

# GUESSS CANADA NATIONAL REPORT 2023



**Authors :****Pr. Étienne St-Jean**

Full Professor of the Canada Research Chair on Entrepreneurial Careers and the UQTR Teaching Excellence Chair in Entrepreneurship Pedagogy, as well as Director of the Research Institute on SMEs at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières.

**Email :** etienne.st-jean@uqtr.ca

**Website :** [www.uqtr.ca/etienne.st-jean](http://www.uqtr.ca/etienne.st-jean)

**Dr. Meryem Kabbaj**

Postdoctoral Researcher at the Research Institute on SMEs at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières.

**Email :** meryem.kabbaj@uqtr.ca

**Contacts :**

For more information about this report, please contact :

**Étienne St-Jean :** etienne.st-jean@uqtr.ca

**Acknowledgements :**

We thank the members of the Research Institute on SMEs team, particularly Ismail Elalaoui, Siba Théodore Koropogui, and Abderrahim Barakat, for their support in producing this report. Our gratitude also goes to all the students who responded to the questionnaire and to the various collaborators from the participating universities for their efforts in mobilizing and collecting data.

## Preface

---

The landscape of entrepreneurship is evolving rapidly, and universities play a central role in promoting an entrepreneurial culture among their students. With the ambition of measuring the entrepreneurial potential of university students, their motivations, and their attitudes toward entrepreneurship, our team chose to join the international research project GUESSS.

Indeed, the GUESSS survey (Global University Entrepreneurial Spirit Students' Survey) focuses on studying and comparing the entrepreneurial spirit of students worldwide. In its 10th edition, the GUESSS survey collected responses from over 226,700 university students across 57 countries. This report presents the results of the survey conducted at 13 Canadian universities in the fall of 2023, covering several provinces and gathering 4,677 responses.

The Canadian team is coordinated by Étienne St-Jean, Ph.D., Full Professor at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, in collaboration with 12 universities represented by: Pr Cooper Nigel from Saskatchewan Polytechnic, Pr Jalal El Fadil and Pr Luc Foleu from the Université du Québec à Rimouski, Pr Olivier Germain from the Université du Québec à Montréal, Pre Maripier Tremblay and Pr Matthias Pepin from Université Laval, Pr Jacques Baronet from Université de Sherbrooke, Pre Marie-Josée Drapeau from Université du Québec à Chicoutimi, Pr Kadia George Aka from Université de Moncton, Pre Maha Tantawy from the University of Windsor, Pr Chad Saunders from the University of Calgary, Pr Yabo Octave Niamié from Polytechnique Montréal, Pre Alexandra Dawson from Concordia University, and Pre Julie Bérubé from the Université du Québec en Outaouais.



## Table of content

---

<b>Preface.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>List of figures .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Executive summary .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>About GUESSS .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>I- Sample characteristics .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>II- Students' career choices .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>III- Entrepreneurship education in universities.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>IV- Assessment of students' entrepreneurial self-efficacy .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>V- Access to support services .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>VI- Business acquisition .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>VII- Potential entrepreneurship .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>VIII- Nascent entrepreneurship .....</b>	<b>19</b>
1. Characteristics of student entrepreneurs .....	19
2. Entrepreneurial orientation of nascent student entrepreneurs .....	21
<b>IX- Established entrepreneurship .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>X- Family business succession .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Conclusion and recommendations .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>References .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Appendix : Presentation of partner universities .....</b>	<b>28</b>

## List of figures

---

<b>Figure 1 :</b> Sample age distribution.....	9
<b>Figure 2 :</b> Sample distribution by field of study.....	10
<b>Figure 3 :</b> Career choice immediately after studies and five years from now .....	11
<b>Figure 4 :</b> Career choices immediately after graduation, by gender.....	11
<b>Figure 5 :</b> Career choice targeted 5 years after graduation, by gender.....	12
<b>Figure 6 :</b> Evaluation of university environment, according to participation in entrepreneurship education programs.....	13
<b>Figure 7 :</b> Differences depending on participation in entrepreneurship education.....	13
<b>Figure 8 :</b> Assessment of entrepreneurial self-efficacy by gender.....	14
<b>Figure 9 :</b> Assessment of entrepreneurial self-efficacy in relation to participation in entrepreneurial education.....	15
<b>Figure 10 :</b> Knowledge of and, if applicable, use of an entrepreneurship support structure .....	16
<b>Figure 11 :</b> Probability of buying an existing business in the next five years following the graduation.....	17
<b>Figure 12 :</b> Comparison of business takeover probabilities between universities .....	17
<b>Figure 13 :</b> Entrepreneurial intentions of students .....	18
<b>Figure 14 :</b> Entrepreneurial intention in relation to participation in entrepreneurship training .....	19
<b>Figure 15 :</b> Number of co-founders among nascent entrepreneurs.....	20
<b>Figure 16 :</b> Number of co-founders among nascent student entrepreneurs .....	20
<b>Figure 17 :</b> Factors influencing the ideas of nascent student entrepreneurs.....	21
<b>Figure 18 :</b> Risk-taking among nascent student entrepreneurs .....	21
<b>Figure 19 :</b> Innovation among nascent student entrepreneur.....	22
<b>Figure 20 :</b> Proactivity among nascent student entrepreneurs.....	22
<b>Figure 21 :</b> Business performance of established entrepreneurs .....	23
<b>Figure 22 :</b> Environmental and social performance of established entrepreneurs' businesses .....	24
<b>Figure 23 :</b> Intention to inherit among university students with at least one parent in business .....	25

## Executive summary

The 10th edition of the GUESSS survey (2023 edition) collected 226,718 responses across 57 countries. Below, we present the key findings from the Canadian sample :

The GUESSS survey in Canada gathered responses from 4,677 university students from 13 universities.

- The average age of participants is primarily between 21 and 30 years, representing more than half of the sample.
- Women constitute 59% of respondents, reflecting the higher proportion of female enrollment in Canadian universities (56%).
- 56% of participants are Canadian nationals, while 44% are of other nationalities, highlighting the diversity of students in Canada.
- The main fields of study for participants include business and management sciences (28%) and humanities and social sciences (20%).
- Regarding the level of study, 55% of participants are enrolled in bachelor's programs, followed by MBA students (20%), master's programs (19%), and doctoral programs (6%).

### Students' career choices :

After graduation, 73% of students plan to work as employees, while only 14% intend to become entrepreneurs or successors.

Five years later, the appeal of salaried work drops to 54%, while 40% of men and 27% of women aspire to become entrepreneurs, reflecting a significant increase in entrepreneurial intentions, particularly among men.

### Entrepreneurship education :

Students who participated in entrepreneurship courses perceive their university environment as more conducive to developing business ideas and report higher entrepreneurial self-efficacy compared to those who did not take such courses. However, nearly half are unaware of the existence of support structures at their university.

### Use of support structures :

- Approximately 48% of students intending to start a business have already sought support from university structures. However, only 18% of student entrepreneurs use these services.
- 58% of established student entrepreneurs state that they have at least one mentor, with 44% reporting having at least one entrepreneurial mentor.

