



Universities' contribution to students' knowledge and skills development

Conducted in March 2021, the 2021 *Graduating Student Survey* marks the 27th cooperative study undertaken by the *Canadian University Survey Consortium / Consortium canadien de recherche sur les étudiants universitaires* (CUSC/CCREU) and the 22nd study in which the University of Regina has participated. The 2021 survey involved 32 universities and over 15,000 students from across Canada. Graduating students are those who are deemed eligible to graduate in 2021. The survey was sent to 1,000 University of Regina students. A total of 445 students completed the survey.

This report focuses on the U of R's students, comparing them to students nationally and those attending comparable institutions. Where possible, this report also compares results with the 2018, 2015, and 2012 CUSC surveys of graduating students. Unless stated otherwise, all differences reported are not statistically significant.

This fourth of six reports examines graduating students' assessment of the impact their university had in developing their knowledge base and skills in the context of four thematic areas, including communication skills, analytical and learning skills, work skills and life skills.

Growth and development in communication skills

Table 1 shows students' ratings of their university's contribution to their growth and development in **communication skills**. Overall, results indicate that University of Regina respondents rate their university's contribution similarly to students nationally and at comparable universities.

- ▶ Among the four communication skills rated, the University of Regina contributed **most** to students' growth and development in *writing clearly and correctly* (64%), lower than their counterparts nationally (67%) or at comparable institutions (67%).
- ▶ U of R graduating students reported that their university also contributed to their growth and development in *speaking to small groups* (59%), similarly to their peers nationally (59%) at comparable institutions (58%).
- ▶ University of Regina respondents reported that their university contributed **least** to *second or third language skills* (15%) and only 5% said it contributed **very much** to their growth and development. These ratings were slightly lower than their counterparts nationally (17%) and at comparable institutions (16%).
- ▶ Male students at the University of Regina were more likely than female students to say the university contributed to their development in *third language skills* (52% versus 47%).
- ▶ Among U of R respondents, female students were less likely (18% at both) to report that the university contributed **very much** to their growth and development in either *speaking to small groups* or *speaking to a class or audience* than their male counterparts (24% and 21% respectively). There was no difference in their sense that the university contributed **very much** to their *writing clearly and correctly* (22%).

Table 1: Universities' contribution to students' growth and development in communication skills (much or very much)	National 2021 (n=15,334)	Comparable universities 2021 (n=6,240)	University of Regina		
			2021 (n=445)	2018 (n=372)	2015 (n=461)
Writing clearly and correctly	67%	67%	64%	63%	73%
Speaking to small groups	59%	58%	59%	63%	70%
Speaking to a class or audience	49%	46%	50%	64%	68%
Second or third language skills	17%	16%	15%	13%	18%

Growth and development in analytical and learning skills

Table 2 presents students' ratings of their university's contribution to their **analytical and learning** growth and development, for which U of R students reported ratings slightly lower than students at other universities.

- ▶ University of Regina respondents said the university contributed **most** to their *ability to find and use information* (70%) and to *thinking logically and analytically* (64%), lower than respondents nationally (76% and 71% respectively) and at comparable institutions (74% and 69% respectively).
- ▶ University of Regina respondents reported that their university contributed **least** to their *mathematical skills* (26%), which is also lower than students nationally (33%) and at comparable universities (34%).
- ▶ University of Regina respondents (53%) were less likely than their counterparts nationally (63%) or at comparable institutions (61%) to say their university contributed to *understanding abstract concepts*.
- ▶ Male students at the University of Regina were more likely than female students to say that their university contributed **very much** to their *ability to find and use information* (28% versus 23%). On a different skill, female students were much more likely than their male counterparts to say their university contributed **much** to their development in *listening to others to absorb information accurately* (41% versus 29%).
- ▶ Male students at the U of R were more likely than female students to say that their university contributed **much or very much** to their development in *mathematical skills* (43% versus 20%).

Table 2: Universities' contribution to students' growth and development in analytical and learning skills (much or very much)	National 2021 (n=15,334)	Comparable universities 2021 (n=6,240)	University of Regina		
			2021 (n=445)	2018 (n=372)	2015 (n=461)
Ability to find and use information	76%	74%	70%	67%	77%
Thinking logically and analytically	71%	69%	64%	67%	77%
Understanding abstract concepts	63%	61%	53%	55%	61%
Reading to absorb information accurately	60%	58%	54%	48%	59%
Listening to others to absorb information accurately	59%	58%	53%	52%	60%
Thinking creatively to find ways to achieve an objective	59%	58%	57%	55%	67%
Effective study and learning skills	57%	55%	51%	52%	59%
Mathematical skills	33%	34%	26%	23%	28%

Growth and development in work skills

Students' perceptions of their university's contribution to their **work skills** varied. Table 3 shows that U of R students, like students elsewhere, are most likely to report that their university contributed **most** to their ability of *working independently* and **least** to *entrepreneurial skills*.

- ▶ University of Regina respondents were slightly more likely to say that the university contributed **much or very much** to their *skills and knowledge for employment* (43%) than students nationally (42%) or at comparable institutions (42%). However, they were somewhat less likely (36%) to report contributions to *knowledge of career options* than students nationally (38%) or at comparable institutions (39%).
- ▶ Students nationally (47%) and at comparable institutions (48%) were more likely to report that their universities contributed **much or very much** to their *computer literacy skills* than did respondents from the University of Regina (39%).
- ▶ Female students at the University of Regina were more likely than male students to say their university contributed **much or very much** to their development in *cooperative interaction in groups* (56% versus 46%), although they were as likely to say it contributed **very much** (18%).
- ▶ Male students at the U of R were more likely than female students to say that their university contributed **much or very much** to their development in *computer literacy skills* (45% versus 37%). They were as likely to say their university contributed **as much** in *knowledge of career options* (36%).

