2022 Canadian Student Wellbeing Survey

Research carried out by Angus Reid FULL REPORT October 2022



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Dear Colleagues in Higher Education,

We have pivoted, quarantined, adapted, vaccinated, and persevered, and now returned to campus. In prior years in this space I observed that the sector has advanced in ways that may otherwise have taken us years. While students have faced enough risk to-date, there is a new risk – that in a rush to return to normal, we lose that which we have learned and has been progressed.

This report contains the results of our second annual Canadian student wellbeing study in partnership with Angus Reid. Surveying over 1,000 current postsecondary students, this survey intends to help better understand student attitudes and feelings towards study, study patterns, expectations, and student experiences at university.

If our sector is nearing the end of the bridge, having come almost to the end and needing to move on, then students report facing similar thresholds. Stress is slightly down this year but still high, yet it is comforting to see that a majority of students are feeling engaged with their university in some way. Over half of students have personally witnessed cheating, with a larger majority attributing it to ease of doing so in a remote/virtual environment. Students continue to report benefit from peer support, confidence, and sense of belonging, but are unwilling to give up newfound flexibility, with three quarters also now employed while studying. Notably, but unsurprisingly, women share the greatest concern over study, stress, and balancing commitments, yet it is comforting to see that a majority of students are feeling engaged with their university in some way.

Overall, this year's survey does point to many positive indicators for the current student, reflecting new student expectations. Our sector has risen to meet them with more support, more inclusive treatment, and more care for our student's personal circumstances.

Let us continue to use research to inform our practices here in Canada, and further focus on student wellbeing in the coming years.

Professor Judyth Sachs Chief Academic Officer, Studiosity

Former Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Provost Macquarie University Former Pro Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching at Sydney University





Studiosity angus reid •

We are proud to be partnering with Angus Reid again this year to conduct our annual student wellbeing survey in Canada.

Stress levels amongst students are still alarmingly high. Living through a pandemic, geo-political conflicts and the ongoing effects of climate change is stressful enough, let alone coupled with the ongoing challenges our young people have in discovering their purpose and career pathway, furthering their studies and balancing this all with working and managing their personal lives.

Postsecondary students need our support and our sector continues to innovate because every student deserves the chance to achieve their best. We are now leaning into digital transformation and changing the way our support services and resources are offered, especially in a blended virtual and in-person learning environment.

The dedication of deans, professors, library and support staff, and senior leaders at our institutions across Canada shows how the higher education sector is striving to do what is best for students.

Looking forward to building on this momentum by listening to our students, doing our best to normalize help-seeking, and providing equitable support when our students really need it.

Chris Helsby

Vice-President & General Manager, Canada Studiosity



Introduction



Background

Universities and colleges around the world partner with Studiosity to provide academic writing and core skills support 24/7, connecting students to help when they need it. They currently work with 75% of universities in Australia, 21 universities in the United Kingdom, and have recently started providing support to Canadian institutions.

As of 2022, Studiosity's services are available worldwide to over 1.6 million students.

For a number of years, Studiosity has run annual Student Wellbeing Surveys in Australia and the United Kingdom, and for the second year, Angus Reid was commissioned by Studiosity to conduct this next wave of research among postsecondary students in Canada.



Research objectives

This annual survey seeks to better understand the motivations, emotions, and demands of postsecondary students in Canada, and how to better tailor initiatives and solutions. The survey investigates key areas of student wellbeing.

This year, the survey focused on topics such as student commitments, motivation, engagement with their institution, cheating, assessment, student stress, intent to withdraw, optimism for the future, study habits, and more.

In addition, specific results were benchmarked with the 2021 survey to better understand how behaviours and attitudes have changed and how these themes have shifted after year over year.



Methodology & Sample

Studiosity produced the questions for this survey and Angus Reid Forum gathered the responses from current Canadian postsecondary students via an online survey.

The survey ran from March 10 to March 24, 2022 and gained a total of 1,014 responses.

The sample frame was balanced to ensure representation of men and women in proportion to their overall share of the Canadian postsecondary student population (56% female, 43% male), as well as to ensure statistically significant representation from regions across the country.

The sample was comprised of 75% full-time students and 25% parttime students, and was conducted in English and French.

Executive summary

Students report significantly less negative impacts to in-person aspects of the postsecondary experience in 2022, but it is vital that



institutions continue to support students and their wellbeing.

The frequency of students feeling stressed remains the same

with 86% of students feeling stressed at least weekly, and 86% in 2021 as well. However, the overall level of stress is still extremely high, with 23% of students saying that they are in a constant state of stress, and 28% feeling stressed at least once daily. Students in British Colombia who said they experience stress monthly is at 12%, up from 5% in 2021.

The survey found that the majority of students are managing their study alongside other responsibilities.

Eight in ten (76%) respondents are employed in some capacity in 2022. A return to campus over the past year may have caused younger students to shift focus to their studies more full-time, as only 7% of students aged 20-21 report working full-time, down from 20% in 2021.

Nine in ten (86%) students aspire for high grades,

saying they are motivated to achieve high marks in their academic program. Students aged 26-29 appeared to be the most motivated (93%), whereas one in five (18%) students between the ages of 22-25 appear not motivated to achieve high grades.

More students are considering withdrawing from their college/university.

Two in five students (40%) reported that they have seriously considered dropping out, up 5% from 2021. This trend is particularly pronounced amongst students in Ontario (41%, up from 32% in 2021) and those under the age of 20 (47%, up from 29%).

In 2022, the majority of students report witnessing cheating.

With most colleges/universities offering a largely remote education over the last two years, more than half (54%) of students say they have personally witnessed cheating, with one-in-six (15%) saying it happens all the time. Two-thirds agree that cheating has become more prevalent with the ease of cheating in an online learning environment considered the primary culprit.

Seven in ten (68%) students believe their college/university is providing them with the skills to be successful in their future career.

