

Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey (CGPSS) 2022 Summary

What is CGPSS?

The Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey (CGPSS) is a nationwide survey of graduate students. The survey is conducted every three years and asks students to evaluate their university experience and satisfaction with their graduate program.

What is the purpose of the survey?

The purpose of this online questionnaire is to gain a better understanding of the university experience of graduate and professional students. Presented in this summary report are results for USask from the 2022 survey with some comparisons to the 2019 and 2016 surveys, including to our Canadian peers.

Who participated in this survey?

All USask graduate students were invited to participate. Of this, 843 students completed the questionnaire, representing a 28% response rate.

Profile of graduate students

- The typical USask graduate student was female (61%), a Canadian citizen (56%), between 21 to 35 years of age (67%) and in the first or second year of a graduate program (67%).
- The majority (81%) lived in *off-campus housing not owned by the university*, 54% were *married* or had a *domestic partner* and 24% reported they had one or more children.
- 44% of USask graduate students were members of a *visible minority group(s)* and 6% self-identified as an *Indigenous person*.

Educational status

- The majority of USask graduate students (93%) were enrolled full-time compared to 85% of our Canadian peers.
- 60% of USask graduate students reported being enrolled in a master's program and 40% in a doctoral program.
- As shown below, most graduate students were still taking courses:

Current status	USask	Canadian peers
Still taking courses	49%	57%
Completed coursework	24%	21%
Passed qualifying exams/papers	9%	9%
Thesis/dissertation proposal accepted	15%	11%
Defended thesis/dissertation/research paper	3%	2%

- A third (34%) of USask graduate students *expect to graduate by the end of the current academic year*.
- If USask students were to start their graduate career again, 65% reported they would *definitely/probably select the same university* while 77% would *select the same field of study* (70% and 80% respectively for Canadian peers).

General satisfaction

- When asked about recommending USask to others, 71% reported they would *definitely/probably recommend this university to someone considering their program*, 64% would *recommend this university to someone in another field* and 78% reported they would *select the same faculty advisor if they were to start over again*. These responses are similar to Canadian peers that reported 75%, 62% and 77% respectively.
- As represented in the table below, master's students were more likely than doctoral students to indicate that they would *definitely/probably* select the same university and recommend USask to others. Similar results were also found for the peer group.

General satisfaction	USask		Canadian peers	
	Master's	Doctoral	Master's	Doctoral
If you were to start your graduate/professional career again, would you select this same university?	67%	63%	71%	67%
Would you recommend this university to someone considering your program?	73%	70%	76%	71%
Would you recommend this university to someone in another field?	66%	61%	64%	58%

- The majority of students rated the quality of the following areas as *excellent/very good/good* at USask: *academic experience* (87%), *overall experience* (84%), *graduate/professional program* (81%) and *student life experience* (70%).
- When asked to rate the extent to which certain factors were a major obstacle to their academic progress, it was found that *financial pressures* continue to be the number one obstacle for USask graduate students (35%) and the peer group (35%). The second item rated as being a major obstacle for all graduate students was *work commitments* (22% for USask and 18% in the peer group).

Satisfaction with program, quality of interactions and coursework

- Fourteen items were included in the questionnaire that measure satisfaction with program, quality of interactions and coursework. Presented below are those items that were rated as *excellent/very good/good* by the highest proportion of students, as well as those that received the lowest rating. As shown, *intellectual quality of the faculty* was rated the highest (95%) by both USask students and the peer group, while *advice on the availability of financial support* received the lowest rating (63%). The percentage of USask students agreeing with the items presented below was consistent with previous survey results, with the largest change being *Availability of area courses I needed to complete my program* which saw a 4% increase among USask students.

Program, quality of interactions and coursework	USask	Canadian peers
Highest rated items		
The intellectual quality of the faculty	95%	95%
The intellectual quality of my fellow students	94%	93%
Overall quality of graduate level teaching by faculty	88%	88%
Amount of coursework	88%	86%



Lowest rated items		
Advice on the availability of financial support	63%	63%
Opportunities to take coursework outside my own department	75%	71%
Opportunities to engage in interdisciplinary work	75%	74%

Professional skills development

- Out of 23 items pertaining to professional skills development in which students participated, the items rated by the highest proportion of USask graduate students as *excellent/very good/good* were: *Feedback on your research* (84%); *Advice/workshops/tools about research ethics in the use of animals* (83%); and *Courses, workshops, or orientation on teaching* (82%).
- Items that received the fewest responses as *excellent/very good/good* were: *advice/workshops on career options outside of academia* (52%); *advice/workshops on careers within academia* (56%); and *advice/workshops about research positions* (58%).
- Four items were also included for those in graduate programs that are mainly course-based. The highest proportion of USask students (84%) rated *advice/workshops/tools on indigenization/reconciliation* as *excellent/very good/good*, while *advice/workshops/training on the transferability of your professional skills acquired during your graduate studies, towards the workforce* received the lowest rating (69%).

Research experience

- From a list of five research experience items, the two items that the greatest proportion of graduate students rated as *excellent/very good/good* were: *conducting independent research since starting your graduate program* (83%); and *Research collaboration with one or more faculty members* (80%).
- *Collaboration with faculty in writing a grant proposal* received the lowest rating amongst USask graduate students (68%). This item was also rated the lowest by our Canadian peers (65%).

