

**FIRST-YEAR UNIVERSITY STUDENT SURVEY
2007**

Master Report

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Prepared for:

Canadian University Survey Consortium

PROTOCOL FOR DATA USE

CANADIAN UNDERGRADUATE SURVEY CONSORTIUM (“CUSC”)

Members of the consortium are bound by the following protocol for the control of survey data.

It was agreed by the participants that data are owned collectively and will be distributed only by collective agreement.

1. The purpose of the survey is to produce data that will allow participating institutions to assess their programs and services. Comparisons with other institutions are made to assist in these assessments. Ranking of institutions is not, in itself, a purpose of the survey.
2. The survey data are owned collectively by the participating institutions.
3. The report that has been prepared may be reproduced and distributed freely on the campuses of participating institutions. However, use of the institutional code key is restricted to members of the steering committee and senior administration at the various campuses on a confidential basis.
4. Institutions will receive a data package that includes data for all participating institutions along with the institutional identifiers so that appropriate institutional comparisons can be made by each institution. This must be done in a way that protects the confidentiality of the institutional identities and respects the absolute right of each institution to decide what portions of its data should be disclosed.
5. Rankings may not be used for institutional promotion, recruiting, or other public dissemination. However, an institution’s mean results, the aggregate mean results, and mean results for the comparable group of institutions in the survey report may be used, although the names of other institutions may not be used.
6. Access to the aggregate data for research purposes may be granted to interested persons provided that the intended use is a legitimate, non-commercial one, and the researcher is qualified and agrees to acknowledge the ownership of the data by participating universities and provide the consortium with a copy of any report or publication that is produced. Decisions on such requests will be made by a sub-committee consisting of Ken Kush, Michael O’Sullivan, Dan Pletzer, and Lynn Smith with consultation with members of the full CUSC committee (all participating institutions) in the case of requests that seem problematic.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROTOCOL FOR DATA USE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	i
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 How this research was conducted.....	1
1.2 University comparisons	5
1.3 Discipline or area of study	6
1.4 Comparison with previous first-year student surveys.....	7
1.5 Statistically significant differences.....	8
1.6 Data restrictions	8
1.7 Non-response	8
2.0 Profile of first-year students.....	9
2.1 Personal profile	10
2.2 Disciplines.....	18
3.0 Financing education and current employment.....	27
3.1 Sources of financing education.....	28
3.2 Credit cards	32
3.3 Current employment	34
4.0 Reasons motivating attendance and choice of university	37
4.1 Decision to attend university	38
4.2 Reasons for choosing their university.....	43
4.3 Applying to university	48
4.4 Contact before choosing a university.....	50
4.5 Application process.....	55
5.0 Experience prior to classes.....	56
5.1 Help in choice of program	57
5.2 Course registration.....	58
5.3 University orientation	60
6.0 University experience	62
6.1 Adjusting to university.....	63
6.2 Satisfaction with various aspects of university experience.....	69
6.3 Personal safety	77
6.4 Satisfaction with faculty	78
6.5 Satisfaction with choice of university.....	79
7.0 Conclusion	81

APPENDICES

- APPENDIX A FINAL QUESTIONNAIRE
- APPENDIX B METHODOLOGY GUIDELINES FOR UNIVERSITIES
PARTICIPATING IN THE PAPER-BASED SURVEY
- APPENDIX C METHODOLOGY GUIDELINES FOR UNIVERSITIES
PARTICIPATING IN THE ON-LINE SURVEY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This is the thirteenth cooperative study undertaken by the Canadian Undergraduate Survey Consortium (CUSC). Since 1996, the survey has run in a three-year cycle, with different student populations targeted each year: all undergraduates, first-year undergraduate students, or graduating students. This year's study presents the results for students in their first year of university in 2007. The last two surveys of first-year students were conducted in 2004 and 2001.

The 2007 survey involved 34 universities. Traditionally, this has been a paper-based survey, which universities have mailed to students. This was the second year that universities could choose to administer the survey using either a paper-based or an on-line version of the questionnaire. Universities participating in the paper-based survey distributed packages consisting of a cover letter, questionnaire, and a postage-paid, self-addressed return envelope to a sample of about 1,000 first-year students. Those participating in the web-based survey provided PRA Inc. with e-mail addresses for a random sample of up to 1,000 first-year students, an electronic logo for their university, and an electronic signature of a university official. PRA managed the on-line survey, which involved liaising with universities and the company that hosted the on-line survey.

Overall, the response rate was 44% and produced a sample of approximately 12,600 students.

Profile of first-year students

According to our survey, the typical first-year undergraduate student is an 18-year-old female. Indeed, female students outnumber male students by almost two to one. This is similar to past CUSC surveys of first-year students. Although they are more common in our sample, for the most part, the experience and attitudes of female students appears to be similar to those of male students. The average age of first-year students is just over 18 years, and, in fact, 73% of students are 18 years of age or younger. Overall, 18% of students report being part of a visible minority, 3% of students identify themselves as Aboriginal people, and 5% of students self-report as having disabilities.

In their first year of university, about half of students (46%) continue to live with their parents (or some other relative or guardian). As many (47%) are living independently in either on-campus housing (33%) or rented accommodations (14%).

About 2 students in 3 report that at least one of their parents has completed some form of post-secondary education, including 37% of students who report that both parents have completed post-secondary training.

Typically, students graduated from high school or CEGEP in 2006 (or later) and had a full course load both at registration and at the time of the survey. Most of these first-year students report majoring in Arts and Humanities (26%), Social Science (15%), Business (13%), or Biological Science (13%) programs.

If their marks are any indication, many students are finding university more academically challenging than high school or CEGEP. While more than 2 students in 3 report an average grade of A- or higher in high school or CEGEP, less than 1 in 3 expects such an average at the end of their first year of university. Typically, students expect an average grade of slightly lower than a B+ at the end of first-year university.

Financing education

Most students appear to rely on multiple sources to help finance their university education. On average, students report using 3 of 11 different sources. The most common sources of funding are personal. Family members, mainly parents (69%), are the single most common source of financing, but other personal financing sources, such as savings (53%) and earnings from summer work (50%), are also frequently mentioned. Students also rely on other sources, including university scholarships and bursaries (51%) and government loans or bursaries (31%).

Overall, the average amount received from all sources to help students finance their education is about \$10,000. Among students who use a particular source, the largest average amount is in the form of loans, either from financial institutions (about \$6,600) or from government loans or bursaries (almost \$5,700). Of those with a government loan or bursary, 19% report difficulty fulfilling the course load necessary to keep that loan or bursary.

Parents and other family members are also large contributors to students' education. On average, students receive about \$4,900 from parents and other relatives. Students with a university scholarship, award, or bursary receive, on average, about \$2,600. However, about 3 of these students in 10 say they would have been unable to attend university without such financial assistance.

Work income from a current job also contributes to financing their education. About 4 students in 10 report being currently employed, and another 1 student in 5 is seeking work. Among those who are currently employed, most (81%) work 20 hours a week or less. The average employed student works about 15 hours a week.

Among employed students, about 6 in 10 report that their job (excluding jobs related to co-op requirements) has at least some negative impact on their academic performance. This includes many who say that the negative impact is moderate (16%) or significant/substantial (7%). Not surprisingly, the more hours per week they work, the more likely students are to report that their employment is having at least some negative impact on their academic performance.

While it is not necessarily a major worry for most students, financing their education is of at least some concern to most. Overall, 2 students in 3 are at least somewhat concerned about having sufficient funding to complete their university education, including 1 in 5 who is very concerned.

Given that the average age of first-year students is 18 years, it may be surprising that just over 4 in 10 first-year students have at least one credit card. Among these students, while most pay off their credit card(s) monthly, almost 1 in 10 reports carrying a balance on their cards at the time of the survey.

Motivation for attending and choice of university

We asked students to rate the importance of 10 reasons for deciding to attend university. Almost all students report that at least one of these reasons was very important in their decision to attend university. Indeed, multiple reasons often play a role. For example, over half of the students rate five or more reasons as very important. Among these 10 reasons, future employment appears to be the main motivation for students to attend university. About two-thirds of students say that either *preparing for specific job or career* (42%) or *getting a good job* (25%) is the single most important reason for going to university.

We asked students to rate the importance of 24 different reasons for deciding to attend their current university. While many reasons are very important to students, when asked to choose one reason as the most important, three key reasons emerge: *specific career-related programs* (21%); *wanted to live close to home* (20%); and *quality of academic programs* (16%).

When selecting a university, about 6 students in 10 report applying to more than one. Among students who applied to more than one university, the average number was about three. Not only did students often apply to more than one university, some (12%) also applied to a college. However, it appears that applying to many universities may simply have been a safety net for students, as the vast majority of first-year students (83%) report that they are attending their first choice of university.

About 1 student in 4 says they received direct contact from their university before they graduated from high school or CEGEP. Students are divided about the importance of different contacts with their university. For about 1 in 4 first-year students, *campus visits and open houses* (25%) were the most important, while for about 1 in 5, the most important contact was the *university's web site* (18%) or *viewbooks, brochures or pamphlets* (17%).

Almost all students (93%) report being at least somewhat satisfied with their university's handling of their application for admission, including 61% who are very satisfied.

Experience prior to class

About half of students report receiving assistance from their university before or while first registering. Among those who received such assistance, 95% report being at least somewhat satisfied, including 50% who are very satisfied.

Students often used multiple methods to register. While almost all students registered on-line (91%), many also registered in person (23%), by mail (17%) or by phone (12%). Regardless of the method, at least 8 students in 10 were satisfied the registration process they experienced. Students are slightly more likely to be very satisfied with in person or on-line registration. Students also report that they were able to register mostly (35%) or completely (54%) in the courses they wanted.

About 2 first-year students in 3 participated in a university orientation program. The vast majority of students who attended orientations report being satisfied with various aspects of the session. Students are most satisfied with their orientation in terms of *making them feel welcome*

to the university (94%) and providing information about campus life (86%). Fewer were satisfied with their orientation in terms of *helping understand university's academic expectation* (80%) or *building confidence* (77%).

University experience

We asked students to rate their success with a wide variety of personal, academic, and practical adjustments to university. Of the seven academic adjustments rated by students, about 9 students in 10 (of those who rated these aspects) report having at least some success with *understanding content and information presented in courses* (including 44% who have had very much success), *meeting academic demands* (38% with very much success), *choosing a program of studies that meet their objectives* (51% with very much success), and *performing adequately in written assignments* (36% with very much success). The majority of students report having the least success in terms of *getting academic advice*, with only 23% reporting very much success.

Most students also report having at least some success in adjusting to personal aspects of university life. Among those who rate their success, at least 8 in 10 report having some or much success in *feeling as if they belong at university* (including 47% who report very much success); *making new friends* (46% reporting very much success); and *organizing my time to complete academic work* (28% reporting very much success). Less than half report having success in *becoming involved in campus activities* (46%, with only 13% reporting very much success).

Most students report having at least some success with practical adjustments, although students had the least success *finding useful information and resources on careers and occupations*. While almost 67% report having at least some success, just 19% say that they have had very much success in this regard.

In terms of facilities and services, the vast majority of students are satisfied. Of the services and facilities tested, students are most satisfied with *library* (94% satisfied) and *computer facilities* (93%), and are at least satisfied with *parking facilities* (61% satisfied) and *food services* (71%).

Most students also appear to have positive experiences with university faculty. About 8 in 10 students or more agree that: *professors are reasonably accessible outside class to help students* (including 26% who strongly agree); *generally [they] are satisfied with the quality of teaching [they] have received* (22% strongly agree); *most of [their] professors encourage students to participate in class discussion* (21% strongly agree); and *professors treat students as individuals, not just numbers* (21% strongly agree).

While many students feel the university environment is impersonal, they are generally satisfied. More than 9 students in 10 agree that they are satisfied with their decision to attend their university, including about 4 students in 10 strongly agree. For most, their experience at their university has *met* (67%) or *exceeded* (17%) their expectations.

Conclusion

Generally, students at Canadian universities report having a positive experience in their first year of university. As such, these results reflect much of what we found in 2004 and 2001, the last two times such surveys were conducted with first-year university students. While there are areas that might be improved, most students report that their universities fulfilled their expectations and that they are satisfied with their choice of university.

1.0 Introduction

This is the thirteenth cooperative study undertaken by the Canadian University Survey Consortium (CUSC). The surveys target three undergraduate sub-samples: first-year, graduating, and all students. This year's study surveyed students who were in their first-year of undergraduate studies in 2006-2007.

Table 1 shows the types of students that CUSC has surveyed each year.

Year	Sample	Number of participating universities
1994	All undergraduates	8
1996	All undergraduates	10
1997	Graduating students	9
1998	First-year students	19
1999	All undergraduates	23
2000	Graduating students	22
2001	First-year students	26
2002	All undergraduates	30
2003	Graduating students	26
2004	First-year students	27
2005	All undergraduates	28
2006	Graduating students	25
2007	First-year students	34

1.1 How this research was conducted

As shown in the table above, the CUSC survey runs in a three-year cycle, each year targeting particular types of students: first-year students, all undergraduates, or graduating students. The questionnaire used for each of these populations is different.

Each year, PRA Inc. and representatives from participating universities review past questionnaires and methodology to discuss issues and possible changes. Representatives of participating universities review the questionnaire last used – in this case, it was the 2004 questionnaire. The goal of this review is to identify questions that are no longer appropriate, consider questions that may be added to the survey, and review problems or issues identified the last time the survey was run. As much as possible, the intent is to leave the questionnaire unchanged to allow for comparison across time. Based on the outcome of this meeting, PRA prepares a draft and then, based on comments, produces a final questionnaire (Appendix A).

Traditionally, this has been a paper-based survey, which participating universities mail to their students. After PRA pilot-tested an on-line version of the survey in 2005, all participating universities had the choice of conducting the survey by mail or on-line. In 2007, 31 universities used the on-line version, and 3 used the paper-based method.

Below we summarize the methodology used for each approach.

1.1.1 Paper-based survey

Each university participating in the paper-based survey supported the study by:

- Generating a random sample of 1,000 students who were in their first-year of studies in the 2006-2007 academic year. Not all participating universities had 1,000 first-year students; in these cases, the university conducted a census of its first-year students.
- Mailing a package containing a cover letter, questionnaire, and a postage-paid, self-addressed return envelope to sampled students.
- Mailing a reminder letter to all non-respondents approximately two to three weeks after the original mailing.
- Mailing another survey package (containing another letter, questionnaire, and return envelope) to all non-respondents approximately four to six weeks after the original mailing.
- Reviewing and returning the completed questionnaires to PRA for processing.