Large majority of students are satisfied with their program choice, with eight in ten (81%) students reporting that they would choose the same degree/program again if they were to start their postsecondary education over again.

International students are feeling much more supported by their college/ university in 2022 than they did in 2021.

One in two (51%) of international students rate support from their institution as 4 or 5, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is "not at all" and 5 is "completely,", (up from 33% in 2021). In terms of overall wellbeing, more international students report their wellbeing as very good (20%, up from 8% in 2021).



Study stress is often caused by struggles to balance responsibilities and commitments, yet working while studying correlates with job optimism

Eight in ten (76%) respondents were employed in some capacity in 2022. When considering workload, this highlights that only 24% of students can completely focus on their studies. As found in the 2021 survey, balancing time with other responsibilities and commitments is a huge source of stress among students in 2022 as well (53%).

Yet, students not currently working are twice as likely as those with full-time jobs to be pessimistic about their employment prospects (21% vs. 11%). So, while time management can be difficult, students tend to be more optimistic about their future if they are working and studying simultaneously. Money is on the mind of students - In terms of solutions to combat stress, expanding financial aid has displaced returning to in-person learning as the most urgent priority

Overall, students continue to be divided in how supported they feel by their college/university, with male students twice as likely as they were last year to say they feel "completely" supported.

With more students returning to campuses in the past year, expanding access to financial services & aid was the top priority identified for helping students combat stress. Of this, having more access to financial services was identified significantly higher among female students (55%, sompared to 45% of male students) as a solution. Students are feeling more support from their college/university, but burning the midnight oil is still common and stressful

Nearly three in four (72%) postsecondary students say they've had to study all night without sleep at some point to meet a deadline or get through their course workload, with one in five (20%) saying it happens regularly. The prevalence of this behaviour is unchanged from 2021.

Among those who have pulled all-nighters, common reasons cited include: struggles to manage one's time (57%), struggles to balance personal life with school (54%), overwhelming course workload (50%, down 6% from 2021), and trying to balance work with school (47%, up 5% from 2021).





Student Commitments, Motivation & Engagement



The study surveyed a representative sample of students from across Canada

Student Sample

In this latest student wellbeing survey, Angus Reid ensured a representative sample of students from across Canada's higher education sector. This survey was conducted among 1,014 current postsecondary students in Canada.

The sample frame was balanced to ensure representation of female and male students in proportion to their overall share of the Canadian postsecondary student population (56% female, 43% male), as well as to ensure statistically significant representation from different regions of the country. The sample was comprised of 75% full time students and 25% part time students.

The age breakdown of survey respondents is as follows: 6% aged 18-19, 17% aged 20-21, 28% aged 22-23, 17% aged 24-25, 12% aged 26-29, and 20% aged 30+.

For comparison purposes only, a sample of this size would yield a margin of error of +/- 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The survey was conducted in English and French.

Student Breakdown

In 2022, the student respondents were:



89%

Domestic (i.e. paying domestic Canadian tuition fees)



14% Primarily French-speaking



11%

International (i.e. paying international tuition fees)



86% Primarily English-speaking



Yellow boxes represent significant differences at 95% confidence.

The majority of students balance both full time study and paid employment



Q. Which of the following describes your current education status?

75% of survey respondents attend a college/university program full time (e.g. Bachelor's, Masters or PhD program), with the remaining 25% studying part time. Full time study trends downwards as the age of respondents increases.

STUDENT SELF-REPORTED

STUDY STATUS

Q. Were you employed in 2021?

Please select the option most relevant to you.



The majority are managing their studies alongside other responsibilities. Eight in ten (76%) respondents are employed in some capacity, which includes 24% working full time, 41% working part time, and 11% working casual or temporary work.





The majority of students are motivated to achieve high grades but still look for more support and engagement

Q. Which of the following do you think would help improve your academic performance?

Select all that apply.

Two years into the pandemic, nearly half (47%) of students continue to long for a return to in-person learning, with more financial aid equally important to students with lower household income (<\$50k annual income). 24/7 online support appears especially important to those in life science/medicine programs.

Broadly, the most common responses amongst students were returning to in-person learning, more access to financial aid, and 24/7 online academic support for when students are not in class or on campus.

There continues to be a divide in priority of support measures to improve academic performance amongst age groups. Returning to in-person learning was significantly higher in importance for students aged 18-19 and 20-21 vs. students aged 26+. Students aged 26+ identified having more access to financial services and aid as a priority, with students aged 18-19 selecting the option 30% of the time. Smaller tutorials/lecture sizes was also identified significantly higher amongst students 18-23 vs. students 30+.

In terms of more student-run support groups, more male students identified it would be beneficial in improving academic performance (21%) compared to females students (16%).





Nine in ten (86%) students are motivated to achieve high grades in their academic program. Of those students who identified as being motivated, students aged 26-29+ appear to be significantly more motivated than students aged 18-23. By region, students in Quebec and Saskatchewan/Manitoba appear to be the most motivated. By language, 94% of French-speaking students said they are motivated to achieve high grades, significantly higher than English-speaking students (84%).

Returning to in-person learning

More access to financial services and aid

40%

47%

24/7 online academic support for when I'm not in class or on campus **39**%

59%

Smaller tutorial/lecture sizes

37%

More access to emotional support services on campus

31%

More student-run support groups **18**%



Highest among lower-income (<\$50k) students (45%) and those in social science programs (50%)

Highest among life science & medicine students (49%)

Highest among natural sciences* students (50%)

* Small sample size; interpret results with caution

The majority of students are motivated to achieve high grades but still look for more support and engagement

Q. Overall, how engaged with your college/university do you feel?

In terms of engagement, 61% of students report feeling engaged with their college/university at some level, with male students significantly more likely to say so at 68%, compared to 58% of female students.