### Business succession :

Despite the aging population of SME owners, 47% of students find it unlikely that they will take over an existing business in the next five years. Only 13% consider this option likely.

### Potential entrepreneurship :

A little over one-third of students show a strong entrepreneurial intention, while 58% remain hesitant. Those who have taken entrepreneurship courses express a stronger intention to start a business.

### Nascent entrepreneurship :

54% of nascent entrepreneurs are bachelor's students, particularly in business management (32%). Most of them prefer to start businesses on their own, influenced by societal and technological trends such as AI (54%) and climate challenges (48%).

### Active entrepreneurship :

More than half of active entrepreneurs believe their businesses outperform competitors in terms of innovation (61%), sales growth (54%), and profitability (55%). These entrepreneurs also demonstrate a strong commitment to social and environmental responsibility.

### Family business succession :

Nearly a quarter of surveyed students have entrepreneurial parents, but the majority do not plan to take over the family business, indicating a low level of engagement in family business succession.

# Introduction

---

In many countries, and particularly in Canada, entrepreneurship is gaining in popularity as a desirable career choice, especially for people completing a university education. Universities play an important role in promoting an entrepreneurial culture among their students, and in preparing them to take up the challenge of an entrepreneurial career.

Over the past two decades, many Canadian universities have launched entrepreneurship education programs and set up support structures such as incubators and accelerators, providing a favorable ecosystem for the emergence and development of new business ideas. As a result, students benefit from entrepreneurship courses, advice, specialized training and, in many cases, access to networks of mentors ready to advise and, in some cases, invest. Many entrepreneurial success stories have emerged from universities, encouraging more students to see how they can turn their ideas into viable businesses.

This report examines the entrepreneurial potential of university students in Canada, based on data from the Global University Entrepreneurial Spirit Students' Survey (GUESSS). This international project, carried out in 2023, mobilized the participation of 13 universities in Canada, covering several provinces, with 4,677 responses obtained. We would like to thank all the students who responded to the questionnaire, as well as the various collaborators at the participating universities, for their efforts in mobilizing and collecting the data.

The results show that students have moderate intentions of becoming entrepreneurs, with a strong determination to set up a business in the future. Participants in entrepreneurial education programs report greater entrepreneurial attitudes, values, and motivations, as well as improved practical skills in management and network development. These same people also feel more confident in their ability to discover new business opportunities, create new products, and think creatively than those who have not attended such programs.

These findings underline the importance for professors, educators, and public policy makers of investing in the promotion of entrepreneurship in the university environment and developing appropriate support strategies.

## About GUESSS

---

GUESSS is an international research project, part of a consortium focusing on the entrepreneurial activity of university students. It was launched in 2003 through an international online data collection and is repeated every two to three years. The main objective of GUESSS is to generate new knowledge on student entrepreneurship in the form of academic and practice-oriented results. These results are the subject of a substantial flow of articles published in scholarly academic journals and several reports.

The study is based on a centrally managed online survey, using validated and up-to-date measurement instruments. The questionnaire used refers to several dimensions (e.g. well-being, entrepreneurial intention, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, etc.) and is aimed at both students who are considering becoming entrepreneurs and those who already are (or are in the process of becoming) entrepreneurs.

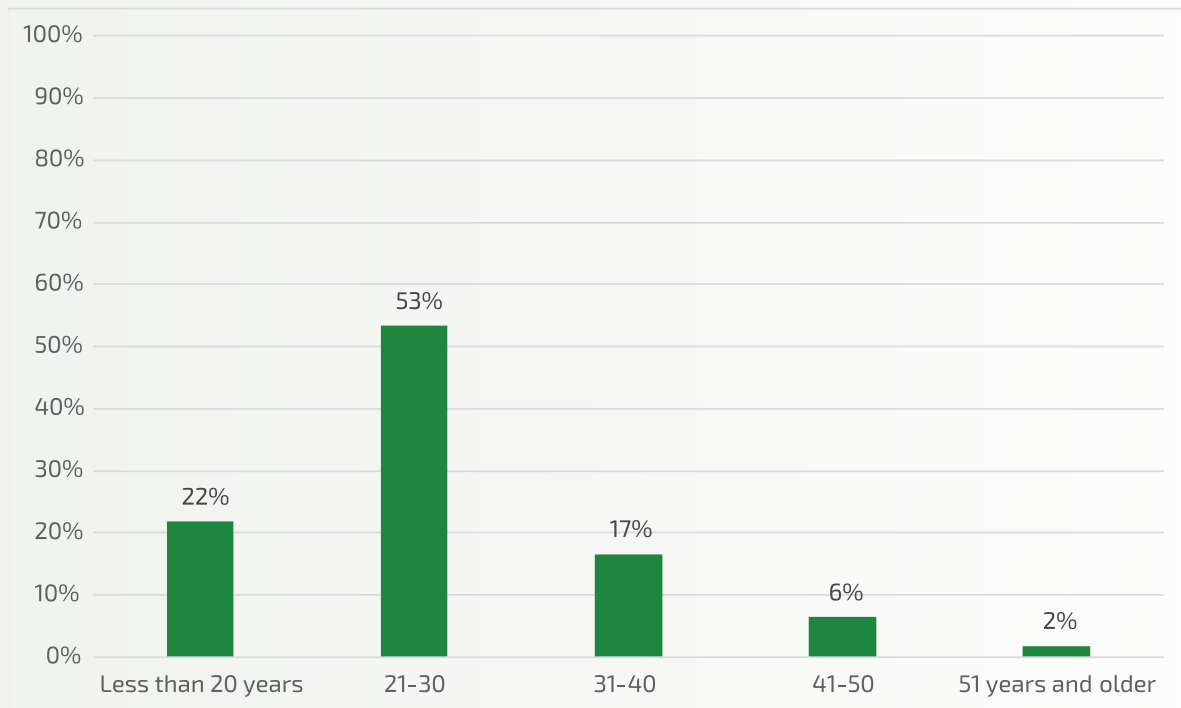
The GUESSS project is based on cooperation between national representatives. Each country has a national team responsible for coordinating data collection. In 2023, 57 countries participated in this anonymous online survey, with a total of 227,712 final responses.

The Canadian team is coordinated by Étienne St-Jean, Ph.D., full professor at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, in collaboration with 12 universities represented by: Pr Cooper Nigel of Saskatchewan Polytechnique, Pr Jalal El Fadil and Pr Luc Foleu of Université du Québec à Rimouski, Pr Olivier Germain of Université du Québec à Montréal, Pre Maripier Tremblay and Pr Matthias Pépin of Université Laval, Pr Jacques Baronet of Université de Sherbrooke, Pre Marie-Josée Drapeau of Université du Québec à Chicoutimi, Pr Kadia George Aka from Université de Moncton, Pre Maha Tantawy from University of Windsor, Pr Chad Saunders from University of Calgary, Pr Yabo Octave Niamié from Polytechnique Montréal, Pre Alexandra Dawson from Concordia University and Pre Julie Bérubé from Université du Québec en Outaouais.



