

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The 2026 *Middle-Years Students Survey* marks the 32nd cooperative study undertaken by the Canadian University Survey Consortium/Consortium canadien de recherche sur les étudiants universitaires (CUSC-CCREU). The survey involved 20 universities and over 8,000 students from across Canada.

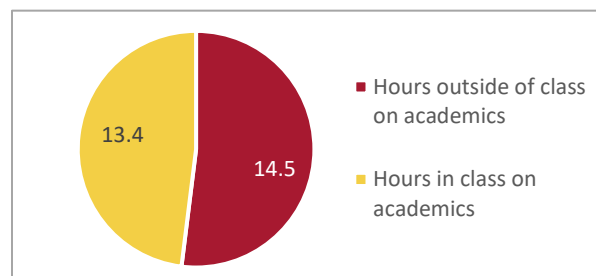
Profile of middle-years students

- The majority of middle-years students tend to be studying full-time, Canadian citizens, single, female, living separate from their parents/family, do not identify as a racialized person, 23 years old, and have a B- to B+ average.
- Over two-fifths of students report having a disability or impairment, with mental health conditions being the most common.
- Just 14% of middle-years students are first-generation students – that is, neither parent has had any post-secondary education.

Activities

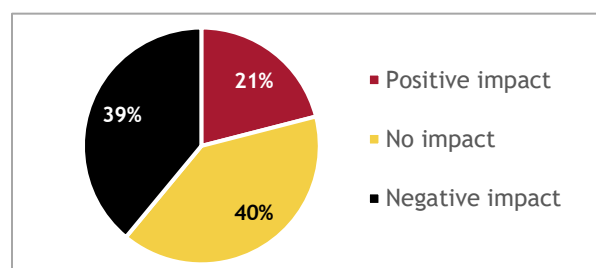
About 20% of students volunteer on or off campus for an average of three to four hours per week.

On average, students spend about 28 hours per week on their studies, with slightly more hours spent outside of class than in class.



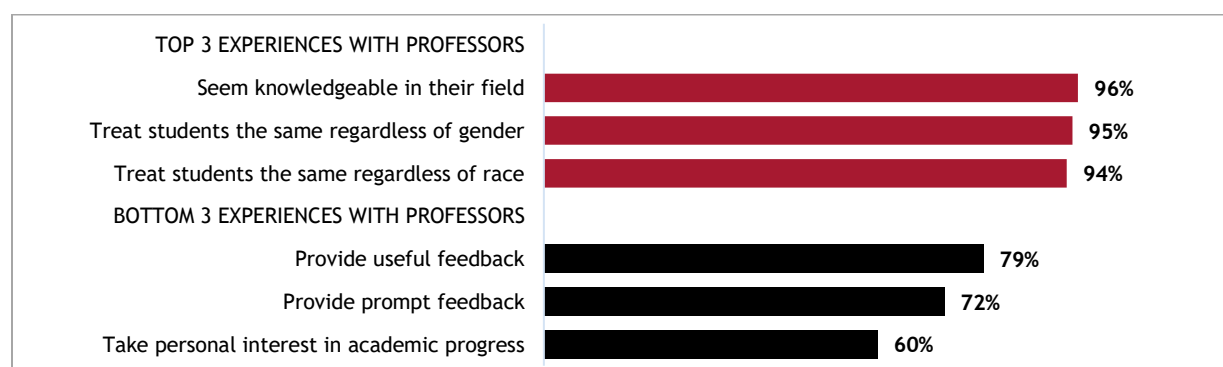
Employment

Fifty-seven percent of middle-years students are employed, working about 18 hours a week. Among those who are employed, almost twice as many say that their employment has had a negative rather than positive impact on their academic performance.



