



WOMEN, BUSINESS AND THE LAW

FAQ – WBL 2025

Methodology Workshops

PENSION

1. Where is the list of indicators that were used to construct the Pension topic.

The *Women, Business and the Law Methodology Handbook* provides a comprehensive overview of all indicators used in the Pension topic legal and supportive frameworks. It includes a complete list of sources and evidence consulted for constructing this topic, as well as for the other ten topics included in the *Women, Business and the Law* index. For more details, please refer to pages 225-242 of the Methodology Handbook.

2. What about situations where someone doesn't meet all the requirements for accessing pensions? Under what circumstances can a person still retire and receive partial benefits?

Partial pension benefits refer to reduced or proportional payments granted to individuals who retire without fulfilling all the conditions required for a full pension. In most systems, eligibility for full pension benefits typically requires meeting two key criteria: attainment of a specified retirement age and completion of a minimum number of contribution years.

However, in cases where an individual does not meet one or both of these requirements—such as retiring earlier than the statutory age or having an incomplete contribution history—some pension systems permit access to partial pension benefits. These benefits are calculated on a reduced or proportional basis, reflecting, for example, the individual's shorter contribution period or earlier retirement. The age at which partial benefits may be accessed varies by jurisdiction. In some economies, individuals may become eligible before reaching the full retirement age, while in others, the age threshold may remain the same as the full retirement age. The specific rules and formulas governing partial pensions are defined within each economy's legal and regulatory frameworks. In economies where the law does not specify the provision of partial pension benefits and consequently does not establish different retirement ages for men and women, it is considered that there is no legal inequality in partial pension retirement age.

3. Regarding this question "What is the age at which a woman can retire and receive partial pension benefits", what if the law specifies a specific number of years of service to be able to receive partial pension instead of an age?

In economies where the legal framework allows for the receipt of partial pension benefits, eligibility is typically based on one or both of the following criteria: (1) reaching a certain age and/or (2) completing a specified number of years of contributions or service. For the purposes of the *Women, Business and the Law* index, this particular indicator focuses on the age at which a woman can retire and receive partial pension benefits. The emphasis on age reflects the project's analytical focus on identifying and tracking gender-based differences in retirement age across economies—a dimension where significant disparities have been observed over time. While years of service may also be a condition for accessing partial benefits, the indicator specifically captures legal provisions related to age-based eligibility, in order to maintain consistency and comparability across all jurisdictions assessed.

4. When retirement ages are unequal for men and women, is it best practice to gradually increase and equalize the ages or to equalize it immediately?

While the objective of equalizing retirement ages between men and women aligns with international standards promoting gender equality, many policymakers choose to implement such reforms through a gradual transition rather than immediate changes. An abrupt increase in the retirement age—for example, raising the retirement age for women from 55 to 60 within a single year—can have significant effects on individuals nearing retirement. Such changes may impact their financial planning, career decisions, and broader life arrangements.

Women, Business and the Law adopts a fractional scoring approach ranging from 0 (for an age gap of 5 years or more) to 1 (for no age gap), calculated using a linear function, to more accurately reflect the complexities of pension systems and to better measure and recognize incremental progress toward closing pension age gaps.

5. Given that many countries have separate pension systems for public and private sector workers, why does your analysis focus only on the private sector?

In many economies, distinct pension systems exist for public and private sector workers. As part of the World Bank's broader mandate to support private sector development, *Women, Business and the Law* adopts a working life-cycle approach that examines the legal and regulatory environment affecting women as both employees and entrepreneurs in the private sector. Therefore, the report focuses specifically on the private sector to maintain consistency with its overall methodological framework and objectives, and to ensure that the data are comparable across the 190 economies covered.

6. Given that we have seen courts in some jurisdictions making impactful decisions on pensions and gender (as an example from the UK, the *Lloyds Banking Group Pension Trustees Ltd v Lloyds Bank PLC* case), how does WBL address such court decisions/case law?

Women, Business and the Law incorporates court decisions or case law in its assessment when it has reached the level of binding precedent as described on page 14 of the [Methodology Handbook](#), i. e.,. Reaching legal precedent involves a judicial decision that establishes a legal standard or principle, serving as an authoritative guide that lower courts are obligated to follow in future similar cases. Short of reaching legal precedent, the Legal Frameworks pillar for the Pension topic is limited to the analysis of domestic laws and regulations that govern pension systems

7. If there are greater barriers for women to access jobs by age, why is it more convenient to equalize the retirement age between men and women?

While it is true that older women often face greater challenges in accessing employment, equalizing the retirement age between men and women remains a critical reform—primarily due to its long-term impact on the gender pension gap. As outlined on page 225 of the [Methodology Handbook](#), and supported by extensive literature, legal frameworks that establish a lower retirement age for women than for men can significantly reduce women's lifetime earnings, limit their pension contributions, and ultimately lower their retirement benefits.

By equalizing the retirement age, governments can help ensure that women have equal opportunities to accumulate pension entitlements, participate in the labor market for longer periods, and improve their financial security later in life. While equal retirement ages alone cannot eliminate the gender pension gap, they represent an essential step toward improving women's economic outcomes over their course of life.

8. Aren't incentives to increase women benefits considered to be biased against men as we are calling for equal treatment and policies for both genders without preference to one over the other?

The use of targeted policy mechanisms, such as incentives to increase women's pension benefits, is not intended to create bias but rather to address existing structural inequalities—such as the gender pension gap—that disproportionately affect women. This gap can arise from a range of factors, including lower lifetime earnings, interrupted work histories due to caregiving responsibilities, and lower participation in formal employment, all of which can negatively impact women's ability to accumulate adequate pension benefits.

For the purposes of the Pension indicator, *Women, Business and the Law* considers a range of incentives designed to improve pension coverage and adequacy. These may include tax deductions for voluntary contributions, subsidies for early enrollment in pension schemes, flexible contribution arrangements, or financial incentives for low-income earners. While some of these measures may be tailored to address the specific barriers women face, many are designed to be broadly accessible and may apply equally to both women and men.