# I. Sample characteristics

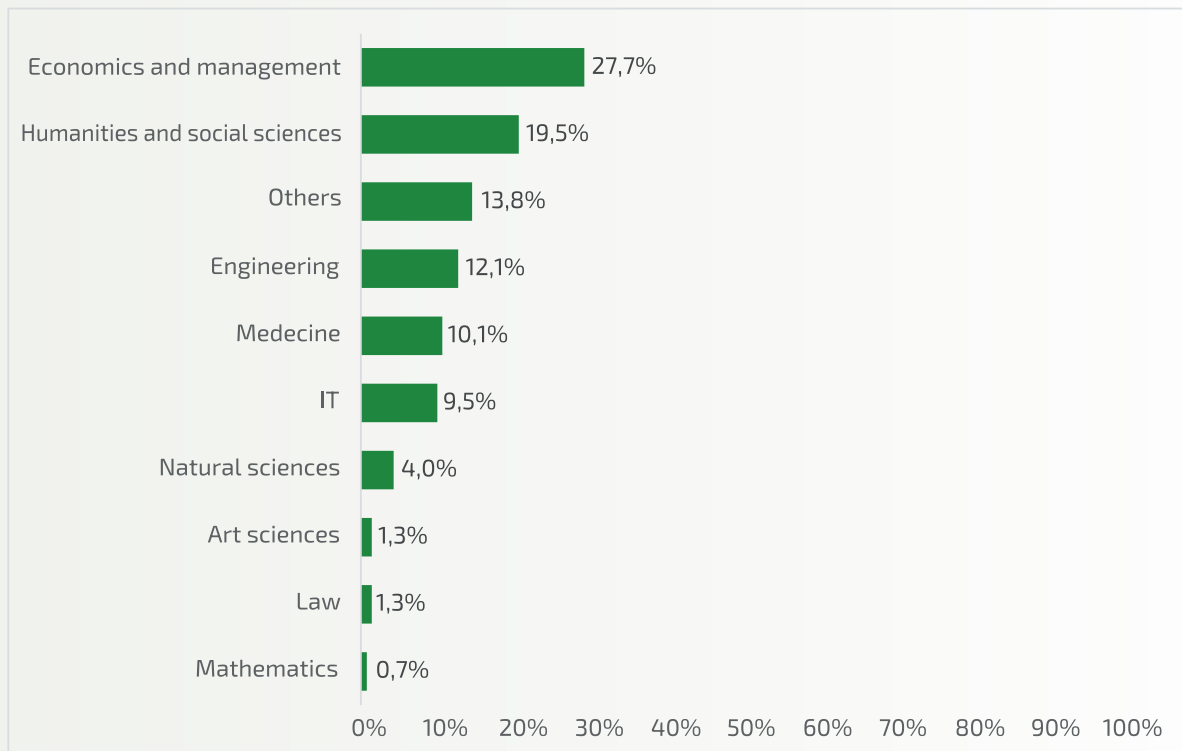
The GUESSS survey in Canada involved 4,677 university students. The majority of respondents were women, representing 59% of the sample. This distribution reflects the higher participation of women in university studies (approximately 56% of university enrolments in Canada). The gender diversity in the sample may be relevant to understanding different entrepreneurial perspectives and aspirations. More than half of our sample is made up of people aged between 21 and 30 (Figure 1), this predominance of young people is linked to the target population nature of the GUESSS survey.



**Figure 1.** Sample distribution by age

In terms of participants' origins, the breakdown of students by nationality shows a slight majority of Canadians (56%), while other nationalities represent 44% of the total sample. This also seems to reflect the diversity of countries of origin at Canadian universities.

In terms of level of study, undergraduates predominate, notably at bachelor's level (55%), followed by those enrolled in other study programs such as MBA (20%) and 2nd level degree (M.Sc., etc.) (19%), and finally 3rd level degree (DBA, Ph.D., etc.) (6%). Most students in our sample come from the economic and management sciences (28%), followed by the humanities and social sciences (20%).