Table 3: Universities' contribution to students' growth and development in work skills (much or very much)	National	Comparable universities	University of Regina		
	2021 (n=15,334)	2021 (n=6,240)	2021 (n=445)	2018 (n=372)	2015 (n=461)
Working independently	74%	74%	66%	69%	73%
Cooperative interaction in groups	59%	59%	54%	58%	65%
Skills for planning and completing projects	59%	58%	51%	54%	61%
Skills and knowledge for employment	42%	42%	43%	47%	53%
Computer literacy skills	47%	48%	39%	35%	37%
Knowledge of career options	38%	39%	36%	41%	45%
Entrepreneurial skills	21%	20%	18%	15%	23%

Growth and development in life skills

Table 4 presents students' ratings for university's contribution to their growth and development in **life skills**.

- ▶ At the upper end, over 5 in 10 U of R respondents said the university contributed **much or very much** to several skills, including *ability to interact with people from backgrounds different from your own* (25% very much), *dealing successfully with obstacles to achieve an objective* (16% very much), *ability to evaluate your own strengths and weaknesses* (16% very much) and *time management skills* (20% very much).
- ▶ Female students at the University of Regina were more likely than male students to say their university contributed **much or very much** to their development in *time management skills* (55% versus 50%), *moral and ethical judgement* (51% versus 48%) and *ability to evaluate your own strengths and weaknesses* (54% versus 48%). Both female and male students were as likely to say their university contributed **as much** in their *ability to lead a group to achieve an objective* (47%).

- Female students at the U of R were also more likely than male students to say their university contributed **much or very much** to their development in their *ability to interact with people from backgrounds different from your own* (65% versus 57%), and *understanding Indigenous worldviews, experiences, issues and peoples of Canada* (64% versus 40%).

Table 4: Universities' contribution to students' growth and development in life skills (much or very much)	National	Comparable universities	University of Regina		
	2021 (n=15,334)	2021 (n=6,240)	2021 (n=445)	2018 (n=372)	2015 (n=461)
Ability to interact with people from backgrounds different from your own	63%	63%	63%	63%	66%
Dealing successfully with obstacles to achieve an objective	61%	59%	55%	58%	67%
Persistence with difficult tasks	61%	60%	51%	56%	61%
Time management skills	58%	57%	53%	57%	63%
Ability to evaluate your own strengths and weaknesses	54%	53%	53%	57%	65%
Moral and ethical judgement	50%	49%	50%	58%	60%
Ability to lead a group to achieve an objective	49%	49%	47%	53%	56%
Self-confidence	46%	43%	44%	50%	59%
Understanding Indigenous worldviews, experiences, issues, and peoples of Canada	41%	43%	57%	N/A	N/A
Appreciation of the arts	34%	34%	29%	27%	34%
Spirituality	17%	16%	17%	19%	22%

Areas perceived by students as being the most important for universities' contribution to student development

Students rated their university's contribution to all 30 areas, and they were asked to rank the top three most important areas to which their university should be contributing. Table 5 shows the percentage of students who ranked each area in their top three choices (among those selected by at least 10% of students nationally).

Table 5: Areas perceived by students as being the most important for universities' contribution to student development (much or very much)	National	Comparable universities	University of Regina
	2021 (n=15,334)	2021 (n=6,240)	2021 (n=445)
Thinking logically and analytically	37%	37%	39%
Skills and knowledge for employment	24%	24%	22%
Dealing successfully with obstacles to achieve an objective	23%	23%	20%
Ability to find and use information	19%	19%	16%
Writing clearly and correctly	16%	17%	15%
Thinking creatively to find ways to achieve an objective	16%	15%	10%
Time management skills	14%	15%	17%
Effective study and learning skills	13%	13%	13%
Knowledge of career options	11%	11%	11%
Self-confidence	10%	10%	14%
Speaking to a class or audience	10%	10%	9%
Understanding Indigenous worldviews, experiences, issues, and peoples of Canada	9%	10%	18%
Understanding abstract concepts	9%	9%	10%

Note: Respondents provided top three choices. Therefore, columns will not sum to 100%.

About CUSC

The 2021 CUSC survey is the 27th cooperative study undertaken by the *Canadian University Survey Consortium / Consortium canadien de recherche sur les étudiants universitaires* (CUSC/CCREU) and the 22nd 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 undergraduate 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 2021 survey was directed to graduating students; this report compares results to the previous surveys conducted in 2018, 2015, and 2012. The 2021 survey involved 32 participating universities and over 15,000 students from across Canada, yielding an overall response rate of 29.5%. Participating students from the University of Regina numbered 445, which represents a 44.5% 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 2021, ten Group 2 universities participated in the survey. Along with the University of Regina, they included Brock, Carleton, Lakehead, Ryerson, Simon Fraser, Thompson Rivers, New Brunswick (Fredericton), Victoria, and Wilfred Laurier.

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. Unless stated otherwise, all differences reported are not statistically significant.

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.