

Financing Education, Debt, and Employment

The 2023 *Middle-Years Student Survey* marks the 29th cooperative study undertaken by the *Canadian University Survey Consortium / Consortium canadien de recherche sur les étudiants universitaires* (CUSC/CCREU) and the 24th study in which the University of Regina has participated. The survey was distributed from January to April 2023 to close to 54,000 students at 29 universities across Canada. In total, 11,585 (21.5% response rate) middle-years university students completed the survey, including 982 (32.7%) from the University of Regina.

This report focuses on the University of Regina's middle-years students who had earned between 25 and 101 credit hours at the time of the survey, comparing them to students nationally and to students attending institutions comparable to the University of Regina (see final page for a listing of universities and definitions of middle-years students). Where possible, this report also compares results with the 2020, 2017, and 2014 CUSC surveys of middle-years students.

This second report in a series of six explores the sources of financing, the employment, and the debt from financing post-secondary education of middle-years students who completed the survey.

Employment

- ▶ University of Regina students (61%) are more likely to be employed than students nationally (58%) and at comparable universities (54%). The highest proportion of UR students who reported being employed was recorded in 2020 (65%).
- ▶ Of those who reported current employment, the typical U of R middle-years students works on average 20.2 hours per week, which is higher than the 18.0 hours per week reported by students nationally and the 17.1 hours per week reported by students at comparable universities.
- ▶ As students advance in their studies, they are more likely to be employed. The proportion of University of Regina middle-years students who reported being employed has fluctuated around 60% over the years, ranging from 59% in 2014 to 65% in 2020, and 61% in 2023.
- ▶ Nationally, the proportion of students who reported being employed slightly increased from 56% in 2020 to 58% in 2023.
- ▶ At comparable universities, the proportion of students who reported being employed remained at the same level (54%) from 2020 to 2023.
- ▶ About 46% at the national level and at comparable universities said their employment has a negative impact on their academic performance, compared to 48% at the University of Regina.

Results are shown in the following table:

Profile of responding middle-years students	National	Comparable universities	University of Regina			
	2023 (n=11,585)	2023 (n=4,800)	2023 (n=982)	2020 (n=1,158)	2017 (n=1,065)	2014 (n=941)
Currently employed						
Yes, both on and off campus	3%	2%	3%	4%	2%	3%
Yes, on campus	6%	7%	4%	6%	4%	5%
Yes, off campus	49%	45%	54%	55%	52%	51%
No, but seeking work	19%	21%	17%	17%	16%	15%
No, not seeking work	23%	25%	22%	18%	26%	26%
Number of hours worked per week *						
10 or less	30%	34%	24%	29%	30%	22%
11 to 20 hours	41%	41%	38%	42%	39%	46%
Over 20 hours	29%	25%	38%	29%	31%	32%
Average	18.0	17.1	20.2	18.3	18.3	19.6
Impact of employment on academic performance *						
Very positive	5%	4%	4%	4%	7%	5%
Somewhat positive	11%	10%	12%	12%	13%	15%
No impact	39%	40%	36%	37%	34%	30%
Somewhat negative	42%	42%	43%	41%	43%	48%
Very negative	4%	4%	5%	4%	4%	3%

* Only students who are currently employed were asked how many hours they worked per week and whether their employment has an impact on their academic performance.

Debt from financing post-secondary education

Students were asked to identify the repayable debt they have incurred from financing their university education, which was defined as money students had acquired to help finance their education that they owe and will have to pay back.

Nationally, 37% of middle-years students who responded to the survey said they have acquired repayable debt to finance their university education, compared to 40% at the University of Regina and 33% at comparable universities.

Debt from financing post-secondary education	National	Comparable universities	University of Regina			
	2023 (n=11,585)	2023 (n=4,800)	2023 (n=982)	2020 (n=1,158)	2017 (n=1,065)	2014 (n=941)
Any debt	37%	33%	40%	41%	44%	45%
Government student loans	32%	29%	33%	32%	31%	30%
Loans from parents/family	9%	9%	9%	11%	15%	16%
Loans from financial institutions	7%	6%	10%	13%	18%	16%
Debt from other sources	4%	3%	5%	8%	8%	9%

Sources of financing

Students were asked to indicate which of 11 different sources they were using to fund their current year of university education. The most common source for University of Regina middle-years students is *parents, family, or spouse* (47%), with many also using earnings from *current employment* (39%) or *summer work* (33%). The proportion who use *government loans or bursaries* (42%) is higher than the proportion who reported having *debt from government student loans* (33%). Results are shown in the following table:

Sources of financing	National	Comparable universities	University of Regina			
	2023 (n=11,585)	2023 (n=4,800)	2023 (n=982)	2020 (n=1,158)	2017 (n=1,065)	2014 (n=941)
Parents, family, or spouse	55%	58%	47%	52%	60%	57%
Earnings from summer work	40%	39%	33%	40%	42%	46%
Earnings from current employment*	41%	37%	39%	44%	45%	47%
Government loan or bursary	38%	34%	42%	42%	36%	32%
University scholarship, financial award, or bursary	38%	38%	24%	26%	32%	27%
Register Education Savings Plan	22%	24%	14%	16%	14%	11%
Loans from financial institution	6%	5%	9%	11%	15%	14%
Co-op, internship, and other practical experiences related to program	6%	8%	5%	3%	4%	5%
Investment income	4%	4%	4%	4%	2%	4%
Other	5%	4%	10%	9%	9%	11%

Note: Students could report more than one source of financing.

*On campus and off campus.

Most students don't just rely on one source to finance their education. In fact, the average number of sources reported is between two and three across Canada, with close to 7 in 10 University of Regina middle-years students relying on two or more sources.

At the University of Regina, middle-years students required \$16,041 on average to finance their current year of education, which is lower than the \$17,518 required by students nationally, and the \$17,756 required by students at comparable universities.

Sources of financing	National	Comparable universities	University of Regina			
	2023 (n=11,585)	2023 (n=4,800)	2023 (n=982)	2020 (n=1,158)	2017 (n=1,065)	2014 (n=941)
One	27%	27%	34%	29%	25%	26%
Two	25%	25%	29%	26%	25%	26%
Three	23%	23%	20%	23%	26%	25%
Four or more	25%	25%	17%	22%	24%	24%
Average number of sources	2.6	2.6	2.3	2.5	2.6	2.5
Average amount required	\$17,518	\$17,756	\$16,041	\$15,481	\$17,526	\$17,113

About CUSC

The 2023 CUSC survey is the 29th cooperative study undertaken by the *Canadian University Survey Consortium / Consortium canadien de recherche sur les étudiants universitaires* (CUSC/CCREU) and the 24th 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 2023 survey was directed to middle-years students and compares results to previous surveys conducted in 2020, 2017, and 2014. The survey involved 29 participating universities and over 11,500 students from across Canada, yielding an overall response rate of 21.5%. Participating students from the University of Regina numbered 982, which represents a 32.7% rate of response.

University comparisons

For comparison purposes, CUSC categorizes the participating universities into two 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.

The University of Regina is included in Group 2. In 2023, nine Group 2 universities participated in the survey. Along with the University of Regina, they included Brock, Carleton, Lakehead, Simon Fraser, Thompson Rivers, New Brunswick (Fredericton), Victoria, 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.