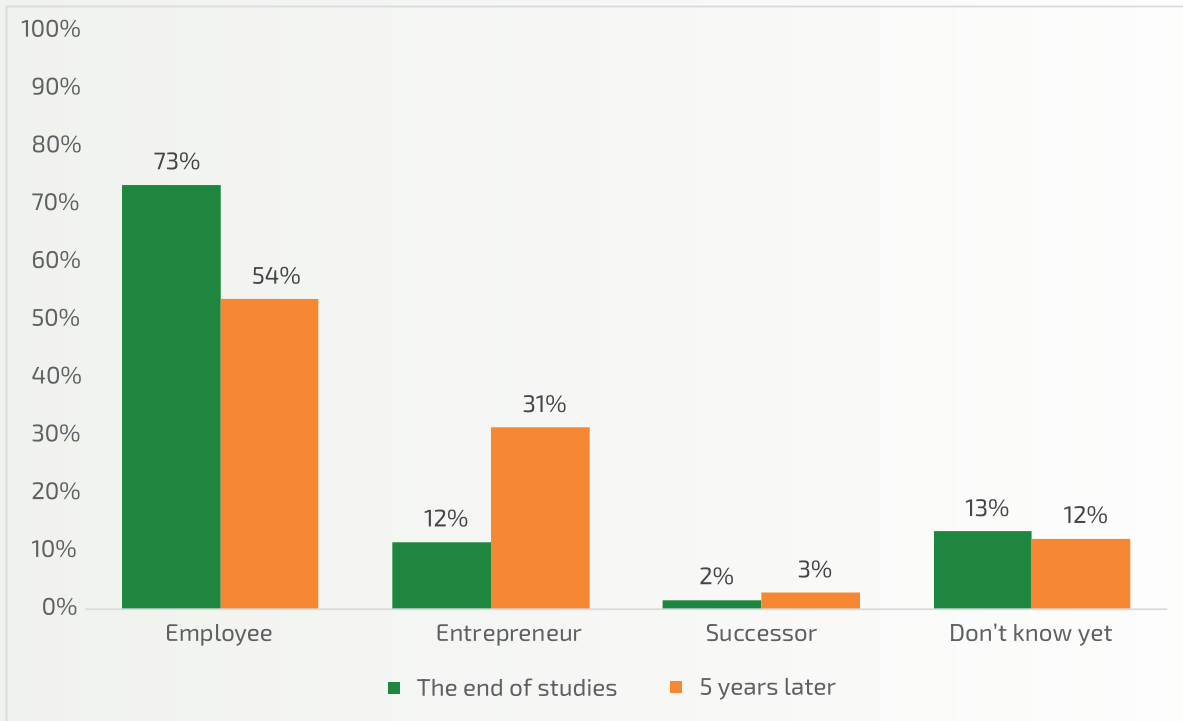


**Figure 2.** Sample distribution by field of study

## II- Students' career choices

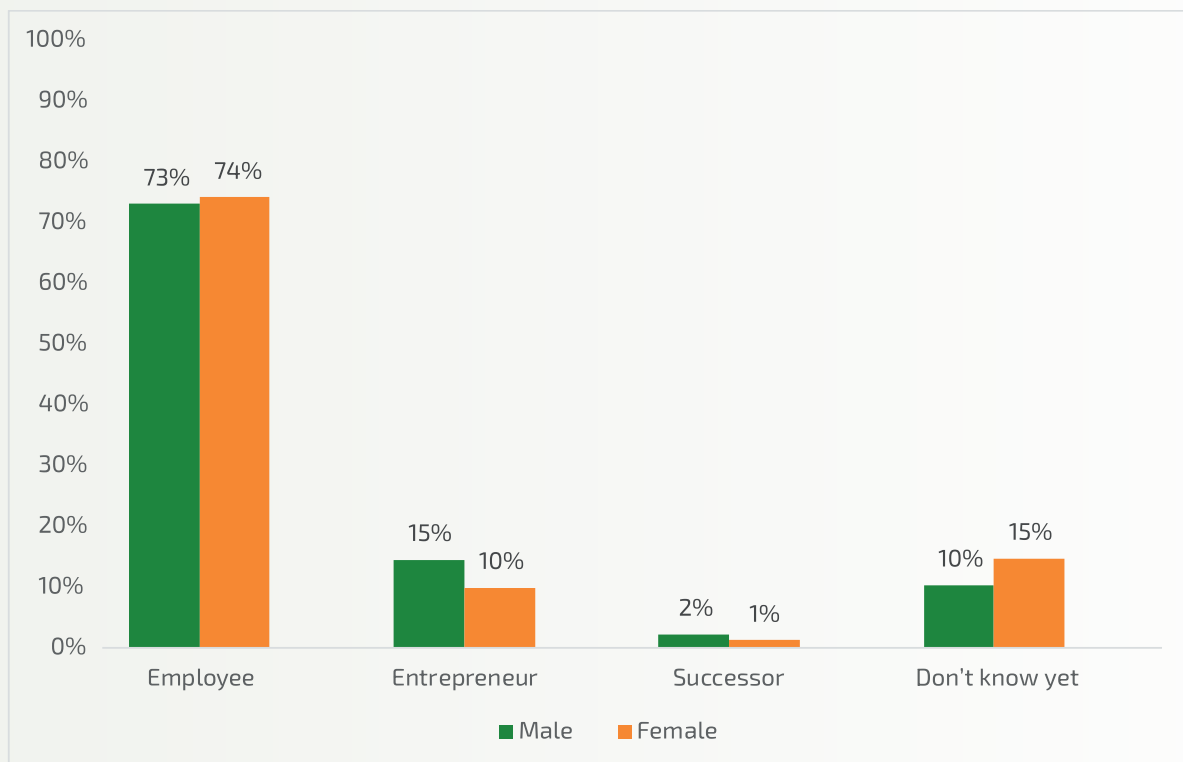
A comparison of students' immediate post-study career choices and those targeted five years after graduation reveals that the option of becoming an entrepreneur seems more desirable after gaining some experience. This evolution can be attributed to the acquisition of professional experience or a better understanding of the market. The appeal of salaried employment is more marked as an attractive option after degree completion, but this declines when the person looks ahead five years after, from 73% to 54%. This indicates that entrepreneurship seems to be seen more as a viable option following professional development in organizations, enabling the acquisition of experience, contacts, and various resources to prepare one's project well.



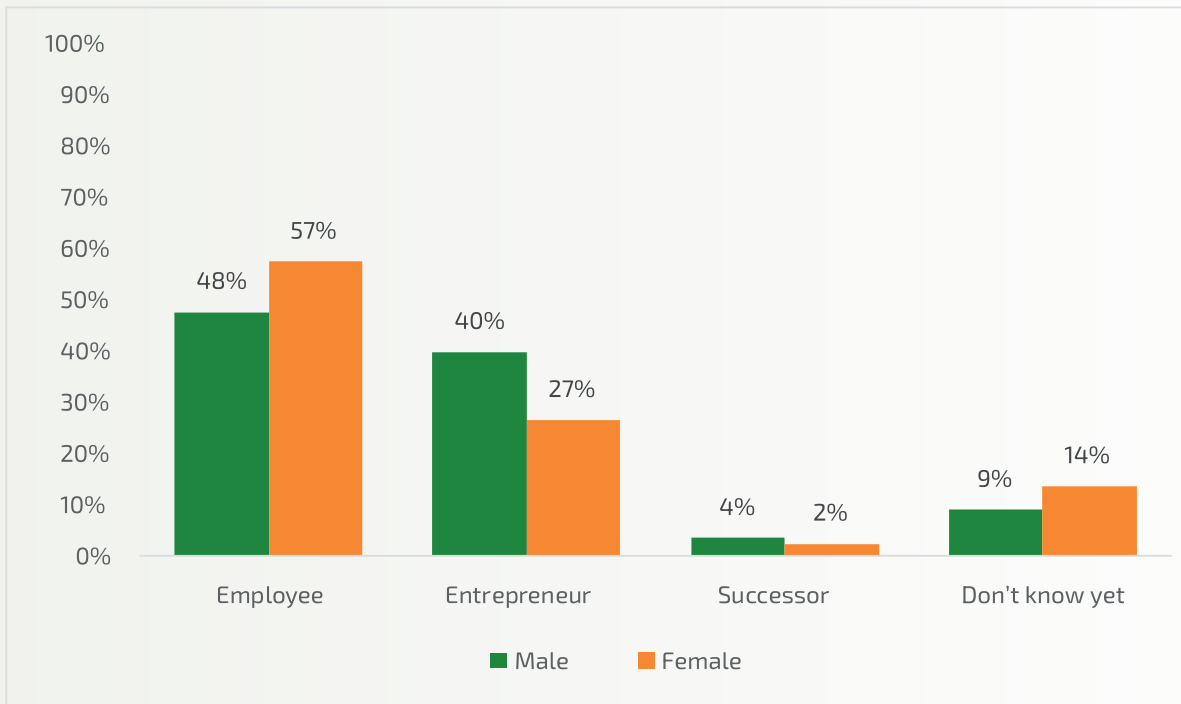


**Figure 3.** Career choices immediately after graduation and five years from now

A comparison of career choices by gender shows that most women (74%) and men (73%) prefer to become employees immediately after graduation. However, a slightly higher percentage of men (15%) than women (10%) plan to become entrepreneurs. This difference could be linked to social and cultural factors influencing entrepreneurial aspirations early in a career.