Appendix B presents the methodology guidelines for universities participating in the paper-based survey.

1.1.2 On-line survey

Each university participating in the on-line survey supported the study by:

- Generating a random sample of 1,000 students who were in their first-year in the 2006-2007 academic year and providing PRA with an electronic database containing the e-mail addresses for these students. Not all participating universities had 1,000 first-year students; in these cases, each university provided a census of its first-year students' e-mail addresses.
- Providing PRA with an electronic logo for its university and the electronic signature of a university official. Both items were included in an e-mail that was sent to the sample of students.

Appendix C presents the methodology guidelines for universities participating in the on-line survey.

PRA was responsible for managing the on-line survey. This involved liaising with the participating universities, providing the company contracted to host the on-line survey with a database of student e-mail addresses, preparing the introductory and reminder letters to students, and responding to student questions about questionnaire content as well as technical questions about using the on-line survey.

PRA was also responsible for compiling the data for the on-line and paper surveys. This involved reviewing completed questionnaires (on-line and paper-based), coding responses to a selection of open-ended questions, entering the responses from the paper survey on computer, merging the on-line and paper-based datasets, reconciling/correcting any data errors, and programming the data tables using SPSS.

Table 2 (next page) shows the response rates by university, which ranged from about 20% to 69% with an average of 44.1%. Generally, the response rate is about the same as 2001 (47.4%), when all universities used the paper-based version. In fact, the gap in response rates is even smaller when comparing just those universities who participated in both the 2004 (43.9%) and 2007 (42.7%) surveys.

As part of this study, participating universities returned 12,648 complete surveys.¹

University	Survey type	Number distributed	Number completed	Response rate
Alberta	Web	1,000	459	45.9%
Brandon	Paper	426	153	35.9%
British Columbia (Okanagan Campus)	Web	715	276	38.6%
British Columbia (Vancouver Campus)	Web	1,000	434	43.4%
Brock	Web	1,000	444	44.4%
Calgary	Web	1,000	418	41.8%
Carleton	Web	1,000	447	44.7%
Concordia	Web	1,000	476	47.6%
Dalhousie	Web	1,000	419	41.9%
Fraser Valley	Web	983	485	49.3%
King's	Paper	96	35	36.5%
Lethbridge	Web	1,000	689	68.9%
Manitoba	Web	1,000	450	45.0%
McMaster	Web	1,000	220	22.0%
Montréal	Web	1,000	568	56.8%
Mount Saint Vincent	Web	339	81	23.9%
New Brunswick (Fredericton Campus)	Web	920	597	64.9%
New Brunswick (Saint John Campus)	Web	441	302	68.5%
Nipissing	Web	600	347	57.8%
Northern British Columbia	Web	380	231	60.8%
Ontario Institute of Technology	Web	910	388	42.6%
Ottawa	Web	1,000	447	44.7%
Redeemer	Web	179	115	64.2%
Regina	Web	1,000	460	46.0%
Ryerson*	Web	1,000	308	30.8%
Saint Mary's	Paper	1,000	331	33.1%
Saskatchewan	Web	1,000	384	38.4%
Simon Fraser	Web	1,000	469	46.9%
Trent	Web	1,000	407	40.7%
Trinity Western	Web	659	235	35.7%
Victoria	Web	1,000	543	54.3%
Wilfrid Laurier	Web	1,000	442	44.2%
Windsor	Web	1,000	384	38.4%
Winnipeg	Web	1,000	204	20.4%
Total		28,648	12,648	44.1%

* After completing the web-based survey, Ryerson switched to the paper-based survey in order to increase its response rate.

¹ PRA defined a completed survey as any survey where a student completed at least 100 mandatory questions (approximately 50% of all questions in the survey).

1.2 University comparisons

For comparison purposes, we have categorized the participating universities into three groups (see Table 3):

- Group 1 consists of universities that offer primarily undergraduate studies and have smaller student populations.
- Group 2 consists of universities that offer both undergraduate and graduate studies and tend to be of medium size in terms of student population.
- Group 3 consists of universities that offer both undergraduate and graduate degrees, with most having professional schools as well. These tend to be the largest institutions in terms of student populations.

Table 3: Categories of participating universities		
Group 1 (n=16)	Group 2 (n=8)	Group 3 (n=10)
Brandon University University of British Columbia (Okanagan Campus) University College of the Fraser Valley The King's University College (AB) University of Lethbridge Mount Saint Vincent University University of New Brunswick (Saint John Campus) University of Northern British Columbia Nipissing University University of Ontario Institute of Technology Redeemer University College Saint Mary's University Trent University Trinity Western University Wilfrid Laurier University University of Winnipeg	Brock University Carleton University University of New Brunswick (Fredericton Campus) University of Regina Ryerson University Simon Fraser University University of Windsor University of Victoria	University of Alberta University of British Columbia (Vancouver Campus) University of Calgary Concordia University Dalhousie University University of Manitoba McMaster University Université de Montréal University of Ottawa University of Saskatchewan

Participating universities change from year to year. Four universities that participated in the 2004 survey declined to participate in the 2007 survey. However, ten universities that did not participate in the 2004 survey decided to join this year's survey (see Table 4).

Table 4: Changes in participating universities				
	Participated 2007, but not in 2004	Participated 2007, but not in 2001	Participated 2004, but not in 2007	Participated 2001, but not in 2007
Group 1	Brandon University University College of the Fraser Valley The King's University College (AB) University of New Brunswick (Saint John Campus) University of Ontario Institute of Technology Redeemer University College Trent University	University College of the Fraser Valley The King's University College (AB) Mount Saint Vincent University University of Northern British Columbia University of Ontario Institute of Technology Redeemer University College	Lakehead University Ontario College of Art and Design	Lakehead University Ontario College of Art and Design
Group 2	Brock University University of New Brunswick (Fredericton Campus)	Brock University University of New Brunswick (Fredericton Campus) University of Victoria	University of Toronto at Scarborough	University of Toronto at Scarborough
Group 3	University of Alberta	University of Calgary McMaster University	York University	Queen's University

1.3 Discipline or area of study

Students recorded their major or subject area of concentration, which either their university or PRA re-coded into approximately 100 subject areas. PRA then grouped these subject areas into nine themes.

The process for defining subject area of concentration (or major) included the following steps.

- For universities using the paper-based method, a representative from each university reviewed and categorized students' responses.² Those universities that did not code a student's area of study left the decision to PRA to make.
- Universities that participated using the web-based method supplied a code for their students' majors based on their administrative records. In those instances when a university did not know (most often because the student had not yet

²

Because some students recorded their personal area of interest rather than their current area of study, some participating universities based their coding on their administrative records, rather than students' responses.

declared a major), PRA made the decision based on the student’s response to the major question in the survey.

- If students provided more than one major field of study, PRA recorded all of them, but the first major listed became the primary major for purposes of classifying students.
- When a student’s response was vague, unclear, or did not obviously fall into an existing category, they were classified as “other field.”

Table 5 shows this year’s distribution of major field of study. The results in 2007 are slightly different than those in 2004 and 2001. In 2007, the sample includes more first-year students who are majoring in an Arts and Humanities discipline, and fewer who are majoring in the Social Sciences. The current sample also includes more students who are majoring in Physical Science compared to 2004 and 2001.

	2007 (n=12,648)	2004 (n=11,132)	2001 (n=7,093)
Arts and Humanities	26%	21%	20%
Social Science	15%	19%	18%
Business	13%	13%	12%
Biological Science	13%	12%	10%
Physical Science	9%	4%	4%
Professional	7%	7%	6%
Engineering	6%	5%	5%
Education	3%	3%	4%
Other fields	3%	8%	11%
Don't know/no response	6%	7%	10%

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

1.4 Comparison with previous first-year student surveys

As mentioned, in both 2001 and 2004, CUSC conducted a similar survey with first-year students. Throughout this report, we compare the results of the current survey with results of the 2001 and 2004 surveys. As noted above, not all universities that participated in the previous studies also participated in 2007. Conversely, some of the universities participating this year did not participate in either or both of the previous years. Therefore, any difference may result from the inclusion of different universities rather than changes over time. PRA includes these comparisons as a point of interest; further investigation may be necessary to assess true differences across time. That said, there are few differences in results between the three surveys.

1.5 Statistically significant differences

Large sample sizes may inflate measures of statistical significance and may lead to false conclusions about the strength of association. The chi square measure of association, in particular, is susceptible to this possibility. Therefore, we increased the standards for designating whether a relationship can be termed “statistically significant.” Two of the benchmarks shown in Table 6 must be met for us to term an association “statistically significant”; the Pearson’s chi square must have probability of a type 1 error of .000 and the Phi coefficient or Cramer’s V must have a value of .150 or greater. Throughout this document, any differences reported meet these criteria, unless otherwise stated.

Test	Level for significance
Pearson’s chi square	.000
Phi coefficient	.150 or higher
Cramer’s V	.150 or higher

1.6 Data restrictions

For the on-line version of the survey, we applied ranges for open-ended questions that required numeric values, such as the year students began their post-secondary education and student financing. PRA also applied these ranges to students’ responses from the paper-based version of the survey. For the most part, few responses fell outside of the ranges imposed for the on-line version.

1.7 Non-response

As has been the practice for the last several years, non-responses have been included in the analysis. Throughout this report, unless explicitly stated in a table as a sub-population, overall results include those who did not respond to a particular question, although they are not shown in the tables. Therefore, responses to the majority of questions will not sum to 100%.

2.0 Profile of first-year students

In this section, we report that:

- The typical first-year student is an 18-year-old female, studying in English, and living with her parents. Overall, these results are very similar to those of previous survey years.
- The vast majority of students attend a university in their province of permanent residence. Among provinces represented in the 2007 survey, at least 86% of students are attending a university in their home province.
- Most first-year students come from families where at least one parent had at least some post-secondary education, and, in fact, 37% of students say that both of their parents completed a post-secondary degree.
- Typically, students are majoring in Arts and Humanities, Social Science, or Business (although many other disciplines are represented).
- The vast majority of students started their university education right after finishing high school or CEGEP and graduating with an A- average or higher. However, some students appear to have difficulty maintaining their pre-university grades, as less than half as many students expect an average grade of A- or higher by the end of their first year.

2.1 Personal profile

As Table 7 (next page) shows, the typical first-year student is an 18-year-old, English-speaking female.

- As we have found in past surveys, female students outnumber male students by about 2 to 1. This year is no exception.
- The average age of first-year students is just over 18 years. In fact, 73% of students are 18 years of age or younger, with the youngest being 14. About 4% are 21 years of age or older, including one student who is 68. Students attending Group 2 universities are more likely to be 18 years of age or younger (81%) than those in Group 1 (74%) or Group 3 (66%) universities. On average, Group 2 students are half a year younger than those at other universities.
- About 74% of students report that their first language is English. The remaining students report that the first language they learned and still speak is French (7%) or another language (14%). There is a difference between Groups, although this is primarily because the two Quebec universities are in Group 3 (which, therefore, has the highest proportion of French speaking students).
- Some 5% of students self-report as being disabled. Most commonly, students report such disabilities to be learning (1%) or mental health (1%) related.
- Overall, 18% report being in a visible minority. Among those who report being in a visible minority, most say that they are Chinese (27%), Indo-Pakistani (15%), Arabian (9%), Black (8%), Southeast Asian (6%), Latin American (5%) or Filipino (5%). It appears that students attending Group 3 universities are most likely to self-identify as being part of a visible minority, while Group 1 students are least likely. However, this difference is not statistically significant.
- About 3% of students identify themselves as Aboriginal people.

Table 7: Personal profile				
	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
Gender Q43				
Male	33%	31%	36%	34%
Female	61%	64%	59%	61%
Age Q44				
18 years or younger	73%	74%	81%	66%
19 years of age	13%	14%	11%	15%
20 years of age	4%	3%	2%	7%
21 years or older	4%	4%	<1%	6%
Average age	18.2	18.3	17.9	18.4
Language first learned and still understand Q45				
English	74%	85%	78%	60%
French	7%	1%	2%	17%
Other	13%	8%	15%	18%
Disability Q55				
Total self-identified	5%	6%	5%	4%
Visible minority Q53				
Total self-identified	18%	12%	19%	23%
Aboriginal status Q52				
Total self-identified (net)	3%	4%	3%	3%
- Métis	1%	1%	<1%	1%
- Non-status	<1%	1%	1%	<1%
- First Nations	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%
- Inuit	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%

As Table 8 shows, the personal characteristics of students who participated in the 2007 survey are slightly different to those of students who participated in 2001 and 2004. Most notably, first-year students appear to be younger in 2007, which may indicate that more students are going to university directly from high school, rather than taking a few years off. This may also be a result of the elimination of Grade 13 in Ontario, which was last offered in 2003.

Table 8: Personal profile: First-year students across time			
	2007 (n=12,648)	2004 (n=11,132)	2001 (n=7,093)
Gender			
Male	33%	33%	34%
Female	61%	67%	66%
Age			
18 years or younger	73%	53%	37%
19 years of age	13%	31%	41%
20 years of age	4%	6%	10%
21 years or older	4%	8%	11%
Average age	18.2 years	19.5 years	19.9 years
Disability			
Total self-identified	5%	5%	5%
Visible minority			
Total self-identified	18%	15%	14%
Aboriginal status			
Total self-identified	3%	2%	3%

2.1.1 Living arrangements

As Table 9 shows, in their first year of university, the majority of students continue to live with their parents (or some other relative or guardian).

- Some 46% of students live with their parents or other relatives. This is more common at larger institutions (especially Group 3 universities) primarily because parents or relatives are more likely to live in the same large centre as students.
- Conversely, about half are living independently, most commonly in on-campus housing (33%) or in rented accommodations (14%). Living on-campus is much more common among students attending Group 1 universities, where almost 4 in 10 first-year students live in residence.

	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
With parents/guardians/relatives	46%	40%	47%	52%
In on-campus housing (residence hall/apartment/etc.)	33%	39%	36%	24%
Rented home/apartment/room	14%	13%	11%	16%
In personally owned home	<1%	1%	<1%	1%
Other	<1%	<1%	<1%	1%

Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore, columns may sum to more than 100%.

The distributions of students' living arrangements are slightly different in 2007, with slightly more students living independently in on-campus residences in 2007. This may reflect which universities participated each year, rather than any significant change in students' choice of accommodation. See Table 10.

