

# UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO EXECUTIVE REPORT

This report provides an executive summary of University of Waterloo's (Waterloo's) findings in the Canadian University Survey Consortium (CUSC) 2022 Survey of First-Year Students. In total, 667 students from Waterloo participated in the survey.

This report highlights key findings and provides a comparison of Waterloo students, students at all 44 participating universities (n=15,157), and those attending six comparable universities (n=2,889). All percentages reported are based on those students who could provide a rating.

## PROFILE OF FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS

### Demographic profile

*First-year students at Waterloo are more likely to identify as a visible minority than students at other universities.*

The typical first-year student at Waterloo is a Canadian citizen, female, and 18 years of age. Waterloo students tend to be younger than students nationally by about a year and a half.

Seven in 10 Waterloo first-year students self-identify as a member of a visible minority, which is much higher than the proportions nationally or at comparable universities.

Almost 2 in 10 Waterloo first-year students indicate they have a disability, most commonly a mental health (10%) issue. Waterloo students tend to be less likely to self-identify as having a disability.

About 1 in 10 Waterloo first-year students are first-generation students, that is, neither parent took any post-secondary education. This is on par with the proportions reported nationally or at comparable universities.

Table 1: Demographic profile

	All universities (n=15,157)	Comparable universities (n=2,889)	Waterloo (n=667)
Canadian citizen	86%	87%	92%
Female	65%	63%	60%
Visible minority	44%	51%	70%
Disability	31%	29%	19%
First generation	11%	11%	9%
Indigenous	4%	2%	1%
Average age	19.4	18.1	17.8

About 64% of students at Waterloo live on campus, which is much higher than students nationally (30%) or at comparable institutions (36%). Among those not living on campus, 39% of Waterloo students would choose to live on campus if given the opportunity.

### Academic profile

*Waterloo students are much more likely than students nationally to have received a financial award from their institution.*

All first-year students at Waterloo are studying full-time, which is higher than the proportion nationally.

Slightly more than 9 in 10 Waterloo students received a financial award from the university, which is much higher than results nationally.

Half of Waterloo students report a grade of A- or higher, which is higher than results nationally and at comparable universities.

Table 2: Academic profile

	All universities (n=15,157)	Comparable universities (n=2,889)	Waterloo (n=667)
Studying full-time	89%	96%	100%
Received financial award from this university	61%	85%	92%
Reported university grade of A- or higher	37%	39%	52%
Transferred from another institution	6%	2%	1%

### Employment

*Waterloo first-year students are less likely to be employed.*

About 17% of first-year students at Waterloo report being employed, which is much lower than students nationally (39%) and at comparable universities (35%). Among those working, Waterloo students report working 14.9 hours per week, which is similar to the averages nationally (17.0) and at comparable universities (15.2).

## MOTIVATION FOR ATTENDING UNIVERSITY

Regardless of where students are studying, job/career-related reasons are the most common motivators for attending university. At Waterloo, the most important reason is related to employment, as 3 in 10 say they are attending university to *prepare for a specific job or career*.

Table 3: Top five most important reasons to attend

	All universities (n=15,157)	Comparable universities (n=2,889)	Waterloo (n=667)
Prepare for career	29%	30%	30%
Get more fulfilling job	14%	13%	13%
More likely to get job	12%	14%	15%
Make positive difference	11%	11%	10%
Earn more money	7%	7%	12%

## CHOOSING A UNIVERSITY

### Applications

*Waterloo students are more likely than students nationally to have applied to other universities.*

Before coming to Waterloo, almost all students applied to other universities, which is higher than students nationally. Just 3% of Waterloo students applied to college, which is much lower than the proportions reported nationally or at comparable universities.

Regardless, more than 8 in 10 first-year students at Waterloo say the university was their first choice, which is higher than the proportion nationally or at comparable universities.