**Figure 4.** Career choices immediately after graduation, by gender



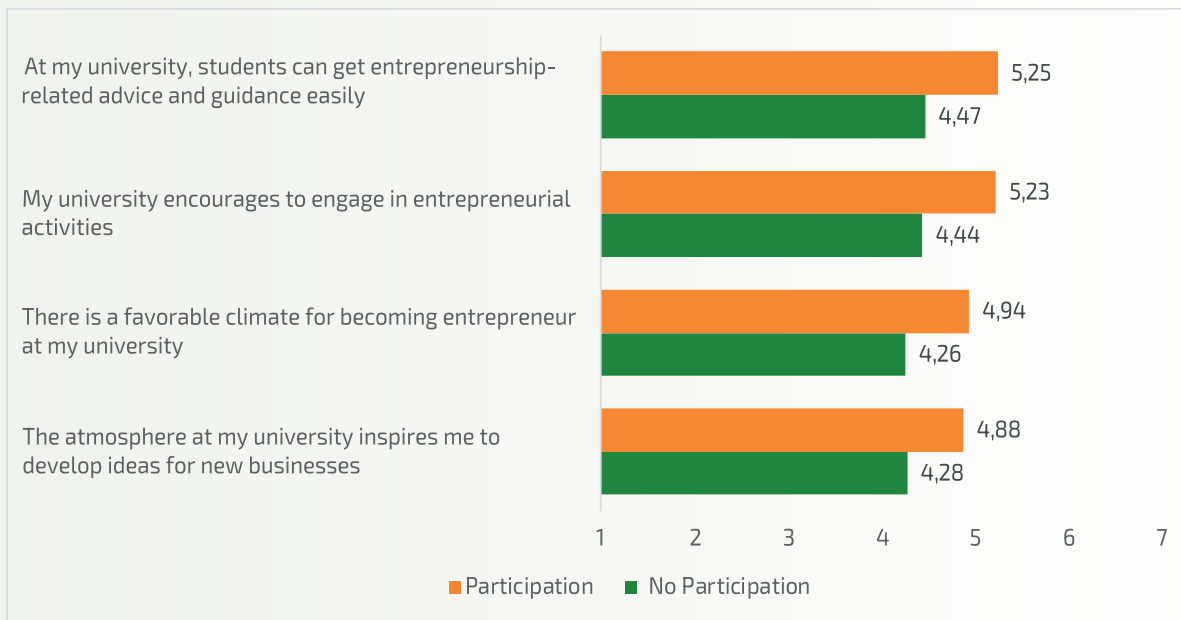
**Figure 5.** Career choices targeted 5 years after graduation, by gender

Five years after graduation, 40% of men want to become entrepreneurs, compared to 27% of women. We can see that interest in entrepreneurship among women five years after graduation is not as strong as that of men.

### III- Entrepreneurship education in universities

As part of the GUESSS survey, students were asked about their perceptions of the university environment in terms of support for entrepreneurship.

The results show that students who have participated in entrepreneurial education programs perceive their university environment as more favorable to the development of new business ideas and to entrepreneurship in general (with a mean exceeding 4.88 on a Likert scale of 7), compared to those who have not participated.



**Figure 6.** Evaluation of the university environment, according to participation in entrepreneurship education programs

Students also evaluated university offerings in terms of developing entrepreneurial skills. As shown in Figure 7, those who had participated in entrepreneurial education programs reported better attitudes, more pronounced values and motivations related to entrepreneurship, as well as improved practical skills in management and network development.