	2007 (n=12,648)	2004 (n=11,132)	2001 (n=7,093)
With parents	46%	55%	50%
On-campus residence	33%	26%	29%
Rented home/apartment/room	14%	16%	19%
Personally owned home	<1%	1%	2%

Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore, columns may sum to more than 100%.

2.1.2 Permanent residence

We asked students to indicate the population of the community in which they lived before starting university. As Table 11 shows:

- About 4 students in 10 come from large urban centres (with populations of 100,000 or more), including almost 1 in 4 who is from a city with a population of 300,000 or more.
- Reflecting both where they live and the location of the university, students attending Group 3 universities are more likely to be from the largest communities. Indeed, twice as many students attending Group 3 universities (36%) as Group 1 students (17%) are from communities with populations of 300,000 or more.

	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
Lived on a farm/ranch	5%	6%	4%	4%
Less than 5,000	11%	12%	11%	9%
5,000 to 9,999	9%	10%	8%	7%
10,000 to 49,999	17%	17%	19%	15%
50,000 to 99,999	11%	15%	11%	8%
100,000 to 300,000	16%	16%	19%	13%
Over 300,000	25%	17%	22%	36%

We asked students to indicate their province of permanent residence. The distribution of students reflects the province in which participating universities are located.

- Almost 3 in 10 (29%) students report that their province of permanent residence is Ontario.
- About 1 student in 4 is from the prairie provinces (Alberta, Saskatchewan, or Manitoba – 23%).
- Almost 1 student in 5 lives permanently in BC (18%).
- About 1 student in 10 is from Atlantic Canada (11%).
- About 1 student in 20 has a permanent home outside Canada (6%).

Table 12 shows these results.

	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
British Columbia	18%	21%	23%	9%
Alberta	11%	13%	2%	17%
Saskatchewan	7%	1%	11%	9%
Manitoba	5%	7%	<1%	8%
Ontario	29%	34%	38%	18%
Québec	7%	<1%	<1%	20%
Nova Scotia	5%	7%	2%	5%
Prince Edward Island	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
New Brunswick	6%	6%	12%	<1%
Newfoundland and Labrador	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Territories	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
International/USA/other	6%	4%	5%	8%

Table 13 shows the distribution of students by the province in which they are attending university. First-year students who responded to this survey attend universities in 8 of 10 provinces.

Table 13: Province in which attending university				
	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
British Columbia	21%	26%	28%	10%
Alberta	13%	15%		21%
Saskatchewan	7%		13%	9%
Manitoba	6%	8%		11%
Ontario	31%	36%	43%	16%
Québec	8%			24%
Nova Scotia	7%	9%		10%
New Brunswick	7%	6%	16%	

Figure 1 shows that among the students surveyed in 2007, the vast majority attend university in their home province. Of those who do not attend university in their home province, most are attending university in a neighboring one.

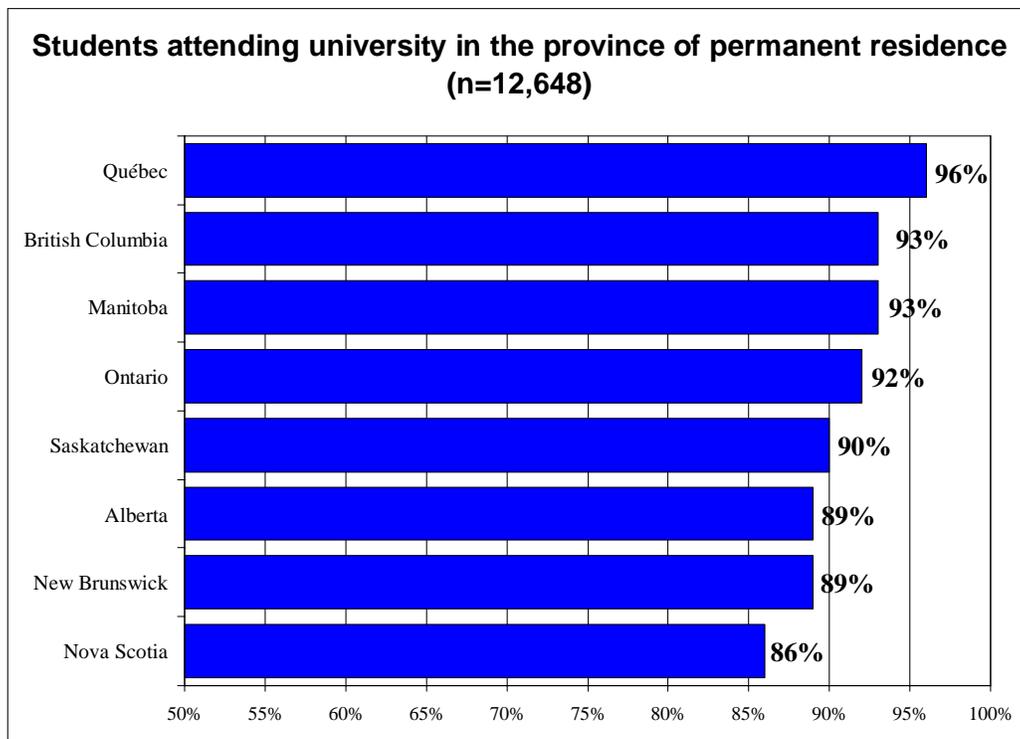


Figure 1

2.1.3 Parent's education

Table 14 shows the highest level of education of students' parents (as reported by students). Almost 9 students in 10 knew the level of education of at least one of their parents, including 84% who knew the level of education of both parents.

- About 2 students in 3 report that at least one parent has completed some type of post-secondary education. This includes 37% of students who report that both parents have completed post-secondary training.
- About half (49%) say that their mothers completed post-secondary training, most commonly university (32%). Similarly, over half (52%) report that their fathers completed post-secondary education, again, most often university (35%).
- About 1 student in 4 reports that their mothers' or fathers' highest level of education is high school or less.

Table 14: Parents' education Q56				
	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
Mother's education				
Less than high school	6%	6%	6%	7%
High school or CEGEP	21%	22%	20%	21%
Some post-secondary	10%	11%	10%	8%
College/technical/trade school graduate	17%	19%	17%	16%
University graduate/professional	32%	28%	33%	36%
Other/don't know/no response	13%	14%	14%	12%
Father's education				
Less than high school	9%	10%	9%	9%
High school or CEGEP	16%	18%	16%	15%
Some post-secondary	7%	7%	8%	6%
College/technical/trade school graduate	17%	19%	17%	16%
University graduate/professional	35%	30%	35%	41%
Other/don't know/no response	15%	16%	15%	14%

2.2 Disciplines

We asked students to record the subject or major area in which they are enrolled. These areas were then grouped into nine broadly defined disciplines as shown in Table 15.

First-year students are pursuing degrees in:

- **“Generalist” disciplines.** Some 4 students in 10 cite programs classified as Arts and Humanities (26%) or Social Sciences (15%).
- **“Professional” disciplines.** Almost 3 students in 10 are in disciplines such as Business (13%), Professional (7%), Engineering (6%), or Education (3%).
- **“Science” disciplines.** About 1 student in 5 is currently in a science program, mainly Biological (13%) or Physical Science (9%).

Students attending Group 1 universities are more likely than others to report that their major subject area is Arts and Humanities. Students in Group 2 and 3 universities are more likely than those in Group 1 to report being in Engineering and Professional programs.

	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
Arts and Humanities	26%	35%	23%	18%
Social Science	15%	14%	17%	15%
Business	13%	13%	15%	12%
Biological Science	13%	13%	13%	12%
Physical Science	9%	8%	7%	11%
Professional	7%	4%	8%	9%
Engineering	6%	3%	8%	8%
Education	3%	2%	3%	3%
Other fields	3%	<1%	3%	4%
Don't know/no response	6%	5%	4%	7%

Note: In cases where more than one major was provided, we took the first mention as the primary area of concentration.

In 2007 (and in past surveys), male and female students tend to select different educational paths. As Figure 2 shows:

- Female students outnumber male students in most disciplines, but especially in Professional, Education, Social Science, and Arts and Humanities programs.
- Male students tend to be more common in Business, Physical Science, and Engineering programs.

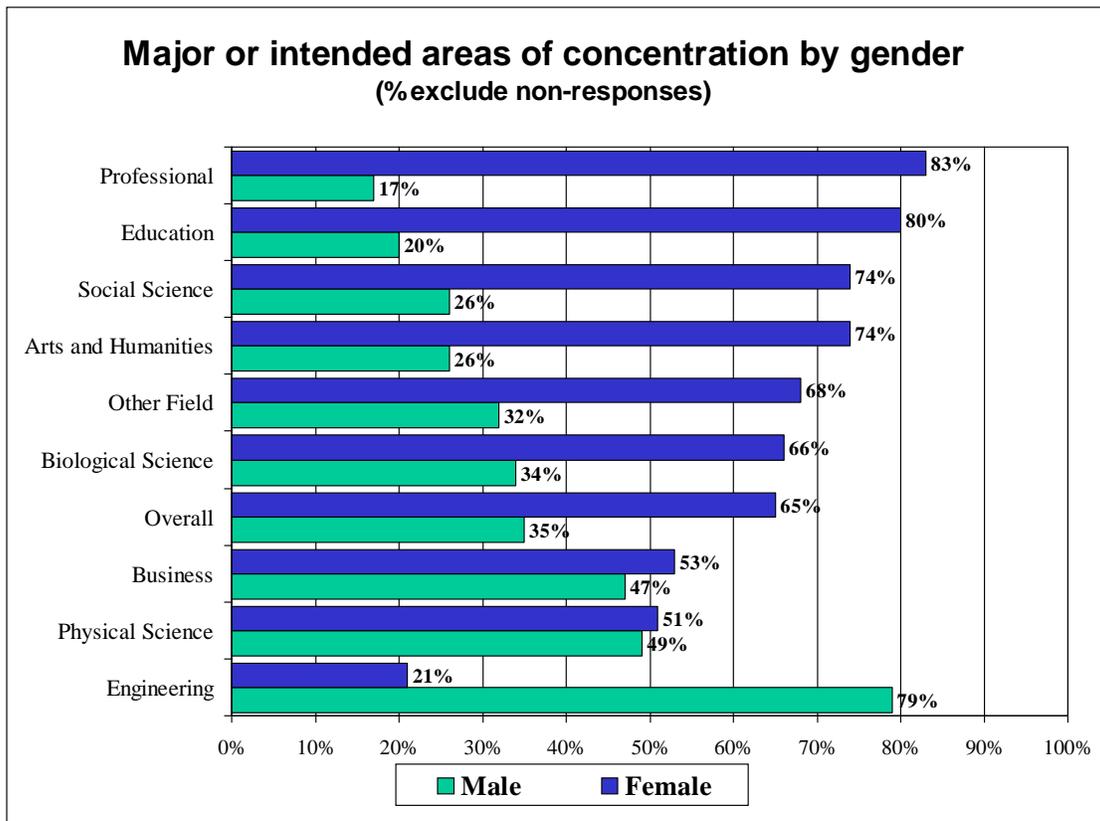


Figure 2

Age appears to play a smaller, yet non-significant, role in students' selection of discipline. Education is the only discipline where students have an average age above 19, possibly because students are less likely to enter Education programs right after high school. In fact, 11% of Education students graduated from high school in 2004 or prior, which is highest among all disciplines (although not statistically significant).

Most students graduated from high school or CEGEP in the same year they began their first year of university. In other words, they went immediately from high school graduation in the spring of 2006 to university in the fall. Overall, students report that:

- They graduated from high school or CEGEP in 2006 or later (80%).³ Almost 1 in 5 students report taking a break in their education, finishing high school or CEGEP a year or more before beginning their university education.
- They signed up for a full course load at registration (85%). This decreased only slightly throughout the year, with 82% reporting a full course load at the time of the survey (the survey was administered between January and April 2007).
- Their language of instruction at university is English (84%). The remaining students report that their language of instruction is French (7%) or another language (4%). Again, reflecting the location of the universities, students in Group 3 universities are most likely to report studying in French.
- About 1 student in 20 is studying in Canada on a visa.

See Table 16.

Table 16: Academic profile				
	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
Year graduated from high school or CEGEP Q26				
2006 or later	80%	76%	83%	82%
2005	13%	16%	13%	10%
2004 or before	6%	7%	3%	6%
Did not graduate	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Full course load at registration Q27				
Yes	85%	83%	85%	87%
Full course load at time of survey Q28				
Yes	82%	80%	83%	82%
Language of instruction Q46				
English	84%	90%	89%	73%
French	7%	<1%	2%	18%
Other	4%	3%	4%	4%
Studying in Canada on a visa Q51				
Yes	5%	4%	5%	5%

³ Note that 53 students reported that they graduated high school or CEGEP in 2007.

The change in course load is deceiving. While it appears that only about 3% of students reduced their course load between registration and the time of the survey, many more students drop or add courses throughout the term.

- Over 8 students in 10 appear to make no changes to their course load, that is, at least not enough to change their status from having a full to a partial course load or vice versa. Indeed, 75% of students had a full course load at registration and maintain this course load at the time of the survey, while 7% registered as a part-time student and maintain this status.
- The remaining students report changing their course load status between registration and the survey. These students are split between those who registered with a full course load but at the time of the survey had a partial load (10%) and those who registered with a partial load but added courses to take on a full-course load (7%).

See Table 17.

Table 17: Changes in course load	
	All students (n=12,648)
No change	
Full Course load at both points in time	75%
Partial load at both points in time	7%
Change in course load	
Full load at registration/partial load at survey	10%
Partial load at registration/full load at survey	7%

2.2.1 Interest in campus living

As we reported earlier, about 1 student in 3 lives on campus. Overall, about another 1 student in 5 would choose to live on campus if given a chance (or 25% of those not already living on campus).⁴ See Table 18.

	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
Yes	17%	14%	18%	19%
No	30%	28%	26%	36%
Already living on campus	33%	39%	36%	24%

2.2.2 Grade point average

We asked students to tell us their average grade in high school or CEGEP, as well as their expected average grade at the end of their first year of university. We also asked students to convert their grade point to a letter grade equivalent.

In high school or CEGEP:

- The average grade of these students is close to an A- (an average of 5.9 out 7; an A- is a 6).
- More than 7 students in 10 (71%) report that their average grade at the end of their secondary schooling was an A- or better.
- About 1 student in 4 (26%) reports an average of B or B+ in high school or CEGEP, while few (2%) first-year students report having an average of C+ or lower.

Students' marks fall in their first year of university compared to their grades in high school or CEGEP.

