

*From the University/College Applicant Study™:*

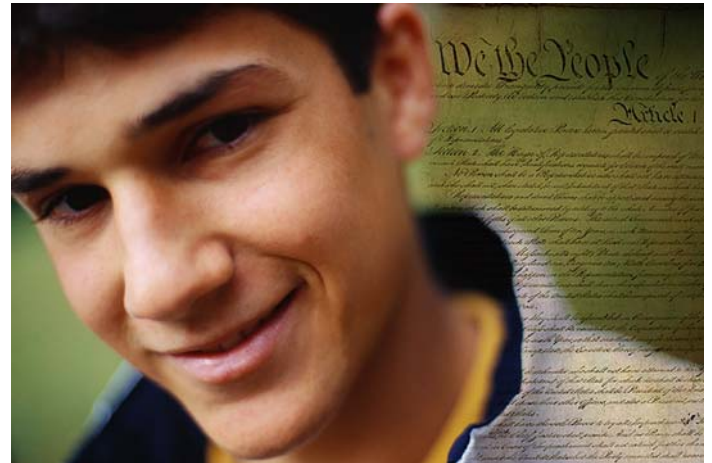
# Attracting Students to the Social Sciences

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In spring 2009, we surveyed about 150,000 applicants to more than 40 colleges and universities across Canada, and asked them what drew them to specific institutions as their first choice for higher education. Respondents rated the impact of 50 different factors in 7 categories, on a seven-point scale from -3 to +3. In this *UCAS™ White Paper*, we look at the way applicants to university Social Science programs weighed those considerations on average.

**Overview:** On average, Canadian university applicants report that the biggest factors in their choice of institution are their perceptions of reputation, quality faculty, student experience, employment outcomes, an attractive campus, published rankings, graduate school placements, and social activities. *(See the diamonds on the Push/Pull Graph, on page 2.)*

**SocSci applicants appear to be traditionalists, rather like their Arts peers, attracted by campus and extracurricular factors, but they are more concerned about finances, more attracted by nurturing factors like personal attention, small classes and a small student body.**



**Reputation Factors:** Like applicants to other university programs, SocSci applicants place immense weight on the academic reputation of the institution they choose – although unlike applicants to many Science or professional programs, they place significantly *less* weight on the reputation of their particular program or major, and *more* emphasis on the history or tradition of the university.

**Academic Factors:** SocSci applicants place considerably less weight on academic factors than other students – most notably on technology, high-profile research, gifted programs, high admission averages and opportunities for undergraduate research. Like most university applicants, they see quality faculty as vital, but they also place slightly more emphasis on library collections than their peers.

**Financial Factors:** Monetary considerations are not the primary decision factors for most Canadian university applicants, but SocSci applicants report more concern with tuition and other costs, needs-based financial aid and employment

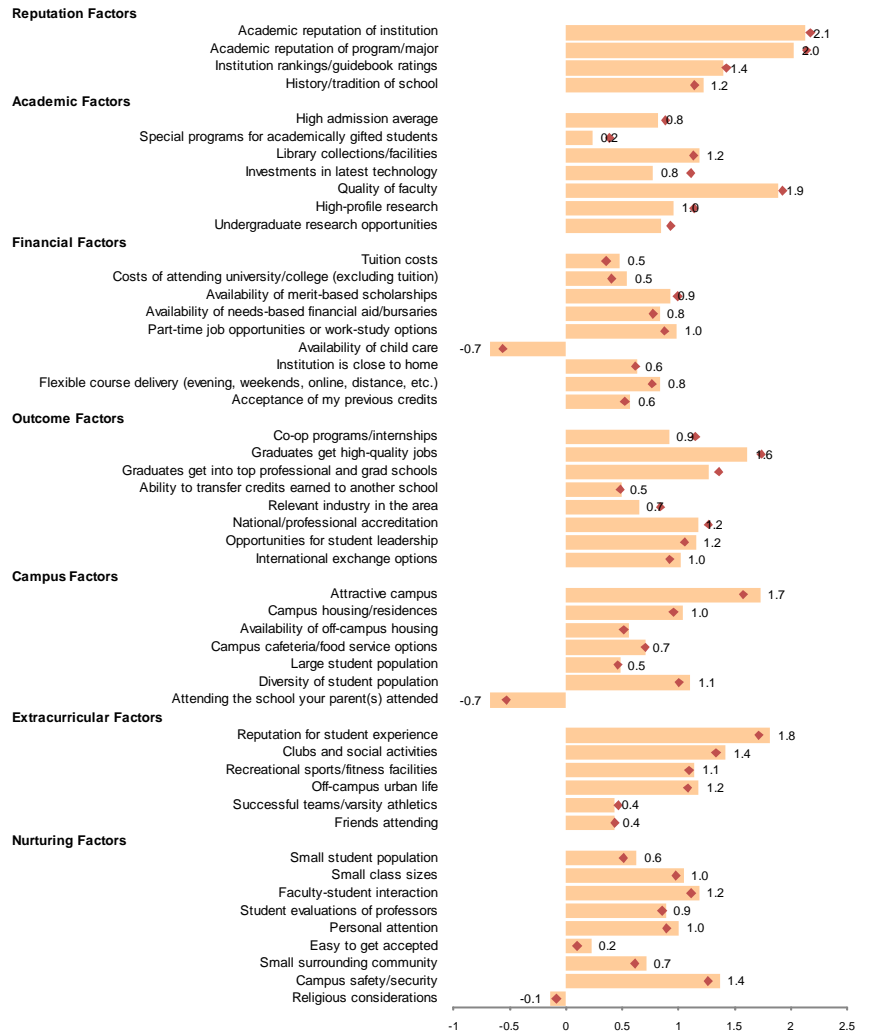
or work-study options. They are noticeably less concerned about merit-based scholarships, and the availability of childcare, but are slightly more attracted by flexible course delivery.

**Outcome Factors:** SocSci applicants place noticeably less weight on employment outcomes and grad school placements than their peers in other programs, and are less concerned with co-op programs, industry in the vicinity of campus, and professional accreditations. They match their peers for concern with transferability of their credits, however, and like Arts applicants, place somewhat *more* emphasis on opportunities for leadership and international exchanges.

**Campus Factors:** SocSci applicants are significantly less likely to be drawn to the university their parents attended, perhaps because they are first-generation PSE students. They are however drawn more than their peers by an attractive campus, good residences, and student diversity.

**Extracurricular Factors:** SocSci applicants also place somewhat more emphasis than the average on aspects of student life, particularly a university's reputation for student experience, clubs and social activities, and off-campus urban life.

**Nurturing Factors:** SocSci applicants consistently place more emphasis than average on all the nurturing factors, from campus safety and small student population to small class sizes, small surrounding community, faculty/student interaction, and personal attention. SocSci applicants are also somewhat more attracted by ease of acceptance, and are slightly more repelled by religious considerations.



Push/Pull Graph: Impact of Key Decision Factors on selection of First-Choice University, all Canadian university Social Science applicants, 2009 UCAS™ Applicant Study. (Overall average for university applicants to all programs is indicated by the diamond.)

## FOR MORE INFO:

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