Presentations and publications

- Seven items asked about the occurrence of presentations and publications. As shown below, *seminars/colloquia at which students present their research* was reported as occurring most often in graduate students' departments (81%), while *other institutional funding to attend scholarly/scientific meetings* occurred the least (32%). The largest discrepancies between USask and peer institutions is that USask students appear to have more opportunities to present at seminars/colloquia while students at other universities have had more instances where they have published as sole, or first, author.

Occurrence of presentations/publications	USask			Canadian peers		
	All	Master's	Doctoral	All	Master's	Doctoral
Seminars/colloquia for students to present research	81%	87%	90%	67%	77%	84%
Departmental funding to attend national/regional meetings	42%	42%	52%	35%	37%	51%



Occurrence of presentations/publications	USask			Canadian peers		
	All	Master's	Doctoral	All	Master's	Doctoral
Other institutional funding to attend scholarly/scientific meetings	32%	28%	46%	27%	28%	39%
Scholarly meetings	51%	49%	66%	45%	51%	63%
Deliver papers/present posters at national scholarly meetings	63%	52%	72%	61%	50%	69%
Co-authored in refereed journals with your program faculty	38%	27%	47%	42%	33%	49%
Published as sole or first author in a refereed journal	34%	25%	42%	40%	27%	50%

Advisor and thesis, dissertation, and research paper

- Fifteen items were included to assess mentoring activities of thesis/dissertation advisors. For 13 of the items, the percentage that selected *strongly agreed* or *agreed* ranged from 88% to 96% with one item rated at 68%.
- The top mentoring activities included: *advisor gave me constructive feedback on my work* (96%); *advisor was knowledgeable about formal degree requirements* (94%); and *advisor served as my advocate when necessary* (93%). The activities lowest on the list included: *advisor encouraged discussions about current job market and various career prospects* (68%); and *advisor was very helpful defining my study plan and outlining steps to program completion* (80%).
- In terms of face time, the majority of students meet with their advisor at least once a month either to discuss students' ongoing research and results (87%) or writing of the dissertation draft (68%).

Financial support

- The top three sources of financial support were: *graduate teaching assistantship* (36%); *loans, savings or family assistance* (34%); and *university-funded bursaries* (31%).
- Up 7% since 2019, 76% of USask graduate students reported they did not have any undergraduate debt, compared to 72% of our Canadian peers. Of those with debt, 43% reported debts under \$20,000.
- Approximately 14% higher than in 2019, a total of 54% of USask graduate students reported they did not have any graduate debt (compared to 51% for the peer group). Of those students with graduate debt, 59% were in debt for an amount less than \$20,000.

University resources and student life

- Of the 24 items on university resources and student life that were rated *excellent/very good/good*, the top rated were: *Indigenous student centre* (95%); *library facilities* (94%); and *Research laboratories* (89%). These resources were also the top three for the Canadian peer group.
- USask graduate students rated the following items as *excellent/very good/good* the least: *transportation services* (62%); *housing assistance* (62%); and *Financial aid office* (65%).



Social life

- The largest number of USask students reported frequently or occasionally attending *organized social activities within their advisor/research group* (97%), while the fewest students attended *organized university-wide social activities* (68%). Reported attendance at USask, however, was higher than our Canadian peers in all four categories.

Attendance of organized social activities	USask			Canadian peers		
	2016	2019	2022	2016	2019	2022
Social activities within advisor/research group	89%	95%	97%	84%	93%	95%
Social activities within department	83%	86%	87%	79%	85%	83%
Social activities within residence	66%	71%	85%	56%	74%	76%
University-wide social activities	60%	65%	68%	47%	57%	58%



Appendix A: List of participating institutions

1. University of Alberta
2. Athabasca University
3. Brock University
4. University of Calgary
5. Carleton University
6. Concordia University
7. Dalhousie University
8. École Nationale d'Administration Publique
9. École de Technologie Supérieure
10. University of Guelph
11. Institut national de la recherche scientifique
12. Lakehead University
13. Laurentian University | Université Laurentienne
14. Université Laval
15. University of Lethbridge
16. University of Manitoba
17. McGill University
18. McMaster University
19. Université de Moncton
20. Université de Montréal
21. Mount Saint Vincent University
22. Memorial University of Newfoundland
23. Nipissing University
24. Northeastern University | Toronto campus
25. OCAD University
26. University of Ontario Institute of Technology
27. University of Ottawa | Université d'Ottawa
28. Polytechnique Montréal
29. Queen's University
30. University of Regina
31. Royal Roads University
32. Toronto Metropolitan University
33. Simon Fraser University
34. Université de Sherbrooke
35. University of Saskatchewan
36. Saint Paul University | Université Saint-Paul
37. TÉLUQ
38. University of Toronto
39. Trent University
40. Thompson Rivers University
41. Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue
42. University of British Columbia
43. Université du Québec à Chicoutimi
44. Université du Québec à Montréal
45. Université du Québec en Outaouais
46. Université du Québec à Rimouski
47. Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières
48. Western University
49. University of Victoria
50. Vancouver Island University
51. University of Waterloo
52. University of Windsor
53. Wilfrid Laurier University
54. York University

