

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO EXECUTIVE REPORT

This report provides an executive summary of the University of Waterloo's findings in the Canadian University Survey Consortium (CUSC) 2019 Survey of First-Year Students. In total, 905 students from the University of Waterloo participated in the survey.

This report highlights key findings and provides a comparison of Waterloo students, students at all 46 participating universities (n=18,092), and those attending 11 comparable universities (n=6,712). All percentages reported are based on those students who could provide a rating.

PROFILE OF FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS

Demographic profile

University of Waterloo students are more likely to self-identify as members of a visible minority, be living on campus, and be male than students at other universities.

Although the majority of students from the University of Waterloo are female (54%), this is lower than the proportion nationally (65%) or at comparable universities (61%). The typical first-year student at the University of Waterloo is about 18 years of age, on par with other universities.

University of Waterloo first-year students are more likely to self-identify as a member of a visible minority (73%) than students nationally (44%) and at comparable universities (52%).

About 17% of University of Waterloo students report that they have a disability, which is lower than students nationally (24%) and at comparable universities (22%).

TABLE 1: Demographic profile

	All universities (n=18,092)	Comparable universities (n=6,712)	University of Waterloo (n=905)
Female	65%	61%	54%
Average age	18.2	18.0	17.8
Visible minority	44%	52%	73%
Disability	24%	22%	17%
First generation	11%	12%	9%
Indigenous	4%	2%	1%

About 74% first-year students at the University of Waterloo live on campus, a statistic that is much higher than students nationally (40%) or at comparable institutions (47%). Among those not living on campus, 40% of University of Waterloo students would choose to live on campus if given the opportunity.

Academic profile

University of Waterloo students are more likely to have received a financial award and report higher grades than students elsewhere.

The typical first-year student at the University of Waterloo is studying full-time (87%), which is slightly lower than students nationally (95%) and at comparable universities (92%).

About 87% of University of Waterloo students received a financial award from the university, which is much higher than the proportion nationally (64%) and at comparable universities (73%).

About 40% of University of Waterloo students report an average university grade of A- or higher, which is higher than the proportion nationally (30%) and at comparable universities (30%).

TABLE 2: Academic profile

	All universities (n=18,092)	Comparable universities (n=6,712)	University of Waterloo (n=905)
Studying full-time	95%	92%	87%
Received financial award from this university	64%	73%	87%
Reported university grade of A- or higher	30%	30%	40%

Employment

Compared to students nationally, University of Waterloo students are less likely to be working in their first year.

Just 14% of first-year students at the University of Waterloo report being employed, which is considerably lower than students nationally (36%) and at comparable universities (31%). However, among those working, students at the University of Waterloo and elsewhere report working between 13 to 14 hours per week on average.

MOTIVATION FOR ATTENDING UNIVERSITY

Regardless of where students are studying, job/career-related reasons are the most common motivators for attending university. At the University of Waterloo, the top three most important reasons all relate to employment, including *preparing for a specific job or career* (23%), *getting a more fulfilling job than they would get if they did not attend university* (14%), and *being more likely to get a job with a degree* (13%).

TABLE 3: Top five most important reasons to attend

	All universities (n=18,092)	Comparable universities (n=6,712)	University of Waterloo (n=905)
Prepare for career	30%	27%	23%
Get more fulfilling job	15%	15%	14%
More likely to get job	12%	13%	13%
Make positive difference	11%	11%	12%
Earn more money	7%	8%	9%

CHOOSING A UNIVERSITY

Applications

University of Waterloo students are more likely to have applied to other universities and less likely to have applied to college than students nationally.

At the University of Waterloo, 98% of students applied to other universities, which is much higher than students nationally (75%). In addition, just 4% of Waterloo students applied to college, which is about one-third of the proportion nationally (13%).

Regardless, 84% of first-year students at the University of Waterloo say the university was their first choice, which is higher than the proportion nationally (81%) and at comparable universities (78%).

TABLE 4: Applications

	All universities (n=18,092)	Comparable universities (n=6,712)	University of Waterloo (n=905)
Applied to other universities	75%	87%	98%
Applied to college	13%	12%	4%
University is first choice	81%	78%	84%

Most important reason for selecting their university

University of Waterloo students put more emphasis on work experience programs when selecting their university.

University of Waterloo first-year students put the most emphasis on the university *offering programs that have co-op, practicum, or other work experience* when selecting a university, which ranked second

among students at other universities. They also put more emphasis on *the academic reputation of the university*.

TABLE 5: Top five most important reasons for selecting

	All universities (n=18,092)	Comparable universities (n=6,712)	University of Waterloo (n=905)
Has program I want	29%	29%	22%
Offers work experience	13%	20%	45%
Live close to home	12%	10%	3%
Reputation	9%	9%	15%
Cost	6%	4%	2%

Sources of information

When selecting a university, University of Waterloo students place more emphasis (10% or greater difference) relative to students nationally and at comparable universities on several sources that rank universities.

TABLE 6: Major differences in importance of sources of information (somewhat or very important)

	All universities (n=18,092)	Comparable universities (n=6,712)	University of Waterloo (n=905)
Maclean's Rankings	24%	28%	42%
QS World Rankings	19%	20%	34%
Times Higher Education Rankings	18%	18%	29%
Academic Ranking	17%	19%	30%

UNIVERSITY ORIENTATION

University of Waterloo students are more likely to participate in orientation, but are less likely than other students to be satisfied with their orientation experiences.

