

A photograph of a young man with glasses and a beard, smiling and standing with his arms crossed. He is wearing a high-visibility orange and yellow safety vest over a dark t-shirt. In the background, a large red semi-truck is parked in front of a building. The scene is outdoors under bright sunlight.

# Newly licensed drivers finding satisfying careers in Alberta's trucking industry

ALBERTA MELT  
GRADUATE  
SURVEY REPORT

Trucking HR Canada (THRC) has completed a study that explored the experiences, perspectives, and career trajectories of Alberta MELT graduates.

The study involved three waves of surveys with graduates over a 17-month span. The results offer insight into the early chapters of new drivers' careers. In this report, we share what we learned about their pathways into and around the industry.

## KEY FINDINGS

- Overall, graduates felt prepared to begin truck driving careers, but they still embraced subsequent training opportunities
- The majority of graduates found full-time work in a job where a Class 1 license is required
- While most graduates were enthusiastic about their career choice at the start of the study, job satisfaction waned slightly as they gained experience. However, graduates remained satisfied with their decision to pursue a career in trucking

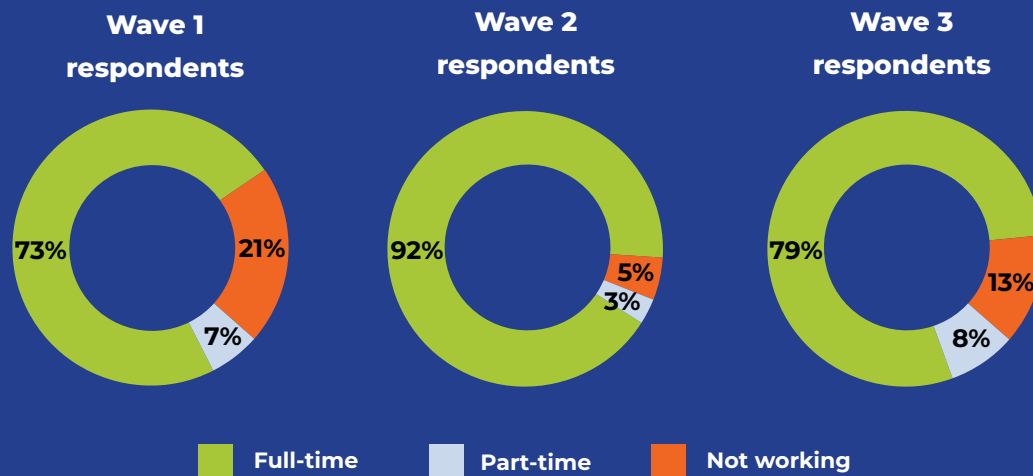
The majority of study participants were men (91%) and the most well-represented age group was 25-34. There were respondents in every age group from 18-24 to 55+, indicating that some graduates are pursuing truck driving as a first job, while others are undergoing mid- or late-career transitions.

## MELT graduates are finding employment in their selected occupations

At the beginning of the study, we asked participants why they enrolled in MELT. Most (84%) said it was because they wanted to become a truck driver, and the majority took meaningful steps toward this goal. Almost all participants (92%) in the first wave obtained a Class 1 license, and over 60% found work as a truck driver. This wasn't the only occupation where licensed drivers found employment: the second most common occupation (16%) was heavy equipment operator.

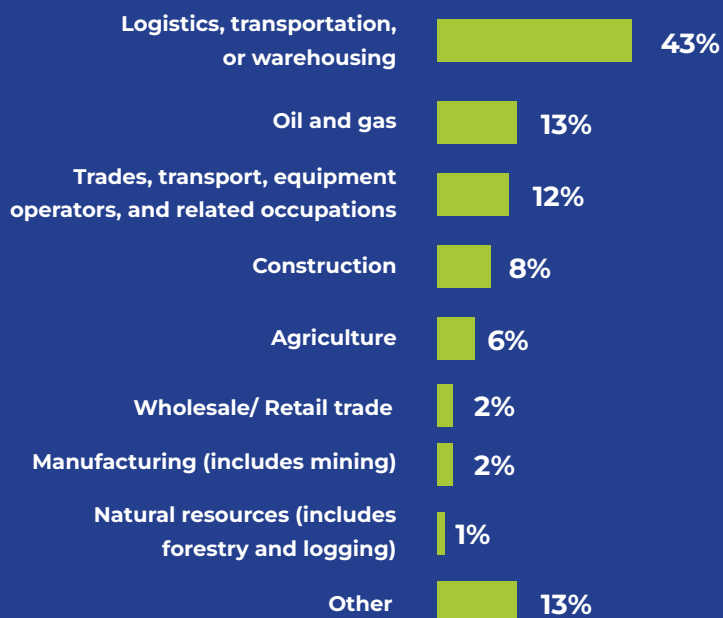
The majority of respondents found full time work. However, in all waves there were respondents who either found part-time work or who were unemployed (see Figure 1).