Professors and staff

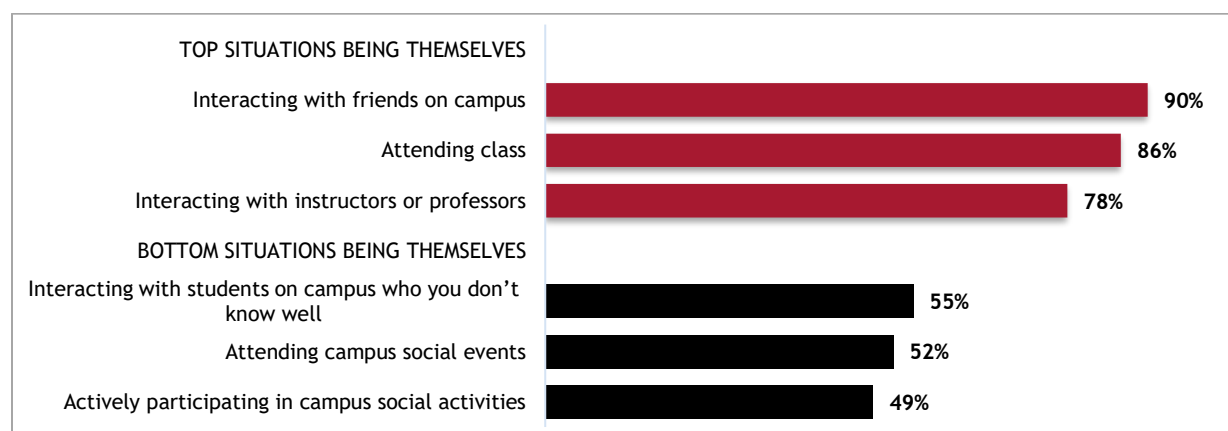
- Students reported having had positive experiences with professors, as only two out of 13 areas received less than 75% agreement – *professors provide prompt feedback on academic work* (72%) and *professors taking a personal interest in their academic progress* (60%).



- In addition, students say it is most important for professors to *communicate well in their teaching* (46% rated in their top three areas).
- Seventy percent of students said they *were given the chance to evaluate the quality of teaching in their courses* for all of their courses.
- Over 8 in 10 agreed that they are *generally satisfied with the quality of teaching they received*, including 18% who strongly agreed.