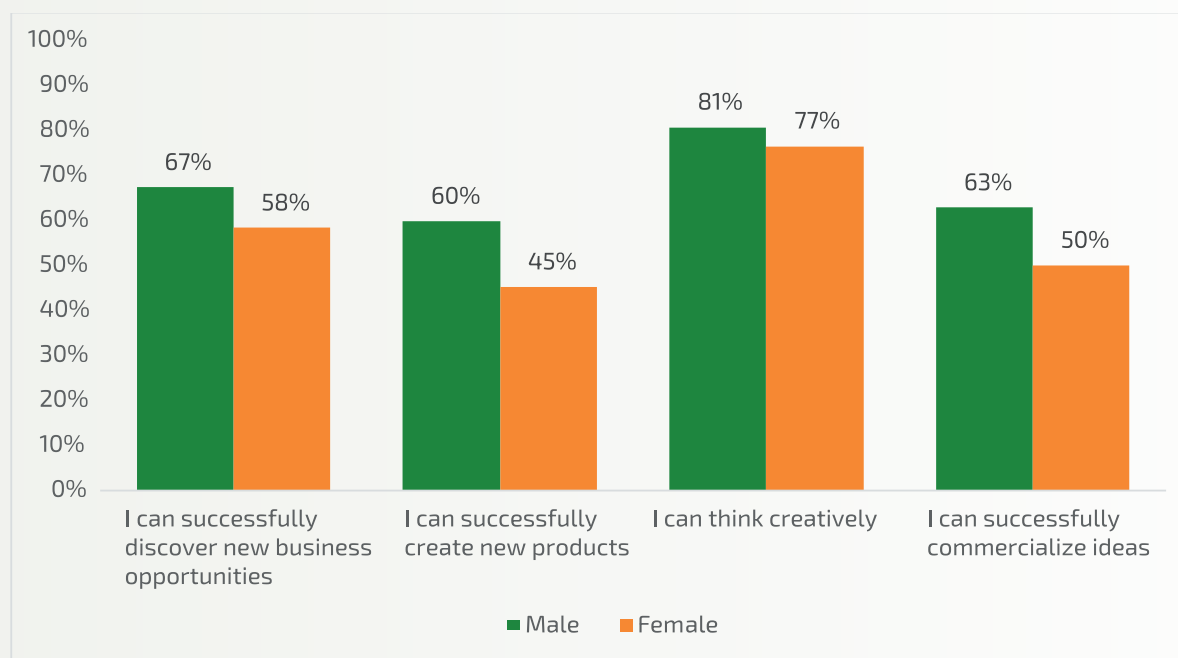


**Figure 7.** Differences depending on participation in entrepreneurship education

## IV- Assessment of students' entrepreneurial self-efficacy

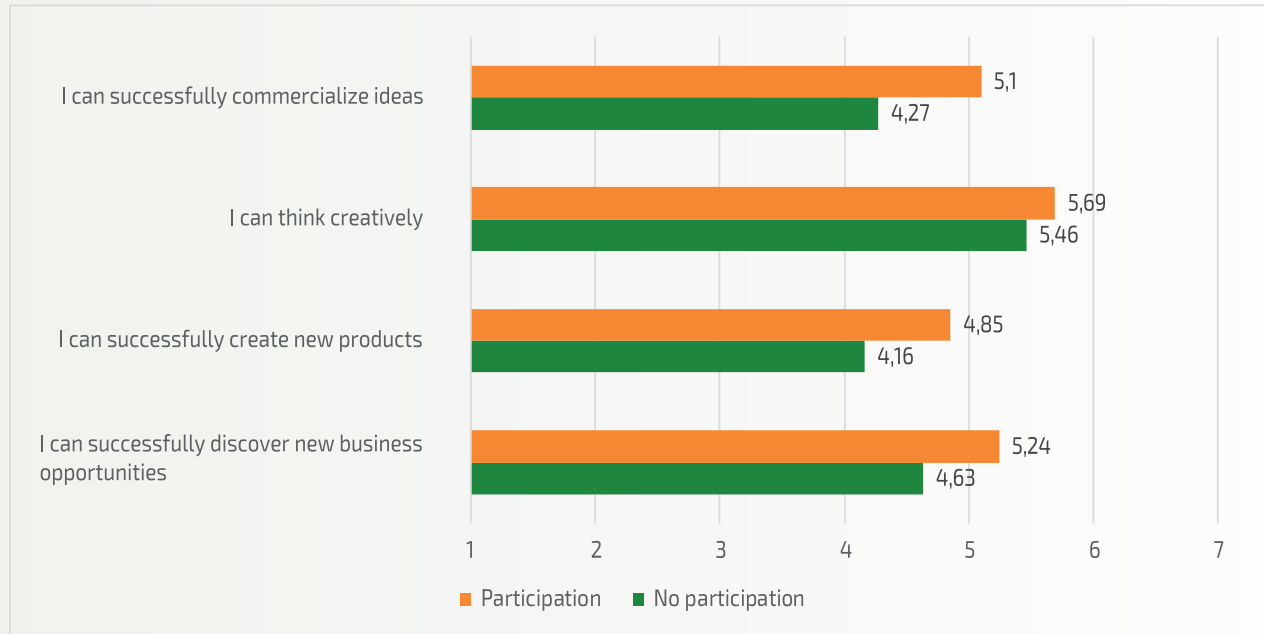
Entrepreneurial self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one's own abilities to organize and execute the actions necessary to achieve specific goals in the entrepreneurial context. This concept has attracted a great deal of interest among researchers because of its ability to predict entrepreneurial intention (Newman et al, 2019) and because it is a key component of entrepreneurial careers (Wilson et al, 2007). This self-efficacy is developed through entrepreneurial education (Koropogui et al., 2023).

As part of the GUESSS survey, students were asked to rate their entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Comparing these levels by gender, it turns out that men are more confident in their ability to discover new business opportunities, create new products, think creatively, and commercialize ideas, compared to women. This indicates a significant difference in the perception of entrepreneurial skills according to gender (Figure 8).



**Figure 8.** Assessment of entrepreneurial self-efficacy by gender

An analysis of the impact of entrepreneurial education on entrepreneurial self-efficacy shows that the latter is indeed influenced by participation in entrepreneurial training programs (Figure 9). Indeed, students who have participated in entrepreneurial training programs feel more confident in their ability to discover new business opportunities, create new products, think creatively, and commercialize ideas than those who have not.



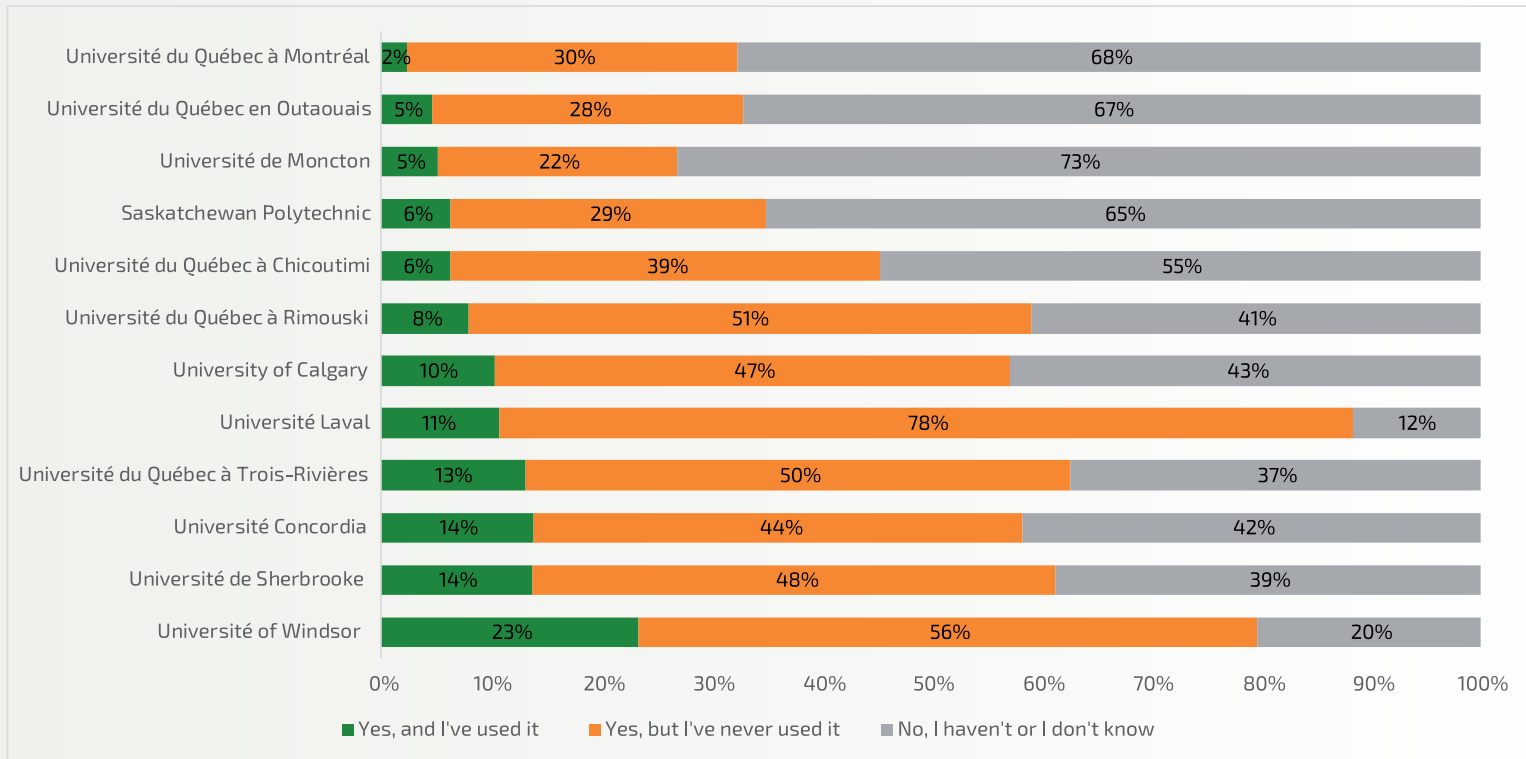
**Figure 9.** Assessment of entrepreneurial self-efficacy in relation to participation in entrepreneurial education

## V- Access to support services

One of the key findings of our survey is that almost half of all students are unaware of the availability of a support structure at their university. This underlines the importance of communication strategies and the involvement of all stakeholders (e.g. professors, lecturers, etc.). That said, almost half (48%) of those considering entrepreneurship as a career choice after 5 years following graduation, testify that they have already used the support structures within their universities. However, few student entrepreneurs (18%) actually use a university support structure. Indeed, the vast majority (82%) have never used the services of the latter, even though 34% of them claim to be aware of the existence of such a structure on their campus.

Figure 10 illustrates students' awareness of the presence of an entrepreneurship support structure at their university, and whether they use it.