Table 4: Applications

	All universities (n=15,157)	Comparable universities (n=2,889)	Waterloo (n=667)
Applied to other universities	77%	94%	99%
Applied to college	15%	11%	3%
University is first choice	79%	73%	84%

### Most important reason for selecting their university

Waterloo first-year students put the most emphasis on the *program they want having work experience* when selecting a university, with almost half of Waterloo students selecting it as the most important reason. This is four times higher than the proportion nationally and three times higher than the proportion at comparable universities.

Table 5: Top five most important reasons for selecting

	All universities (n=15,157)	Comparable universities (n=2,889)	Waterloo (n=667)
Has program I want	29%	33%	21%
Close to home	12%	10%	4%
Offers work experience	11%	15%	47%
Reputation	7%	6%	12%
Cost	7%	4%	2%

### Sources of information

When selecting a university, Waterloo students put more importance on three sources of information (10% or greater difference) used to make a decision about which institution to attend compared to students elsewhere, which are a combination of their parents and university rankings. They put less importance on contact with people from the university, such as *admission staff or professors*.

Table 6: Differences in importance of sources of information (somewhat or very important)

	All universities (n=15,157)	Comparable universities (n=2,889)	Waterloo (n=667)
Parents	41%	41%	53%
Contact with admissions staff on campus	31%	29%	20%
Contact with professors	27%	27%	14%
Maclean's university rankings	21%	24%	35%
QS World University Rankings	18%	18%	28%

## UNIVERSITY ORIENTATION

*Waterloo students are less likely to have participated in orientation compared to students elsewhere.*

Overall, 44% of first-year students at Waterloo participated in orientation in the fall of 2022. This is slightly lower than the rates nationally (50%) and at comparable universities (50%).

Waterloo students' satisfaction with aspects of orientation is generally lower than students at comparable universities, with the biggest difference for satisfaction in *helping their personal and social transition to university*.

Table 7: Satisfaction with orientation\* (very or somewhat satisfied)

	All universities (n=15,157)	Comparable universities (n=2,889)	Waterloo (n=667)
Feeling welcome	89%	87%	83%
Providing info on student services	86%	86%	81%
Providing info about campus life	84%	84%	79%
Helping understand academic expectations	81%	82%	73%
Building confidence	78%	78%	66%
Helping transition to university	76%	77%	64%

\* Out of those who attended orientation.

## REGISTRATION

*Waterloo students are more likely to be satisfied with aspects related to registration.*

Generally, Waterloo first-year students report higher levels of satisfaction with *getting into all the courses they wanted* and *the process of registering for courses* than students at other universities.

Table 8: Satisfaction with registration (very or somewhat satisfied)

	All universities (n=15,157)	Comparable universities (n=2,889)	Waterloo (n=667)
Getting into all courses	84%	83%	87%
Process of registering	79%	77%	86%

## TRANSITION TO UNIVERSITY

*Waterloo students tend to report higher levels of success transitioning to university.*

First-year students at Waterloo report more success transitioning to university than students elsewhere (10% or greater difference) for four of 18 areas tested, with the biggest difference for *dealing with new living arrangements*.

Conversely, they report less success in only one area – *using the library* – which is 10 percentage points lower than the proportion reported nationally.

Table 9: Differences in success transitioning (some or very much)

	All universities (n=15,157)	Comparable universities (n=2,889)	Waterloo (n=667)
Finding way around campus	86%	77%	88%
Dealing with living arrangements	72%	70%	84%
Finding suitable housing	66%	64%	74%
Using the library	64%	54%	54%
Making friends	59%	58%	68%

## FACILITIES AND SERVICES

*Waterloo first-year students are more likely to use many on-campus services.*

First-year students at Waterloo are much more likely to use several services (10% or more difference) compared to students at other universities, with the biggest differences for *food services* and *university residences*.

Amongst those services used by at least one quarter of students, Waterloo students are more satisfied (79% satisfied or very satisfied) with *food services* than those at comparable universities (68%) or nationally (69%).

