

What is CGPSS?

The Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey (CGPSS) is a nation-wide survey of graduate students. The survey is conducted every three years and asks students to evaluate their university experience and satisfaction with their graduate program.

What is the purpose of the survey?

The purpose of this online questionnaire is to gain a better understanding of the university experience of graduate and professional students. Presented in this summary report are results for the U of S from the 2013 survey with some comparison to the 2007 and 2010 surveys, including comparisons to our Canadian peers¹.

Who participated in this survey?

All U of S graduate students were invited to participate (1,958). Of this, 731 students completed the questionnaire, representing a 37% response rate (up from 27% in 2010).

For more information, please visit usask.ca/ipa or contact Institutional Planning and Assessment at: ipa_assessment@usask.ca

Key findings of the Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey (CGPSS) 2013

Profile of graduate students

- The typical U of S graduate student was female (58%), a Canadian citizen (67%) and between 21 to 30 years of age (66%). The majority (84%) lived in *off-campus housing not owned by the university*, 49% were *married* or had a *domestic partner* and 25% reported they had one or more children.
- 34% of U of S graduate students were members of a *visible minority group(s)* (up from 29% in 2010) and 5% self-identified as an *Aboriginal person* (up from 4% in 2010).

Educational status

- The majority of U of S graduate students (89%) were enrolled full-time compared to 85% of our Canadian peers¹. This is down slightly from 2010, where 93% of U of S graduates and 90% of peers were enrolled full-time.
- As was found in 2010, 67% of U of S graduate students reported being enrolled in a master's program and 33% in a doctoral program, similar to our Canadian peers (64% and 36% respectively).
- A total of 39% of U of S graduate students were in their first year of study (compared to 51% in 2010).
- As shown below, over half (59%) of graduate students were *still taking courses* (14% increase from 2010).

Current status	U of S	Canadian peers
Still taking courses	59%	53%
Completed coursework	15%	21%
Passed qualifying exams/papers	9%	9%
Thesis/dissertation proposal accepted	16%	14%
Defended thesis/dissertation/research paper	1%	3%

- 27% of U of S graduate students *expect to graduate by the end of the current academic year*, compared to 36% of our Canadian peer group. This was down from 35% in 2010.

¹ "Canadian peers" refers to the average score of 48 Canadian institutions that participated in the CGPSS in 2013, including the University of Saskatchewan. See Appendix A for a list of participating institutions.

General satisfaction

- If U of S students were to start their graduate career again, 65% reported they would *definitely/probably select the same university* while 80% would *select the same field of study* (similar to our Canadian peers).
- When asked about recommending the U of S to others, 70% reported they would *definitely/probably recommend this university to someone considering their program* (4% lower than 2010), 60% would *recommend this university to someone in another field* and 78% reported they would *select the same faculty advisor if they were to start over again* (8% higher than 2010).
- As shown below, master's students were more likely to indicate that they would *definitely/probably* select the same university and recommend the U of S to others as compared to doctoral students. Similar results were also found for the peer group. When analyzed by demographic, it was found that first year students, females, Aboriginal students and visible minorities were more likely to recommend the U of S to others.

General satisfaction	U of S		Canadian peers	
	Master's	Doctoral	Master's	Doctoral
If you were to start your graduate/professional career again, would you select this same university?	71%	53%	72%	67%
Would you recommend this university to someone considering your program?	75%	59%	76%	72%
Would you recommend this university to someone in another field?	64%	52%	64%	59%

- At least 8 in 10 graduate students rated the quality of the following areas as *excellent/very good/good* at the U of S: *academic experience* (89%), *overall experience* (87%), *graduate/professional program* (88%) and *student life experience* (82%). These results were comparable to 2007 and 2010 and to our Canadian peers.
- In relation to *overall experience*, those with less than \$30,000 of accumulated undergraduate or graduate debt rated their overall experience higher as compared to those with more than \$30,000 of debt. As well, *overall experience* ratings were higher for those in their first year of study.
- When asked to rate the extent to which certain factors were a major obstacle to their academic progress, it was found that *work/financial commitments* continues to be the number one obstacle for U of S graduate students and the peer group (36% and 32% respectively). This is up from 31% in 2010 for U of S students and our Canadian peers. The second item rated as being a major obstacle for all graduate students was *family obligations* (15%).

