



Demographic Profile, Financing Education and Student Debt

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 first of six reports profiles graduating students and reports on their demographic characteristics, as well as education related financing and debt.

Demographic profile

Table 1 presents a demographic profile of responding graduating students for the University of Regina, comparing it to the profile of students nationally and at comparable universities. Results show:

- ▶ The average graduating University of Regina student is about 25 years of age, slightly older than students nationally and at comparable universities (24 years at both). They are also more likely to have children.
- ▶ 74% of University of Regina responding students are female. The population of U of R students invited to participate in the survey was 64% female. Thus, female students are over-represented in the respondents. No adjustment has been made for this.
- ▶ University of Regina students are statistically less likely than those nationally or at comparable universities to self-report as being a member of a visible minority group, but are more likely to self-report as indigenous person (statistically higher than comparable universities).
- ▶ Even though higher than in previous years, the percentage of University of Regina students (46%) who reported living with their parents is lower than that of students nationally and at comparable universities (51% at both). In previous years, U of R students reported living with their parents at a higher level than their peers across Canada.

Table 1: Profile of responding students	National 2021 (n=15,334)	Comparable universities 2021 (n=6,240)	University of Regina			
			2021 (n=445)	2018 (n=372)	2015 (n=461)	2012 (n=430)
Average age	24 years	24 years	25 years	25 years	25 years	25 years
Female	65%	63%	74%	76%	70%	62%
Disability	27%	28%	24%	17%	15%	9%
Visible minority	44%	46%	21%	20%	15%	13%
Indigenous	3%	3%	11%	10%	11%	6%
Live with parents, guardians or relatives	51%	51%	46%	39%	39%	37%
Have children	7%	4%	12%	12%	11%	12%

Academic profile

Table 2 provides an academic profile of graduating students. Results show the following:

- ▶ On average, University of Regina graduating students take about 5 years to complete their program, which is the same as students nationally and at comparable universities.
- ▶ Almost 3 in 10 (27%) of University of Regina students report having *interrupted their studies for one or more terms*, slightly higher than at comparable institutions (23%) and nationally (24%). *Financial reasons* (7%) *employment* (7%), and *illness* (5%) are the most likely reasons University of Regina students reported interrupting their studies.
- ▶ An inability to register in required courses can also prolong program completion. At the U of R, students delayed completion of their program due to required courses not being available (23%) which is slightly higher than their peers at comparable universities (22%) and students nationally (20%). The situation for U of R students shows a noticeable increase from 2018 and 2015.
- ▶ The typical University of Regina graduating student reports an average grade of about a B, similar to students at comparable universities and nationally. The proportion of University of Regina graduating students reporting an average grade at or above A- (20%) is lower than that at comparable institutions (38%) and those nationally (40%). This proportion declined relative to 2018 (24%) and 2015 (26%).
- ▶ Two thirds of University of Regina graduating students (66%) said they have been involved in some type of work and learning program experience, which was notably higher than that reported by students at comparable universities (55%) or nationally (50%). Also of note, among those University of Regina students who did report work and learning program experience, 80% reported grades of B- or higher, compared to 74% reporting a grade of B- or higher among those who did not.

Table 2: Academic profile	National 2021 (n=15,334)	Comparable universities 2021 (n=6,240)	University of Regina			
			2021 (n=445)	2018 (n=372)	2015 (n=461)	2012 (n=430)
Average number of years in program	5 years	5 years	5 years	5 years	5 years	6 years
Interrupted studies for one or more terms	24%	23%	27%	20%	22%	34%
Required courses not available delayed completion	20%	22%	23%	18%	17%	20%
Grade point A- or higher	40%	38%	20%	24%	26%	34%
Work and learning program experience	50%	55%	66%	73%	72%	N/A

Financing of post-secondary education

Nationally and at the University of Regina, students typically report using up to three sources to fund their last year of undergraduate studies. Table 3 lists the top seven sources of funding University of Regina students use to finance their final year of undergraduate studies, comparing it to students nationally and at comparable universities.

- ▶ The most common sources of funding that University of Regina students use for their education are parents, family, or spouse (47%), current employment (42%), and government loan or bursary (40%).
- ▶ University of Regina students (40%) are much less likely than students nationally (45%) and at comparable universities (47%) to report relying on government loans or bursaries to support their final year of studies. They are more likely to rely on loans from financial institutions than students at other universities. Use of government student loans and bursaries has increased since 2012 when 26% of students reported student loan and bursary supports. On the other hand, there has been a slight decrease in reliance on parents and family and on employment income since 2018. Growth to access to RESP's has been minimal since 2015.
- ▶ At the University of Regina, students required approximately \$16,110 on average to finance their last year of education. This amount is lower than nationally (\$17,357) and at comparable institutions (\$17,050), and similar to the previous survey (2018).
- ▶ The amount University of Regina students required to finance their last year of education in 2021, 2018 and 2015 is considerably higher than the amount required in 2012. The figures displayed are not adjusted for inflation, but even when inflation is integrated, the 2012 amount (\$12,509) is still significantly lower.