- The average grade falls from an A- to between a B and a B+ (an average of 4.7 out 7).
- Three students in 10 (30%) expect that their average grade will be an A- or higher at the end of their first year.

⁴ Some 14% could not provide a response to this question.

- Over half (53%) expect to end their first year with a B or B+.
- Almost 1 student in 5 (17%) expects an average grade of C+ or lower.

Interestingly, students attending larger universities (Group 2 and 3) had higher grades in high school or CEGEP than students attending smaller universities (Group 1). However, there is somewhat of a leveling effect that occurs in their first year, as there is no difference between students expected grades at the end of their first year by group.

See Table 19.

Table 19: Student grades				
	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
Average grade in high school or CEGEP Q25*				
A or A+	41%	32%	44%	47%
A-	30%	30%	30%	30%
B+	16%	18%	15%	13%
B	10%	14%	9%	7%
C+	2%	4%	1%	1%
C or lower	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%
Average	5.9	5.7	6.0	6.1
Average grade expected at end of first year Q24*				
A or A+	10%	9%	9%	11%
A-	20%	19%	19%	21%
B+	24%	23%	25%	25%
B	29%	30%	30%	26%
C+	11%	12%	11%	10%
C or lower	6%	7%	6%	6%
Average	4.7	4.6	4.7	4.8

*Note: This grade scale is based on the following: A/A+=7, A-=6, B+=5, B=4, C+=3, C=2, D=1.

While, on average, students' grades are lower in their first year of university than in high school or CEGEP, some students expect to do better in university than when they were in secondary school.

- Just 36% of students who had an A average (i.e., A+, A, or A-) in high school/CEGEP expect to maintain this average at the end of their first year of university. Some 64% expect to do worse in their first-year of university, with about half expecting to fall to a B or B+ (52%).
- It is somewhat encouraging that 13% of students who had a B/B+ average expect to improve on this average by the end of their first year, although the majority (58%) expect to maintain their high school average. Some 29% expect to finish with a grade of C+ or lower.
- Those who graduate high school with the lowest grades (C+ average or lower) tend to be the most likely to expect that their academic performance will improve in university. In fact, 64% who enter university with an average of C+ or lower expect a higher grade at the end of their first year, including 11% who say it will be at least an A-.

See Table 20.

Expected grade at end of first year	Grade in high school/CEGEP		
	A-, A or A+ (n=8,892)	B/B+ (n=3,264)	C+ or less (n=416)
A- or higher	36%	13%	11%
B or B+	52%	58%	53%
C+ or lower	12%	29%	36%

Note: Only those students who answered both Q24 and Q25 are included in this table.

Students 18 years of age and younger (76%) are more likely than those 19 years of age and older (56%) to report that they graduated from high school or CEGEP with an average of A- or higher. However, by the end of their first year, students expect virtually the same grades, regardless of their age. In fact, students 19 years of age and older expect to do slightly better.

2.2.3 Grades across time

Table 21 compares results from 2007 to those in 2004 and 2001.

Over the three survey years, the high school or CEGEP grades of first year university have been increasing. In 2001, 58% reported an average grade in high school or CEGEP of A- or higher. In 2007, this had increased to 71%. However, this difference between years is not statistically significant.

In spite of this change in pre-university grades, grades expected at the end of the first year are increasing at a similar rate. Indeed, while 27% reported an average expected grade at the end of first year of an A- or higher in 2001, this increased only slightly to 30% in 2007.

Table 21: Student grades across time			
	2007 (n=12,648)	2004 (n=11,132)	2001 (n=7,093)
Average grade in high school or CEGEP Q25*			
A or A+	41%	36%	32%
A-	30%	28%	26%
B+	16%	17%	18%
B	10%	12%	14%
C+	2%	3%	4%
C or lower	<1%	<1%	2%
Average	5.9	5.8	5.6
Average grade expected at end of first year Q24*			
A or A+	10%	9%	9%
A-	20%	19%	18%
B+	24%	24%	23%
B	29%	30%	30%
C+	11%	11%	11%
C or lower	6%	5%	7%
Average	4.7	4.7	4.6

*Note: This grade scale is based on the following: A/A+=7, A-=6, B+=5, B=4, C+=3, C=2, D=1.

2.2.4 Grades by discipline

As shown in Figure 3, although high school/CEGEP grades vary by discipline, expected grades at the end of first-year are remarkably similar (ranging from 4.6 to 4.9 out of 7). On average, students expect their grades at the end of their first year of university to be lower than in secondary school, regardless of discipline, although the drop is much less pronounced for students in Social Sciences and Arts and Humanities.

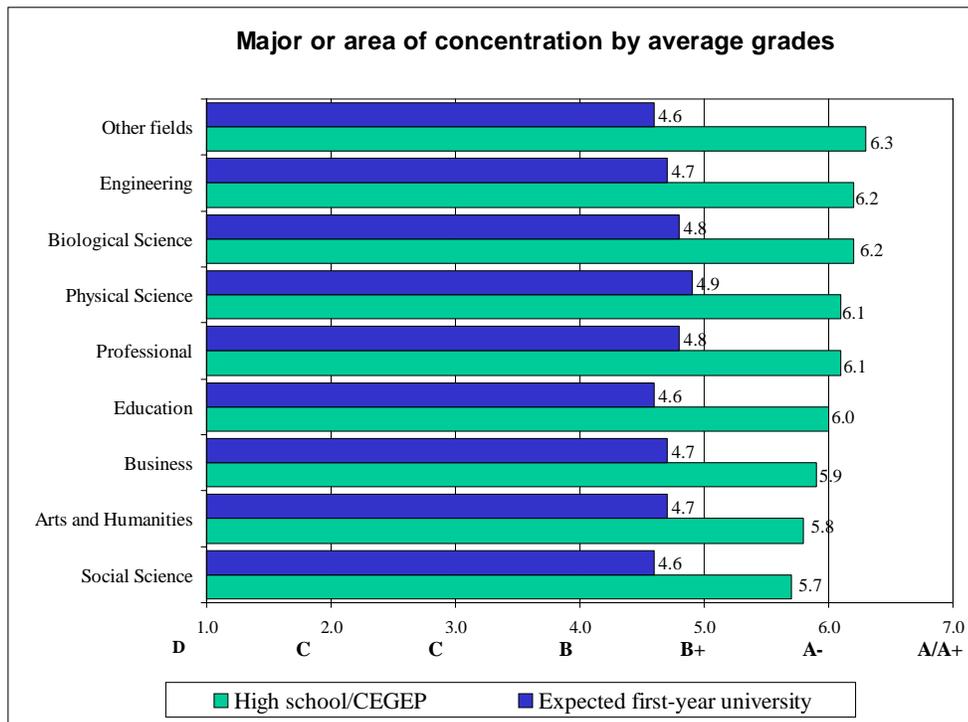


Figure 3

3.0 Financing education and current employment

In this section, we report that:

- First-year students rely on a number of sources to finance their first-year of university. Students most commonly rely on their parents, family, or spouse for financial assistance.
- On average, students require just over \$10,000 to finance their first year of university. They report receiving the most financial support from loans (from financial institutions and the government) and their family.
- About 2 students in 3 are concerned about having sufficient funds to complete their education, including 20% who are very concerned.
- Just more than 4 in 10 first-year students have at least one credit card; however, few report carrying a balance on their card(s) from month to month.
- About 4 in 10 first-year students are currently employed, most often off-campus. On average, students who are employed work part-time, about 15 hours a week. For 6 in 10 employed students, working has had at least some negative effects on their academic performance.

3.1 Sources of financing education

We asked students to identify which of 11 sources they are using to help pay for their university education in their first year. Most students report using several sources.

- The most common source of funding is *parents, family, or spouses*, as almost 7 students in 10 rely on these sources of financing.
- About half of students report using *personal savings, university scholarships, or earnings from summer work* to finance their first year of university.
- About 3 students in 10 report using *government loans or bursaries*, while 1 in 4 reports using *earnings from current employment*.
- About 1 student in 7 finances their first-year of university using money from *RESPs*.
- About 1 student in 20 uses *loans from financial institutions* or money earned from *investments*.

See Table 22 for a complete breakdown.

	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
Parents/family/spouse	69%	65%	70%	72%
Personal savings	53%	57%	52%	51%
University scholarship/financial award/bursary	51%	53%	53%	48%
Earnings from summer work	50%	53%	49%	47%
Government loan or bursary	31%	33%	33%	26%
Earnings from current employment	26%	26%	24%	26%
RESP	14%	14%	14%	14%
Loan from a financial institution	7%	9%	7%	6%
Investment income	6%	6%	6%	5%
Co-op program/Work term	<1%	<1%	2%	<1%
Work-study program	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Other	4%	4%	4%	3%

Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore, columns may sum to more than 100%.

3.1.1 Number of sources

As mentioned, most students rely on multiple sources to help finance their university education. Over 80% report using two or more of the sources tested. Indeed, on average, students report using three of these sources.

	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
One	16%	14%	16%	18%
Two	18%	18%	18%	19%
Three	21%	20%	21%	22%
Four or more	42%	45%	42%	38%
Average	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.1

3.1.2 Contribution by source

We also asked participants to estimate the average amount they receive from each of these sources.

- Overall, the average amount received from these various sources is about \$10,000. Students at Group 1 universities appear to receive slightly more (about \$10,700), while those at Group 3 universities receive the least (about \$9,300).

Among those who use these sources:

- While few students (about 7%) report having *loans from financial institutions*, they are the single largest source for financing for those students who do have them, contributing just over \$6,600 on average.
- *Government loans or bursaries* are also an important source of financing. For the 3 students in 10 who use such loans, these loans contribute an average of almost \$5,700. The amount of the *government loans or bursaries* is, on average, higher for those attending Group 1 universities (just over \$6,000) than those attending Group 2 universities (almost \$5,800), which in turn is a higher amount than for those attending Group 3 universities (almost \$5,000).

- Not only are *parents and other family* the most common source of financing of a students' education, they contribute a large amount to students' education. On average, students receive about \$4,800 from parents and other relatives. Again, students attending Group 1 universities receive slightly more (about \$5,100) than those attending Group 2 universities (about \$4,800), who in turn receive slightly more than students in Group 3 (about \$4,600).
- About half report receiving *university scholarships, financial awards, or bursaries*. These students receive an average of about \$2,600 from this source to finance their education.
- Another half report using *earnings from summer work* to finance their education. On average, students use \$2,100 of their summer earnings towards financing their education.

The average amounts of these and other contributors are found in Table 24.

Table 24: Average amount from each financing source Q33				
	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
All respondents				
Overall average	\$10,009	\$10,669	\$9,949	\$9,347
Average among those with these sources				
Loans from financial institutions	\$6,645	\$6,841	\$6,288	\$6,717
Government loan or bursary	\$5,655	\$6,041	\$5,789	\$4,954
Parents/family/spouse	\$4,849	\$5,142	\$4,824	\$4,589
RESP	\$3,985	\$4,340	\$3,928	\$3,614
Co-op program/work term	\$2,738	\$2,510	\$2,990	\$2,473
University scholarship/financial award/bursary	\$2,627	\$2,405	\$2,464	\$3,045
Investment income (bonds, dividends, etc.)	\$2,413	\$2,456	\$2,457	\$2,321
Earnings from summer work	\$2,112	\$2,207	\$2,003	\$2,089
Personal savings	\$2,058	\$2,272	\$2,011	\$1,833
Earnings from current employment	\$1,883	\$1,766	\$1,562	\$2,246
Work-study program	\$1,748	\$1,177	\$2,292	\$1,752
Multiple other	\$4,177	\$3,414	\$4,053	\$5,371

Table 25 shows the median value for each contribution. In some cases, the median value is much lower than the average (e.g., *parents, family, or spouse*), while in other cases, it is very close to the average (e.g., *loans from financial institutions or government loans or bursaries*).

Table 25: Median amount from each financing source Q33				
	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
All respondents				
Overall median	\$8,800	\$10,000	\$9,000	\$7,750
Median among those with these sources				
Loans from financial institutions	\$6,000	\$7,000	\$5,000	\$6,000
Government loan or bursary	\$5,000	\$6,000	\$5,000	\$4,000
Parents/family/spouse	\$3,000	\$4,000	\$3,500	\$3,000
RESP	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$2,500
Co-op program/work term	\$2,000	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$1,900
University scholarship/financial award/bursary	\$2,000	\$1,750	\$2,000	\$2,000
Earnings from summer work	\$1,500	\$2,000	\$1,500	\$1,500
Investment income (bonds, dividends, etc.)	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
Personal savings	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
Earnings from current employment	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
Work-study program	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$500	\$1,475
Multiple other	\$2,500	\$2,000	\$2,125	\$3,000

3.1.3 Financing concerns

As shown in Table 26:

- About 3 students in 10 report that they applied for a student loan.
- Of those who received a government loan or bursary, about 1 in 5 reports having difficulty fulfilling the course load necessary to keep that loan or bursary.
- Of those who report receiving a university scholarship or financial award, almost 3 in 10 report that they would be unable to attend university without such financial assistance.

	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
Applied for a student loan Q32	31%	35%	33%	26%
Having difficulty fulfilling the course load needed to keep loans or bursaries Q34*	19%	16%	20%	22%
Unable to attend university without financial assistance from this university Q35**	29%	30%	30%	26%
*Note: Only students who had received a government loan or bursary were asked if they are having difficulty fulfilling the course load required to keep the loan/bursary.				
**Note: Only students who had received a university scholarship, financial award or bursary were asked if they would have been able to attend university without this financial assistance.				

As Table 27 shows, most students are at least somewhat concerned about having sufficient funding to complete their university education.

- About 2 students in 3 have at least some concern, including 20% who are very concerned.
- About 3 in 10 are not concerned.

	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
Very concerned	20%	23%	22%	16%
Some concern	46%	47%	46%	45%
Not concerned	29%	26%	27%	34%

3.2 Credit cards

For the first time, we asked first-year students about credit cards. It is perhaps surprising, given that the average age of these students is just 18, that over 4 students in 10 have at least one credit card, including 1 in 10 who has two or more credit cards.

Among those students with credit cards:

- Most do not carry a balance from month to month. Indeed, 8 students in 10 report regularly paying off the balance on their credit card(s) each month.
- About 1 student in 10 reports having a balance owing on their credit card(s). Among those with a balance, the average amount owing is almost \$1,700.

See Table 28.