Feelings of engagement do not appear significantly different by region, but students with a household income <\$25,000 feel the lowest level of engagement at just 55%. French-speaking students also appear less engaged than English-speaking students, though results do not appear statistically significant.



services

40%

38%

35%

33%

31%

27%

27%

Q. Which of the following do you think would increase your level of engagement with your

More professional development/

Improved/more social events on campus

More on-campus jobs for students

More extracurricular activities/clubs

Improved recreational facilities

More access to faculty members

on campus

More in-person classes

internship opportunities

college/university? Please select all that apply.

Ultimately, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to increasing student engagement, with at least a quarter of respondents selecting almost every option presented.

Professional development opportunities are most important to students in:

- Accounting & Finance (49%)
- Business/Management (46%)
- Life Sciences & Medicine (44%)
- Arts & Humanities (44%)

Improved social events, recreational facilities, and extracurricular activities are most likely to increase engagement among:

- Students <21 years-old
- Undergraduates
- Those in Arts & Humanities programs

OTHER, PLEASE SPECIFY [OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES]

"I'm a part-time student taking occasional and brief week-long modular classes. As such, I am not able to benefit from some of the engagement opportunities which are available to full-time students."

"Academically, I am pretty engaged, but socially, I am not: I'd probably focus more on improving the social connections between students, while keeping the academic side as is." "Organized study group sessions and essay writing parties facilitated by motivational experts, to help cut through procrastination."

"More volunteer or internship opportunities for those without prior experience." "I'm a mature student, and I certainly felt connected when I was at university when I was younger. Now in my 30s, between my jobs, school, and existing communities and social circles, I really just need to focus on my classwork."

"Events involving families (students with kids)."

"I have kids. There is little support for parents, and little supported access to other parents. I feel very alone." "Better career counselling."

More access to academic support

Improved on-campus dining options

More peer-to-peer student support

Greater sense of campus pride

Improved student union

None of these

5%

"Better online instruction."

Other

7%

27%

26%

25%

24%

Significantly higher

among students in

Atlantic Canada at 32%

22%



Academic Integrity & Cheating



More than half of students say they have witnessed some form of cheating within the past year

Q. In the past year, have you personally witnessed one of your fellow students cheating on an academic assignment?



Cheating as a self-reportable topic can have limitations and this survey, being anonymous, seeks to overcome some of these. With a focus on self-reported awareness of others rather than own behaviour, this data and survey encourages honest responses to understand the prevalence of this issue faced by educators and institutions globally.

Cheating appears to be common at Canadian colleges and universities, with more than half of students (54%) having witnessed some form of it within the year. Observations of cheating are common in BC, ON, and QC (57%) and prevalently in mathematics & physics (74%), accounting/ finance (63%), engineering (62%), and life science (62%) programs.

International students are significantly more likely (76%) than domestic students (51%) to report witnessing cheating. Awareness of cheating varies by age group, with students aged 22-23 reporting witnessing cheating the most often at 64%.



54% Yes

Verbatim comments from student respondents regarding cheating:

"Professors often expect students to be cheating in these remote study environments, and purposely increase difficulty of tests and exams. Thus honest students are indirectly punished, effectively forcing students to cheat in masses."

"For the classes that I witnessed cheating - the exam questions were set up for the class to do poorly. Too many questions for the given time, and very detailed answers required... (The profs were too concerned with students cheating in an online environment, that it literally pushed people to cheat when they otherwise wouldn't have)."

"Others are cheating, so you are putting yourself at a deficit if you don't."

Three in ten students say they would be willing to cheat if they knew their classmates were doing it

28%

Q. Would you be more likely to cheat if you knew other students in your classes did?

Total

Students under the age of 25 are nearly twice as likely as students aged 26+ to cheat if they knew others in their classes were doing so. Similarly, undergraduate students appear more likely (31%) than graduate students (21%) to cheat if they were aware of others cheating.

By student status, 30% of full-time students reported a willingness to cheat if others were, compared to 21% of part-time students.

Students who are managing full-time employment report a willingness to cheat if others were at 34%, compared to 25% of students with part time or casual/ temporary work, and 28% of students who are currently unemployed. International students and domestic students answered consistently.

Across areas of study, students enrolled in arts & humanities programs reported lower willingness to cheat if others were at 20%, compared to accounting/finance students at 34%, business/management at 28%, and life sciences & medicine at 32%.

	Yes		No		Unsure					
LIKELIHOOD OF CHEATING BY STUDENT AGE										
18-29	38 Ye		41 9	20% Unsure						
20-21	33% Yes		46% No	0	21% Unsure					
22-23	34 % Yes			5% 10	11% Unsure					
24-25	26% Yes		53% No		21% Unsure					
26-29	19% _{Yes}		70% No		12% Unsure					
30+	17% Yes		71% No		12% Unsure					

57%

15%



Two-thirds of students say that cheating has been more prevalent since the start of the pandemic

Q. Compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic, do you think college/ university students have cheated more or less often?



Two-thirds of students, including three-quarters (76%) of those in life sciences & medicine programs, agree that cheating has been more prevalent since the start of the pandemic, with very few students feeling it had become less common. Online learning appears largely to blame.

Three-quarters (77%) of students aged 18-21 believe that cheating has increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. Students aged 30+ are the most likely to report no difference to cheating, at 24%.

By language, primarily French-speaking students are most likely to report students cheating more often at 83%, compared to 63% of English-speaking students.

Q. Why are Students Cheating More?

Among those who believe students are cheating more often

A large majority of undergraduate (86%) and graduate (83%) students alike believe cheating has increased because it is easier to do so in a remote or virtual environment. Social science students are most likely to report diminished oversight from faculty (64%) and waning motivation on the part of students (62%) as potential contributing factors. Less motivation on the part of students appears to be the most common response for students in architecture programs, with 85% of students selecting it as a reason. For students in arts & humanities, the increase in cheating is reported due to the ease of cheating when completing assignments remotely/online, with 89% selecting that option.



