

Enabling a world class public service

PMES 2023 METHODOLOGY GUIDE

Using this guide

This guide is for human resources (HR) practitioners, people managers and employees who want to know more about the People Matter Employee Survey (PMES).

Survey design

The PMES is a comprehensive employee experience questionnaire. Its practical, action-oriented questions draw upon evidence-based models of employee experience. Each year, the Public Service Commission (PSC) tests new and existing questions with public sector employees to ensure the survey measures all the things it needs to measure.

The survey asks employees about their experiences with their work, workgroup, managers, and organisation. Results are grouped into management practices and reported under four domains:

- purpose and direction
- work environment
- enabling practices
- leadership



All of these practices contribute positively to employee and organisational outcomes, including employee engagement, job satisfaction, wellbeing, and customer service.

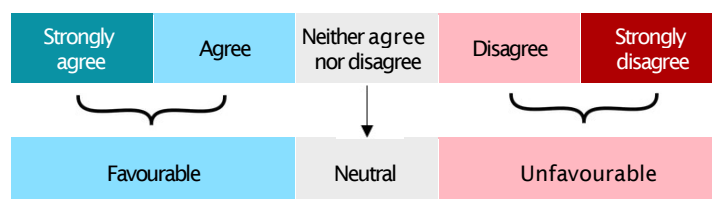
Analysis methods

Most questions in the PMES use a five-point Likert scale, from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree', with a neutral 'neither agree nor disagree' option. Some questions use other types of answer options (e.g., 'yes', 'no' and 'don't know', or '0' to '10' rating scale').

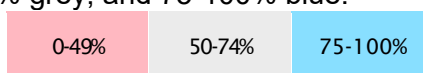
There are also some questions in the survey that allow multiple responses and therefore, results for these questions will not necessarily sum to 100%.

% favourable scores

Most responses are grouped into % favourable (sum of 'strongly agree' and 'agree' responses divided by total number of responses), % neutral, and % unfavourable (sum of 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' responses divided by total number of responses). Responses on a 5-point agree/disagree scale are grouped according to the diagram below. Responses on a scale of 0–10 are grouped into % favourable (7–10), % neutral (4–6), and % unfavourable (0–3). The % favourable scores for individual questions can be aggregated to obtain a % favourable score for a topic (e.g., Inclusion and diversity, job satisfaction), which is the sum of all 'strongly agree' and 'agree' responses for questions in the topic divided by the total number of responses for the topic.



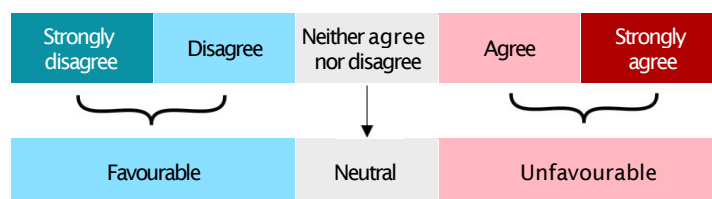
On the 'Headline results for key topics' page, % favourable scores are colour coded based on the following ranges: 0-49% red, 50-74% grey, and 75-100% blue.



Negatively worded questions

Negatively worded questions are items that are phrased in a negative way (e.g., I feel burned out by my work).

When responding to a negatively worded question, 'strongly disagree' and disagree' responses are classified as positive and considered favourable (i.e., it is positive that you disagree that you feel burned out by your work).



For example, if the 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' score for the question *I feel burned out by my work* is 60%, the result can be expressed by stating that **60% disagreed that they feel burned out by their work** or **60% felt they were not burned out by their work**.

Difference scores

Difference scores are displayed as a percentage point where there is a valid comparison (e.g., to the previous year or to cluster results). Differences are colour coded based on the following ranges: 5% or more (blue), between -4% to 4% (grey), and -5% or less (red).

+5 or more	+4 to -4	-5 or less
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Difference scores may be higher for smaller groups due to random fluctuations, and this should be considered when interpreting results.

Topic scores

Topic score comparisons are only provided where there is a valid comparison to the previous year.

- For topics where questions have been removed, the previous year's topic score is recalculated to exclude the removed question/s.
- For topics where questions have been added, no comparison to the previous year is provided.

Employee engagement scores

Each person who answered all five employee engagement questions gets an employee engagement score. Each answer is assigned a score as follows:

- 100 to 'strongly agree'
- 75 to 'agree'
- 50 to 'neither agree nor disagree'
- 25 to 'disagree'
- 0 to 'strongly disagree'

The employee's engagement score is calculated as the average of the five question scores. Employees' scores are then averaged to calculate a team or organisation's engagement score

Rounding

Results are presented as whole numbers (or, sometimes, to one decimal place) for ease of reading. Values are rounded down if their first decimal number is less than 5. Values are rounded up if their first decimal number is equal to or greater than 5. Due to rounding, results will not always add up to 100%. Difference scores may appear to be slightly different to values derived from subtracting rounded numbers, usually within 1%.

Here are two examples of how rounding can impact the scoring:

Example 1: Rounded percentage numbers do not add up to 100%

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Number of responses	151	166	176	96	24	613
Percentage	24.63%	27.08%	28.71%	15.66%	3.92%	100%
Rounded percentage	25%	27%	29%	16%	4%	101%

Example 2: Difference scores appear slightly different to values derived from subtracting rounded numbers

	2022 score	2021 score	Difference score (2022 vs. 2021)
Actual scores	66.4%	64.8%	1.6%
Rounded scores	66%	65%	2%

Key driver analysis

The key drivers of employee engagement are the survey questions most strongly correlated with engagement in a team or organisation. Key drivers are split into strengths (high correlation, high score) and priorities (high correlation, low score). Maintaining strengths and improving priorities can help boost employee engagement.

Privacy

Survey responses are collected on an anonymous basis and strict rules protect privacy at every stage of the survey process. Responses to the PMES will not be disclosed unless required by or under an Australian law or a court/tribunal order. Even if disclosure is required, the responses will remain anonymous.

PSC provides summary reports and dashboards to public sector organisations. These summary reports contain question results, a respondent profile (e.g., demographics, employment status), cluster and agency comparisons, etc. Public sector organisations also receive deidentified text comments.

Results are visible only when there are 10 or more respondents in a work area, demographic group, or any combination of these factors. An even stricter lower limit of 30 applies to the text comments.

In addition, the PSC uses the anonymous, individual level data for internal research purposes, such as exploring the relationship between tenure and employee engagement.

More information about the survey process

The PMES [frequently asked questions](#) page answers some common questions about the survey. You can also email the PSC at employeesurvey@psc.nsw.gov.au.