Overall, 83% of first-year students at the University of Waterloo participated in orientation in the fall. This is higher than the rate nationally (69%) or at comparable universities (72%).

Although more University of Waterloo students participate in orientation, their satisfaction ratings for six aspects are all slightly lower than those of students nationally or at comparable universities.

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

	All universities	Comparable universities	University of Waterloo
Feeling welcome	91%	91%	88%
Providing info about campus life	86%	85%	80%
Providing info about student services	86%	86%	82%
Helping understand academic expectations	80%	79%	73%
Helping transition to university	79%	80%	76%
Building confidence	78%	78%	73%

* Out of those who attended orientation.

REGISTRATION

Generally, University of Waterloo first-year students report slightly higher satisfaction ratings compared to students at other universities for *getting into all the courses they wanted* and *the process of registering for courses*.

TABLE 8: *Satisfaction with registration* (very or somewhat satisfied)

	All universities (n=18,092)	Comparable universities (n=6,712)	University of Waterloo (n=905)
Getting into all courses	85%	86%	88%
Process of registering	80%	79%	85%

TRANSITION TO UNIVERSITY

Generally, first-year students at the University of Waterloo report success transitioning to university with rates similar to students at other universities. The only area where proportions differ by at least 10 percentage points is ratings for *becoming involved in campus activities*, which Waterloo students report more success with than students at other universities.

TABLE 9: *Biggest differences in success transitioning* (some or very much)

	All universities (n=18,092)	Comparable universities (n=6,712)	University of Waterloo (n=905)
Becoming involved in campus activities	50%	52%	62%

FACILITIES AND SERVICES

First-year students at the University of Waterloo are more likely to use several services (10% or more) than students at other universities, including *food services, residences, and co-op offices and supports*. Conversely, they are less likely to use *library electronic resources and parking*. Despite these differences, satisfaction ratings are similar across all facilities and services used by at least one-third of students.

TABLE 10: *Biggest differences in use of services*

	All universities (n=18,092)	Comparable universities (n=6,712)	University of Waterloo (n=905)
Food services	62%	64%	74%
Library - electronic	52%	51%	40%
Residences	37%	43%	64%
Parking	27%	25%	14%
Co-op offices	7%	11%	23%

MOST IMPORTANT ASPECTS - PROFESSORS

University of Waterloo students put the most emphasis on professors *communicating well in their teaching*, with 47% ranking it their top three. This is higher than students nationally (38%) and at comparable universities (40%).

TABLE 11: *Top five most important aspects of professors*

	All universities (n=18,092)	Comparable universities (n=6,712)	University of Waterloo (n=905)
Communicate well	38%	40%	47%
Seem knowledgeable	33%	33%	31%
Well organized	32%	31%	36%
Fair grading	30%	30%	29%
Treat students as individuals	27%	27%	24%

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

University of Waterloo students are less likely than students elsewhere to expect to apply to a professional program.

Although it is early in their post-secondary studies, 21% of University of Waterloo students plan to apply to a professional program, which is less than students elsewhere. University of Waterloo students are just as likely to say they will apply to graduate school (33%) as students elsewhere.

TABLE 12: *Post-graduation plans*

	All universities (n=18,092)	Comparable universities (n=6,712)	University of Waterloo (n=905)
Apply to professional program	30%	26%	21%
Apply to graduate school	33%	32%	33%

PERCEPTIONS OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

University of Waterloo first-year students provide similar ratings relative to students at other universities for questions about their university education. Waterloo student are most likely to agree that *most of their courses are interesting*, which is on par with results nationally and at comparable universities.

TABLE 13: *University education (agree or strongly agree)*

	All universities (n=18,092)	Comparable universities (n=6,712)	University of Waterloo (n=905)
Most courses are interesting	83%	82%	84%
Course load is manageable	82%	81%	78%
In right program	76%	76%	79%
Had adequate info before enrolling	76%	77%	78%

PERCEPTIONS OF FINANCING EDUCATION

University of Waterloo students are just as likely as students elsewhere to agree or strongly agree that they *have the financial resources to complete their program* and that the *university degree is worth the cost*.

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

	All universities (n=18,092)	Comparable universities (n=6,712)	University of Waterloo (n=905)
Have finances to complete program	71%	70%	69%
University is worth the cost	68%	66%	69%

COMMITMENT TO COMPLETION

University of Waterloo students are slightly more likely than students elsewhere to say they plan to complete their degree at their university.

Compared to students nationally, University of Waterloo students are slightly more likely to say they *plan to come back next year* (94% versus 88%) or *plan to complete their degree at their university* (92% versus 83%).

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

	All universities (n=18,092)	Comparable universities (n=6,712)	University of Waterloo (n=905)
Plan to come back next year	88%	90%	94%
Plan to complete my degree here	83%	85%	92%

STUDENT SATISFACTION: KEY INDICATORS

University of Waterloo students hold similar positive perceptions of their university relative to students at other universities.

University of Waterloo students appear to hold similar views of their experiences as students nationally. For instance, 25% of University of Waterloo students are very satisfied with *their decision to attend the university*, which is on par with results nationally (26%) and at comparable universities (25%).

TABLE 16: *Key indicators*

	All universities (n=18,092)	Comparable universities (n=6,712)	University of Waterloo (n=905)
Very satisfied with decision to attend this university	26%	25%	25%
Exceeding expectations	21%	21%	19%
Very satisfied with quality of teaching	16%	14%	17%
Net promoter score	14%	11%	13%
Very satisfied with concern shown to them as an individual	8%	7%	7%