International students report witnessing cheating more often than domestic students

Q. In the past year, have you personally witnessed one of your fellow students cheating on an academic assignment?



When considering the differences in responses to cheating between international and domestic students, international students are significantly more likely (76%) to report witnessing cheating compared to domestic students (51%), especially on occasion. When it comes to cheating being witnessed all the time, international students answered consistently with domestic students, but more

when it comes to isolated incidents.

Regarding being more likely to cheat because other students were doing so, international student responses were in line with domestic student responses at 27%.

6%

24%

Interestingly, fewer international students said that they believe students have cheated more often during the COVID-19 pandemic at 58% compared to 67% of domestic students reporting so.



2022 Canadian Student Wellbeing Survey

Six in ten students aged 22-23 feel as though feedback on their coursework has been timely

Q. This next question deals with the assessment and feedback from professors and teaching assistants in your program. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?



"The criteria used in marking my assignments has been clear in advance"



A large majority of Canadian postsecondary students (80%) agree that the criteria used in marking assignments has been clear in advance. This is especially evident amongst students aged 26-29, as well as students who are currently working full time. Domestic and international students report relatively consistent agreement with 80% of domestic students, and 84% of international students saying they agree or strongly agree.



"Marking and assessment has been fair"



Across areas of study, a large majority of students agreed that marking and assessment has been fair based on their expereince. Business/management and engineering & technology students report high levels of fairness in their programs. Students enrolled in tourism/hospitality programs, as well as those in skilled trades programs, report fairness most often on the part of marking and assessment. Students enrolled in culinary arts/catering programs report the lowest fairness, although sample sizes are small.



CHAPTER 2: ACADEMIC INTEGRITY & CHEATING

"Feedback on my work has been timely"



Student response to the statement "Feedback on my work has been timely" was the most varied by area of study. Students in life sciences & medicine programs, as well as students in social work/human services, report the lowest rates of agreement, 10% lower than the average of 68%, and 30% lower than students in architecture or skilled trade programs. When it comes to responses analyzed by age, students aged 26-29 and 30+ were significantly more likely to agree at 77-78%, compared to students aged 22-23 and 24-25 who agreed with the statement 60-63% of the time. More male students felt that feedback was timely with 72% in agreement, compared to 65% of female students.

"I have received helpful comments on my work"



Regarding receiving helpful comments on their work, responses were also varied by area of study, with architecture (94%) and fine arts/music (89%) students agreeing that they have recieved helpful feedback on their work the most often. Students in culinary arts/catering programs (54%), and students in tourism & hospitality programs (65%) agreed the least, although sample size is small for these particular programs. Majority of programs fell in and around the average of 78% in agreement.

Average of all students

78%



Student Stress, Intent to Withdraw, & Optimism



Half of students surveyed said they would describe their overall wellbeing as good or very good, up 6% from 2021

Q. How would you describe your overall well-being at the present time?

STUDENTS STATE OF WELLBEING IN 2022

51% of current postsecondary students surveyed rated their current state of wellbeing as very good or good, 34% rated it as fair, and 14% rated their wellbeing as poor or very poor. By gender, 13% of male students rated wellbeing as very good, which is a statistically significant higher percentage than female students at 8%.

Compared to 2021, there was a statistically significant increase of 6% in students classifying their wellbeing as positive, good or very good, likely in response to the 'new normal' and adapting to the current student experience. Students aged 22-23 saw the biggest increase in rating their wellbeing positively, with 14% more students selecting good or very good in 2022 compared to the previous year. Students in Quebec also rated their wellbeing as good or very good more often at 60%, an increase of 16% from 2021.



STUDENTS STATE OF WELLBEING BY REGION

BC	38% Good/Very Good		.7% Fair	15% Poor/Very Poor
AB	45% Good/Very Good	-	4% Fair	21% Poor/Very Poor
SK/MB	49% Good/Very Good		38% Fair	12% Poor/Very Poor
ON	52% Good/Very Good		34% Fair	14% Poor/Very Poor
QC	60% Good/Very Good		28% Fair	12% Poor/Very Poor
ATL	54% Good/Very Good		34% Fair	11% Poor/ Very

% OF STUDENTS STATING WELLBEING VERY GOOD/GOOD BY INCOME





By language, 58% of French-speaking students stated their wellbeing as good or very good, an increase of 13% from 2021 compared to only a 5% increase amongst English-speaking students in 2022.

Regional variances were identified with students in Quebec, Ontario, and Atlantic provinces stating their wellbeing more positively as very good or good, especially compared to students in Alberta and British Columbia. There appears to be a statistically significant difference by household income, as students with household incomes >\$50k rating their wellbeing most positively. By area of study, students enrolled in social science programs appear to rate their wellbeing least positively, with 41% of students rating their wellbeing good or very good, which is 10% lower than average.

On average, students rate their state of happiness, as well as their state of anxiety, six out of ten



Q. Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?

When looking at self reported happiness, on average students chose 6/10 with the highest number of students selecting between 6/10 to 8/10. More frequently did male students choose 10/10, with a statistically significant increase of 8% over female students. Students who are working full time jobs chose 9/10 or 10/10 more frequently, and with statistical significance, compared to students who are working casual/ temporary jobs and students who are currently unemployed. At the other end of the scale, 3% of total students did not feel happy at all, yet 5% of international students also chose that same option.



Q. Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?

Regarding current levels of anxiety, on average students also chose 6/10 with the highest number of students selecting between 6/10 to 8/10. When looking at the middle of the scale, students aged 22-23 chose 5/10, 21% of the time, and 10% higher than the average. More students that are currently working full-time chose an anxiety level of 10/10 (12%) compared to students working casual or temporary work (3%) or not employed at all (6%), which could reflect the impact competing priorities has on student anxiety.

