

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO EXECUTIVE REPORT

This report provides an executive summary of University of Waterloo findings in the Canadian University Survey Consortium (CUSC) 2015 Graduating Student Survey of undergraduate students. A sample of 314 students from the University of Waterloo participated in the survey.

This report highlights key findings and provides a comparison of University of Waterloo students against students at all 36 participating universities (n = 18,144) and those attending 12 comparable universities (n = 7,916). All percentages reported on are based on those students who could provide a rating.

PROFILE OF GRADUATING STUDENTS

Demographic Profile

University of Waterloo students are more likely to self-identify as being a member of a visible minority than students nationally and at comparable universities.

The percentage of male (49%) and female (51%) students at the University of Waterloo is split fairly evenly, which differs from students nationally (60%) and at comparable universities (60%) where it tends to skew toward slightly more female students. The typical University of Waterloo graduating student is a 23-year old (22.8 years), single (72%), and a Canadian citizen (89%). The age profile is slightly younger than the profile of students at comparable (23.4) and all other universities (23.6).

Almost half (45%) of University of Waterloo students self-identify as a member of a visible minority group, which is higher than that reported by students nationally (32%) and at comparable institutions (36%). However, less than 1% of University of Waterloo students self-identify as Aboriginal compared to 4% nationally and 3% at comparable universities.

TABLE 1: Demographic profile

	All Universities (n = 18,144)	Comparable Universities (n = 7,916)	University of Waterloo (n=314)
Female	60%	60%	51%
Average age	23.6 years	23.4 years	22.8 years
Visible minority	32%	36%	45%
Aboriginal	4%	3%	<1%
Disability	17%	18%	19%

Regarding living arrangements, a higher proportion of students at the University of Waterloo (77%) live in rented housing off-campus compared to students nationally (52%) and students at comparable universities (56%). This result is somewhat surprising, given that University of Waterloo students tend to be slightly younger than students at other universities.

Academic Profile

Compared to students nationally, University of Waterloo students are more likely to be studying full-time, spend more hours per week on work outside of class, and are also more likely to receive a cumulative grade of A- or higher.

The typical graduating student at University of Waterloo is studying full-time (94%), has not interrupted their studies (84%), did not experience delays in completing their program (73%), and did not transfer from another institution (93%). University of Waterloo students are less likely than students at other universities to have interrupted their studies or transferred from another institution.

Almost half of University of Waterloo students (46%) have a grade of A- or higher, which is higher compared to students nationally (34%) and at comparable universities (32%).

TABLE 2: Academic profile

	All Universities (n = 18,144)	Comparable Universities (n = 7,916)	University of Waterloo (n=314)
Studying full-time	82%	81%	94%
Interrupted studies	22%	21%	16%
Transferred from another institution	19%	19%	7%
Delays in completing program	36%	35%	27%
Grade of A- or higher	34%	32%	46%

A higher percentage of University of Waterloo students said they have been involved in some type of work and learning program experience (76%) compared to students nationally (55%) and at comparable universities (59%).

STUDY PATTERNS

Although University of Waterloo students spend a similar number of hours in class (15.6 hours) compared to students nationally (14.5 hours) and at comparable universities (14.4 hours), they spend considerably more time on academics outside of class (23.3 hours compared to 17.9 hours nationally and 18.4 at comparable universities). This difference might explain the higher proportion of students with a grade of A- or higher.

TABLE 3: Study patterns

Average weekly hours...	All Universities (n = 18,144)	Comparable Universities (n = 7,916)	University of Waterloo (n=314)
Spent in class	14.5 hours	14.4 hours	15.6 hours
Spent on work outside of class	17.9 hours	18.4 hours	23.3 hours
Total	32.4 hours	32.8 hours	38.9 hours

STUDENT STANDING: EMPLOYMENT, DEBT, AND FINANCING

Current employment

University of Waterloo students are less likely to be employed and work fewer hours than students elsewhere.

At University of Waterloo, only about one-third of students are employed (35%). This is much lower than students nationally (59%) and at comparable universities (55%). Most University of Waterloo students are not working by choice, with about half (51%) indicating that they are not seeking work.

The University of Waterloo students that are working work much fewer hours than students at other universities. University of Waterloo students report working about 15 hours per week compared to about 18 hours for students at other institutions.