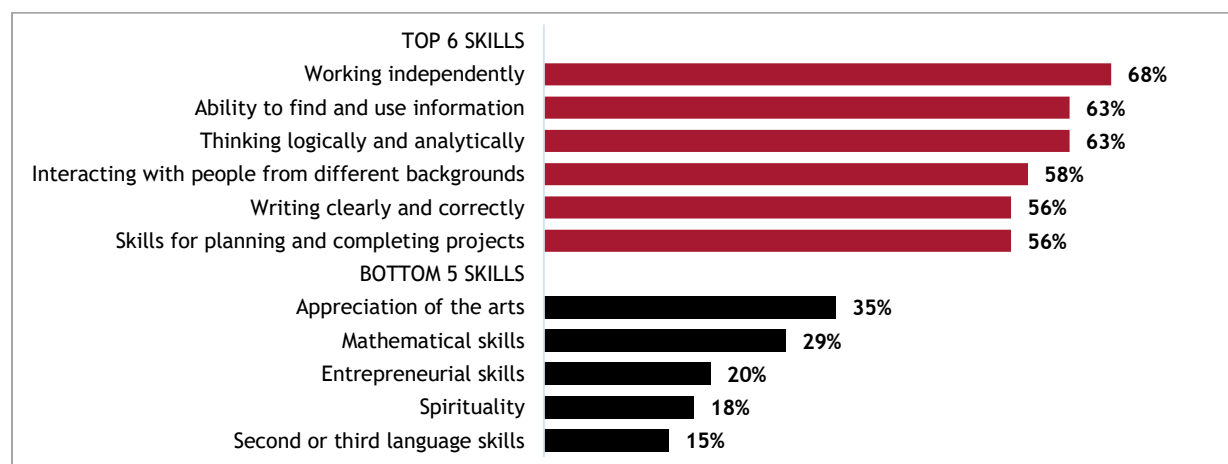
Inclusivity

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



Growth and development

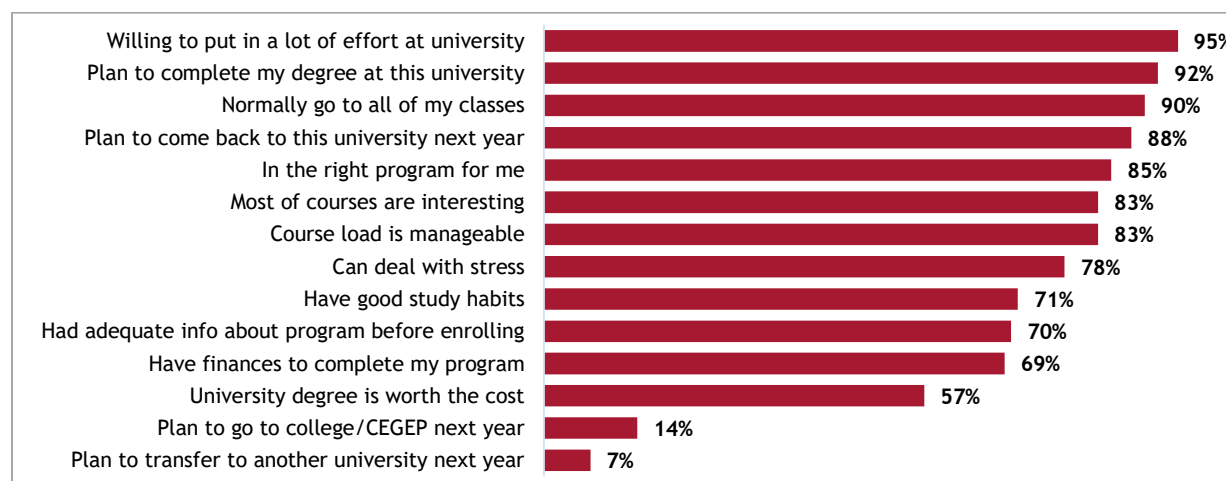
Students were asked to rate the extent to which their university experience contributed to 30 skills. The top and bottom skills that contributed much or very much to their growth and development are shown below.



Among the 30 areas, students were asked to rank the top three most important areas to which their university should be contributing and ranked *skills and knowledge for employment* (26%) highest.

Commitment to completion

Several measures were used to gauge students' commitment to completing their programs at their universities, and agreement with each statement is shown below.

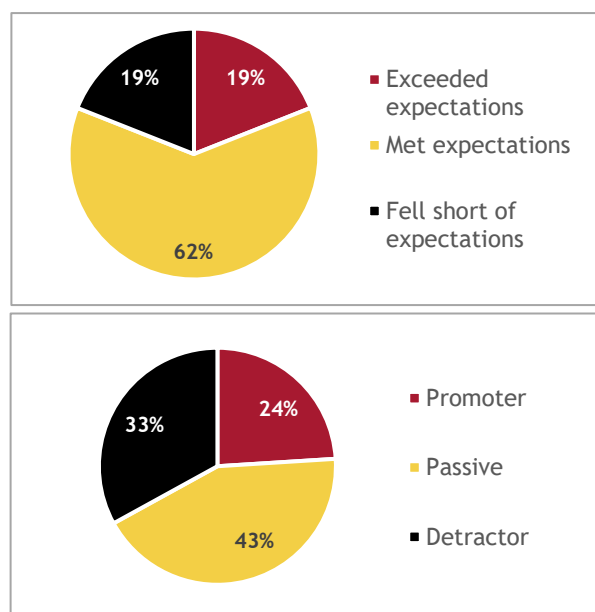


Expectations and experience

The majority of middle-years students say that their university *met their expectations*, while fewer say it *exceeded* and *fell short*.

Overall evaluation of student experiences

- Slightly less than nine in ten are satisfied with *their decision to attend their university* and seven in ten are satisfied with the *concern shown by the university for them as an individual*.
- Using the Net Promoter Score calculation, where detractors (rating of 0 to 6) are subtracted from promoters (rating of 9 or 10), participating universities have a score of -9 (24% promoters minus 33% detractors).

