

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

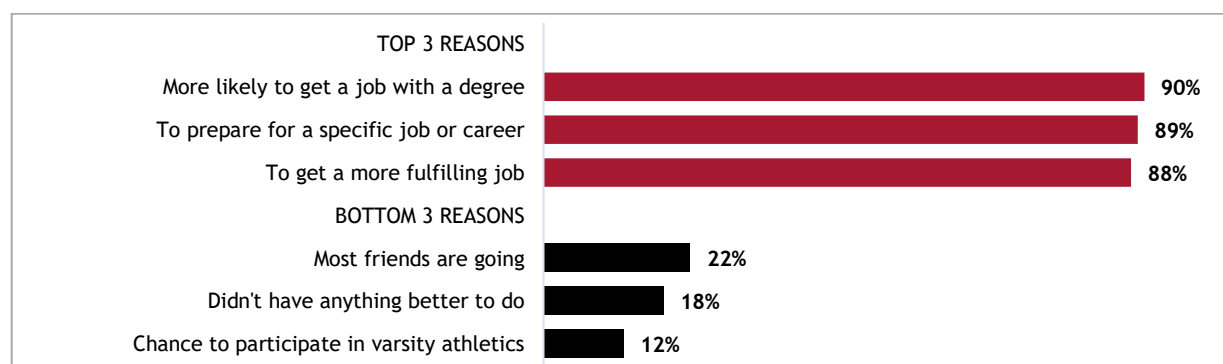
The 2025 *First-Year Student Survey* marks the 31<sup>st</sup> cooperative study undertaken by the Canadian University Survey Consortium/Consortium canadien de recherche sur les étudiants universitaires (CUSC-CCREU). Over 11,000 students from 39 universities across Canada participated in the survey.

### Profile of first-year students

- The majority of students were female, 18 or younger, single, without children, and Canadian citizens.
- Slightly less than half self-identified as a racialized person, while 5% identified as Indigenous.
- About one third of first-year students reported having a disability or impairment, with mental health being the most common.
- Students are split equally between living with family and living independently.
- One in 10 first-year students are first-generation students; that is, neither parent had any post-secondary education.

### Motivation for attending university

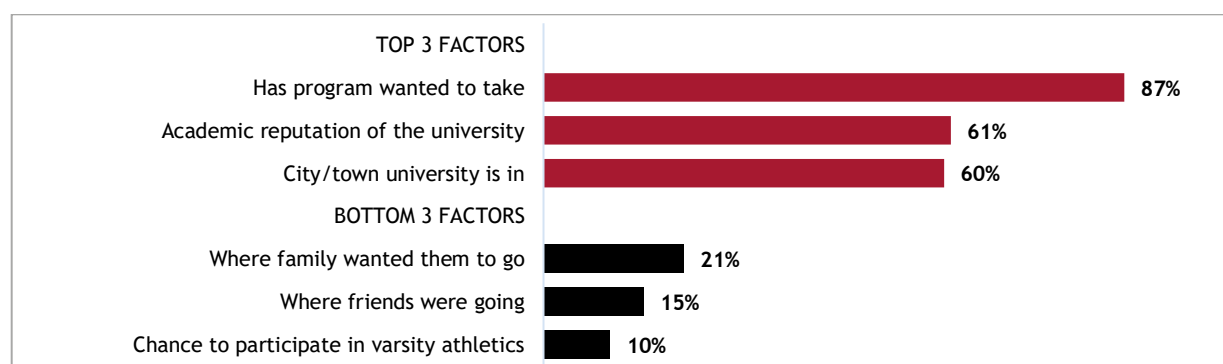
When rating the importance of 15 reasons that motivated them to attend university, the top reasons tend to be career oriented. The top and bottom reasons are shown below.