Table 10: Differences in use of services

	All universities (n=15,157)	Comparable universities (n=2,889)	Waterloo (n=667)
Food services	44%	41%	66%
Residences	28%	33%	57%
Athletic facilities	26%	28%	45%
Financial aid	20%	20%	32%
Co-op offices and supports	4%	4%	18%

## MOST IMPORTANT ASPECTS - PROFESSORS

*Waterloo first-year students put the most emphasis on professors communicating well in their teaching.*

Waterloo students put the most emphasis on professors *communicating well in their teaching*, which also ranks first amongst students nationally or at comparable universities.

Table 11: Top five most important aspects of professors

	All universities (n=15,157)	Comparable universities (n=2,889)	Waterloo (n=667)
Communicate well	43%	44%	51%
Well organized	39%	39%	48%
Knowledgeable	33%	33%	32%
Provide useful feedback	32%	32%	32%
Stimulating in their teaching	27%	26%	27%

## EDUCATIONAL GOALS

*Waterloo students are slightly less likely to expect to apply to a professional or graduate school after their program.*

Although it is early in their post-secondary studies, Waterloo students are slightly less likely to say they *plan to apply to a professional program or graduate school* than students elsewhere.

Table 12: Intention to apply after undergrad studies

	All universities (n=15,157)	Comparable universities (n=2,889)	Waterloo (n=667)
Graduate school	30%	28%	26%
Professional program	26%	24%	22%

## PERCEPTIONS OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

Waterloo first-year students are just as likely as students elsewhere to agree or strongly agree with four statements about their university education. They have the highest agreement among the four statements with *most of their courses are interesting*.

Table 13: University education (agree or strongly agree)

	All universities (n=15,157)	Comparable universities (n=2,889)	Waterloo (n=667)
Most courses are interesting	82%	80%	82%
Course load is manageable	77%	74%	74%
In right program	75%	77%	81%
Had info before enrolling	75%	76%	81%

## PERCEPTIONS OF FINANCING EDUCATION

*Waterloo students are more likely to agree that university is worth the cost.*

Waterloo students are more likely than students elsewhere to agree or strongly agree *university is worth the cost*.

Table 14: *Financing* (agree or strongly agree)

	All universities (n=15,157)	Comparable universities (n=2,889)	Waterloo (n=667)
Have finances to complete program	74%	74%	78%
University is worth the cost	62%	59%	69%

## COMMITMENT TO COMPLETION

*Waterloo students are more likely to say they plan to complete their degree at their university.*

More than 9 in 10 Waterloo students *plan to complete their degree at their university*, which is higher than the proportions nationally and at comparable universities. In spite of this, there is a similar proportion amongst Waterloo students and those who *plan to transfer to another university or college next year* relative to students at other universities.

Table 15: *Persistence* (agree or strongly agree)

	All universities (n=15,157)	Comparable universities (n=2,889)	Waterloo (n=667)
Plan to come back next year	86%	89%	93%
Plan to complete my degree here	82%	85%	92%
Plan to transfer to another university next year	10%	8%	8%
Plan to transfer to college next year	8%	6%	9%

## STUDENT SATISFACTION: KEY INDICATORS

*Waterloo students are more likely to recommend their university to others than students at comparable universities.*

Waterloo students tend to provide ratings similar to students nationally and at comparable universities on key indicators.

However, Waterloo students are more likely to recommend their university to others, as it has a Net Promoter Score of +5 compared to a -6 for comparable universities. This difference is largely due to the fact that 27% of Waterloo students are promoters (rating of 9 or 10 out of 10) compared to 21% at comparable universities.

Table 16: *Key indicators*

	All universities (n=15,157)	Comparable universities (n=2,889)	Waterloo (n=667)
Very satisfied with decision to attend this university	22%	20%	24%
Exceeding expectations	16%	15%	16%
Very satisfied with quality of teaching	13%	11%	11%
Very satisfied with concern shown to them as an individual	6%	6%	3%
Net promoter score	+1	-6	+5