



Factors Influencing University Decisions

The 2022 *First-Year Student Survey* marks the 28th cooperative study undertaken by the *Canadian University Survey Consortium / Consortium canadien de recherche sur les étudiants universitaires* (CUSC/CCREU) and the 23rd study in which the University of Regina has participated. The survey was distributed to close to 49,000 students at 44 universities across Canada. In total, 15,157 (30.9%) first-year university students completed the survey, including 488 (37.7%) from the University of Regina.

This report focuses on the University of Regina’s first-year students, comparing them to students nationally and to students attending institutions comparable to the University of Regina (see final page for a listing). Where possible, this report also compares results with the 2019, 2016, and 2013 CUSC surveys of first-year students. Unless stated otherwise, all differences reported are not statistically significant.

This second report in a series of six examines students' motivations and factors influencing their decision to attend university, their application behaviour and their main reasons for selecting their particular university.

Most important reasons for attending university

First-year students were asked to rate the importance of fifteen different reasons to attend university. Results are shown in the following table:

Motivation for attending university (% important or very important)	National	Comparable universities	University of Regina		
	2022 (n=15,157)	2022 (n=5,644)	2022 (n=488)	2019 (n=444)	2016 (n=657)
I am more likely to get a job with a degree	89%	90%	92%	90%	93%
To get a more fulfilling job than I probably would if I didn't go	86%	87%	91%	87%	91%
To prepare for a specific job or career	86%	87%	89%	91%	92%
Learning new things is exciting	78%	77%	77%	72%	74%
To get a broad education	74%	74%	75%	71%	72%
To apply what I will learn to make a positive difference in society or my community	74%	74%	82%	75%	78%
To earn more money than if I didn't go	72%	74%	74%	71%	72%
To satisfy my intellectual curiosity	71%	70%	70%	68%	72%
To meet new people	62%	66%	63%	49%	45%
To meet my family's expectations	54%	58%	63%	58%	56%
The satisfaction of doing challenging academic work	52%	49%	48%	50%	46%
To explore whether university is right for me	49%	51%	59%	52%	43%
Most of my friends are going	18%	21%	23%	23%	19%
I didn't have anything better to do	17%	18%	17%	14%	9%
The chance to participate in varsity athletics	12%	13%	15%	13%	13%

After ranking each motivator individually, students were asked to select the most important reason for why they decided to attend university. Not surprising, given the information in the previous table, *preparing for a specific job or career* was the most important reason for students nationally (29%), at comparable universities (28%), and also at the University of Regina (33%). Although the percentage decreased from 2016 to 2019 and 2022, over the years, *preparing for a specific job or career* has been the most important reason for University of Regina students to attend university, as shown in the table below:

Most important reason for attending university	National	Comparable universities	University of Regina			
	2022 (n=15,157)	2022 (n=5,644)	2022 (n=488)	2019 (n=444)	2016 (n=657)	2013 (n=668)
To prepare for a specific job or career	29%	28%	33%	33%	54%	50%

Application Behaviour

Nationally, 77% of students applied to a university other than the one they are currently attending. Although only about 4 in 10 of first-year students at the University of Regina said they applied to more than one university, the proportion has been increasing over the years, from 19% in 2004 to 45% in 2016, and 41% in 2022.

Although many students applied elsewhere, 83% of University of Regina first-year students said they are attending their first choice, compared to 79% nationally and 75% at comparable universities. The table below shows the results:

Application Behaviour	National	Comparable universities	University of Regina			
	2022 (n=15,157)	2022 (n=5,644)	2022 (n=488)	2019 (n=444)	2016 (n=657)	2013 (n=668)
Applied to other universities	77%	87%	41%	39%	45%	32%
Currently attending first choice	79%	75%	83%	86%	85%	82%

Choosing a university

First-year students rated 18 aspects concerning their importance in selecting their university. When the aspects were ranked by the proportion of who answered important or very important, students across Canada were most likely to say that their university *has the program they wanted to take* (87%) followed by their *university's academic reputation* (64%) and *the city/town it's in* (59%). University of Regina students were more likely to say that their university *has the program they wanted to take* (82%) followed by *I wanted to live close to home* (66%) and *the city/town it's in* (64%). All results are shown on the next table:

