

### 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 USask from the 2019 survey with some comparison to the 2013 and 2016 surveys, including comparisons to our Canadian peers<sup>1</sup>.

### Who participated in this survey?

All USask graduate students were invited to participate. Of this, 843 students completed the questionnaire, representing a 28% response rate.

For more information, please visit [usask.ca/ipa](http://usask.ca/ipa) or contact Institutional Planning and Assessment at: [ipa\\_assessment@usask.ca](mailto:ipa_assessment@usask.ca)

## Key findings of the Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey (CGPSS) 2019

### Profile of graduate students

- The typical USask graduate student was female (60%), a Canadian citizen (59%), between 21 to 35 years of age (77%) and in the first or second year of a graduate program (68%).
- The majority (85%) lived in *off-campus housing not owned by the university*, 54% were *married* or had a *domestic partner* and 24% reported they had one or more children.
- 42% of USask graduate students were members of a *visible minority group(s)* and 8% self-identified as an *Aboriginal person*.

### Educational status

- The majority of USask graduate students (93%) were enrolled full-time compared to 87% of our Canadian peers<sup>1</sup>.
- As was found in 2016, 64% of USask graduate students reported being enrolled in a master's program and 36% in a doctoral program.
- As shown below, most graduate students were still taking courses:

Current status	USask	Canadian peers
Still taking courses	53%	57%
Completed coursework	19%	20%
Passed qualifying exams/papers	11%	9%
Thesis/dissertation proposal accepted	15%	12%
Defended thesis/dissertation/research paper	2%	3%

- Almost four out of ten (37%) USask graduate students *expect to graduate by the end of the current academic year*.
- If USask students were to start their graduate career again, 67% reported they would *definitely/probably select the same university* while 80% would *select the same field of study* (70% and 80% respectively for Canadian peers).

<sup>1</sup> "Canadian peers" refers to the average score of 50 Canadian institutions (N=63,077) that participated in the CGPSS in 2019, including the University of Saskatchewan. See Appendix A for a list of participating institutions.

- When asked about recommending the USask to others, 74% reported they would *definitely/probably recommend this university to someone considering their program*, 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*. These responses are similar to Canadian peers that reported 75%, 63% and 76% respectively.
- 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 USask to others. Similar results were also found for the peer group.

General satisfaction	USask		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%	67%
Would you recommend this university to someone considering your program?	78%	68%	77%	71%
Would you recommend this university to someone in another field?	69%	55%	65%	59%

- The majority of students rated the quality of the following areas as *excellent/very good/good* at the USask: *academic experience* (87%), *overall experience* (86%), *graduate/professional program* (83%) and *student life experience* (76%).
- When asked to rate the extent to which certain factors were a major obstacle to their academic progress, it was found that *financial pressures* continue to be the number one obstacle for USask graduate students (35%) and the peer group (37%). The second item rated as being a major obstacle for all graduate students was *family obligations* (22% for USask and 18% in the peer group).

## 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 (96%) by both USask students and the peer group, while *advice on the availability of financial support* received the lowest rating (64%). The percentage of USask students agreeing with the items presented below has either stayed the same or increased since 2013 with the biggest change being *Opportunities to take coursework outside my own department* which saw a 5% increase among USask students in the last six years.

Program, quality of interactions and coursework	USask	Canadian peers
<b>Highest rated items</b>		
The intellectual quality of the faculty	96%	95%
Overall quality of graduate level teaching by faculty	90%	88%
The intellectual quality of my fellow students	92%	92%
Amount of coursework	87%	86%
<b>Lowest rated items</b>		
Advice on the availability of financial support	64%	62%
Opportunities to take coursework outside my own department	75%	68%
Opportunities to engage in interdisciplinary work	76%	72%

## Professional skills development

- Out of 19 items pertaining to professional skills development in which students participated, the items rated by the highest proportion of USask graduate students as *excellent/very good/good* were: *Advice/workshops/tools on standards for academic writing in your field* (81%); *Feedback on your research* (81%); and *Courses, workshops, or orientation on teaching* (80%).
- Items that received the fewest responses as *excellent/very good/good* were: *advice/workshops on career options outside of academia* (49%); *advice/workshops on careers within academia* (51%) *advice/workshops about research positions* (55%) and *Advice/workshops/tools on job searching* (58%).
- Four items were also included for those in graduate programs that are mainly course-based. The highest proportion of USask students (86%) rated *advice/workshops on professional ethics* as *excellent/very good/good*, while *advice/workshops on career options* received the lowest rating (74%).