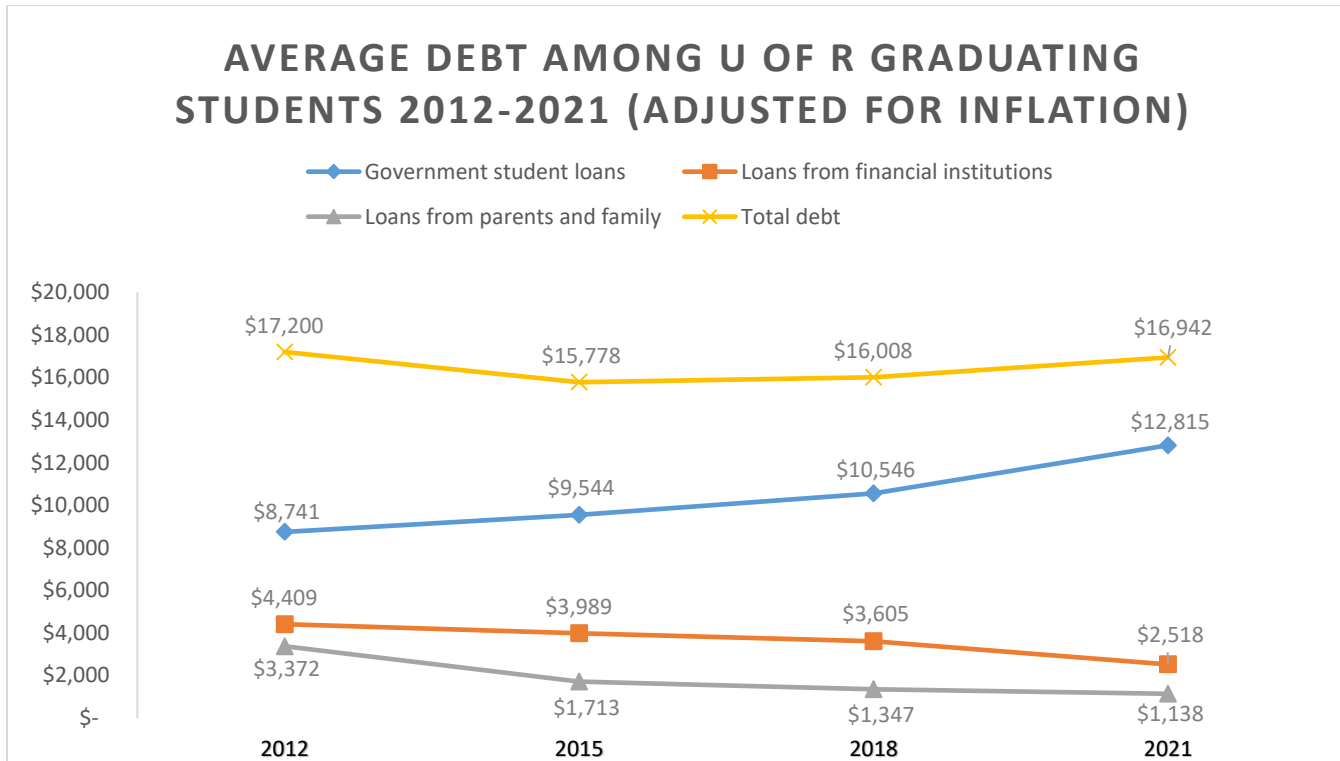
Table 3: Sources of financing education	National	Comparable universities	University of Regina			
	2021 (n=15,334)	2021 (n=6,240)	2021 (n=445)	2018 (n=372)	2015 (n=461)	2012 (n=430)
Parents, family, or spouse	49%	51%	47%	52%	60%	51%
Earnings from current employment	43%	41%	42%	45%	51%	42%
Government loan or bursary	45%	47%	40%	40%	33%	26%
Earnings from summer work	34%	35%	35%	47%	47%	34%
Scholarship, award, or bursary	35%	34%	29%	37%	31%	24%
RESP	16%	17%	16%	15%	14%	5%
Loan from financial institution	6%	6%	11%	17%	16%	18%
Average amount required	\$ 17,357	\$ 17,050	\$16,110	\$ 16,199	\$ 16,673	\$ 10,684

Debt incurred to finance education

As table 4 shows, 44% of University of Regina graduating students report having education-related debt from their undergraduate studies. This percentage has changed little over time. It compares to 46% of graduating students nationally and 47% of those at comparable universities. The average debt among students at the time they graduate (including those reporting no debt) is \$16,942 among University of Regina students. This is considerably higher than the average debt of students nationally (\$13,119) and at comparable institutions (\$12,909).

Table 4: Debt incurred to finance education	National	Comparable universities	University of Regina
	2021 (n=15,334)	2021 (n=6,240)	2021 (n=445)
No debt	54%	53%	56%
Less than \$5,000	3%	3%	2%
\$5,000 to \$9,999	4%	3%	2%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	5%	5%	4%
\$15,000 to \$19,999	5%	5%	2%
\$20,000 or more	30%	30%	34%
Average total debt - all respondents	\$ 13,119	\$ 12,909	\$ 16,942

The figure below shows how the total average debt (adjusted for inflation*) reported by University of Regina students, including those who reported no debt, dropped from 2012 to 2015, and then increased slightly from 2015 to 2021. Repayable debt from government student loans shows a steady increase, growing from \$8,741 in 2012 to \$12,815 in 2021. For 2021, University of Regina graduating students reported a decrease in debt from loans from financial institutions as well as in debt from loans from parents / family.



* <https://www.bankofcanada.ca/rates/related/inflation-calculator/>

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.