Table 28: Credit cards				
	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
Number of credit cards Q39 (all respondents)				
None	51%	52%	57%	44%
One	34%	32%	29%	41%
Two	5%	4%	4%	6%
Three or more	5%	6%	6%	5%
Average number	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.2
Regularly pay off your balance each month Q40*				
Yes	80%	78%	79%	83%
Total credit card balance Q41*				
Zero	91%	90%	91%	92%
\$500 or less	4%	4%	4%	3%
\$501 to \$1,000	2%	2%	2%	2%
Over \$1,000	2%	3%	2%	2%
Average balance (including zero)	\$136	\$178	\$117	\$111
Average of those with a balance	\$1,673	\$1,917	\$1,444	\$1,558
Note: *Total credit card balance and payment of the balance were asked of those who had at least one credit card.				

As one would expect, the older students are, the more likely they are to have credit cards and the more credit cards they have. For example, while 40% of students 18 years of age or younger have at least one credit card, 78% of students 21 years of age and older report the same. Although there is no difference among age groups in terms of paying off their credit card balance each month, older respondents carry a larger balance than younger respondents. On average, respondents age 21 years of age and older with credit cards carry a balance of \$526. This compares to \$88 for those 18 years of age and younger.

3.3 Current employment

About 4 students in 10 report being currently employed, most often off-campus (36%). Another 1 student in 5 (18%) is seeking work. Students reporting a full course load (at the time of the survey) are slightly less likely to report working (39%), compared to students with only a partial course load (46%), although this difference is not statistically significant.

Among those who are currently employed:

- About 8 students in 10 work 20 hours a week or less, which corresponds to the typical student who works about 15 hours a week.
- Fewer than 2 students in 10 work over 20 hours a week, including 4% who are employed full-time (30 hours or more a week).
- Students who are employed and have a full course load work less, on average (14.4 hours), than students with only a partial course load (18.4 hours).
- About 6 students in 10 report that their employment (other than employment related to co-op requirements) has at least some negative impact on their academic performance. This includes some who say that the negative impact is significant (5%) or substantial (2%).
- Not surprisingly, the more hours per week they work, the more likely students are to report that their employment is having at least some negative impact on their academic performance. For example, of those who work 10 hours or less a week, 41% report at least some negative impacts (including only 3% who report significant or substantial negative impacts). However, among those working over 30 hours a week, 69% report at least some negative impact (including 27% who report significant or substantial negative impacts).

Table 29 presents these results.

Table 29: Employment status				
	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
Currently employed Q36 (all respondents)				
Yes, both on and off campus	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Yes, on campus	3%	4%	3%	2%
Yes, off campus	36%	37%	33%	37%
No, but I am seeking work	18%	16%	21%	18%
No, and I am not seeking work	37%	38%	37%	37%
Number of hours worked per week Q37*				
10 hours or less	35%	32%	38%	36%
11 to 20 hours	46%	45%	45%	48%
21 to 30 hours	15%	18%	13%	13%
Over 30 hours	4%	5%	3%	3%
Average number of hours	15.2	16.1	14.7	14.6
Negative impact of non-co-op related employment on academic performance Q38*				
None	40%	42%	39%	38%
Some	36%	34%	37%	38%
Moderate	16%	16%	15%	17%
Significant	5%	6%	5%	5%
Substantial	2%	2%	4%	2%
*Note: Only students who are currently employed were asked how many hours they work per week and whether their employment has a negative impact on their academic performance.				

Regardless of the age of the students, they are as likely to report working while in university. However, age is significantly related to the number of hours per week students work. The older students are, the more hours per week they report working, on average. Students 18 years of age or younger work 14.7 hours a week compared to 20.7 for those 21 and older.

3.3.1 Employment by discipline

It appears that students in certain disciplines are more likely than other students to be employed (though not statistically significant). Those most likely to be employed (excluding work related to a co-op program) are students majoring in Education (57%), and Engineering majors are least likely (26%). Not only are Engineering students the least likely to work, but also, on average, those who do work the fewest hours per week.

See Table 30.

Table 30: Employment by discipline		
	Employed on- or off-campus	Average # of hours
Education	57%	14.7
Social Science	46%	16.0
Arts and Humanities	45%	16.2
Professional	43%	14.4
Overall	42%	15.2
Biological Science	40%	13.7
Business	40%	15.9
Physical Science	37%	14.1
Other fields	30%	14.6
Engineering	26%	12.9
Note: Table 30 excludes those who did not indicate their employment status; the overall % may not match results in Table 29.		

4.0 Reasons motivating attendance and choice of university

In this section, we report on students' reasons for deciding to attend university, in general, and for deciding to attend their current university, in particular.

- Most students' primary motivation to attend university is related to future employment either in a specific field or in general. When asked what the single most important reason is, about 2 in 3 students say either to *prepare for a specific job or career* or to *get a good job*.
- When asked about the single most important reason for choosing their university, three reasons stand out. In each case, about 1 student in 5 mentions the following as the reason for choosing their university: *specific career-related programs*, *proximity to their home*, or the *quality of academic programs*.
- About 6 first-year students in 10 applied to more than one university; on average, students applied to two others. However, over 8 in 10 students are attending their first choice of university.
- About 1 student in 4 says they received direct contact from their university before they graduated from high school or CEGEP.
- In terms of the importance of the contact they had with their university, students are divided. *Campus visits and open houses* were the most important contact for about 1 in 4 first-year students, while the *university's web site* was the most important for about 1 in 5 students.

4.1 Decision to attend university

We asked students to rate the importance of ten different reasons for deciding to attend university in general (see Table 31, next page).

Almost all students report that at least one of these reasons was very important in their decision to attend university. Indeed, over half of the students rate five or more of these reasons as very important.

The reasons most often rated as very important are related to future employment.

- Over 8 students in 10 rate *getting a good job* as very important in their decision to attend university.
- About 3 students in 4 say that *preparing for a specific job or career* is a very important reason for attending university.

Most students also consider the pursuit of knowledge as very important in their decision to attend university.

- Some 3 students in 4 say that *getting a good general education* was very important in their decision.
- Almost as many (7 students in 10) say that *increasing their knowledge in an academic field* was very important in their decision to attend university.
- Just over half also rate *developing a broad base of skills* as very important in their decision about university.

Other reasons are considered very important by less than half of the students.

- About 4 students in 10 say that *preparing for graduate or professional school* was a very important reason.
- About 1 student in 3 says that *becoming a more cultured person* was very important in their decision.
- About 1 student in 4 reports that *meeting parental expectations* was a very important reason for attending university. The same number report that *meeting new friends* was also a very important reason. Older students are less likely to say that *meeting new friends* was a very

important reason for attending university. Specifically, just 12% of students 21 years of age and older say this was very important compared to 26% of students 18 years and younger.

These results are almost identical to those of the last two first-year student surveys.

	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
f. Get a good job	83%	82%	84%	83%
a. Prepare for a specific job or career	74%	75%	73%	74%
b. Get a good general education	73%	72%	74%	74%
e. Increase my knowledge in an academic field	69%	69%	68%	70%
c. Develop a broad base of skills	55%	52%	55%	58%
d. Prepare for graduate/professional school	42%	41%	40%	45%
g. Become a more cultured person	36%	33%	34%	43%
i. Meet new friends	24%	24%	26%	23%
h. Meet parental expectations	23%	21%	25%	24%
j. Other	5%	5%	5%	4%

Depending on a student's major or discipline, the importance students placed on these reasons differs.

- While the majority of students in all disciplines say that *getting a good job* was a very important reason for going to university, it is most common for students in Professional, Engineering, or Education programs to say it was a very important reason. It is least common for students in Arts and Humanities programs to say it was a very important reason.
- The majority of students in all disciplines also say that *preparing for a specific job or career* was a very important reason for attending university. Nevertheless, it is most common for students in Education and Professional programs to say it was very important, and again, least common for students in Arts and Humanities programs to say it was very important.
- The majority of students in Biological Science programs say that *preparing for graduate/professional school* was a very important reason for deciding to attend university. Students in Engineering and Education programs are least likely to say that this was very important.

Table 32 provides an overview of those disciplines that diverge most from the overall proportion in terms of students' reasons for attending university.

Table 32: Motivation to attend university by discipline		
Reason	Discipline	Percent stating "very important"
Get a good job	Professional	91%
	Education	90%
	Engineering	89%
	Overall	83%
Prepare for a specific job or career	Arts and Humanities	75%
	Education	91%
	Professional	89%
	Overall	75%
Prepare for graduate/professional school	Arts and Humanities	69%
	Biological Science	59%
	Overall	43%
	Engineering	30%
	Education	30%

Note: Table 32 excludes those who did not provide a response; overall percentages may not match those in Table 31.

4.1.1 Most important reason

We asked students to choose one of the 10 reasons as the “single most important” in their decision to attend university. As we found in previous surveys, most students’ primary motivation to attend university is related to future employment either in a specific field or in general.

- About 2 students in 3 chose either *preparing for specific job or career* (42%) or *getting a good job* (25%) as the single most important reason for going to university.
- Each of the other reasons is the most important to less than 1 student in 10.

See Table 33.

	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
a. To prepare for a specific job or career	42%	45%	41%	40%
f. To get a good job	25%	23%	26%	25%
b. To get a good general education	8%	8%	9%	8%
d. To prepare for graduate/professional school	7%	8%	7%	8%
e. To increase my knowledge in an academic field	7%	7%	7%	8%
c. To develop a broad base of skills	3%	3%	3%	4%
h. To meet parental expectations	3%	3%	3%	3%
g. To become a more cultured person	2%	2%	2%	3%
i. To meet new friends	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
j. Other	1%	2%	1%	1%

As with their ratings of the importance of different factors, students in particular disciplines are more likely to cite specific reasons as the most important in their decision to attend university.

- Students in Education and Professional programs are more likely than others to say that *preparing for a specific job or career* was their most important reason to attend university.
- Students in Business and Engineering programs are more likely than other students to consider *getting a good job* as the single most important reason. This reason is significantly less common among students in Arts and Humanities and Education programs (the latter because they are preparing for a specific career).
- Students in Biological Science programs are significantly more likely to say that *preparing for graduate/professional school* was the most important reason.

See Table 34.

Table 34: Most important reason by discipline		
Reason	Discipline	Percent stating "most important"
Prepare for a specific job or career	Education	70%
	Professional	58%
	Overall	43%
	Business	37%
Get a good job	Business	38%
	Engineering	32%
	Overall	24%
	Arts and Humanities	19%
	Education	17%
To prepare for graduate/professional school	Biological Science	19%
	Overall	8%
	Business	3%
	Engineering	3%
	Education	2%
Note: Table 34 excludes those who did not provide a response; overall percentages may not match those in Table 33.		

4.2 Reasons for choosing their university

We asked students to rate the importance of 24 different reasons in their decision to attend their current university. We have grouped these reasons into four broad themes: personal, university programs and services, general aspects of university life, and other considerations.

4.2.1 Personal reasons

The location of the chosen university was a very important reason for many students in their decision about which institution to attend.

- For almost 4 students in 10, *wanting to live close to home* was very important in choosing their current university.
- Just over 1 in 10 says the fact that their *friends were attending the university, parents wanted them to enroll at this university* or their desire to *live away from home* were very important. Not surprising, older respondents are less likely to say that their parents wanting them to enroll at this university was a very important reason. In fact, 13% of respondents 18 years of age and younger say this reason was very important, while just 5% of those 21 years and older say the same.
- Just 1 in 20 say that having a *family member currently attending the university* motivated them to come.

Table 35 shows the percentages of those who rated these reasons as being very important in their decision to attend their current university. Of those reasons that were asked in past surveys, the results are very similar to 2004 and 2001.

	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
a. Wanted to live close to home	37%	36%	37%	37%
o. Friends attending here	12%	10%	13%	14%
m. Parents/relatives wanted me to enrol here	12%	10%	11%	14%
b. Wanted to live away from home	11%	12%	12%	9%
n. Other family member(s) currently attending here	5%	4%	5%	7%

4.2.2 University programs and services

Among universities' programs and services, *quality of academic programs* and *specific career-related programs* are most often rated as very important in students' choice of university.

- Almost 6 students in 10 report that the *quality of academic programs* at their current university was very important in their decision. This is the single most common reason rated as very important by first-year students.
- Over half of the students say that the fact that their current university offered a *specific career-related program* was very important in their decision.
- About 1 student in 5 rates both of the following motivators as very important: *availability of on-campus residence and opportunities for international work or studies*. It appears that on-campus residences are more often very important to students attending Group 1 universities. While this difference is suggestive, it is not statistically significant.
- More than 1 student in 10 rates the university's *co-op program or recreational facilities and programs* as very important in their decision to attend their university.
- Fewer than 1 student in 10 rates *athletic or varsity sports* or the fact that the university is *physically accessible for persons with a disability* as very important in their decision.

Table 36 presents this year's results, which are similar to those reported in 2004 and 2001.

	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
d. Quality of academic programs	57%	54%	54%	62%
e. Specific career-related program	54%	54%	55%	54%
k. Availability of on-campus residence	20%	23%	21%	15%
s. Opportunities for international work/study abroad	17%	15%	17%	19%
r. Co-op program	13%	10%	19%	13%
v. Recreational facilities/programs	13%	13%	15%	13%
u. Athletic/varsity sports	8%	8%	9%	8%
t. Physically accessible for persons with a disability	3%	3%	3%	2%

4.2.3 General aspects of university life

Many students consider other aspects of university life when deciding on which institution to attend.

- Half of the first-year students report that a *university's reputation* was very important in their decision of which university to attend.
- Three in 10 students say that the *size of the university* was very important. Not surprisingly, this is more often seen as very important by students attending smaller universities. Almost half of the students attending Group 1 universities say that this reason was very important in their decision, compared with less than 1 student in 4 from Group 2 and 3 universities.
- About 1 student in 4 says each of the following financial considerations was a very important motivator: *tuition fees* or *offer of financial assistance or scholarship*. An offer of financial assistance or scholarship appears to be more important to younger students. While 29% of those 18 years of age or younger say that such an offer was very important, only 16% of those 21 years of age or older say the same.

Table 37 shows these results. These findings have changed very little from those of the 2004 or 2001 surveys of first-year students.

	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
f. University has a good reputation	50%	49%	43%	56%
g. Size of university	31%	46%	24%	19%
c. Offered financial assistance/scholarship	26%	26%	29%	25%
l. Tuition fees	25%	31%	24%	21%

4.2.4 Other considerations

The remaining reasons for students' choice of university are shown in Table 38.