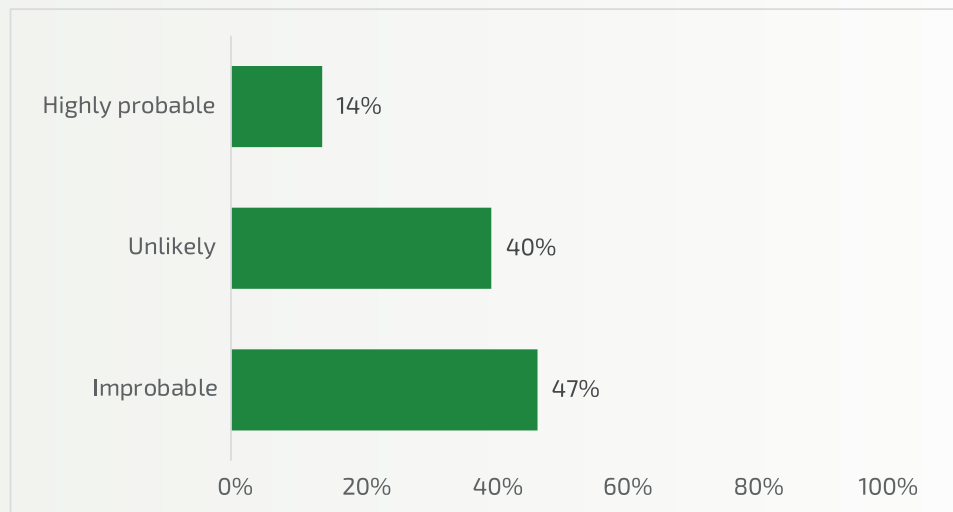


**Figure 10.** Knowledge of and, if applicable, use of an entrepreneurship support structure

When it comes to using entrepreneurial support services in their region, a large majority of students (82%) say they don't use them. Among them, some choose to call on a mentor (44%), whether an entrepreneur (15%) or not (19%). What's more, a proportion of students (9%) even use several mentors simultaneously, including at least one entrepreneur. Among established student entrepreneurs, 58% claim to have at least one mentor, with 44% having at least one entrepreneurial mentor.

## VI- Business acquisition

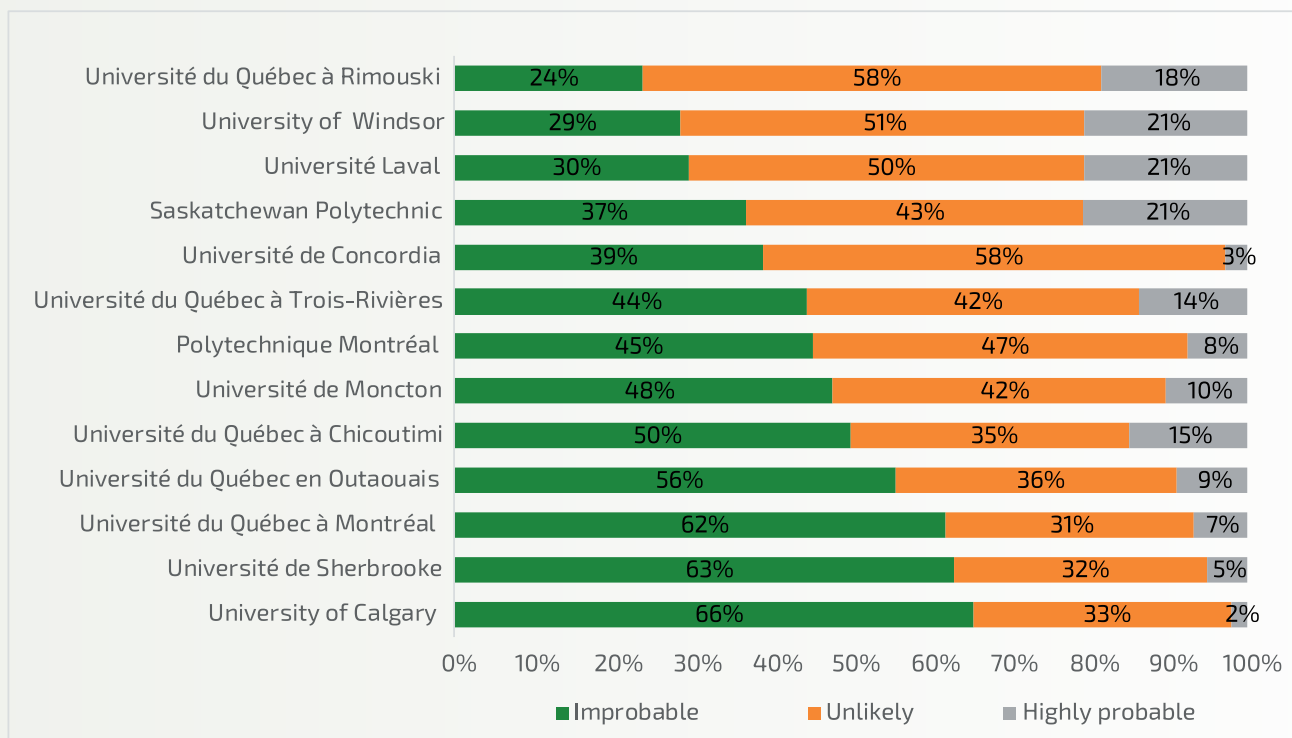
With the aging demographic curve and a growing number of SME managers seriously considering retirement in Canada (Duhamel, 2024), the question of taking over existing businesses is becoming increasingly important. With this in mind, the GUESSS survey explored entrepreneurship intentions among participating students.



**Figure 11.** Probability of buying an existing business in the next five years following the graduation

In terms of the likelihood of them buying an existing business in the next five years and becoming its owner-manager, almost half (47%) said this was highly unlikely (Figure 11). Conversely, 13% feel that there is a high probability that they will follow this path. Efforts to encourage this route to an entrepreneurial career could be relevant in the future.

Figure 12 shows the breakdown of this expected probability for each of the participating universities.