TABLE 4: Current employment

	All Universities (n = 18,144)	Comparable Universities (n = 7,916)	University of Waterloo (n=314)
Currently employed	59%	55%	35%
Average hours worked	18.0 hours	18.1 hours	14.7 hours

Student debt

University of Waterloo students report slightly lower debt loads than students at other universities.

About half (53%) of University of Waterloo students report having some type of debt related to their education, which is on par with students nationally (50%) and at comparable institutions (53%). However, the average debt per student among those with debt is lower among University of Waterloo students (\$23,555) than those nationally (\$26,819) or at comparable universities (\$27,484).

EDUCATIONAL-RELATED DEBT

All Universities (n=18,144)	Comparable Universities (n=7,916)	University of Waterloo (n=314)
\$13,331 (all students) \$26,819 (with debt)	\$14,663 (all students) \$27,484 (with debt)	\$12,453 (all students) \$23,555 (with debt)



Financing current year of studies

University of Waterloo students require more to finance a year of education than students at other universities. Many of these students finance their education through the co-op program.

On average, University of Waterloo students require \$17,487 to finance their current year of studies, which is more than at comparable universities (\$16,232) and nationally (\$15,798). This result is interesting given that University of Waterloo students carry slightly more debt than other students and are also less likely to be working.

TABLE 5: Financing current year

	All Universities (n = 18,144)	Comparable Universities (n = 7,916)	University of Waterloo (n=314)
Financing for current year	\$15,798	\$16,232	\$17,487

Among several sources tested, University of Waterloo students rely most heavily on financing their education through the *co-op program* (56%), *parents or family* (55%), *government loan or bursary* (46%), or *scholarships* (42%). Compared to students nationally and at comparable universities, University of Waterloo students are much more likely to rely on the co-op program. This finding helps to explain why many University of Waterloo students are not currently employed and why their debt levels may be lower than other students, although they require more to pay for their current year.

TABLE 6: Most common types of financing

	All Universities (n = 18,144)	Comparable Universities (n = 7,916)	University of Waterloo (n=314)
Parents, family, or spouse	60%	58%	55%
Earnings from current employment	49%	47%	33%
Earnings from summer work	44%	43%	22%
Co-op, internship, other practical experiences	11%	15%	56%

STUDENTS' SATISFACTION WITH FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Students were asked to rate their satisfaction with 26 different facilities and services that they used. Among services used by at least half of University of Waterloo graduating students, at least 80% report being satisfied except for *food services* (73%).

Among those services used by at least half of University of Waterloo students, University of Waterloo students report similar satisfaction as students nationally and students at comparable universities.

EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Overall, 82% of University of Waterloo students agree that *they are satisfied with the quality of teaching they received*, which is similar to the proportion nationally (86%) and at comparable universities (85%).

Among 15 aspects of interactions with faculty, University of Waterloo students generally hold similar perceptions of faculty, with Waterloo students being

most likely to agree that faculty are *knowledgeable in their field* and least likely to agree that faculty *provide prompt feedback on academic work*.

University of Waterloo students (80%) are more likely than students nationally (71%) and at comparable universities (70%) to have been able to *evaluate teaching in all their courses*.

STUDENT SATISFACTION: KEY OUTCOME MEASURES

Students are, in general, very positive about their educational experiences at the University of Waterloo, but are a bit less positive about their personal experiences compared to students nationally and at comparable schools. However, these differences are usually quite small, typically no more than a few percentage points difference.

Most telling about University of Waterloo students' positive experiences is that 87% are *satisfied with their decision to attend this university* and 85% *would recommend the University of Waterloo to others*.

TABLE 7: University outcomes

	All Universities (n = 18,144)	Comparable Universities (n = 7,916)	University of Waterloo (n=314)
Satisfied with decision to attend this university	89%	88%	87%
Would recommend	88%	87%	85%
Satisfied with overall quality of education	86%	85%	82%
Agree that they feel they belong	78%	78%	72%
Agree that receive good value for money	68%	63%	67%
Satisfied with concern shown for student as individual	58%	58%	49%
University exceeded expectations	23%	24%	27%

STUDENT GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT WHILE AT UNIVERSITY

These sections highlight areas where the University of Waterloo is performing better or worse by $\pm 10\%$ compared to students at other universities for four areas of skill development.