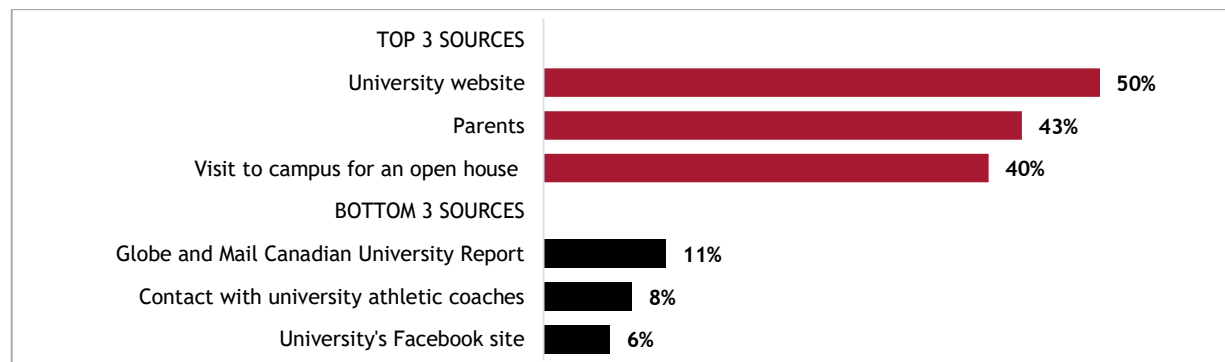
### Choosing a university

Over three quarters of first-year students applied to a university other than their current one, while 1 in 6 applied to a college. Despite this, around 8 in 10 were attending their first-choice university.

Among 18 factors for selecting their specific university, students rated *the program they wanted to take* much higher than other factors. The top and bottom factors are shown below.



Among 19 sources of information students may have used to decide which university to attend, only one source was rated as important/very important by half of students. The top and bottom sources are shown below.



## Orientation

Over 6 in 10 first-year students participated in orientation this past year. Among those who participated in orientation, most were satisfied with all aspects of orientation.

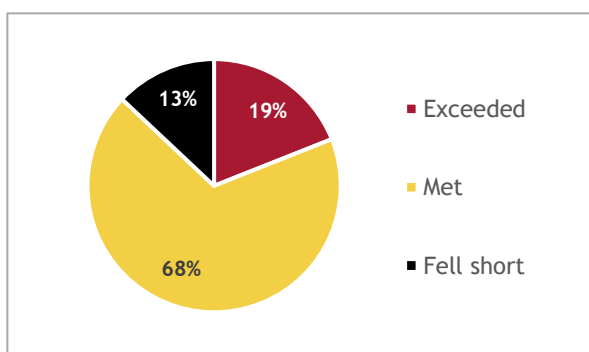
## Registration

Overall, students were satisfied with registration, with around 8 in 10 students indicating they were satisfied or very satisfied with each of two aspects.

## Expectations and experience

First-year students rated 15 experiences as to whether these were less or more than what they expected. Results indicate that students are more likely to be surprised about the academic challenges of university (e.g., *time to put into their coursework* and *how demanding their courses are*) and cost-related aspects (e.g., *cost of going to university* and *debt to complete program*).

When asked to summarize their overall experiences to date (as shown in the graph to the right), first-year students were slightly more likely to say their university experience *exceeded* than *fell short* of their expectations.



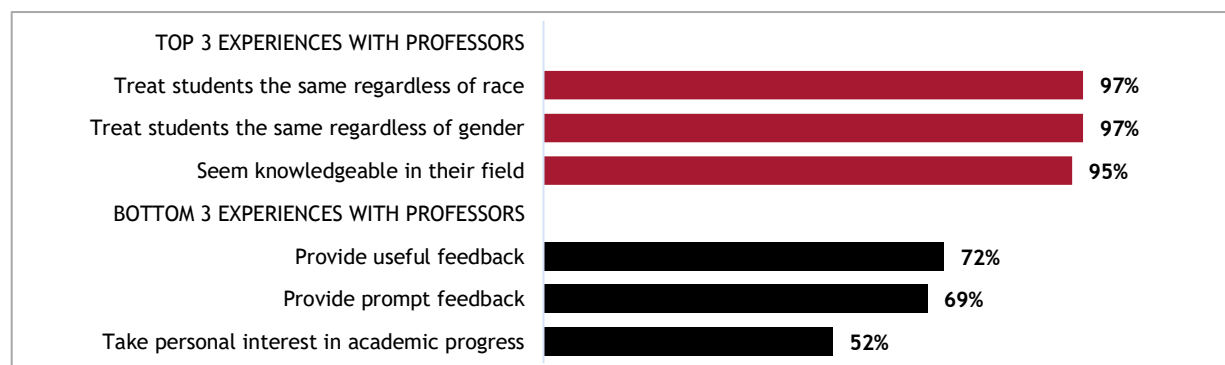
## Transition to university

The majority of students indicated they found some or very much success in each of 18 areas of transitioning to university, with the exception of *becoming involved in campus activities*.

