

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 2016 survey with some comparison to the 2013 and 2010 surveys, including comparisons to our Canadian peers¹.

Who participated in this survey?

All U of S graduate students were invited to participate. Of this, 992 students completed the questionnaire, representing a 33% response rate.

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) 2016

Profile of graduate students

- The typical U of S graduate student was female (58%), a Canadian citizen (60%) and between 21 to 30 years of age (61%). The majority (81%) lived in *off-campus housing not owned by the university*, 50% were *married* or had a *domestic partner* and 23% reported they had one or more children.
- 42% of U of S graduate students were members of a *visible minority group(s)* and 6% self-identified as an *Aboriginal person*.

Educational status

- The majority of U of S graduate students (92%) were enrolled full-time compared to 83% of our Canadian peers¹. This percentage has remained stable for the U of S since 2010 while the peer percentage has dropped 7% in that same time.
- As was found in 2010, 63% of U of S graduate students reported being enrolled in a master's program and 37% in a doctoral program, similar to our Canadian peers (65% and 35% respectively).
- Of the respondents, 38% were in their first year of study whereas 19.4% were in their fourth year or above.
- As shown below, (46%) of graduate students were *still taking courses*

Current status	U of S	Canadian peers
Still taking courses	46%	54%
Completed coursework	20%	21%
Passed qualifying exams/papers	10%	9%
Thesis/dissertation proposal accepted	18%	13%
Defended thesis/dissertation/research paper	6%	3%

- Four out of ten U of S graduate students *expect to graduate by the end of the current academic year*.

¹ "Canadian peers" refers to the average score of 50 Canadian institutions (N=53,742) that participated in the CGPSS in 2016, including the University of Saskatchewan. See Appendix A for a list of participating institutions.

- If U of S students were to start their graduate career again, 68% reported they would *definitely/probably select the same university* while 77% would *select the same field of study* (70% and 80% respectively for Canadian peers).
- When asked about recommending the U of S to others, 74% reported they would *definitely/probably recommend this university to someone considering their program* (4% higher than 2013), 64% 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*.
- As represented in the table below, master's students were more likely than doctoral students to indicate that they would *definitely/probably* select the same university and recommend the U of S to others. Similar results were also found for the peer group.

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?	72%	59%	72%	66%
Would you recommend this university to someone considering your program?	78%	66%	76%	70%
Would you recommend this university to someone in another field?	68%	58%	64%	57%

- The majority of 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* (85%) and *student life experience* (80%).
- 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 (35% and 33% respectively). The second item rated as being a major obstacle for all graduate students was *family obligations* (16%).

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 (93%) 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 2010 and 2013.

Program, quality of interactions and coursework	U of S	Canadian peers
Highest rated items		
The intellectual quality of the faculty	93%	94%
Overall quality of graduate level teaching by faculty	89%	88%
The intellectual quality of my fellow students	88%	89%
The relationship between faculty and graduate students	85%	85%
Lowest rated items		
Advice on the availability of financial support	61%	61%
Opportunities to take coursework outside my own department	70%	66%
Opportunities to engage in interdisciplinary work	72%	72%

Professional skills development

- Out of 13 items pertaining to professional skills development in which students participated, 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* (84%), *feedback on your research* (81%), *advice/workshops on standards of academic writing* (76%) and *research ethics in the use of animals* (76%). These same items were also at the top of the list for our Canadian peers.
- Items that received the fewest responses as *excellent/very good/good* were: *advice/workshops on career options outside of academia* (53%); *advice/workshops about research positions* (56%) and *advice/workshops on careers within academia* (58%) *options outside academia*. These were also the lowest rated by the peer group.
- Six items were also included for those in graduate programs that are mainly course-based. The highest proportion of U of S students (87%) rated *advice/workshops on professional ethics* as *excellent/very good/good*, while *advice/workshops on career options* received the lowest rating (66%).

Research experience

- From a list of five research experience items, the two items that the greatest proportion of graduate students rated as *excellent/very good/good* were: *conducting independent research since starting your graduate program* (81%) and *faculty guidance in formulating a research topic* (79%). These items also were highest rated by the peer group.
- Collaboration with faculty in writing a grant proposal* received the lowest rating amongst U of S graduate students (65%). This item was also rated the lowest by our Canadian peers (65%).