- One student in 5 reports that the *availability of public transportation* and *size of the city or town* was very important. Interestingly, the *availability of public transportation* was significantly more important to students attending Group 3 universities than to those attending Group 1 or 2 institutions.
- About 1 student in 6 reports each of the following reasons as very important in their decision: *physical appearance of the campus*, *the physical appearance of the campus*, and *rich social life*.
- Approximately 1 student in 10 reports that *school spirit* or *advice from counsellors or teachers* was very important in their decision.

These results have changed little compared to those of the previous two surveys of first-year students.

	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
q. Availability of public transportation	19%	14%	18%	26%
j. Size of city/town	19%	18%	18%	20%
w. Physical appearance of the campus	17%	18%	17%	16%
h. Rich social life	16%	16%	15%	16%
i. School spirit	12%	13%	11%	13%
p. Advice from counsellors or teachers	8%	8%	8%	8%

4.2.5 Reasons by discipline

Table 39 shows the reasons that were very important in the decision to attend a particular university by students' area of study or discipline.

- Perhaps not surprising, *specific career-related programs* were more often very important to students in Education and Professional programs than to students in other disciplines.
- Students in Engineering and Business programs are much more likely than other students to say that the *co-op program* was very important.

Reason	Discipline	Percent stating "very important"
Specific career-related program	Education	77%
	Professional	75%
	Overall	56%
	Physical Science	50%
Co-op program	Engineering	33%
	Business	30%
	Overall	14%
	Professional	7%
	Arts and Humanities	6%
Note: Table 39 excludes those who did not provide a response; overall percentages may not match those in Table 36.		

4.2.6 Most important reason

We asked students to choose the single most important reason influencing their choice of university.

Three reasons stand out, accounting for almost 6 students in 10:

- *specific career-related programs* (21%)
- *wanted to live close to home* (20%)
- *quality of academic programs* (16%).

These three reasons are the most common regardless of university type (Group 1, 2, or 3). Indeed, the relative importance of all reasons is similar regardless of university type, with a few notable exceptions:

- *size of university*, which more students attending Group 1 (9%) universities say is most important, compared with students attending Group 2 (2%) or Group 3 (<1%) universities.
- *quality of academic programs*, which is more often chosen as the most important reason by students attending Group 3 (20%) universities.

Table 40 shows the most important reasons. Reasons that were collapsed into the “other” category were each mentioned by 2% or less of students. Overall, the pattern of response is very similar to that from the 2004 and 2001 surveys.

	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
e. Specific career-related program	21%	21%	22%	19%
a. Wanted to live close to home	20%	19%	21%	19%
d. Quality of academic programs	16%	13%	14%	20%
f. University has a good reputation	9%	7%	6%	12%
c. Offered financial assistance / scholarships	7%	6%	9%	6%
b. Wanted to live away from home	4%	4%	4%	3%
g. Size of university	4%	9%	2%	<1%
m. Parents/relatives wanted me to enrol here	3%	3%	3%	4%
l. Tuition fees	3%	4%	2%	1%
Other	14%	13%	16%	15%

4.3 Applying to university

We asked students about the process of applying to university. As Table 41 shows:

- About 6 students in 10 applied to more than one university.
- On average, students who applied to more than one university, applied to three (includes university currently attending).
- Of those who applied to more than one university, about 1 in 3 students applied to a university outside their home

province. Students attending a Group 3 university are most likely to have applied to a university outside their home province, while those attending a Group 1 university are least likely.

- More than 1 student in 10 applied to college as well as to university.
- Even though many students applied to more than one university, more than 8 students in 10 report that the university they are currently attending was their first choice. However, among those who applied to more than one university, 77% report that they are attending their first choice, whereas 93% of those who applied to just the university they are attending say it was their first choice.

Table 41: Application process				
	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
Applied to more than one university Q3				
Yes	61%	61%	68%	56%
Total number applied to Q3A*				
Two**	30%	25%	28%	40%
Three	34%	36%	38%	28%
Four	16%	18%	16%	15%
Five or more	19%	20%	19%	17%
Average	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.3
Number outside home province Q3B*				
None	67%	75%	67%	56%
One	15%	13%	14%	18%
Two	9%	7%	9%	12%
Three or more	9%	5%	10%	14%
Average	0.7	0.5	0.7	1.0
Applied to college as well (other than a CEGEP) Q4				
Yes	12%	13%	16%	9%
Currently attending first choice Q5				
Yes	83%	81%	81%	87%
*Note: Only students who applied to more than one university were asked the total number to which they had applied, and the total number to which they applied outside their home province.				
**Note: Students who said they applied to more than one university but indicated that they applied to one in total were assumed to have meant that they have applied to one university besides the one they currently attend, for a total of two.				

4.4 Contact before choosing a university

We asked students about 13 different types of contact that they might have had before choosing their current university. Most appear to have had multiple types of contact before making their decision.

4.4.1 Personal contact

Overall, about 1 student in 4 says they received some form of contact from their university before graduating from high school or CEGEP. See Table 42.

	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
Yes	26%	25%	26%	26%
No	74%	75%	74%	74%

Table 43 shows the proportion of students who rate these methods of contact when choosing their current university. Although respondents rate the method, it does not necessarily mean they had this experience.⁵

	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
b. Viewbooks, brochures or pamphlets	93%	93%	94%	93%
c. Campus visit / open house	84%	84%	85%	84%
a. Visit by a university rep. to my high school or CEGEP	77%	75%	80%	77%
h. Emails from university faculty/staff	77%	76%	80%	75%
d. Recruitment fairs	74%	73%	76%	73%
e. Meeting with univ. recruitment/admissions staff on campus	72%	73%	73%	70%
f. Calls from faculty/staff of the university	67%	68%	70%	64%
g. Calls from students of the university	67%	66%	69%	65%
j. Contact from university athletic coaches	55%	55%	56%	54%

⁵ For example, it is unlikely that 55% of students had contact with university athletic coaches. Some students most likely chose 'not very important', rather than 'not applicable' if they did not have any contact.

Table 44 shows how important each contact was in students' decisions about which university to attend. The table shows the students who rate a contact as very important as a percentage of those who offered a rating.

- Of the 84% of students who rated a campus visit or attended an open house, about 4 students in 10 say that a *campus visit/open houses* was very important in their decision.
- Of the 93% of students who provided a rating, approximately 3 students in 10 rate *viewbooks, brochures or pamphlets* as very important.
- Of those who offered a rating, about 1 student in 5 says each of *e-mails from university faculty/staff, visit by a university represent to my high school or CEGEP, and meeting with university requirement/admissions staff* were very important in their decision.
- Again, of those who offered a rating, over 1 student in 10 rates each of *calls from faculty/staff of the university, recruitment fairs, and calls from students of the university* as very important.
- Less than 1 student in 10, who offered a rating, indicates that *contact from university athletic coaches* was very important in their decision.

	All students	Group		
		1	2	3
c. Campus visit / open house	38%	42%	37%	35%
b. Viewbooks, brochures or pamphlets	28%	27%	30%	28%
h. Emails from university faculty/staff	20%	20%	22%	18%
a. Visit by a university rep. to my high school or CEGEP	19%	20%	21%	17%
e. Meeting with univ. recruitment/admissions staff on campus	18%	19%	19%	16%
f. Calls from faculty/staff of the university	15%	16%	17%	13%
d. Recruitment fairs	13%	12%	14%	12%
g. Calls from students of the university	12%	12%	14%	10%
j. Contact from university athletic coaches	8%	8%	9%	6%

Note: Percentages are based on those who offered a rating.

4.4.2 Contact through media

Most students provided a rated of the importance of various media sources when choosing their university. See Table 45.

Table 45: Considerations when choosing current university - Media (percent who offered a rating) Q9				
	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
i. University web site	95%	94%	95%	95%
k. Maclean's university rankings	79%	78%	81%	77%
l. The Globe and Mail's University Report Card	70%	70%	71%	68%

Table 46 shows the number of students who say each consideration is very important as a percentage of those who offered a rating (that is, those who had used these sources). Of the students who provided a rating:

- About 4 in 10 say the *university web site* was very important in choosing their current university.
- Over 1 in 10 say *Maclean's* university rankings edition was very important in their decision.
- Similarly, less than 1 in 10 say *The Globe and Mail's University Report Card* was very important.

Table 46: Considerations when choosing current university - Media ('very important') Q9				
	All students	Group		
		1	2	3
i. University web site	39%	38%	36%	41%
k. Maclean's university rankings	13%	15%	12%	12%
l. The Globe and Mail's University Report Card	8%	9%	7%	7%

Note: Percentages are based on those who offered a rating.

We asked students if they recall seeing any advertisements about their university. Overall, 46% of students recall seeing advertising about their university.

- Slightly less than 1 in 5 recall seeing a *newspaper ad* for their university, and a similar number recall seeing *billboard* advertising.
- About 1 in 10 recalls seeing an ad for their university on *TV*, and almost as many recall a *radio ad*.

Among the 14% who recall seeing other ads for the university, most say they saw the university’s web site, which they considered as a form of advertising.

Table 47: Recall seeing advertising through various media sources Q11				
	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
Recall any media (net)	46%	44%	41%	51%
- Newspaper ad	19%	18%	18%	23%
- Billboard	17%	12%	11%	28%
- TV ad	10%	9%	11%	11%
- Radio ad	8%	10%	6%	8%
- Other	14%	16%	13%	12%

Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore, columns may sum to more than 100%.

4.4.3 Most important contact in choice of program

We asked students to consider all contacts, academic and media, and identify which contact was the most important in their decision to attend their current university. Of these pre-decision contacts, four stand out as the most important.

- *Campus visit or open house.* About 1 student in 4 reports that a visit to the university campus was the most important contact in their decision to attend this university.
- *University web site.* About 1 student in 5 reports that the university’s web site was the most important contact in their decision. From year to year, the importance of the web site has grown among first-year students. In 2001, 9% of first-year students reported that it was the most important contact, compared to 16% in 2004.
- *Viewbooks, brochures or pamphlets.* Less than 1 in 5 reports that such materials were the most important.

- *Visit by university representative to high school or CEGEP.* Just over 1 in 10 reports that such a visit was most important.

Other reasons were most important to less than 1 student in 20 including *Maclean's university rankings edition*, *meeting with university admissions officer on campus*, and *recruitment fairs*. Other reasons (included in the “other” category) are cited by 2% or less of students. See Table 48.

	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
c. Campus visit / open house	25%	28%	23%	24%
i. University web site	18%	17%	14%	21%
b. Viewbooks, brochures or pamphlets	17%	14%	19%	19%
a. Visit by a university rep. to my high school or CEGEP	12%	12%	14%	10%
k. Maclean's university rankings	4%	4%	4%	5%
e. Meet with univ. recruitment/admissions staff on campus	4%	4%	4%	3%
d. Recruitment fairs	3%	3%	3%	2%
Other	11%	11%	13%	9%

While students who are 18 or younger are most likely to cite a *campus visit* as the single most important contact (29%), students who are 21 or older do not rely as much on such visits (11%). Older students (especially those who are 21 or older) are more likely to say that the *university web site* is the single most important contact (35%). This compares with about half as many students 18 years of age or younger (17%).

4.5 Application process

Most students report that they are satisfied with the way their university handled their application for admission.

- More than 9 students in 10 report that they are satisfied, including 6 in 10 who are very satisfied.
- Fewer than 1 student in 10 is dissatisfied.

See Table 49.

Table 49: Satisfied with handling of application for admission Q13				
	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
Very satisfied	61%	67%	60%	56%
Somewhat satisfied	32%	28%	33%	36%
Somewhat dissatisfied	5%	3%	5%	6%
Very dissatisfied	2%	1%	2%	2%

5.0 Experience prior to classes

In this section, we report that:

- About half of first-year students received advice about their program or course selection. Of those who received advice, more than 9 in 10 are satisfied.
- Students predominantly registered for their courses on-line, although some registered in person, by mail, or by phone. Over 8 students in 10 are satisfied with the process, regardless of the method they used, even though more tend to be very satisfied with their experiences registering on-line or in person.
- About 2 students in 3 took advantage of the orientation sessions their university offered. Students are satisfied with the orientation, which assisted them in a number of ways.
- Among those who attended orientation, students are satisfied (more than 9 out of 10) with how the orientation made them *feel welcome to the university*.
- About 8 students in 10 are also satisfied with the orientation in terms of *providing information about campus life, providing information about student services, helping them understand the university's academic expectations, and helping their personal and social transition to university*.
- Slightly more than 3 students in 4 say they are satisfied with the orientation in terms of *building their confidence* (including 24% who say they are very satisfied).

5.1 Help in choice of program

We asked students if, before or while registering, they received advice or help with their program or course selection.

- Just over half of students report receiving such assistance or help.
- Almost all of those students who report receiving such advice are satisfied with the assistance they received. Over 9 students in 10 report being satisfied, including almost half who are very satisfied with the help they received from their university in deciding on their program or course selection.

See Table 50 for complete results.

Table 50: University assistance regarding choice of program				
	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
Received university assistance before or while first registering Q14A				
Yes	51%	54%	53%	47%
Satisfaction with assistance received in selecting program Q15*				
Very satisfied	50%	56%	49%	42%
Somewhat satisfied	45%	40%	45%	51%
Somewhat dissatisfied	4%	3%	4%	6%
Very dissatisfied	1%	<1%	1%	1%

*Note: Only those who received assistance were asked how satisfied they were.

5.2 Course registration

We asked students how they registered at their university.

- Slightly more than 9 students in 10 registered on-line.
- About 1 student in 4 registered in person.
- Slightly less than 1 in 5 registered by mail, and 1 in 10 registered by phone.
- About 1 student in 3 registered using more than one method, including about 1 in 20 who used four or more methods.
- Students attending a Group 1 university are more likely than students in other university groups to have registered in person. On the other hand, students in Group 3 universities are the most likely to have registered on-line.

See Table 51.

	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
On-line	91%	85%	94%	96%
In person	23%	31%	22%	14%
By mail	17%	18%	17%	18%
By phone	12%	11%	11%	12%
Other	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%

Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore, columns may sum to more than 100%.

We asked students how satisfied they are with the process of course registration when they first registered. As shown in Table 52, in each case, over 8 students in 10 are somewhat or very satisfied.

	All students	Group		
		1	2	3
In person	89%	90%	89%	84%
On-line	88%	91%	89%	85%
By mail	88%	90%	89%	85%
By phone	81%	85%	82%	76%
Other	84%	87%	88%	74%

Note: Percentages are based on those who have had experience with each method of registration.

Although the vast majority of students are at least somewhat satisfied with these methods, it appears that students are more likely to be very satisfied depending on the method used. Figure 4 shows satisfaction with the process by method of registration.