## Educational experiences

Students rated their satisfaction with various educational experiences:

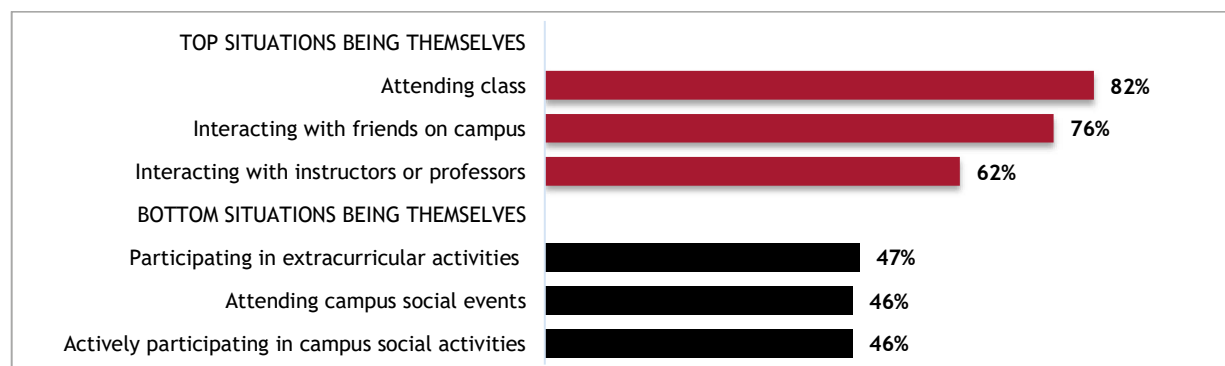
- The majority of students reported positive relationships with professors, with at least two thirds agreeing with each statement, with the exception of *taking a personal interest in academic progress*. The top and bottom experiences with professors are shown below.



- More than 9 in 10 first-year students said they *were given the chance to evaluate the quality of teaching in their courses*, although just half said they were able to evaluate the teaching in all of their courses.
- The majority of first-year students agreed that they were *generally satisfied with the quality of teaching they received*.

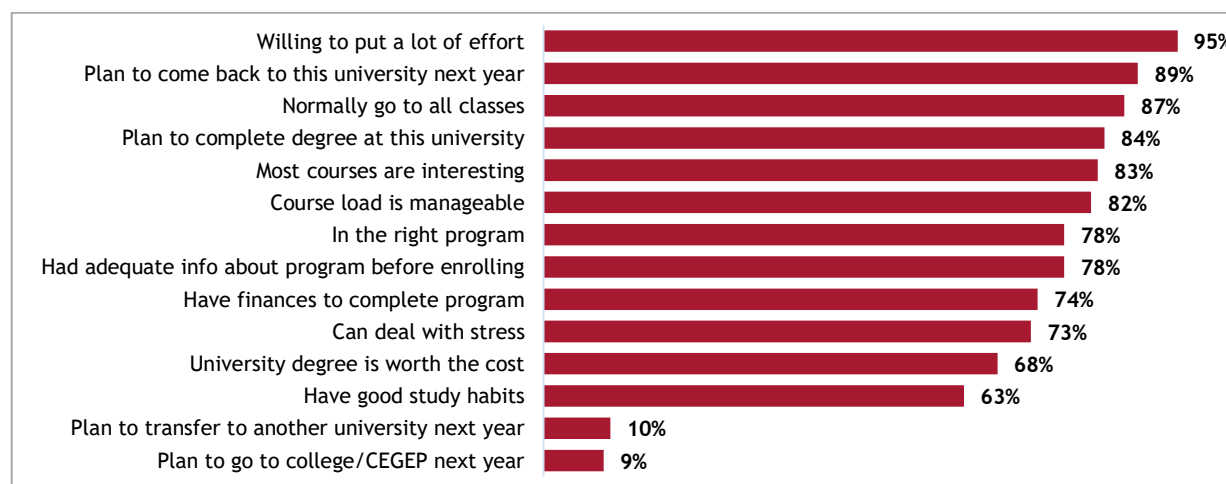
## Inclusivity

The graph below shows the most and least common situations in which students say they feel at least quite a bit comfortable being themselves.



