

Examining the University of Regina First-Year Student Experience Adjusting to university

Completed in April 2013, the 2013 CUSC Survey of First-Year Students focused on undergraduate university students who started at the University of Regina during the 2012–2013 academic year. The survey was distributed to more than 41,000 students at 35 universities across Canada. In total, 15,218 undergraduate students from across Canada completed the survey, including 668 from the University of Regina.

This report focuses on the University of Regina's students, comparing them to students nationally and to students attending institutions comparable to the University of Regina. Where possible, this report also compares results with the 2010, 2007, and 2004 CUSC surveys of first-year students. Unless stated otherwise, all differences reported are not statistically significant.

This fourth report examines first-year students' assessment of the level of success they have had in adjusting to the academic, personal and practical demands of university.

Success adjusting to academic demands of university

Table 1 displays respondents' ratings of seven aspects of success in adjusting to academic demands.

- ▶ With ratings of more than 90%, University of Regina students report the most success *understanding content and information presented in courses, meeting academic demands, choosing a program of studies, and performing adequately in written assignments.*
- ▶ University of Regina students report the least success *getting academic advice and performing adequately in courses requiring math skills.* This is the same as at other universities, indicating that many first-year students across Canada struggle with these academic demands.

	National (n=14,550)	Comparable universities (n=6,205)	University of Regina			
			2013 (n=668)	2010 (n=612)	2007 (n=460)	2004 (n=265)
Understanding content and information presented in courses	95%	95%	96%	96%	96%	96%
Meeting academic demands	92%	91%	94%	92%	94%	90%
Choosing a program of studies	93%	93%	94%	90%	93%	91%
Performing adequately in written assignments	91%	90%	91%	91%	90%	88%
Finding help with questions or problems	85%	84%	84%	83%	82%	79%
Performing adequately in courses requiring math skills	80%	80%	79%	77%	82%	81%
Getting academic advice	72%	72%	76%	73%	70%	72%

- ▶ Nationally (including students from the University of Regina), students in Engineering (51%) are most likely to report having very much success *performing adequately in courses requiring mathematical skills.* Students in Social Science (29%) and Arts and Humanities (29%) programs report that they had the least success in this area.

Success adjusting to personal demands of university

Table 2 displays the degree of success students report in adjusting to personal demands while in university.

- ▶ Overall, University of Regina students say they have the most success *organizing their time to complete academic work* and the least success *becoming involved in campus activities*.
- ▶ Results also show that over time, there has been a consistent decrease in the proportion of University of Regina students who find some or very much success with *new living arrangements* (declining from 86% in 2004 to 70% in 2013) and *finding suitable and affordable housing* (declining from 80% in 2004 to 71% in 2013). In 2013, these results are also lower than those found nationally and at comparable universities.
- ▶ University of Regina students were less likely to report that they experience some or very much success *becoming involved in campus activities* than students nationally or at comparable institutions, although, there has been substantial improvement relative to results reported in 2004.

	National (n=14,550)	Comparable universities (n=6,205)	University of Regina			
			2013 (n=668)	2010 (n=612)	2007 (n=460)	2004 (n=265)
Organizing my time to complete academic work	84%	83%	86%	86%	83%	87%
Making new friends with other students	81%	82%	79%	79%	82%	77%
Finding suitable, affordable housing	73%	73%	71%	76%	77%	80%
New living arrangements	76%	78%	70%	74%	80%	86%
Becoming involved in campus activities	53%	56%	47%	46%	45%	31%

Success making practical adjustments

Table 3 shows students' success with practical adjustments.

- ▶ University of Regina students find much success *finding their way around campus* (with almost all students reporting some or very much success in this area). Students report less success *using the library* (70%) and *finding useful information and resources on careers and occupations* (68%).
- ▶ Compared to students nationally (80%) and at comparable universities (76%), University of Regina students report less success *using the library*.