Communication skills

Among four **communication skills** tested, University of Waterloo students rated two lower than students nationally and at comparable universities (shown in Table 8).

TABLE 8: Key differences in communication skills (much or very much)

	All Universities (n = 18,144)	Comparable Universities (n = 7,916)	University of Waterloo (n=314)
Writing clearly and correctly	63%	64%	52%
Speaking to a class or audience	56%	56%	44%

Analytical and learning skills

Among eight **analytical and learning skills**, University of Waterloo students rated the contribution of their university significantly higher than students nationally and at comparable universities on only one aspect (*mathematical skills*) as shown in Table 9.

TABLE 9: Key differences in analytical and learning skills (much or very much)

	All Universities (n = 18,144)	Comparable Universities (n = 7,916)	University of Waterloo (n=314)
Mathematical skills	32%	33%	51%

Work skills

Of the seven skills classified as **work skills**, University of Waterloo students rated *computer literacy skills* and *knowledge of career options* higher than students at other institutions.

TABLE 10: Key differences in working skills (much or very much)

	All Universities (n = 18,144)	Comparable Universities (n = 7,916)	University of Waterloo (n=314)
Skills and knowledge for employment	43%	45%	55%
Computer literacy skills	42%	45%	54%

Life skills

Of the ten areas classified as **life skills**, the University of Waterloo students rated *moral and ethical judgement* (38%) more than 10 percentage points lower than students nationally (51%) and at comparable universities (51%).

TABLE 11: Key differences in life skills (much or very much)

	All Universities (n = 18,144)	Comparable Universities (n = 7,916)	University of Waterloo (n=314)
Moral and ethical judgment	51%	51%	38%

Most important areas for contribution

Among all areas, students were asked to rank the top three areas in terms of which are most important for universities to contribute towards. Both University of Waterloo students and students at other universities say it is most important for universities to contribute towards *thinking logically and analytically*. Generally, results for this question were similar among University of Waterloo students and students across Canada.

TABLE 12: Most important areas for contribution

	All Universities (n = 18,144)	Comparable Universities (n = 7,916)	University of Waterloo (n=314)
Thinking logically and analytically	46%	46%	50%
Skills and knowledge for employment	21%	21%	21%
Ability to find and use information	15%	15%	21%
Self-confidence	19%	19%	19%
Thinking creatively to find ways to achieve an objective	16%	16%	17%

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

The majority of University of Waterloo students plan on pursuing further education after graduating.

About two-thirds (68%) of University of Waterloo students are planning on pursuing further education within the next five years, including 14% who plan on taking further graduate-level education at the

University of Waterloo. This is on par with students nationally (70%) and at comparable universities (68%).

About 35% of University of Waterloo students say their debt levels either discourage or prevent them from taking further education, which is on par with students nationally (32%) and at comparable universities (37%).

POST-GRADUATION EMPLOYMENT

University of Waterloo students are very positive about their expected employment following graduation.

Overall, 30% of University of Waterloo students say they have arranged for employment after graduation, which is on par with universities nationally (31%) and at comparable universities (31%).

Looking at Table 13, a higher percentage of students at the University of Waterloo have arranged full-time (86%) and permanent (71%) employment positions for after they graduate, compared to students at other institutions. Of interest, a higher proportion of University of Waterloo (23%) students have arranged for employment outside of Canada than students nationally (5%) or at comparable universities (7%).

University of Waterloo students (92%) with employment arranged are more likely to be satisfied with their employment than students nationally (82%) or at comparable universities (83%). In part, this may be because University of Waterloo students expect to earn a higher salary of almost \$4,700 per month compared to about \$3,000 for students at other universities.

TABLE 13: Post-graduation employment (those with employment arranged)

	All Universities	Comparable Universities	University of Waterloo
Satisfied with employment	82%	83%	92%
Full-time	67%	70%	86%
Job in Canada	95%	93%	77%
Moderately or strongly related to skills	64%	63%	72%
Permanent	58%	57%	71%
New job	30%	29%	26%
Self-employed	5%	5%	6%
Expected median earnings	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$4,708