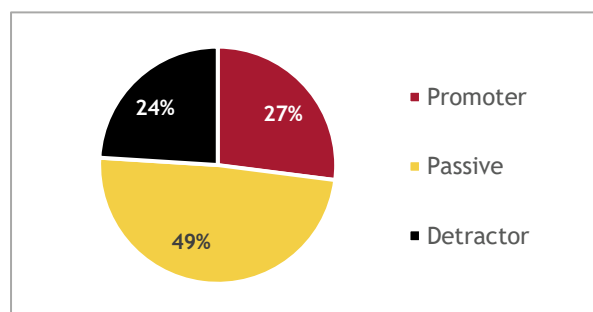
## Commitment to completion

Several measures were used to gauge students' commitment to completing their program at their university. Agreement with each statement is shown below.



## Overall evaluation of student experiences

- Almost three quarters of first-year students were satisfied with the *concern shown by the university for them as an individual*.
- Around 9 in 10 first-year students were satisfied with *their decision to attend their university*.
- Using the Net Promoter Score calculation, where detractors are subtracted from promoters, universities have a score of +3.

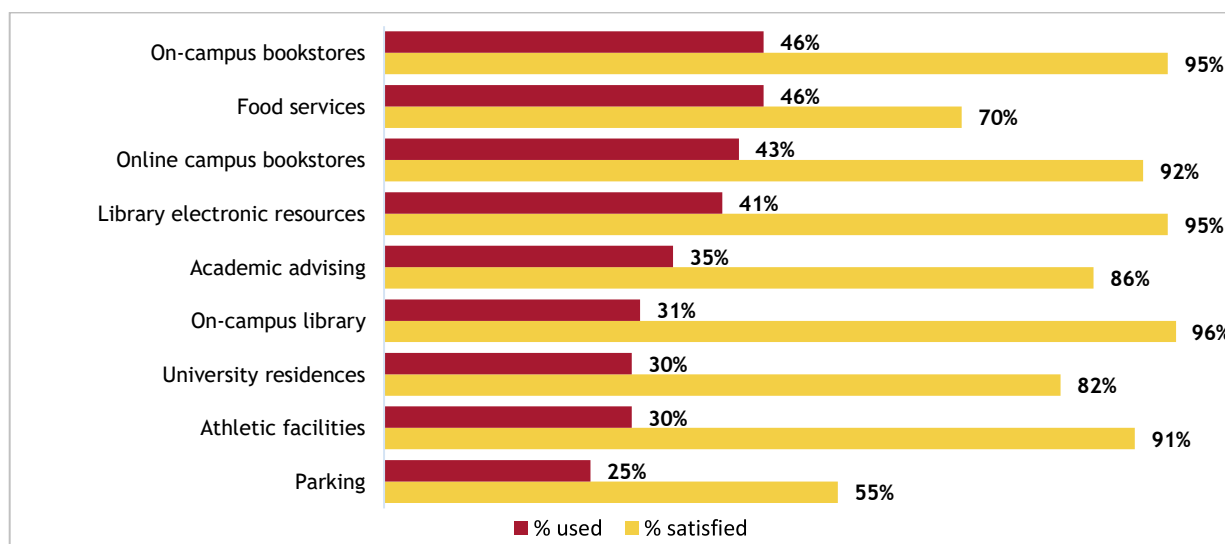


## Goal development

- Nearly 8 in 10 first-year students said they had already selected their major or discipline. About 3 in 10 were planning on applying to a professional program or graduate school after completing their degree.
- Overall, one third of first-year students have a specific career in mind, while another third have several possible careers. Despite many having a career (or two) in mind, just 1 in 5 said they know their career options very well.
- Around 9 in 10 first-year students have taken at least one step to prepare for employment or a career after graduation; most often, they have talked to people about it.

## Satisfaction with facilities and services

Satisfaction with facilities and services used by at least 25% of students is shown below.



## Academic profile

Examining students' academic profiles shows that the majority are attending full-time, began their post-secondary studies this academic year at their current university, did not transfer from another institution, and reported an average grade of B- or higher.