	National (n=14,550)	Comparable universities (n=6,205)	University of Regina			
			2013 (n=668)	2010 (n=612)	2007 (n=460)	2004 (n=265)
Finding my way around the campus	95%	96%	97%	97%	98%	98%
Using the library	80%	76%	70%	68%	73%	70%
Finding useful information and resources on careers and occupations	68%	68%	68%	62%	68%	61%

Success feeling as if they belong in university

When asked the degree of success they have *feeling as if they belong in university*, more than 8 in 10 University of Regina students report very much or some success. This is on par with results nationally and at comparable universities. However there has been a trend toward fewer University of Regina students reporting feeling very much success in this area, from a high of 48% in 2004 to 42% in 2013.

Nationally and at the University of Regina, almost 2 in 10 students report very little or no success *feeling as if they belong*, including 3% among University of Regina students who say they have not had any success in this area.

	National (n=14,550)	Comparable universities (n=6,205)	University of Regina			
			2013 (n=668)	2010 (n=612)	2007 (n=460)	2004 (n=265)
Very much	43%	46%	42%	43%	48%	48%
Some	38%	36%	40%	44%	43%	40%
Very little	14%	13%	15%	10%	7%	11%
None	5%	5%	3%	3%	2%	<1%

About CUSC

The 2013 CUSC survey is the 19th cooperative study undertaken by the *Canadian University Survey Consortium / Consortium canadien de recherche sur les étudiants universitaires (CUSC/CCREU)* and the 14th study in which the University of Regina has participated. Since 1996, the survey has run in a three-year cycle, with different student populations targeted each year: all undergraduates, first-year undergraduates, or graduating students.

This study focuses on undergraduate university students who started in the Fall 2012 term and compares results to previous first-year surveys conducted in 2010, 2007, and 2004. The survey was distributed to more than 41,000 students at 35 universities across Canada. In total, 15,218 undergraduate students from across Canada completed the survey, yielding an overall response rate of 37.0%. Participating students from the University of Regina numbered 668, which represents a 49.2% rate of response.

University comparisons

For comparison purposes, CUSC categorizes the participating universities into three groups:

- ▶ Group 1 consists of universities that offer primarily undergraduate studies and have smaller student populations.
- ▶ Group 2 consists of universities that offer both undergraduate and graduate studies and tend to be of medium size in terms of student population.
- ▶ Group 3 consists of universities that offer both undergraduate and graduate degrees, with most having professional schools as well. These tend to be the largest institutions in terms of student population.

The University of Regina is included in Group 2. In 2013, twelve Group 2 universities participated in the survey. Along with the University of Regina, they included Brock, Carleton, Lakehead, Ryerson, Simon Fraser, Thompson Rivers, Moncton, New Brunswick (Fredericton), Victoria, Waterloo and Wilfred Laurier. This reflects a higher number of participating Group 2 institutions as compared to earlier surveys of graduating students.

In this report, the University of Regina is not included in either the *National* category (all three Groups) or the *Comparable Universities* category (Group 2 institutions).

Because different universities participate each year, differences in results among similar surveys from earlier years may result from the inclusion of different universities rather than changes over time.

Statistically significant differences

In order to term an association as statistically significant, the Pearson's chi-square must have probability of a type 1 error of less than .001 and either the Phi coefficient or Cramer's V must have a value of .150 or greater.

Non-response

Non-responses have not been included in the analysis. Therefore, throughout this report, unless explicitly stated as a subpopulation, overall results do not include those who did not respond to a particular question. However, for questions where "don't know" is a valid response, overall results include those who selected "don't know" to a particular question.

Weighting

In order to compensate for the discrepancies between the population of first-year students among participating institutions and the sample population, the combined (national and comparator) data in this report have been weighted.

Note: Tables in this report might not add up to one hundred percent due to rounding errors and/or because some categories (such as "Other") are not reflected in the table.

For more information about CUSC/CCREU, visit the website at www.cusc-ccreu.ca.