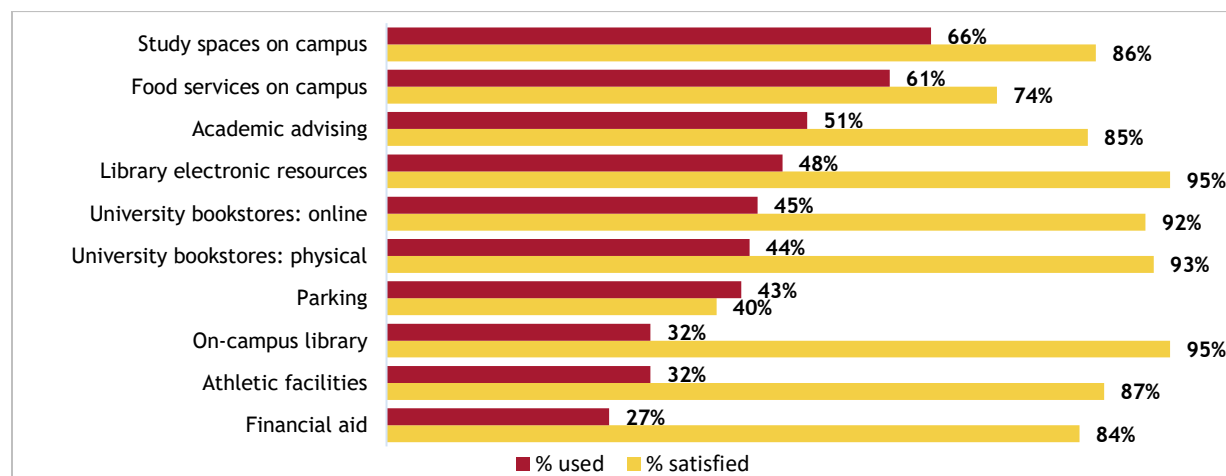


Goal development

- Eighty-four percent of middle-years students said they had selected their major or discipline.
- Middle-years students are more likely to intend to apply to a *graduate school* (33%) than a *professional program* (29%).
- Thirty-six percent of middle-years students have a specific career in mind, while 32% have several possible careers in mind. Despite many having a career (or two) in mind, just 21% said they know their career options very well.
- Almost all middle-years students have taken at least one step to prepare for employment or their career after graduation; most commonly, these were steps that might be considered casual – that is, *talking with parents, family, friends, or professors about employment*.

Satisfaction with facilities and services

Satisfaction with facilities and services used by at least 20% of students are shown below.



Finances

- Eighty-three percent have at least one credit card, carrying a balance of around \$4,000 for those with unpaid credit card debt.
- Forty-one percent of middle-years students have incurred debt related to their program, most commonly *government student loans*. The average debt among all students is over \$10,000, but this more than doubles when only those reporting debt are considered.
- Students required over \$18,000 to finance their current year of education, most commonly relying on *parents, family or spouse, government loans or bursaries, university scholarships, financial awards, or bursaries, and employment* (summer or current).

Equity and diversity

Among all respondents, 90% identified as either a man or woman only, while 3% identified as a man or woman and at least one other gender identity, and 4% identified as at least one identity other than man or woman.

Overall, 61% of respondents identified as heterosexual/straight only, while 2% identified as heterosexual and at least one other sexuality, and 27% identified as a sexuality other than heterosexual/straight (mostly commonly bisexual).

Food accessibility module

- Over half of middle-years students indicated that they used food services on campus infrequently, either once a month or less or never. Among those who used food services on campus, the vast majority (93%) said they did so because of convenience.
- Over half of middle-years students indicated that they prepared food at home daily, while another one in four prepared food a few times a week.
- About two-thirds of middle-years students indicated that they used food services off campus at least a few times a month. Two-thirds of middle-years students who used food services off campus indicated they did so because of convenience, while over one in three indicated they did so because of the food quality or cost.
- The vast majority (89%) of middle-years students have not used a food bank this academic year. Amongst the 11% who have used a food bank, around three-quarters did so because of the *cost*, while one-third did so for *convenience*.

Around three-quarters of middle-years students are either satisfied or very satisfied with food on campus meeting their dietary restrictions.

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