Importance for selecting their university (% important or very important)	National	Comparable universities	University of Regina		
	2022 (n=15,157)	2022 (n=5,644)	2022 (n=488)	2019 (n=444)	2016 (n=657)
It has the program I want to take	87%	88%	82%	80%	79%
The academic reputation of the university	64%	62%	45%	47%	52%
The city/town it's in	59%	59%	64%	61%	62%
Cost of tuition and fees	53%	51%	53%	43%	42%
It offered a scholarship	51%	58%	60%	49%	55%
The program I want has a co-op, practicum, or other work experience	48%	59%	41%	43%	52%
The size of the university suits me	47%	45%	42%	44%	53%
It has a good reputation for campus life	46%	47%	41%	36%	37%
I wanted to live close to home	46%	46%	66%	64%	67%
Availability of public transportation	45%	49%	33%	31%	27%
It offered other financial assistance	36%	38%	38%	30%	37%
The program I want offers study/work experience abroad	32%	35%	31%	30%	32%
It offered a place in residence	28%	31%	19%	25%	19%
I wanted to live away from home	25%	28%	13%	17%	14%
Cost of university residence	22%	24%	17%	22%	17%
It's where my family wanted me to go	17%	19%	31%	29%	26%
It's where my friends are going	12%	13%	24%	21%	22%
The chance to participate in varsity athletics	11%	11%	14%	11%	10%

Students were presented with the same list of 18 aspects and asked to select the reason that was most important for selecting their university. At the national level, students said that their university *has the program I want to take* (29%), but also *wanting to live close to home* (12%) and *the program I want has a co-op, practicum, or other work experience* (11%) were important. For University of Regina students the most important reason in choosing the university was because they *wanted to live close to home* (30%), much higher than students nationally and at comparable universities (12% at both). The second most important reason for University of Regina students was that *it has the program I want to take* (21%), lower than students nationally and at comparable universities (29% at both). The following table shows the results:

Most important reason for selecting their university	National	Comparable universities	University of Regina		
	2022 (n=15,157)	2022 (n=5,644)	2022 (n=488)	2019 (n=444)	2016 (n=657)
It has the program I want to take	29%	29%	21%	24%	26%
I wanted to live close to home	12%	12%	30%	27%	36%
The program I want has a co-op, practicum, or other work experience	11%	15%	6%	7%	7%

Important sources of information

First-year students rated the importance of 19 sources of information they may have used when making a decision about whether or not to attend their university. Across Canada, the top three sources of information include *their university's website* (54%), *parents* (41%), and *students attending the university* (40%). For University of Regina students the most important source of information was their *parents* (59%), followed by *the university's website* (49%), *students attending the university* (45%), and *friends* (45%). The table below shows all sources of information for U of R students compared to students across Canada and at comparable universities:

Importance of sources of information (% important or very important)	National	Comparable universities	University of Regina		
	2022 (n=15,157)	2022 (n=5,644)	2022 (n=488)	2019 (n=444)	2016 (n=657)
The university's website	54%	53%	49%	43%	40%
Parents	41%	44%	59%	53%	53%
Students attending the university	40%	43%	45%	39%	41%
Contact with admissions staff on campus	31%	28%	41%	32%	40%
Friends	30%	32%	45%	40%	35%
High school/CEGEP counsellors or teachers	27%	28%	41%	35%	43%
Contact with professors	27%	24%	32%	29%	25%
Printed university brochure, pamphlet, or view book	26%	27%	28%	27%	29%
Visit to campus for an open house	25%	25%	25%	43%	47%
Other visit to campus	24%	26%	26%	29%	33%
The university's other social media (e.g. Twitter, tumblr, etc.)	22%	24%	17%	14%	9%
Maclean's university rankings	21%	23%	12%	9%	10%
QS World University Rankings	18%	18%	12%	11%	7%
The Times Higher Education World University Rankings	17%	17%	13%	9%	8%
Academic Ranking of World Universities	17%	18%	12%	11%	7%
Visit by a university representative to your high school or CEGEP	16%	16%	20%	26%	27%
Globe and Mail Canadian University Report	13%	14%	11%	10%	8%
The university's Facebook site	8%	8%	9%	10%	8%
Contact with university athletic coaches	8%	8%	11%	8%	11%

About CUSC

The 2022 CUSC survey is the 28th cooperative study undertaken by the *Canadian University Survey Consortium / Consortium canadien de recherche sur les étudiants universitaires* (CUSC/CCREU) and the 23rd study in which the University of Regina has participated. Prior to 2014, the surveys ran in a three-year cycle, targeting first year, graduating, and all students in separate years. In 2014, the All Undergraduate student survey was changed to a survey of Middle-Years students (i.e., students in the second or third year of a four-year program, second year of a three-year program, or second to fourth year of a five-year program, or, as in the case of the University of Regina, students who have earned between 25 and 101 credits).

The 2022 survey was directed to first-year students and compares results to previous surveys conducted in 2019, 2016, and 2013. The survey involved 44 participating universities and over 15,000 students from across Canada, yielding an overall response rate of 30.9%. Participating students from the University of Regina numbered 488, which represents a 37.7% 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 2022, twelve Group 2 universities participated in the survey. Along with the University of Regina, they included Brock, Carleton, Lakehead, Simon Fraser, Thompson Rivers, Toronto Metropolitan University, Moncton, New Brunswick (Fredericton), Victoria, Waterloo and Wilfred Laurier. 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.

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.