## Current employment

Over 1 in 3 first-year students were employed at the time of the survey, most often off campus. Among those who were employed, the typical student worked 16 hours per week, with about three times more students reporting that their employment had a negative impact on their academic performance.

## Financing education

Around half of first-year students indicated they had at least one credit card. Among those students who have credit cards, the vast majority reported that they pay off their balance each month. Among those with an unpaid balance, the average credit card debt is over \$3,800.

Overall, more than half of first-year students said they received a financial award from their university. Among those who said they received an award, one-third said they would not have been able to attend university without this financial assistance.

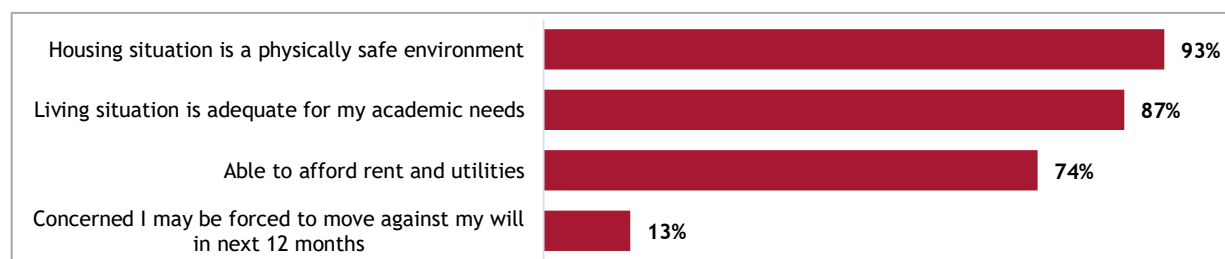
## Equity and diversity

Among all respondents, 91% identified as either a man or woman only, while 3% identified as a man or woman and at least one other gender identity, and 3% identified as at least one identity other than man or woman.

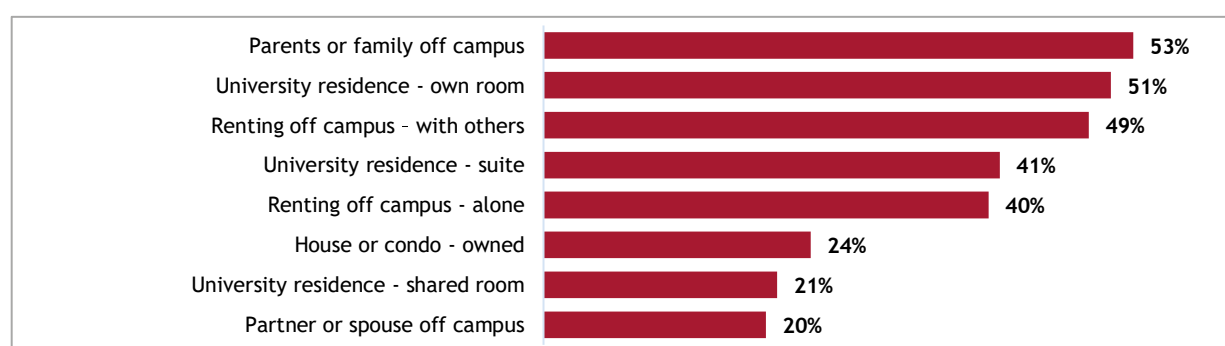
Overall, 63% of respondents identified as heterosexual/straight only, while 2% identified as heterosexual and at least one other sexuality, and 24% identified as a sexuality other than heterosexual/straight (mostly commonly bisexual).

## Housing module

First-year students' agreement with statements about their current housing situation are shown in the graph below.



First-year students' top preferences for living accommodations for 2025-26 academic year are shown in the graph below.



Those who selected an off-campus accommodation in their top three preferences for next year were asked about their anticipated costs. On average, students expect to pay approximately \$1,100 per month, with most of it going towards their rent.

Around 1 in 3 first year students were at least somewhat concerned with securing housing for the 2025-26 academic year. The most common reason for concern was *affordability*, followed by *difficulty finding suitable housing*, and *distance from campus*.

Almost 8 in 10 students expected to have housing secured by the end of their 2024-25 academic year, which includes half who have *already secured housing*.