- Those who registered on-line or in person are the most likely to be very satisfied. About 4 students in 10 who used these methods are very satisfied with these method of registration.
- Those who registered by mail or phone are less likely to be very satisfied. Less than 3 students in 10 who used these methods are very satisfied with them.

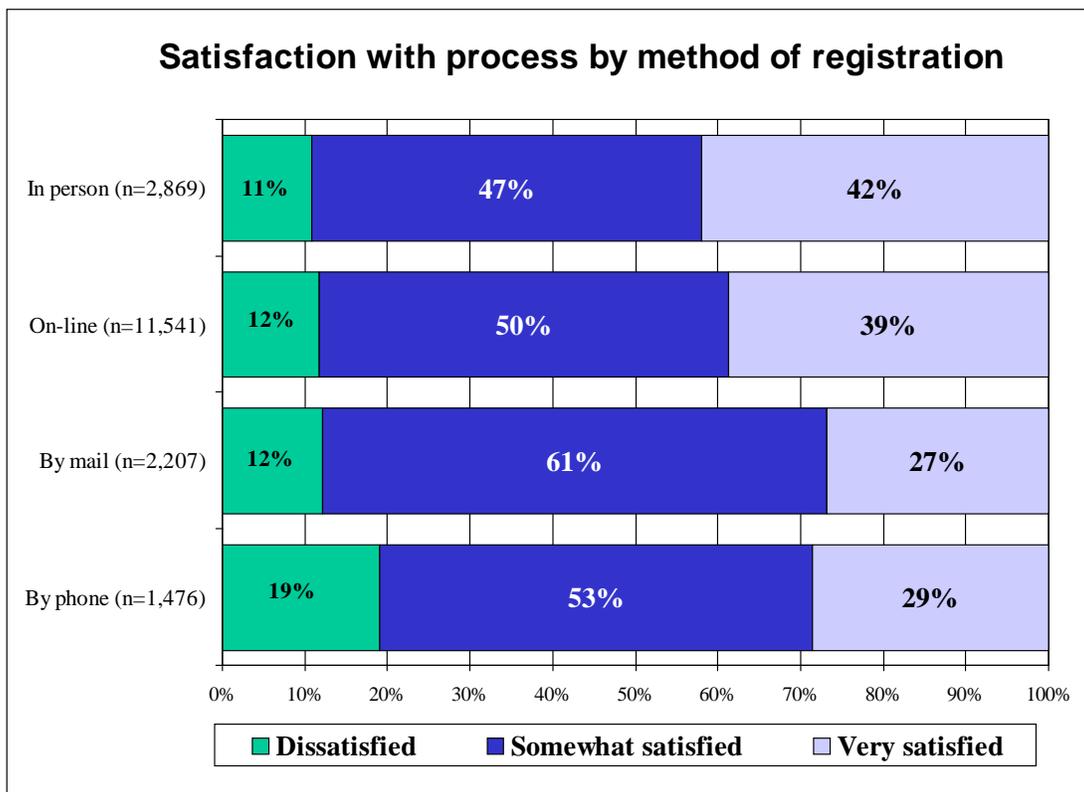


Figure 4

Just over half of the students report that they were able to register completely for the courses they wanted. About 1 in 3 students say they were able to register for most of the courses they wanted. The remaining 1 in 10 students registered in only some or none of the courses they wanted. See Table 53.

Table 53: Last fall, to what extent were you able to register in the courses you wanted? Q17				
	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
Completely	54%	56%	54%	52%
Mostly	35%	35%	34%	37%
Somewhat	9%	8%	10%	10%
Not at all	2%	1%	2%	2%

5.3 University orientation

Most first-year students participated in a university orientation program, and a majority of these students report that they had a positive experience.

- Some 2 students in 3 report that they participated in an orientation program before or after arriving on campus last fall.

Of those who participated in an orientation program:

- Over 9 students in 10 say they are satisfied in terms of the orientation making them *feel welcome at the university*, including 47% who say they are very satisfied.
- About 8 students in 10 say they are satisfied with the orientation in terms of *providing information about campus life* (including 34% who are very satisfied), *providing information about student services* (with 32% very satisfied), *helping them understand the university's academic expectations* (with 24% very satisfied), and *helping their personal and social transition to university* (with 27% very satisfied).
- Slightly more than 3 students in 4 say they are satisfied with the orientation in terms of *building their confidence* (including 24% who are very satisfied).

These findings are presented in Table 54.

Table 54: Orientation				
	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
Participated in an orientation program Q18				
Yes	66%	69%	68%	61%
Satisfaction with orientation - 'very satisfied'/'satisfied' Q19*				
a. Feeling welcome at the university	94%	95%	94%	92%
d. Providing information about campus life	86%	88%	86%	85%
e. Providing information about student services	85%	86%	84%	84%
c. Helping your personal and social transition to university	81%	82%	82%	77%
b. Helping you understand university's academic expectations	80%	80%	82%	78%
f. Building your confidence	77%	80%	77%	73%
*Note: Only those who participated in an orientation program were asked how satisfied they were.				

Older first-year students are less likely to have participated in an orientation program. About 7 students in 10 who are 18 years of age or younger participated, compared to about 1 in 3 of those 21 years of age or older.

6.0 University experience

In this section, we report on students' experience at university, including their self-assessed success in adjusting to various aspects of university life and their satisfaction with university programs, services, and faculty. In 2007, we find that:

- The vast majority of first-year students are finding success adjusting to the academic demands of university, especially understanding course content and information presented in their courses. However, some students are having less success getting academic advice and performing adequately in courses requiring math skills.
- In terms of making personal adjustments, students are finding success in most areas, with the exception of becoming involved in campus activities.
- First-year students are also having success with making practical adjustments, although some students are having difficulty finding useful information and resources on careers and occupations.
- About 7 students in 10 are satisfied or very satisfied with the concern shown by their university for them as individuals, although about 1 student in 5 is dissatisfied.
- In terms of on-campus facilities and services, the majority of first-year students are satisfied with all the facilities and services tested. As has been the case in previous years, students are least satisfied with parking facilities and food services.
- Students are generally very pleased with their interactions with faculty and staff, especially with professors being accessible outside of class.
- Overall, more than 9 students in 10 are satisfied with their choice of university, including almost 4 in 10 who are very satisfied. However, just 17% say that their university exceeded their expectations, and almost as many (15%) say it fell short.

6.1 Adjusting to university

We asked students to rate their success in adjusting to 16 aspects of university life, which we grouped into three broad categories: academic, personal, and practical. In each case, students were asked to indicate whether they had been “very successful,” or whether they had experienced “some success,” “little success,” or “no success” in adjusting to each aspect of university life.

6.1.1 Adjusting to academic demands of university

Not all students rate all aspects of university of life. Table 55 shows the percentage of students who could offer a rating of their success in adjusting to academic aspects.

With the exception of *performing adequately in courses requiring mathematical skills* (70%), 90% of students or more provide ratings of their success in adjusting to academic aspects of university life.

	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
j. Understanding content and information presented in courses	100%	99%	100%	100%
a. Meeting academic demands	100%	100%	100%	100%
f. Choosing a program of studies to meet my objectives	98%	98%	98%	98%
n. Finding help with questions or problems	97%	98%	97%	97%
h. Performing adequately in written assignments	97%	98%	97%	97%
g. Getting academic advice	90%	93%	91%	87%
i. Performing adequately in courses requiring mathematical skills	70%	68%	68%	74%

Of those who could rate their success in academic adjustment, about 9 students in 10 (or more) report having at least some success in the following areas:

- *Understanding content and information presented in courses*, including 44% who report having had very much success.
- *Meeting academic demands*, including 38% who report having had very much success.

- *Choosing a program of studies to meet my objectives*, including 51% who report having had very much success.
- *Performing adequately in written assignments*, including 36% who report having had very much success.

Of those who could offer a rating, about 8 students in 10 report having at least some success in the following areas:

- *Finding help with questions or problems*, although only 31% report having had very much success.
- *Performing adequately in courses requiring mathematical skills*, including 34% who report having had very much success.

Of those who could offer a rating, 2 in 3 report having had at least some success in:

- *Getting academic advice*, including only 23% who report having had very much success.

Table 56 shows this year's results, which are very similar to those in 2004 and 2001.

	All students	Group		
		1	2	3
j. Understanding content and information presented in courses	96%	97%	96%	95%
a. Meeting academic demands	91%	92%	91%	91%
f. Choosing a program of studies to meet my objectives	90%	92%	89%	90%
h. Performing adequately in written assignments	89%	90%	88%	89%
n. Finding help with questions or problems	82%	85%	81%	80%
i. Performing adequately in courses requiring mathematical skills	77%	75%	76%	81%
g. Getting academic advice	67%	72%	67%	62%

Note: Percentages are based on those who offered a rating.

6.1.2 Personal adjustments

Almost all students rate their success in adjusting to various personal aspects of university life, except for adjusting to *new living arrangements*, which just two-thirds of students answer. See Table 57.

	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
o. Organizing my time to complete academic work	99%	99%	100%	99%
b. Making new friends with other students	99%	99%	99%	99%
k. Feeling as if I belong at university	99%	99%	99%	99%
c. Becoming involved in campus activities	96%	95%	96%	96%
d. New living arrangements	65%	68%	66%	59%

Among those who rate their success, about 8 students in 10 (or more) report having had at least some success in:

- *Feeling as if I belong at university*, including 47% who report having had very much success.
- *Making new friends with other students*, including 46% who report having had very much success.
- *Organizing my time to complete academic work*, although only 28% report having had very much success.
- *Adjusting to new living arrangements*, including 49% who report having had very much success.

Again, among those who provide a rating, just less than half report having at least some success in:

- *Becoming involved in campus activities*, including only 13% who report having had very much success.

See Table 58.

	All students	Group		
		1	2	3
k. Feeling as if I belong at university	86%	88%	87%	83%
b. Making new friends with other students	84%	85%	85%	82%
o. Organizing my time to complete academic work	81%	82%	80%	80%
d. New living arrangements	79%	82%	78%	75%
c. Becoming involved in campus activities	46%	48%	47%	42%

Note: Percentages are based on those who offered a rating.

6.1.3 Practical adjustments

Most students—about 9 or more in 10—rate most of these practical adjustments involved in university life. The one exception is *finding suitable, affordable housing*, which only affected those who had moved (or planned to move) when attending university.

See Table 59.

	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
l. Finding my way around the campus	99%	99%	99%	99%
m. Using the library	96%	97%	96%	97%
p. Finding useful information and resources on careers and occupations	91%	91%	91%	91%
e. Finding suitable, affordable housing	59%	62%	59%	55%

Among those rating their success in terms of making practical adjustments:

- Almost all report having had at least some success in *finding my way around the campus*, including 76% who report having had very much success.
- About 8 students in 10 report having had at least some success *using the library*, including 41% who report having had very much success
- Almost 3 students in 4 report having had at least some success *finding suitable, affordable housing*, including 35% who report having had very much success.
- About 2 students in 3 report having had at least some success *finding useful information and resources on careers and occupations*, but only 19% report having had very much success.

See Table 60.

Table 60: Success in adjustments to university - Practical ('very much'/'some' success) Q20				
	All students	Group		
		1	2	3
l. Finding my way around the campus	97%	98%	97%	97%
m. Using the library	81%	83%	80%	80%
e. Finding suitable, affordable housing	74%	78%	72%	72%
p. Finding useful information and resources on careers and occupations	67%	69%	67%	66%
Note: Percentages are based on those who offered a rating.				

6.1.4 Success by discipline

Table 61 shows the one area of significant difference by discipline, in students' ratings of success adjusting to university life. In *performing adequately in courses requiring mathematical skills*, students in Engineering and Physical Science programs are more likely to report being very successful. Students in Social Science and Arts and Humanities programs report having had the least success.

Table 61: Success in adapting by discipline		
Reason	Discipline	Percent stating "very much" success
Performing adequately in courses requiring mathematical skills	Engineering	46%
	Physical Science	43%
	Overall	35%
	Arts and Humanities	25%
	Social Science	24%
Note: Table 61 excludes students who did not provide a response; overall percentages may not match those in Section 6.1.1.		

6.2 Satisfaction with various aspects of university experience

On average, first-year students report that they are at least somewhat satisfied with the concern shown by their university for them as individuals.

- About 7 students in 10 are satisfied with the concern shown by their university for them as individuals. This includes only 18% who are very satisfied.
- About 1 student in 5 is dissatisfied.
- Students attending Group 1 universities are more likely than students attending Group 2 or 3 universities to be very satisfied. This is perhaps not surprising because Group 1 universities tend to be smaller and may therefore have more opportunity to demonstrate concern for students as individuals.

See Table 62.

Table 62: Concern shown by the university for you as an individual Q21D				
	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
Very satisfied	18%	25%	16%	11%
Satisfied	52%	51%	53%	52%
Dissatisfied	17%	14%	18%	21%
Very dissatisfied	6%	3%	6%	8%

6.2.1 Academic facilities and services

We asked students to rate various academic facilities and services. As Table 63 shows, about 9 students in 10 (or more) could rate each facility or service, with two exceptions—only about 8 students in 10 rate *computer facilities*, and about 1 in 20 rates their university’s *co-op program* (which is not surprising because most co-op programs are not available to students until after their first year).

Table 63: Academic facilities/services (percent who offered a rating) Q21/Q22				
	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
q21e. General condition of buildings and grounds	99%	99%	99%	99%
q21a. Average size of your classes	99%	99%	98%	98%
q21b. Instructional facilities (e.g., classrooms, labs, equipment)	98%	98%	98%	99%
q21f. Study space	98%	98%	98%	98%
q22a. Library facilities	90%	91%	89%	90%
q22b. Computer facilities	78%	77%	79%	78%
q22p. Co-op program	6%	5%	9%	6%

The vast majority of students are satisfied or very satisfied with each of the academic facilities and services. About 9 students in 10 (or more), are at least satisfied with:

- *Library facilities*, including 41% who are very satisfied
- *Computer facilities*, including 40% who are very satisfied
- *Instructional facilities*, including 28% who are very satisfied. Students attending Group 1 universities tend to be more satisfied with the instructional facilities at their universities. More than 1 student in 3 attending Group 1 universities is very satisfied compared to about 1 in 4 of those attending Group 2 and 1 in 5 attending Group 3 universities.
- *Average size of [their] classes*, including 33% who are very satisfied. Given that Group 1 universities tend to have fewer students, it may not be surprising that students attending Group 1 universities are more likely to be satisfied than those attending Group 2 or Group 3 universities.