Seven in ten students say the coronavirus pandemic had a negative impact on their college/university experience

27% Significant negative impact (31% in 2021) 43% moderate negative impact (42% in 2021) 16% not impacted (15% in 2021) 10% moderate positive impact (9% in 2021) 3% significant positive impact (3% in 2021)

Q. What impact, if any, has the coronavirus pandemic had on your college/university experience?

Unsurprisingly, after another year the coronavirus pandemic continued to have a negative impact on the college/university experience, with over half of students saying it has done so significantly, despite a slight decline from 2021. Groups most likely to say the pandemic has had a net negative impact on their college/university experience are Atlantic Canadians (82%) and arts/humanities students (80%). By region, there was a 14% decrease in students in Alberta reporting a negative impact on their experience, and a 12% increase in reporting positive impact on their experience in 2022.

Q. How has the coronavirus pandemic negatively impacted your college/university

experience? Select all that apply.

Since last year, there has been a significant decline in the proportion of students expressing a negative impact on various in-person aspects of the university experience, including face-to-face time with academics, lectures and extracurricular activities. The biggest change in findings from 2021 results is the impact on classes having moved online, with 13% fewer students selecting this option, signaling this is now the norm. In terms of time spent on campus, 2022 results remained fairly consistent.

		2021	Male	Female	18-19*	20-21	22-23	24-25	26-29	30+
I've had significantly less face-to-face contact with academics	72%	77%	68%	74%	84%	78%	77%	71%	55%	65%
Most or all of my courses have been moved online	67% 🖊	79%	64%	68%	72%	75%	70%	66%	53%	60%
I've spent significantly less time on campus	65%	68%	61%	67%	70%	73%	68%	64%	52%	62%
I've struggled to meet new people/make friends	64%	69%	61%	67%	75%	82%	70%	58%	54%	47%
I haven't been able to participate in the extracurricular activities that I want to	54% 🖊	59%	52%	54%	60%	60%	56%	52%	50%	44%
I've struggled to get adequate mental health support	36%	34%	29%	40%	44%	41%	38%	33%	36%	27%
I've struggled to get adequate academic support	34%	36%	32%	35%	36%	41%	27%	28%	32%	44%
I've lived at home when I hadn't planned to	20% 🜉	27%	20%	20%	15%	24%	22%	25%	15%	14%
I've struggled to get adequate health services	17%	15%	13%	20%	13%	18%	20%	13%	15%	17%
I've stayed in university accommodation when I hadn't planned to	5%	3%	6%	3%	4%	9%	5%	4%	3%	3%

Significantly higher/lower at 95% confidence

Significantly higher/lower than 2021 at a 95% confidence level

Seven in ten students say the ongoing coronavirus pandemic had a negative impact on their college/university experience

Q. How has the coronavirus pandemic negatively impacted your college/university experience? [Continued]

OTHER, PLEASE SPECIFY [SAMPLE OF OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES]



One in two students say balancing commitments and schoolwork is one of the most stressful parts of postsecondary

Q. What do you find are the most stressful parts of your college/university experience?

Select all that apply.

STRESSFUL PARTS OF STUDENT EXPERIENCE BY DEMOGRAPHICS

	2022	2021	Male	Female	18-19*	20-21	22-23	24-25	26-29	30+
Balancing work or social commitments & schoolwork at the same time	53%	53%	48%	57%	62%	58%	55%	55%	45%	45%
The amount of studying required	49% 🖶	57%	44%	53%	70%	60%	53%	50%	34%	35%
Paying for college/university	46%	43%	41%	50%	37%	42%	44%	55%	45%	47%
Transition to online learning during the pandemic	34% 🖶	47%	34%	34%	32%	37%	37%	36%	28%	29%
Academic subject matter is challenging	33%	37%	29%	36%	47%	43%	31%	27%	25%	33%
Making new friends	33%	34%	30%	35%	42%	47%	38%	27%	19%	23%
Dealing with more responsibility on my own	31%	35%	30%	32%	39%	41%	32%	22%	29%	26%
Not knowing where to go for support if I have problems	25%	28%	24%	26%	25%	33%	25%	21%	28%	22%
Referencing sources correctly in my academic work	22% 📕	27%	18%	24%	21%	27%	21%	16%	23%	21%
Feeling alone when I have to study at night	20% 棏	24%	18%	21%	16%	23%	21%	15%	19%	20%
Being away from friends or family	20%	22%	20%	21%	30%	21%	21%	16%	16%	23%
		Significantly higher/lower at 95% confidence				₽₽	5		gher/low confiden	

In the past year, there has been a significant decline in the proportion of students reporting being stressed out by online learning or the amount of studying required for their program. Across a number of stressful aspects of the college/university experience, female students and younger students report more likely to express feelings of stress.

STRESSFUL PARTS OF STUDENT EXPERIENCE BY ENROLLMENT TYPE

	2022	2021	Domestic	International	Diploma/ Certificate	Undergrad	Graduate
Balancing work or social commitments & schoolwork at the same time	53%	53%	54%	41%	39%	57%	58%
The amount of studying required	49% 🜉	57%	50%	36%	42%	57%	34%
Paying for college/university	46%	43%	46%	48%	40%	47%	50%
Transition to online learning during the pandemic	34% 🛡	47%	35%	25%	38%	34%	26%
Academic subject matter is challenging	33%	37%	33%	33%	24%	37%	32%
Making new friends	33%	34%	33%	36%	28%	38%	26%
Dealing with more responsibility on my own	31%	35%	31%	32%	32%	31%	28%
Not knowing where to go for support if I have problems	25%	28%	25%	28%	24%	26%	24%
Referencing sources correctly in my academic work	22% 🜉	27%	22%	21%	20%	24%	16%
Feeling alone when I have to study at night	20% 🖊	24%	20%	15%	18%	21%	19%
Being away from friends or family	20%	22%	18%	39%	17%	21%	22%
			-				

Significantly higher/lower at 95% confidence

Significantly higher/lower than 2021 at a 95% confidence level

Across many of the common stressful aspects that postsecondary students experience, domestic students express significantly more stress than international students, though international students are twice as likely to say it has been difficult for them being away from their friends/family.