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%). The largest discrepancy between the U of S and peer institutions is that U of S students appear to have more opportunities to present at seminars/colloquia.

Occurrence of presentations/publications	U of S			Canadian peers		
	All	Master's	Doctoral	All	Master's	Doctoral
Seminars/colloquia for students to present research	86%	86%	92%	75%	68%	90%
Departmental funding to attend national/regional meetings	57%	57%	68%	50%	41%	66%
Attend national scholarly meetings	45%	44%	57%	46%	36%	64%
Deliver papers/present posters at national scholarly meetings	66%	57%	76%	66%	55%	75%
Co-authored in refereed journals with your program faculty	49%	41%	57%	49%	40%	56%
Published as sole or first author in a refereed journal	42%	33%	52%	46%	35%	56%

Advisor and thesis, dissertation, and research paper

- Fourteen items were included to assess mentoring activities of thesis/dissertation advisors. For 13 of the items, at least 83% of U of S graduates *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that their advisor engaged in the activities. The only item that rated lower was “*my advisor encouraged discussions about current job market and various career prospects*” (69%).
- The top mentoring activities included: *advisor served as my advocate when necessary* (93%), *advisor gave me constructive feedback on my work* (92%) and *advisor was knowledgeable about formal degree requirements* (92%). The activities ending off the list included *advisor was very helpful to me in preparing for written qualifying exams* (83%) and *for the oral qualifying exam* (83%).
- The majority of students meet with their advisor at least once a month either to discuss students’ ongoing research and results (82%) or writing of the dissertation draft (67%).

Financial support

- The top three sources of financial support were: *loans, savings or family assistance* (39%), *graduate teaching assistantship* (32%), and *Graduate research assistantships* (26%). This was similar to our Canadian peers.
- Up 2% since 2013, 63% of U of S graduate students reported they did not have any undergraduate debt, compared to 65% of our Canadian peers. Of those with debt, the average was \$27,256 versus the peer average which was \$24,860.
- Slightly higher than the 52% in 2013, a total of 55% of U of S graduate students reported they did not have any graduate debt (compared to 48% for the peer group). Of those students with graduate debt, 15% the average amount was \$20,754, close to the peer average of \$21,217.

University resources and student life

- Of the 20 items on university resources and student life, three items were rated as *excellent/very good/good* by at least 87% or more of U of S graduate students: *library facilities* (95%), *athletic facilities* (87%) and *information technology services* (85%). The top three for the Canadian peer group were *Athletic facilities* (84%), *disability/access services office* (82%) and *information technology services* (81%).
- Similar to previous years, less than 65% of U of S graduate students rated the following items as *excellent/very good/good*: *housing assistance* (48%), *child care services* (59%) and *financial aid office* (60%) and *career services* (64%).

Social life

- The largest number of U of S students reported frequently or occasionally attending *organized social activities within their advisor/research group* (89%), while the fewest students attended *organized university-wide social activities* (60%). Reported attendance at the U of S, however, was higher than our Canadian peers in each category.

Attendance of organized social activities	U of S			Canadian peers		
	2010	2013	2016	2010	2013	2016
Social activities within advisor/research group	96%	92%	89%	96%	90%	84%
Social activities within department	89%	83%	83%	87%	81%	79%
Social activities within residence	79%	76%	66%	76%	67%	56%
University-wide social activities	61%	56%	60%	55%	47%	47%

Appendix A: List of participating institutions

- Athabasca
- Brock University
- Carleton University
- Concordia University
- Dalhousie University
- École de Technologie Supérieure
- École Nationale d'Administration Publique
- Guelph
- Institut national de la recherche scientifique
- Lakehead University
- Laurentian University
- Laval (Université de)
- McGill University
- McMaster University
- Memorial University
- Moncton (Université de)
- Nipissing University
- OCAD University
- Queen's University
- Royal Roads University
- Ryerson University
- University of Saskatchewan
- Saint Mary's University
- Sherbrooke (Université de)
- Simon Fraser University
- Thompson Rivers University
- Trent University
- University of Alberta
- University of British Columbia
- University of Calgary
- University of Lethbridge
- University of Manitoba
- 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 Regina
- University of Toronto
- University of Victoria
- University of Waterloo
- University of Windsor
- Western University
- Wilfrid Laurier University
- York University