## Figure 1 – Across all waves, the majority of graduates found full-time work



The largest portion of respondents found jobs in the logistics, transportation, and warehousing sector, but there were also significant numbers in oil and gas, trade and transport equipment operation, and construction as well (see Figure 2).

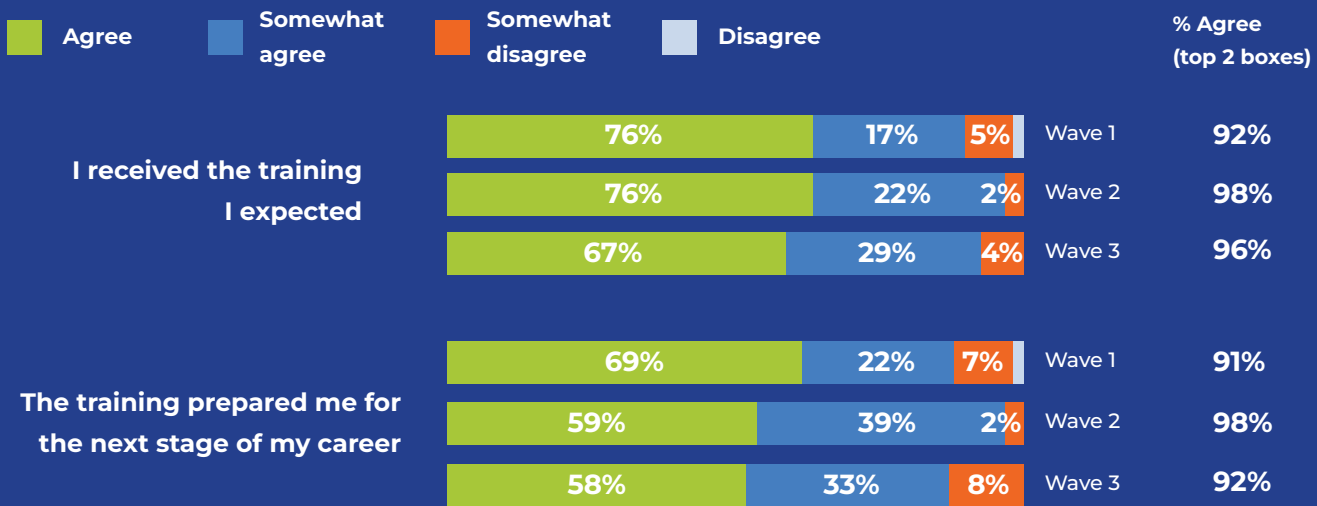
## Figure 2 – Respondents work in many different sectors



## In the eyes of graduates, entry-level training is a valuable experience

We asked graduates about their experiences in entry-level training and whether that experience helped prepare them for the next stage in their careers. The response was overwhelmingly positive: over 90% of respondents said they received the training they expected and felt prepared for the next stage in their careers.