Satisfaction with program, quality of interactions and coursework

- Fourteen items were included in the questionnaire that measure satisfaction with program, quality of interactions and coursework. Presented below are those items that were rated as *excellent/very good/good* by the highest proportion of students, as well as those that received the lowest rating. As shown, *intellectual quality of the faculty* was rated the

highest (94%) by both U of S students and our peer group, while *advice on the availability of financial support* received the lowest rating (60%). These findings are consistent with what was found in 2007 and 2010.

Program, quality of interactions and coursework	U of S	Canadian peers
Highest rated items		
The intellectual quality of the faculty	94%	95%
The intellectual quality of my fellow students	90%	91%
Quality of instruction in my courses	89%	88%
Overall quality of graduate level teaching by faculty	89%	87%
Lowest rated items		
Advice on the availability of financial support	60%	64%
Opportunities to engage in interdisciplinary work	72%	69%
Opportunities to take coursework outside my own department	73%	68%

Professional skills development

- Out of 12 items pertaining to professional skills development, the items rated by the highest proportion of U of S graduate students as *excellent/very good/good* were: *courses, workshops, or orientation on teaching* (83%), *feedback on your research* (78%), *advice/workshops about research ethics in the use of animals* (76%) and *research ethics in human subject research* (72%). These were the same items at the top of the list for our Canadian peers, and replicated the findings for 2007 and 2010.
- Less than half of U of S graduates rated two of the items as *excellent/very good/good*: *advice/workshops about research positions* (45%) and *advice/workshops about career options outside academia* (47%, up from 38% in 2010). These were the same items rated lowest by the peer group. In 2010, less than half of U of S students (43%) also rated *advice/workshops on career options within academia* as *excellent/very good/good*. However, in 2013, this rating increased to 51%.
- In 2013, six items were also included for those in graduate programs that are mainly course-based. The highest proportion of U of S students (89%) rated *advice/workshops on professional ethics* as *excellent/very good/good*, while *advice/workshops on job preparation and professional practice* received the lowest rating (64%).

Research experience

- From a list of five research experience items, the two items that the greatest proportion of U of S and peer group graduate students rated as *excellent/very good/good* were: *conducting independent research since starting your graduate program* (80%) and *faculty guidance in formulating a research topic* (78%). These items also topped the list for the U of S and peer group in 2007 and 2010, with the U of S having higher ratings on both items in all years as compared to our Canadian peers.

- *Collaboration with faculty in writing a grant proposal* received the lowest rating amongst U of S graduate students (65%), but saw a 5% increase compared to 2010 findings. This item was also rated the lowest by our Canadian peers (62%).

Presentations and publications

- Six items asked about the occurrence of presentations and publications. As shown below, *seminars/colloquia at which students present their research* was reported as occurring most often in graduate students' departments (81%), while *published as sole or first author in a refereed journal* occurred the least (39%). Although five of the six items declined compared to 2007 and 2010 findings, the table below shows that opportunities for presenting and publishing were much higher for doctoral students as compared to master's.

Occurrence of presentations/publications	U of S			Canadian peers		
	All	Master's	Doctoral	All	Master's	Doctoral
Seminars/colloquia for students to present research	81%	75%	94%	76%	68%	90%
Departmental funding to attend national/regional meetings	50%	42%	66%	51%	41%	68%
Attend national scholarly meetings	41%	33%	57%	47%	37%	66%
Deliver papers/present posters at national scholarly meetings	67%	59%	75%	69%	59%	77%
Co-authored in refereed journals with your program faculty	44%	39%	50%	53%	47%	58%
Published as sole or first author in a refereed journal	39%	32%	47%	51%	42%	59%

Advisor and thesis, dissertation, and research paper

- Thirteen items were included to assess mentoring activities of thesis/dissertation advisors. Results revealed a high level of satisfaction with advisors and found that 84% or more U of S graduates *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that their advisor engaged in all 13 activities. As well, all of the items receiving higher ratings as compared to 2007 and 2010 and ratings for all items were slightly higher as compared to our Canadian peers.
- The top mentoring activities, as reported by U of S graduates, included: *advisor served as my advocate when necessary* (95%), *advisor gave me constructive feedback on my work* (94%) and *advisor was knowledgeable about formal degree requirements* (93%). The activities ending off the list included *advisor was very helpful to me in preparing for written qualifying exams* (84%) and *for the oral qualifying exam* (84%).