- *General condition of buildings and grounds*, including 30% who are very satisfied. Again students attending Group 1 universities are more satisfied with the conditions of buildings and grounds than those attending Group 2 or 3 universities. In fact, almost 4 students in 10 attending Group 1 universities are very satisfied compared to 3 in 10 attending Group 2 and 2 in 10 attending Group 3 universities.

More than 8 students in 10 are satisfied with:

- *Study space*, including 29% who are very satisfied.

About 3 in 4 students are satisfied with the:

- *Co-op program*, including 32% who are very satisfied.

Table 64 presents the percentages of those who are satisfied or very satisfied with the various academic facilities and services.

Table 64: Academic facilities/services ('very satisfied'/'satisfied') Q21/Q22				
	All students	Group		
		1	2	3
q22a. Library facilities	94%	94%	94%	95%
q22b. Computer facilities	93%	95%	94%	91%
q21b. Instructional facilities (e.g., classrooms, labs, equipment)	91%	94%	91%	87%
q21a. Average size of your classes	90%	97%	90%	82%
q21e. General condition of buildings and grounds	89%	92%	89%	86%
q21f. Study space	85%	87%	85%	83%
q22p. Co-op program	76%	78%	76%	74%

Note: Percentages are based on those who offered a rating.

6.2.2 General facilities/services

As Table 65 shows, while some facilities and services are rated by most students (e.g., campus bookstore and food services), others are rated by fewer students.

As one might expect, younger students are more likely to have used their university's residences than older students. Indeed, 45% of respondents 18 years of age and younger have used this service, compared to 12% of those 21 and older.

	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
h. Campus bookstores	98%	99%	98%	97%
o. Food services	79%	82%	82%	73%
c. Athletic facilities	56%	56%	59%	52%
g. University-based social activities	46%	49%	47%	42%
f. Parking facilities	44%	52%	45%	36%
d. Other recreational facilities	43%	42%	48%	42%
e. University residences	42%	47%	47%	32%
s. Facilities for student associations, clubs, etc.	28%	27%	27%	31%
n. Campus medical services	23%	23%	24%	21%

Of those who provided a rating, the vast majority of students are satisfied with these services.

About 9 students in 10 report being satisfied with:

- *Other recreational facilities*, including 37% who are very satisfied.
- *Athletic facilities*, including 45% who are very satisfied.
- *Facilities for student associations, clubs, etc.*, including 28% who are very satisfied.
- *University-based social activities*, although only 26% are very satisfied.
- *Campus bookstores*, including 32% who are very satisfied.

Of those students who provided a rating, over 8 students in 10 report being satisfied with:

- *Campus medical services*, including 42% who are very satisfied.
- *University residences*, including 31% who are very satisfied.

About 7 students in 10 report are satisfied with:

- *Food services*, including only 19% who are very satisfied.

As we found in the 2004 and 2001, of those students who provided a rating, their lowest level of satisfaction appears to be with:

- *Parking facilities*; just 15% are very satisfied, while 13% are very dissatisfied.

See Table 66.

	All students	Group		
		1	2	3
d. Other recreational facilities	91%	91%	93%	90%
c. Athletic facilities	90%	88%	93%	91%
s. Facilities for student associations, clubs, etc.	89%	90%	89%	89%
g. University-based social activities	89%	89%	88%	89%
h. Campus bookstores	88%	88%	87%	90%
n. Campus medical services	86%	89%	85%	84%
e. University residences	83%	84%	83%	79%
o. Food services	71%	71%	71%	70%
f. Parking facilities	61%	65%	57%	59%

Note: Percentages are based on those who offered a rating.

6.2.3 Special services

As their name implies, special services tend to be used by far fewer students. With the exception of academic advising (which 4 in 10 rate), about 1 student in 5 (or fewer) rates their satisfaction with various special services. See Table 67.

	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
q. Academic advising	39%	45%	38%	33%
t. Services for students needing financial aid	22%	25%	22%	17%
m. Study skills / learning support services	19%	21%	19%	16%
r. Tutoring services	15%	14%	16%	15%
l. Personal counselling services	14%	16%	14%	13%
i. Employment services	11%	10%	11%	12%
v. Career counselling services	10%	12%	8%	9%
k. International student services	7%	7%	6%	8%
j. Services for students with disabilities	5%	5%	5%	4%
u. Services for First Nations students	3%	3%	3%	3%

Generally, students who use these services report being satisfied with their experience. Among students who rate these services, almost 9 students in 10 are satisfied with:

- *Study skills/learning support services*, including 30% who are very satisfied.

Among those who offered a rating, about 8 students in 10 (or more), report being satisfied with:

- *Services for students needing financial aid*, including 30% who are very satisfied.
- *Academic advising*, including 33% who are very satisfied.
- *Tutoring services*, including 30% who are very satisfied.
- *Career counselling services*, including 34% who are very satisfied.
- *Personal counselling services*, including 31% who are very satisfied.
- *Employment services*, including 26% who are very satisfied.

About 3 students in 4 are satisfied with:

- *International student services*, including 29% who are very satisfied.
- *Services for students with disabilities*, including 38% who are very satisfied.

Fewer first-year students (about 2 in 3), are satisfied with the special service for:

- *First Nation students*, although 29% are very satisfied.

See Table 68.

	All students	Group		
		1	2	3
m. Study skills / learning support services	88%	91%	86%	85%
t. Services for students needing financial aid	85%	87%	84%	83%
q. Academic advising	84%	87%	85%	80%
r. Tutoring services	84%	86%	83%	84%
v. Career counselling services	82%	88%	79%	75%
l. Personal counselling services	81%	85%	82%	77%
i. Employment services	79%	79%	76%	81%
k. International student services	76%	77%	74%	77%
j. Services for students with disabilities	73%	79%	73%	66%
u. Services for First Nations students	66%	72%	68%	59%

Note: Percentages are based on those who offered a rating.

6.2.4 Use and satisfaction with services by discipline

Table 69 shows those services and facilities that students in certain disciplines are more or less likely to have used.

- Students in Engineering programs are most likely to report using on-campus *computer facilities*, while students in Arts and Humanities programs are least likely.
- Engineering, Biological Science, and Business students are more likely than students in other disciplines to have used their university’s tutoring services. On the other hand, Professional and Arts and Humanities students are less likely to have used this service.
- Students in Engineering and Business programs are most likely to have experience with co-op programs.

Table 69: Use of services by discipline		
Reason	Discipline	Percent using service
Computer facilities	Engineering	92%
	Overall	78%
	Arts and Humanities	71%
Tutoring services	Engineering	23%
	Biological Science	22%
	Business	20%
	Overall	15%
	Social Science	10%
	Professional	10%
	Arts and Humanities	9%
Co-op program	Engineering	14%
	Business	13%
	Overall	6%
	Social Science	4%
	Professional	4%
	Arts and Humanities	4%

While there are a few differences among disciplines in terms of use, there is just one difference by discipline in students’ satisfaction with their facilities or services.

- Students in Arts and Humanities programs tend to be the most satisfied with the *average size of [their] classes*, while students in Engineering programs are the least satisfied.

Table 70 shows significant differences in students' self-reported satisfaction by major or intended area of interest.

Service	Discipline	Percent stating 'Very satisfied'
Average size of your classes	Arts and Humanities	43%
	Overall	34%
	Engineering	21%

Note: Table 70 excludes students who did not provide a response; overall percentages may not match those in Section 6.2.1.

6.3 Personal safety

While about 9 students in 10 report that they are satisfied with their personal safety on campus, just over 4 students in 10 are very satisfied, which suggests that most campuses could do more to address the issue of safety.

Both female and male students appear to be generally satisfied with their personal safety on campus. That said, female students (42%) appear to be slightly less likely to report being very satisfied compared to male students (51%). While this difference is suggestive, it is not statistically significant.⁶

See Table 71.

	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
Very satisfied	44%	50%	42%	38%
Satisfied	49%	43%	50%	54%
Dissatisfied	3%	4%	4%	3%
Very dissatisfied	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%

⁶ That is, it is not statistically significant based on the criteria we have established to measure such differences. See Section 1.5 for our definition of statistical significance.

6.4 Satisfaction with faculty

We asked students to agree or disagree with a series of statements about their professors. Most students report having positive experiences with university faculty. Students attending Group 1 universities appear to be more likely than those at other universities to agree with all of these statements, although the difference is only statistically significant in one case.

- About 9 students in 10 agree that their *professors are reasonably accessible outside of class to help students*, including 26% who strongly agree.
- Almost as many agree that *generally [they] are satisfied with the quality of teaching [they] have received*, including 22% who strongly agree.
- Slightly more than 8 in 10 agree that *most of [their] professors encourage students to participate in class discussions*, including 21% who strongly agree.
- Almost 8 students in 10 agree that *at this university, professors treat students as individuals, not just numbers*, including 21% who strongly agree. Students attending Group 1 universities are not only more likely to agree (86%), but to strongly agree (31%). Students attending the larger institutions represented in Group 2 (16%) and 3 (15%) are less likely to strongly agree.

Please refer to Table 72 for results.

	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
c. Most of my professors are reasonably accessible outside of class to help students	90%	93%	91%	86%
d. Generally, I am satisfied with the quality of teaching I have received	88%	91%	88%	85%
a. Most of my professors encourage students to participate in class discussions	82%	88%	79%	78%
b. At this university, professors treat students as individuals, not just numbers	77%	86%	73%	71%

6.4.1 Satisfaction with faculty by discipline

Generally, students in Arts and Humanities and Education programs are more likely to strongly agree that their *professors encourage students to participate in class discussions*, while those in Engineering programs are less likely to strongly agree. See Table 73.

Reason	Discipline	Percent 'Strongly agree'
Most of my professors encourage students to participate in class discussions	Education	27%
	Arts and Humanities	27%
	Overall	21%
	Engineering	14%

6.5 Satisfaction with choice of university

We asked students to rate their level of agreement with the statement: *I am satisfied with my decision to attend this university*. Table 74 shows the results.

- Overall, slightly more than 9 students in 10 agree with this statement, including almost 4 in 10 who strongly agree.
- About 1 student in 10 disagrees.

While it appears that students in Group 1 universities are more likely than the other students to strongly agree, the difference is not statistically significant.

	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
Strongly agree	38%	43%	37%	34%
Agree	53%	50%	54%	57%
Disagree	6%	5%	7%	7%
Strongly disagree	2%	2%	2%	2%

6.5.1 University experience met students' expectations

We asked students whether their experience at their university had met, exceeded, or fallen short of their expectations.

- More than 8 students in 10 report that their experience at their university has *met* (67%) or *exceeded* (17%) their expectations.
- Conversely, almost 1 in 6 students reports that their experience *fell short* of their expectations.

See Table 75.

Table 75: Degree to which university experience met expectations Q29A				
	All students (n=12,648)	Group		
		1 (n=4,721)	2 (n=3,652)	3 (n=4,275)
Exceeded	17%	21%	16%	15%
Met	67%	66%	67%	67%
Fell short	15%	13%	16%	18%

7.0 Conclusion

This study involved a survey of over 12,600 first-year undergraduate students at 34 universities. As such, it is one of the most comprehensive studies conducted with first-year undergraduate students in Canada. This report provides an overview of the findings and is not intended to be an exhaustive analysis of the results. This data represents a valuable resource for further study.

Students at Canadian universities have generally had a positive experience in their first year of university. As such, these results confirm much of what we found in 2001 and 2004, the last two times a survey of first-year students was conducted. As we found in the past, students' impressions of their university begin even before classes start. Generally, students entering university report having good experiences choosing a university, registering at their chosen institution, selecting courses or programs, and adjusting to university life. Further, they are generally satisfied with the services and facilities offered by their university and tend to have very positive impressions of their professors.

For most students, the main objective of obtaining a university education is to prepare for employment. Indeed, the most important reasons for deciding to go to university are to prepare for a specific job or career or, more generally, to get a good job. While many say that attending university is about getting a good general education or developing a broad base of skills, fewer cite these as the most important reasons for deciding to attend.

When choosing a university to attend, issues about employment and career-goals appear to less important in this decision. Although about 1 in 5 says that the most important reason they chose to attend their university was its specific, career-related programs, just as many say it was because they wanted to live close to home. This may indicate that for many students, career aspirations are not linked to a particular university and, therefore, are not considered as important as other factors when choosing which university to attend.

When considering their post-secondary education, most students left their options open by applying to multiple institutions. Most say that they are attending their first choice, suggesting that multiple applications are simply a safeguard in case they do not get into their favoured university.

Applying to several universities may also indicate that students have not made up their mind about where to attend. This may indicate that contact with students prior to their making a decision is important for institutions, if they want to influence students' choices. According to students, campus visits or open houses and university web sites are the most important contacts in helping them to decide where to attend. While students say these contacts with universities are important, students may not be using them to make a decision, but rather, to confirm what they have already decided.

Most students report positive experiences in the registration process, selection of classes, and in orientation. Of these, orientations appear to play an important role in making students feel welcome, providing information on campus life, and introducing student services. Most students report that their orientations also helped them with their personal and social transition to university and helped them to build confidence. They also helped students understand their universities' academic expectations. While about 2 students in 3 go to orientations, given these benefits, more students should be encouraged to attend.

The vast majority of first-year students report that they have had at least some success in adjusting to various aspects of university life. That said, many students face challenges in making this adjustment. Fewer than 7 students in 10 feel that they have had at least some success in getting academic advice, and only 1 in 4 reports having very much success. In part, students' perceived lack of success in this regard may relate to the fact that, for many, their grades are less than what they might have expected. Overall, just 3 students in 10 students expect an A- average or higher at the end of their first-year even though 7 in 10 report graduating from high school or CEGEP with an A- average or higher.

Students report being satisfied with the academic services and programs offered by their university. They hold a similar view of their professors, whom students say are accessible, encourage participation, and treat students as individuals. In fact, almost 9 in 10 students agree that they are satisfied with the quality of teaching they have received.

Some students face challenges outside of the classroom. About 2 students in 3 report that they have at least some concern — including 1 in 5 who is very concerned — about having sufficient funding to complete their post-secondary education. In addition, many depend on numerous sources for financing their education.

In spite of these financial concerns and even though they are finding university more academically challenging than high school or CEGEP, students remain very positive about their university experience and choice of institution. Indeed, more than 8 in 10 report that their university experience has met or exceeded their expectations, and more than 9 students in 10 are satisfied with their decision to attend their current university.