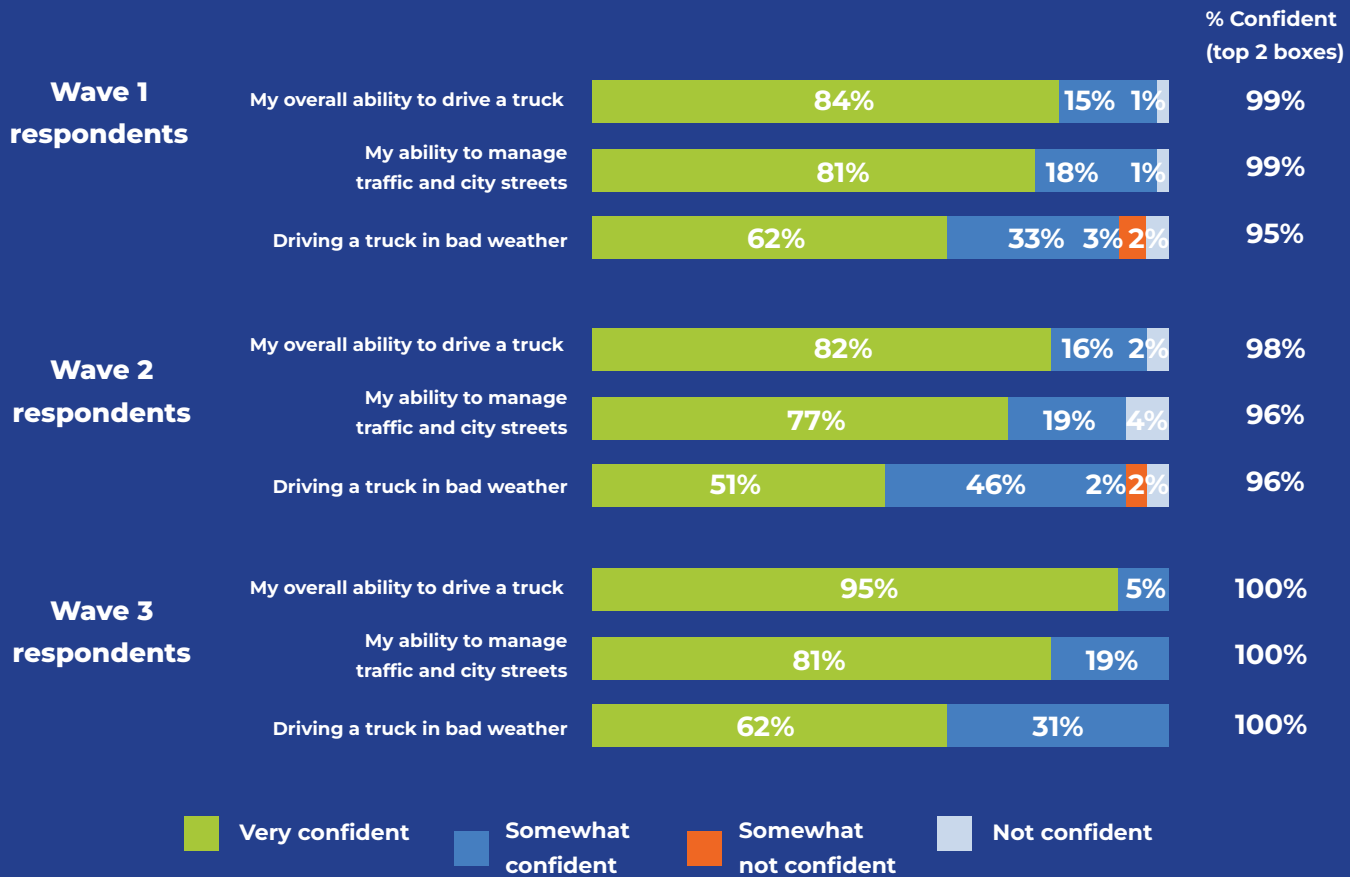
### Figure 3 – Training helps graduates feel prepared for the next stage in their careers



## New graduates are confident in their driving abilities but see value in additional training

MELT graduates in our study reported high confidence in their driving abilities in all situations. At the beginning of the study, 99% of participants said they were confident or very confident in their ability to drive a truck, and 95% were confident driving in bad weather. Participants that were tracked through each wave of the study showed improved confidence in all areas over time.

## Figure 4 – New graduates have high confidence in their driving abilities



Entry-level training instills confidence in new drivers, but they also recognize the value of additional training beyond entry level. Nearly a third of graduates in Wave 1 said they took extra training on top of MELT to obtain their Class 1 license, and 59% said they received additional training with an employer (either informal mentoring/coaching or more formal training programs) to prepare them for careers as truck drivers.

