

ESTONIAN LABOUR FORCE SURVEY 2002
Interviewer's manual

SECTION L. Health and ability to work

Since 2001, the Estonian Labour Force Survey Questionnaire includes an extra module, the contents of which vary from year to year. The module is compiled in accordance with the relevant EU regulations, and is included in labour force survey questionnaires in EU member and candidate states. The aim of the added module is to gather detailed information about an aspect of life directly relevant to the labour market. The 2001 survey addressed issues relating to working hours and the organisation of work. The 2002 survey examines the effect of health problems on a person's ability to work.

Question L00. The questions in Section L are asked from all household members aged between 15 and 64 in all the quarters of 2002. Similarly to defining the working-age population, the age of respondents is calculated according to the date of birth. The age of the respondents has been recorded in Question B05D (the Table of Household Members in the Household Head Questionnaire).

Question L01. Before asking the question, the explanatory text must be read to the respondent. For finding all the persons with a lasting disease or disability, it is essential to make the question unambiguous for the respondent. The word "lasting" should be emphasised. "Lasting" refers to a disability or disease which has lasted for at least 6 months or is likely to last for at least 6 months. If necessary, other conditions enlisted in Questions L02 can be mentioned to explain what the interviewer means by lasting health problems. The respondent should be reminded that lasting health problems include not only physical, but also mental and emotional problems, also periodic (e.g., back problems) and episodic (e.g., epilepsy) conditions.

Question L02. The aim of the question is to investigate the relationship between health problems and employment. On the basis of the information relating to the diseases and disabilities the respondents are suffering from, it is possible to identify the types of jobs causing more problems for people with a particular condition. All health problems the respondent suffers from should be recorded. Impaired vision (Answer 4) and hearing (Answer 5) are indicated only if the respondent's sight or hearing are affected also when wearing glasses or a hearing aid. Impaired speech (Answer 6) includes medical problems, such as a stutter or a stammer; it does not include language problems (e.g., insufficient knowledge of Estonian). All mental diseases, emotional problems (depression, stress, phobias, etc.) and disorders causing difficulty in learning (dyslexia, etc.) are coded 13. Chronic alcoholism, drug addiction, etc. are coded 15.

Question L03. If the respondent has several health problems, the most serious one should be indicated – i.e., the one causing the respondent most difficulties in coping with his/her everyday life and work.

Question L04. If the respondent finds it difficult to decide when exactly the health problem started, one of the following questions may be of help: (a) when the respondent first contacted a doctor in connection with the problem, or (b) when the problem first began to affect the respondent's everyday life. Each time range includes the lower and excludes the upper limit: for example, if a health problem has lasted for exactly 1 year, the range "1-2 years" (Answer 3) should be indicated.

Question L05. In stating the cause of the health problem, work-related causes should be distinguished from work-unrelated causes. For example, if the health problem was caused by a traffic accident which occurred while the respondent was performing his/her job-related duties, Answer 2 should be recorded; if it was caused by a traffic accident not related to work, Answer 3. Work-related accidents (Answer 2) should be distinguished from other accidents (Answer 4), and work-related diseases (Answer 5) from other diseases (Answer 6).

Work-related accident (Answer 2) refers to a sudden injury sustained while performing tasks assigned or permitted by the employer, during working hours (incl. breaks), on the way to work or in any other employment-related situation.

Work-related disease (Answer 5) refers to occupational and other employment-related diseases. Occupational disease is a medical condition caused by risk factors in the work environment or the nature of work, which is listed in the register of occupational diseases. A doctor suspecting an occupational or other work-related disease arranges for the patient to contact an occupational health specialist, who, having made the diagnosis, informs also the employer.

Question L07. The question is asked only from the respondents who work. "Adjusted to suit people with special needs" means that the working conditions have been specifically modified to suit the needs of people with disabilities. Such companies, non-profit organisations and foundations are by law entitled to tax exemptions for full-time employees who have lost 40% or more of their ability to work.

Questions L08-L10 are asked from both working and non-working respondents, changing the wording of the question as appropriate ("is restricted" or "would be restricted").

Question L08. "Kind of work" refers to the nature of work: manual job, desk job, indoor or outdoor job, etc.. Depending on the nature of the disability, certain kinds of job may involve more difficulties for people with special needs.

Question L09. People with disabilities may have difficulty achieving the same level of efficiency as healthy people: their physical strength is limited, they may be able to work for only a couple of hours a day, etc.

Question L10. People who have (partially) lost the use of their limbs (e.g., wheelchair users) often have problems with getting to work.

Question L11. If the answer to the Checkpoint Question is “No”, Section L has been completed.

Questions L12-L14. The aim of Questions L12-L13 is to find out whether the respondent needs assistance in working or would need assistance in order to be able to work. “Assistance” refers to help from family members, relatives, friends, colleagues, etc.. Answer1 in L13 includes the availability of special facilities (e.g., special equipment, sign language translation, wheelchair access, etc.). There may be more than one answer to Question L13, of which the respondent will select the most important one in Question L14.