## 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* (78%). These items also were highest rated by the peer group.
- Collaboration with faculty in writing a grant proposal* received the lowest rating amongst USask graduate students (61%). This item was also rated the lowest by our Canadian peers (63%).

## 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 discrepancies between USask and peer institutions is that USask students appear to have more opportunities to present at seminars/colloquia while students at other universities have had more instances where they have published as sole, or first, author.

Occurrence of presentations/publications	USask			Canadian peers		
	All	Master's	Doctoral	All	Master's	Doctoral
Seminars/colloquia for students to present research	83%	78%	92%	71%	63%	88%
Departmental funding to attend national/regional meetings	46%	39%	58%	41%	33%	59%
Other institutional funding to attend scholarly/scientific meetings	38%	31%	51%	35%	27%	51%
Deliver papers/present posters at national scholarly meetings	68%	61%	75%	68%	59%	76%
Co-authored in refereed journals with your program faculty	36%	26%	46%	39%	27%	50%
Published as sole or first author in a refereed journal	31%	21%	41%	39%	27%	49%

## Advisor and thesis, dissertation, and research paper

- Fourteen items were included to assess mentoring activities of thesis/dissertation advisors. For 13 of the items, the percentage that selected *strongly agreed* or *agreed* ranged from 85% to 94% with one item rated at 70%.
- The top mentoring activities included: *advisor was very helpful to me in selecting the dissertation committee* (94%); *advisor served as my advocate when necessary* (93%); and *advisor was available for regular meetings* (93%). The activities lowest on the list included: *advisor encouraged discussions about current job market and various career prospects* (70%); and *advisor was very helpful to me in preparing for the oral qualifying exam* (85%).
- In terms of face time, the majority of students meet with their advisor at least once a month either to discuss students' ongoing research and results (85%) or writing of the dissertation draft (68%).

## Financial support

- The top three sources of financial support were: *loans, savings or family assistance* (40%); *graduate teaching assistantship* (27%); and *university-funded bursaries* (23%).
- Up 8% since 2016, 71% of USask graduate students reported they did not have any undergraduate debt, compared to 68% of our Canadian peers. Of those with debt, almost half (48%) reported debts under \$20,000.
- Approximately 8% lower than in 2016, a total of 47% of USask graduate students reported they did not have any graduate debt (compared to 46% for the peer group). Of those students with graduate debt, 65% were in debt for an amount less than \$20,000.

## University resources and student life

- Of the 21 items on university resources and student life that were rated *excellent/very good/good*, the top rated were: *library facilities* (95%); *Indigenous student centre* (92%); and *information technology services* (86%). These resources were also the top three for the Canadian peer group.
- USask graduate students rated the following items as *excellent/very good/good* the least: *transportation services* (63%); *housing assistance* (59%); and *career services* (65%).

## Social life

- The largest number of USask students reported frequently or occasionally attending *organized social activities within their advisor/research group* (95%), while the fewest students attended *organized university-wide social activities* (65%). Reported attendance at the USask, however, was higher than our Canadian peers in three out of the four categories.

Attendance of organized social activities	USask			Canadian peers		
	2013	2016	2019	2013	2016	2019
Social activities within advisor/research group	92%	89%	<b>95%</b>	90%	84%	<b>93%</b>
Social activities within department	83%	83%	<b>86%</b>	81%	79%	<b>85%</b>
Social activities within residence	76%	66%	<b>71%</b>	67%	56%	<b>74%</b>
University-wide social activities	56%	60%	<b>65%</b>	47%	47%	<b>57%</b>

## 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
- Northeastern University -Toronto campus
- OCAD University
- Queen's University
- Royal Roads University
- Ryerson University
- University of Saskatchewan
- 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 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