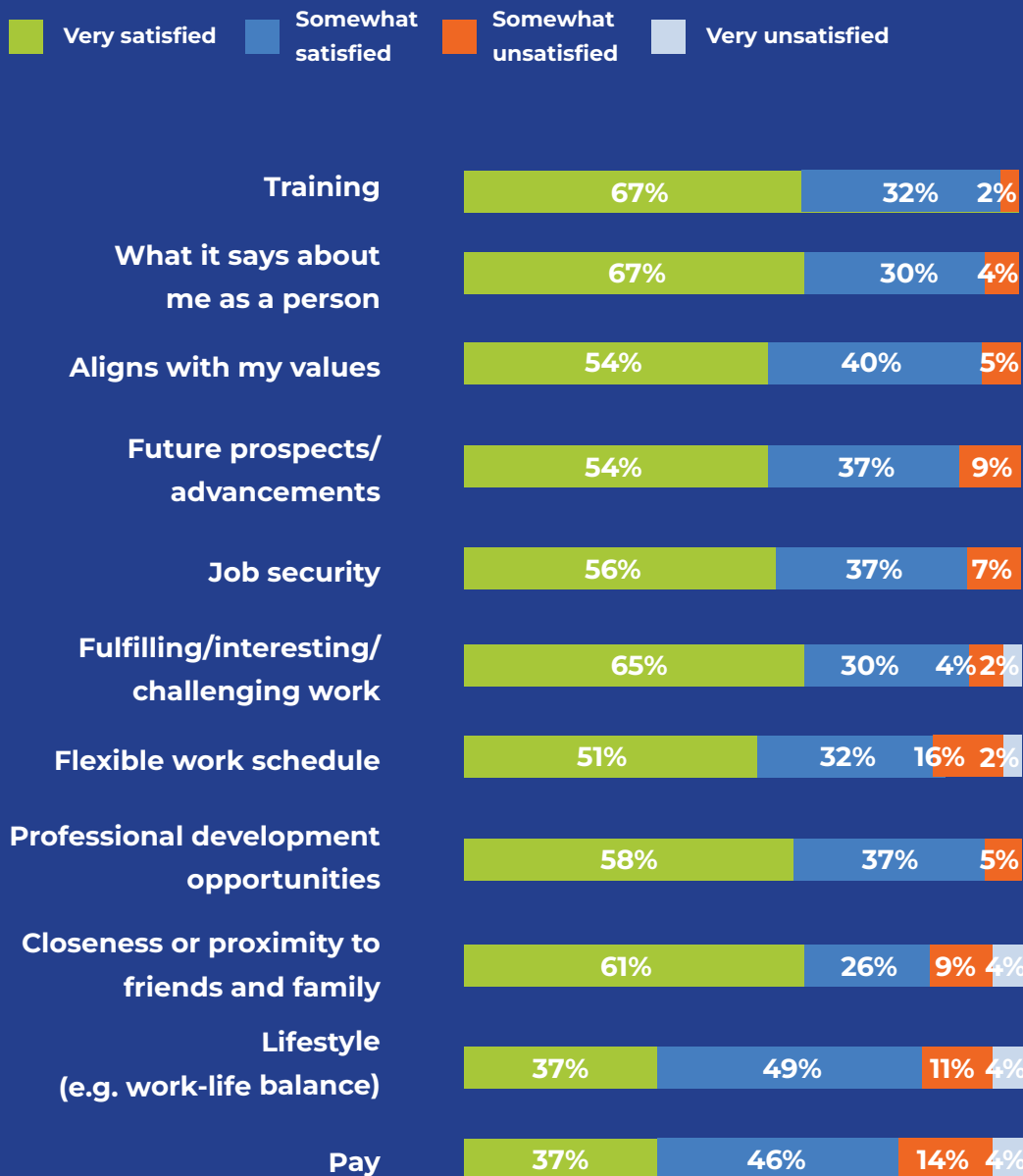
As part of this study, we also surveyed employers in Alberta’s trucking industry, and they too believed additional training was important for new drivers. Over half (67%) of employer respondents agreed that entry-level training on its own does not sufficiently prepare new drivers to be successful, and 65% felt that there is too much expectation placed on employers to get new drivers up to speed.

Fortunately, while graduates feel good about their abilities coming out of entry-level training, our results suggest they are prepared to continue building their skillsets through subsequent training opportunities.

## Job satisfaction is strong overall, but fades slightly over time

Across all three waves, participants reported strong job satisfaction and said they were happy with their career choices. Over 90% of participants reported satisfaction with job security, possibilities for advancement, professional development opportunities, and the level of interest and challenge in their work. Satisfaction with pay and work-life balance were also strong at 83% and 86% respectively. Among individuals that were tracked over all three waves, job satisfaction remained strong but did drop slightly over time.