Financial support

- As was found in 2007 and 2010, the top three sources of financial support for U of S graduate students were: *loans, savings or family assistance* (32%), *graduate teaching assistantship* (29%), and *university funded fellowships* (27%). The

first two sources were also in the top three for our Canadian peers. As well, it was found that 44% of U of S graduate students reported having three or more sources of financial support, as compared to 52% of the peer group.

- Similar to 2010, 61% of U of S graduate students reported they did not have any undergraduate debt in 2013, as compared to 65% of our Canadian peers. Of those graduate students with undergraduate debt, 33% had accumulated \$30,000 or more (down from 35% in 2010), compared to 27% for our Canadian peers (up from 24% in 2010).
- As was found in 2010, a total of 52% of U of S graduate students reported they did not have any graduate debt (compared to 49% for the peer group). Of those students with graduate debt, 15% had accumulated \$30,000 or more (up from 13% in 2010), compared to 20% for our Canadian peers (up from 17% in 2010).

University resources and student life

- Of 18 items on university resources and student life, three items were rated as *excellent/very good/good* by 85% or more of U of S graduate students: *library facilities* (93%), *athletic facilities* (90%) and *health care services* (85%). The first two items were also rated in the top three for the Canadian peer group with the U of S having higher ratings on each item.
- Less than 60% of U of S graduate students rated the following items as *excellent/very good/good*: *campus transportation service* (47%), *housing assistance* (49%), *child care services* (56%) and *financial aid office* (59%). All of these items, with the exception of *childcare services*, saw a decrease in ratings compared to 2007 and 2010.

Social life

- Items pertaining to students' social life revealed a decline in the percentage of graduate students reporting that they *frequently/occasionally* attended organized social activities as compared to findings for 2007 and 2010. As shown below, the largest number of U of S graduate students reported attending *organized social activities within their advisor/research group* (92%), while the fewest students attended *organized university-wide social activities* (56%). Results were similar for our Canadian peers.

Attendance of organized social activities	U of S			Canadian peers		
	2007	2010	2013	2007	2010	2013
Social activities within advisor/research group	97%	96%	92%	95%	96%	90%
Social activities within department	90%	89%	83%	88%	87%	81%
Social activities within residence	85%	79%	76%	78%	76%	67%
University-wide social activities	63%	61%	56%	53%	55%	47%

For more information, visit
www.usask.ca/ipa

Appendix A: List of participating institutions

- University of Alberta
- Brock University
- University of Calgary
- Carleton University
- Concordia University
- Dalhousie University
- École de Technologie Supérieure
- École Nationale d'Administration Publique
- University of Guelph
- Institut national de la recherche scientifique
- Lakehead University
- Laurentian University
- Laval (Université)
- University of Lethbridge
- University of Manitoba
- McGill University
- McMaster University
- Memorial University
- Moncton (Université de)
- Nipissing University
- OCAD University
- Queen's University
- University of Regina
- Royal Roads University
- Ryerson University
- University of Saskatchewan
- Sherbrooke (Université de)
- Simon Fraser University
- Thompson Rivers University
- Trent University
- University of British Columbia
- Université de Montréal
- Université d'Ottawa
- Université du Québec à Chicoutimi
- Université du Québec à Montréal
- Université du Québec à Rimouski
- Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières
- Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue
- Université du Québec en Outaouais
- Université Saint-Paul
- University of Ontario Institute of Technology
- University of Toronto
- University of Victoria
- University of Waterloo
- Western University
- Wilfrid Laurier University
- University of Windsor
- York University