Expanding access to financial services & aid has replaced a return to inperson learning as the priority for helping students combat stress

50% More access to financial services & aid 43% 45% Returning to in-person learning 58% 24/7 online academic support for when I'm not in class or 39% 38% on campus 35% Smaller tutorial/lecture sizes 38% 32% More access to emotional support services on campus 30% 2022 20% More student-run support groups 2021 22% Significantly higher/lower than 2021 at a 95% confidence level

Q. What do you think could help combat many of these issues?

With more students returning to campuses in the past year, expanding access to financial services & aid has replaced a return to in-person learning as the greatest priority for helping students combat stress. More access to financial services and aid was significantly higher among female students (55%, vs. 45% of male), and returning to in-person learning was significantly higher among male students (50%, vs. 41% of females) and students aged 18-19 (61%). When it comes to smaller tutorial/lecture sizes, female students chose this option significantly more often (42%, vs. 35% of male students).

OTHER, PLEASE SPECIFY [OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES - MORE IN APPENDIX]

"Complete overhaul of my program. It's operating on outdated assumptions about course load and student life, and clearly hasn't considered the student experience in the program planning." "The solutions seem too far to know what to do because Alberta Education has allowed a deviation so far from normal." "You keep mentioning returning to in-person but I'm much better mentally when lectures are online - I would rather not have to worry about the health of my friends and family in addition to my work and studies."

"Access to online classes even if the class has come back in person. I struggle with my health and pain, I can't always drive."

"Cheaper costs of living so I don't

have to work so much".

"Free University so I wouldn't have to worry so much about putting my family in massive debt in the future. Or grants for parents."

"More constructive tests and exams, maybe some study or help sessions, less long 3+ hour exams."

"Lower tuition, more understanding of the schedule of working professionals."

> "Make sure students really grasped/ comprehend the knowledge that they were taught."

Not forcing a return to in-person learning. Keeping it a choice if you want to go in or not."

"Hybrid style classes / No in-person attendance marks for lectures or tutorials - (All classes and labs should be able to be accessible and completed at least in part on-line.)" "Increasing the time limit of the degree (so I can take less courses per semester). Or allow me to take more than 2 courses per semester so I can quickly finish the degree."

"Continue to offer all classes remotely. In person class offers me no additional benefits but does cause significant stress trying to commute in rush hour traffic."

"We need guidance. We need supervisors who actually supervise: give us goals help nudge us along and sometimes just tell us it will be ok." "Lighter workloads, end-ofyear assignments instead of exams, fewer required course, more interactive learning instead of only lectures, and a lower cost of schooling."

Three of five students aged 18-21 and one-in-two students 22+ report feeling stressed every single day

Q. On average, how often do you feel stressed by studying/schoolwork?

While nearly all postsecondary students experience stress at least occasionally, there are stark differences in frequency between younger and older students: 62% of students aged 18-21 say they feel stressed by studying/schoolwork every single day, compared to 48% of students aged 22+. Female students are significantly more likely than male students to say they feel constantly stressed (27% vs. 18%, respectively). Students aged 18-19 (37%) are most likely to express that they feel constantly stressed. Full time students (25%) appear more consistently stressed compared to part time students (15%), as well as undergraduate students (26%) and students enrolled in life science & medicine (28%), natural sciences (30%), and social sciences (27%) programs.





Students continue to be divided in how supported they feel by their college/university

Q. On a scale of 1 to 5, how supported do you feel by your college/university?

Overall, students continue to be divided in how supported they feel by their college/university, with male students twice as likely (13% vs. 7% in 2021) as they were last year to say they feel completely supported. Students aged 24-25 also report feeling more supported than the average, and are three times more likely to report feeling fully supported compared to last year (10% vs. 3% in 2021).

Students in British Columbia stood out in 2021 as being by far the most satisfied with the level of support they have received from their college/ university, but this difference seems to have evaporated in 2022.



SUPPORT AGREEMENT BY REGION



Q. On a scale of 1 to 5, how supported do you feel <u>by the existing student support services</u> at your college/university?



STUDENT SERVICES SUPPORT AGREEMENT BY AGE

Generally, the majority of students rated the support they receive through student support services at 3/5. Students aged 26-29 and 30+ report feeling more completely supported at 12%. In the top two boxes, primarily English-speaking students felt more supported at 28%, compared to 17% of primarily French-speaking students. Students with a household income <\$25k report feeling less supported at 32% for the bottom two boxes, compared to those with household incomes between \$25-50k (26%), and >\$50k (21%).

Two in five students have seriously considered withdrawing from their college/university, up five percentage points from 2021

Q. [Agreement] I have seriously considered dropping out of university.



Two in five (40%) students have seriously considered dropping out of their college or university program, up five percentage points from last year. Ontario appears to be driving this increase (41%, up from 32% in 2021).

J%

аагее

Nearly half (47%) of students aged 18-19 have seriously considered dropping out of university, a substantial increase from 2021 (29%), and there is a significant increase in agreement from 2021 among full-time students (38%, up from 31%).

CONSIDERATION OF WITHDRAWING BY TRACKED DEMOGRAPHICS



Much like the increase amongst students aged 18-19, students aged 26-29 also report that they have seriously considered withdrawing from their college/university more in 2022, at 48% up 13% from 2021. Students aged 18-19 tend to be more sure of their responses in 2022, with a decrease of 13% in the "don't know/not sure" category, more than any other age group surveyed. In 2022, more female students report having considered withdrawing at 41%, compared to 37% of male students, with the same proportions selecting the "don't know/not sure" option.



AGREEMENT CONSIDERATION OF WITHDRAWING BY AREA OF STUDY

Two-thirds of students remain at least somewhat optimistic about their employment outlook after college/university

Q. Thinking about the future, how optimistic or pessimistic are you about your job prospects after leaving college/university?