### Figure 5 – Overall, graduates are satisfied with all aspects of their career choices



Participants also became less willing to advocate for the sector as time wore on. In the second and third wave surveys, we asked participants how likely they would be to recommend their job to a friend or family member. In Wave 2, 41% said they would recommend their job. In Wave 3, that number dropped to 24%.

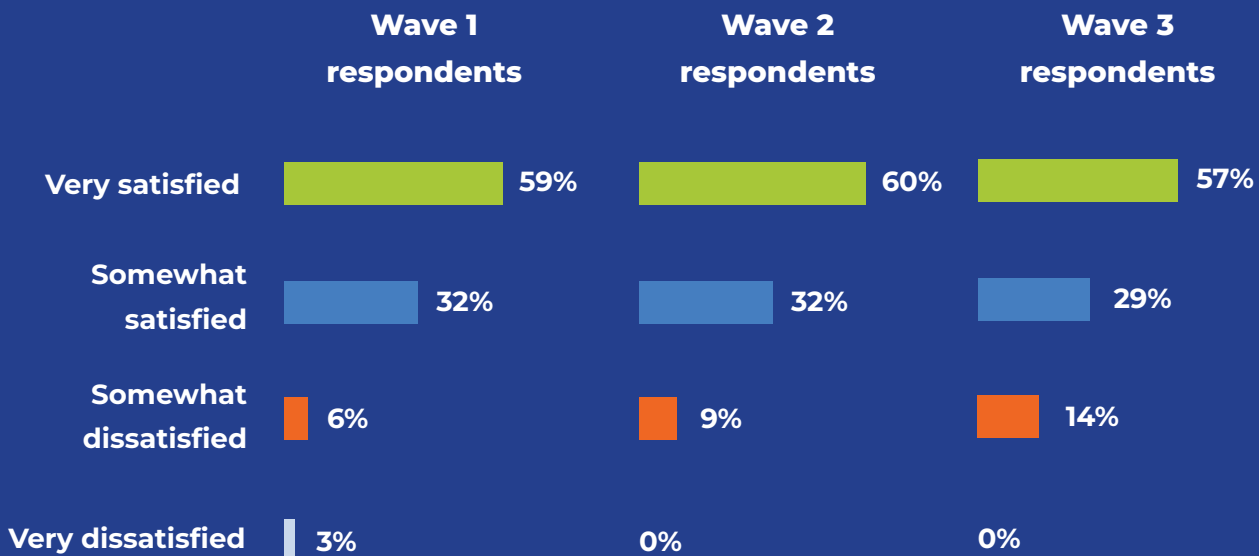
According to survey results, the largest areas of dissatisfaction were onerous working conditions and feeling unwelcome in the sector. Respondents indicated that the sector is particularly unwelcoming to new drivers since employers prioritize experience. This can make it hard for new drivers to break into the industry. We also heard from some female respondents who found it difficult to fit into a male-dominated industry.

Dissatisfaction with pay was a factor for some respondents as well, and among those who reported switching jobs, the most common reason for doing so was pursuit of higher compensation.

## Graduates are satisfied with their career decisions

Overall, graduates were proud of their career choice. As shown above in Figure 5, an overwhelming majority said their jobs aligned with their personal values and that they were satisfied with what those jobs say about them as a person. Moreover, in all three waves, graduates reported that they were happy with their career choice (Figure 6).

**Figure 6 – Graduates are satisfied with their career choice**



## Study details

Trucking HR Canada conducted three waves of surveys with Alberta MELT graduates over a span of 17 months.

- Wave 1: conducted online from August 2024 to June 2025, with 355 completes
- Wave 2: conducted online from January 2025 to June 2025, with 60 completes
- Wave 3: conducted online from July 2025 to December 2025, with 24 completes

Respondents were sourced from Alberta trucking schools.

In addition, we conducted two surveys of trucking employers in Alberta. Employer surveys were conducted online from October 4 to November 5, 2024, and from November 17 to December 3, 2025. Senior executives from over 100 Alberta trucking companies participated. The companies serve various industries, including wholesale trade, food retail, manufacturing, construction, agriculture and oil and gas. For more detailed results from the employer surveys, access the THRC Alberta employer survey report.

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