Nearly two-thirds of Canadian postsecondary students remain at least somewhat optimistic about their employment outlook after college/ university, with a modest increase since last year in the proportion describing themselves as "very optimistic".

There continues to be a clear divide between students who already have full time/part time jobs and those who do not. Optimism is higher among those with full time (71%) and part time (65%) jobs, and students not currently working are twice as likely as those with full time jobs to be pessimistic about their postgraduation employment prospects (21% vs. 11%).



Q. Thinking about the future, how optimistic or pessimistic are you about your job prospects after leaving college/university?

their job prospects.

VERBATIM [OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES - MORE IN APPENDIX]

"More connection with partner companies to help graduated students find more job opportunities in shorter time, more guidance towards their career, offer more post-graduate assistance on their first years in the work field."

"The long term sustainability promised by the university is not reflected in the jobs/ partnership with coop programs available. There are way too few green economy jobs."

"Giving us a real job shadowing experience."

"More networking events and education about finding work post-graduation (workshops etc)."

"The best offer that "Give me better college/university opportunities in mv could make is to teach final year to ease the the students all the transition into getknowledge that they ting a job, be it more need for their future co-op opportunities job. Only the merits of or more internship the students can make opportunities" them optimistic about

> "More assistance with employment post graduation."

"I'm a mature student, and I certainly felt connected when I was at university when I was younger. Now in my 30s, between my jobs, school, and existing communities and social circles, I really just need to focus on my classwork."

"Focused job opportunities that cater to students strengths."

Q. If you could start all over again, how likely is it that you would choose the same degree/program again?



Overall, 80% of Canadian postsecondary students say they would likely choose their same degree or program again.

Substantially more students in business/management programs say they would not be likely to choose the same degree/program if they could do it over (25%). Students in engineering/technology programs are significantly more likely (45%) than those in life sciences (29%) and natural science (30%) programs to say they would very likely choose the same degree over again.

Two-thirds of students remain at least somewhat optimistic about their employment outlook after college/university

Q. [Agreement] Physical university campuses will still exist in 20 years' time.



Q. Finally, how do you think colleges & universities will evolve in the next five years?

VERBATIM [OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES - MORE IN APPENDIX]

"Probably will continue to offer hybrid (remote and in-person learning). "As the pandemic seems to "A return to campus, but greater "Colleges and universities be declining. Hopefully more ability to create online materials. I would most likely transition college/university activities think campuses are going to struggle More adult students. Less to Online Environments to rebuild the university experience that existed before." and programs will transition to funding for humanities and maybe be apart of the in-person and more students research. Increase co-op opportunities." "Metaverse" more often for and teachers will be more remote learning." motivated to continue on "Becoming more flexible. after what we have all had to Also greater focus on mental go through with regards to health and gender related COVID-19." "A lot more transition to online learning." violence." "Hopefully no more exams" "Considering strategic planning and course development through a climate change lens." "Hopefully reducing cost and stress levels of students trying to balance life expenses and school." "Future educators will "Due to shortfalls in funding, have to face the fact universities will use on-line

Due to shortpatts in funding, universities will use on-line learning more to reduce expenses and increase revenue. There will be less faculty, less critical thinking and more focus on skills versus education." "Future educators will have to face the fact that students will need (and want) to learn in a flexible, personalized format"

"Considering strategic planning and course development through a climate change lens."

"Hopefully, more access to online/off-campus classes and services. Beyond the importance of having this be expanded and implemented in the context of the pandemic, I believe that this is important to have a permanent option for disabled students, those with illnesses, etc. Putting those with different abilities and needs as a priority, in my opinion, can improve the university experience for all (professors, students, etc.)." "Hopefully, with greater flexibility surrounding in person and remote class options. Ideally there will also be more accountability for the quality of teaching as well. It can be much more difficult to learn online, but some professors teach very effectively online, and some do not teach very effectively either in person or online."



Study Habits & Transitioning to Postsecondary



Male students spend 3 hours per week studying compared to 3.5 hours spent by female students



Q. Generally speaking, when do you do most of your studying...?



Three in four students say they have had to study all night without sleep to meet a deadline or get through their course workload

Q. Have you ever had to study all night without sleep (pull an all-nighter) to get through your course workload or meet a deadline?



Nearly three in four postsecondary students say they have had to study all night without sleep at some point to meet a deadline or get through their course workload, with one in five saying it happens regularly. The prevalence of this behaviour is unchanged from last year. Among those who have pulled all-nighters, common reasons cited include: struggles to manage one's time (57%), struggles to balance personal life with school (54%), overwhelming course workload (50%, down 6% from 2021), trying to balance work with school (47%, down 5% from 2021).



Three in ten students report feeling anxious as a result of studying alone, seven-in-ten students aged 18-19 considered dropping a course

Q. How does studying by yourself make you feel? Select all that apply.

While more students report feeling comfortable studying alone in 2022 (45%, compared to 34% in 2021), current students continue to report feeling unmotivated, anxious, isolated, and self-doubtful.

While frequency of students reporting anxiety as a result of studying alone has decreased for students aged 22-23 (28%, compared to 38% in 2021), more students aged 30+ report feeling anxiety at 34%, compared to 22% in 2021.

By region, students in Ontario less frequently report feeling unmotivated as a result of studying alone at 32%, compared to 43% in 2021. Fewer students in Quebec report feeling isolated at 21%, down 11% from previous year. Generally, Quebec students also report feeling more comfortable studying alone in 2022 at 43%, compared to 30% in 2021.

COMFORT STUDYING ALONE BY AREA OF STUDY



None of the above - I am comfortable studying by myself





Q. Have you considered dropping a course as a result of struggling with studying alone?



On average, 55% of students would agree that they had considered dropping a course as a result of struggling studying alone. The biggest variance in agreement was amongst students aged 18-19, who agreed 70% of the time, a statistically significant increase compared to students aged 20-29. Students aged 30+ also report considering dropping a course due to struggles studying alone at a higher rate of 60%.

By region, students in Quebec showed the lowest rate of consideration at 44%, and students in Ontario showed the highest rate of consideration at 61% responding yes, at least once or twice.

Comparing year over year results shows a statistically significant change in consideration amongst French-speaking students at 37% in 2022, down 19% from 56% in 2021.

Almost one in two students aged 20-21 say 24/7 access would make them more inclined to use student support services

Q. What would make you more inclined to use student support services? *Select all that apply.*

While 57% of students say that having access to flexible channels would make them more inclined to use student support services, domestic students (59%) and female students (62%) selected this option most frequently, compared to 47% of international students and 51% of male students. Flexible channels appears to be the most benefical for students in accounting/finance (72%), as well as life science/medicine programs (66%).

24/7 access was selected 40% of the time, yet students aged 20-21 chose this option the most often at 46%, significantly higher than students aged 22-23 at 34%. By area of study, students in mathematics and physics programs reported 24/7 access as a means to encourage use of student support services at 59%, compared to just 12% of tourism and hospitality students.



Q. How would you feel about on-demand, 24/7 online study support from a real person?



In total, 22% of students say they have access to a 24/7 online study support service and the proportion of students who report using their service has doubled since 2021 (5% to 9%). Students aged 30+ seem to be taking advantage of supports offered more in 2022, with 14% reporting having access and using it, up 9% from 2021. Female students appear to be more likely to use a 24/7 online study support with 54% reporting they would if they had access, 10% higher than male students.

FROM CHAPTER 3

Q. On a scale of 1 to 5, how supported do you feel <u>by the existing</u> <u>student support</u> <u>services</u> at your college/university?

Generally, the majority of students rated the support they receive through student support services at 3/5. Students aged 26-29 and 30+ report feeling more completely supported at 12%. Rating 4 or 5, primarily English-speaking students felt more supported at 28%, compared to 17% of primarily French-speaking students. Students with a household income <\$25k report feeling less supported with 32% rating 1 or 2, compared to those with household incomes \$25-50k (26%), and >\$50k (21%).

Two in five students, including half of students in engineering/tech, express a regular need for study help after class or off-campus

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?



68% of students believe their institution is providing them with the skills for success in their future career, with Frenchspeaking students the most in agreement at 80%, compared to 66% of English-speaking students.

While, overall, 62% of students report having found the transition to postsecondary easy, seven in ten (69%) students aged 26+ found the transition easy, compared to 60% of students 20-25 and just 39% of students 18-19.

Of students who report having a need for study help after class or when they are off-campus, 42% agreed with the statement but the frequency of students reporting this need is significantly higher in diploma/certificate programs (50%, vs. 39% of undergraduate and 38% of graduate students).



I found the transition to college/university easy

- I often need study help after class or off-campus
- My university/college is providing me with the skills to be successful in my future career



Younger students more likely to struggle with academics and older students more likely to struggle with financial cost of education

Q. What aspects of the transition to college/university did you find most difficult, if any?



Balancing schoolwork with their job(s) and social commitments, handling their program's study demands, and affording college/ university top the list of the most common sources of stress, with younger students more likely to struggle with academics and older students more likely to struggle with the financial cost of postsecondary education. Students aged 18-19 are by far the most likely to struggle with the amount of studying required (58%, vs. 38% of students 20+). Students in Quebec are significantly less likely to struggle with paying for college/university (26%, vs. 40% in the rest of Canada). Making new friends is most likely to be a challenge for students aged 20-23 (33%, vs. 23% of students 18-19 and just 19% of students 24+).



Three-in-ten students aged 18-19, whilst seven-in-ten students aged 30+, would rate their test-taking skills as good or excellent



Q. How would you rate your own academic skills in each of the following areas?

When students were asked to rate their academic skills in a variety of areas, the biggest difference appears to be by age. Overall, students rated their critical thinking and writing skills highest, with students aged 30+ reporting higher skill in public speaking/debate, test-taking, research, and study habits more often.

French-speaking students tend to rate their critical thinking skills more favourable (86% rated excellent or good, compared to Englishspeaking students at 75%), as well as their skill in test-taking (73% excellent or good, compared to 58% of English-speaking students).



ACADEMIC SKILLS RATED AS EXCELLENT OR GOOD BY AREA OF STUDY

Writing Critical thinking Public speaking/debating



Given the experiences of students during over the past few years, it is more important than ever that our Canadian higher education sector must focus on student wellbeing, improving support and increasing student optimism for the future.

Despite many long-term effects of the pandemic on student experiences, we have seen some positive changes since the 2021 survey, such as a significant decline in the proportion of students stressed out by online learning or the amount of studying required for their program, more students taking advantage of support offered by their institution, including 24/7 study support, and a slight increase in students reporting optimism regarding their employment outlook after graduation.

However, it is obvious that students are still dealing with many negative experiences which their institutions could better support them with. For instance, finding the transition to university difficult, experiences of high stress, struggling to balance study with other commitments, worries for future prospects and loneliness among international students.

It is important to continue to listen to the experiences of students and how their perceptions change as the world changes; with new concepts such as the metaverse becoming more of a reality and surely changing what it will mean to be a student in times to come.



To review the 2022 Canadian Student Wellbeing Study appendix with full set of results, please contact: **cparker@studiosity.com**

Studiosity

Acknowledgments

Research report: Studiosity Canada & Angus Reid

This survey was conducted among 1,014 current postsecondary students in Canada. The sample frame was balanced to ensure representation and statistical significant of gender and region in proportion to their overall share of the Canadian postsecondary student population. The sample was comprised of 75% full-time students and 25% part-time students. For comparison purposes only, a sample of this size would yield a margin of error of +/- 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The survey was conducted in English and French.

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