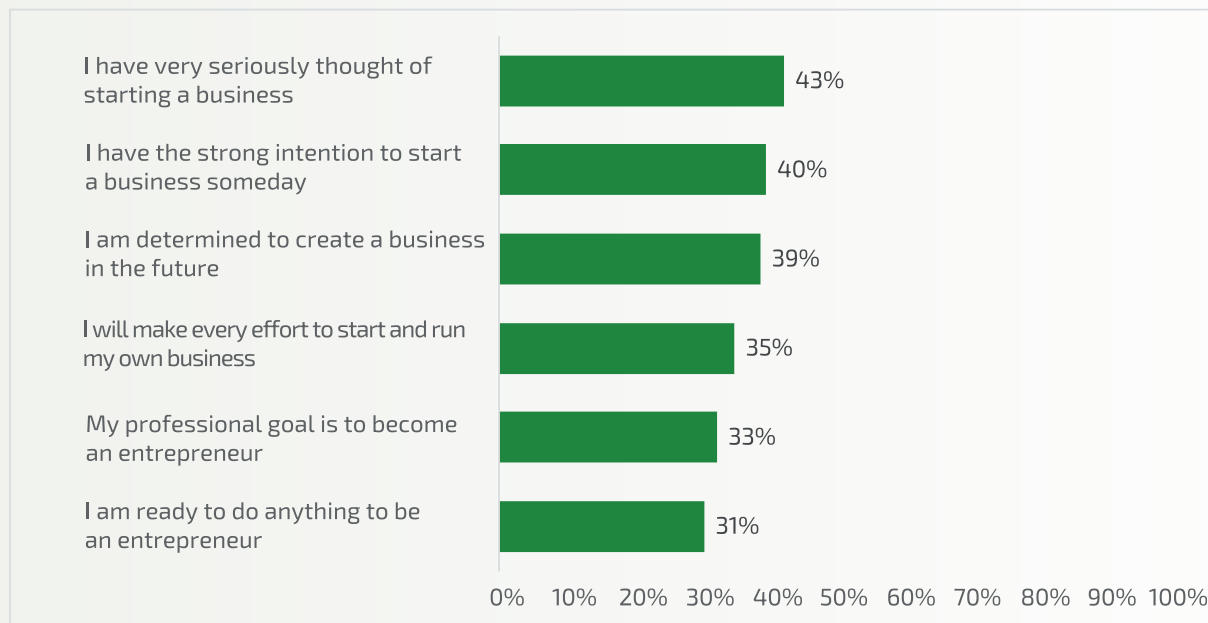
**Figure 12.** Comparison of business takeover probabilities between universities

## VII- Potential entrepreneurship

In the GUESSS survey, data is collected from four different student populations: Potential entrepreneurs, nascent entrepreneurs, established entrepreneurs, and successors. Potential entrepreneurs are those who are not in the process of setting up a business (nascent entrepreneurs) and who are not yet entrepreneurs (established entrepreneurs) (Gartner et al., 2004).

### • Students' entrepreneurial intentions

When it comes to entrepreneurial intention, we find a general trend where a large proportion of university students' express reservations or a lack of clear commitment to entrepreneurship (58%). However, more than a third of the students in our sample show strong entrepreneurial intent (Figure 13). Entrepreneurship education programs could focus on this population, while seeking to transform the perceptions and reduce the reservations of the large remaining share.



**Figure 13.** Entrepreneurial intentions of students

Exploring the entrepreneurial intention of students according to their participation in entrepreneurship training, Figure 14 illustrates that those who have participated in entrepreneurship training show a stronger intention to become entrepreneurs and start a business, compared to those who have not participated. This suggests the importance of promoting and supporting entrepreneurship education programs within academic institutions to encourage an entrepreneurial spirit among students, and to enable those intending to become entrepreneurs to prepare adequately.



**Figure 14.** Entrepreneurial intention in relation to participation in entrepreneurship training

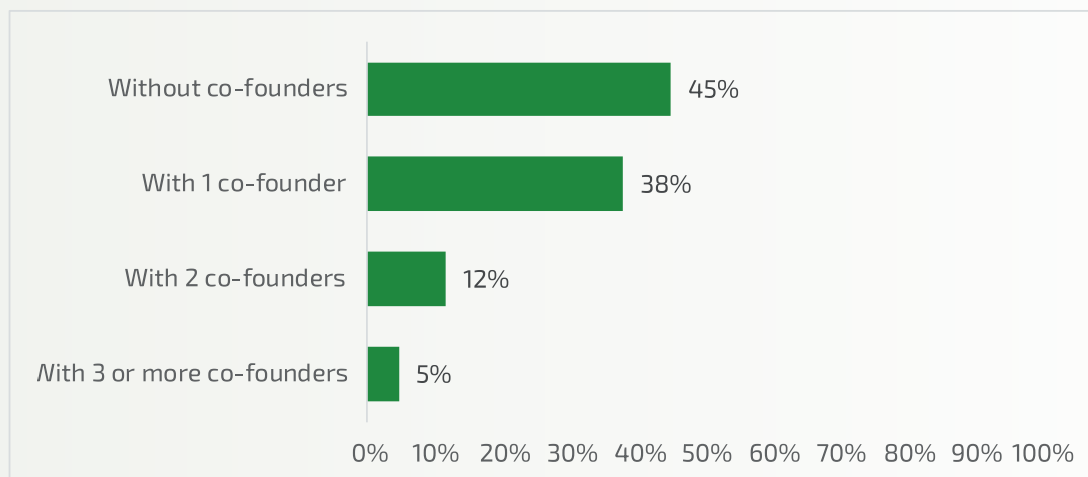
## VIII- Nascent entrepreneurship

Nascent entrepreneurs are defined here as those who are attempting to set up their own business and are actively engaged in the entrepreneurial process (Carter et al., 2003).

### 1. Characteristics of student entrepreneurs

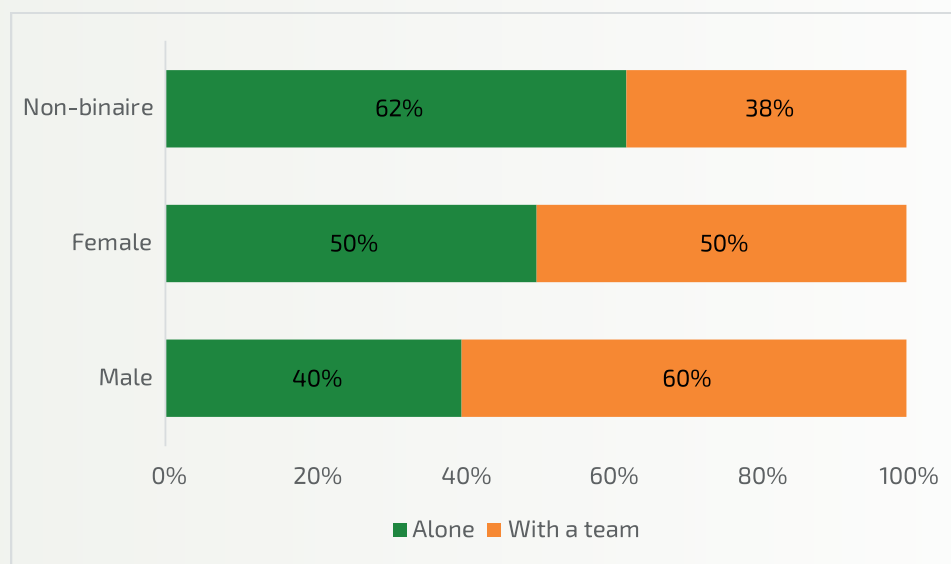
More than half of those who declared themselves to be nascent entrepreneurs are bachelor students (1e cycle) (54%), mainly in management (32%). The proportion of men (51%) is slightly higher than that of women (47%).

Most nascent entrepreneurs intend to launch on their own (45%), while those intending to do so with a co-founder represent 38% (Figure 15). Far fewer nascent entrepreneurs plan to launch with teams of two or three co-founders (12% and 5% respectively).



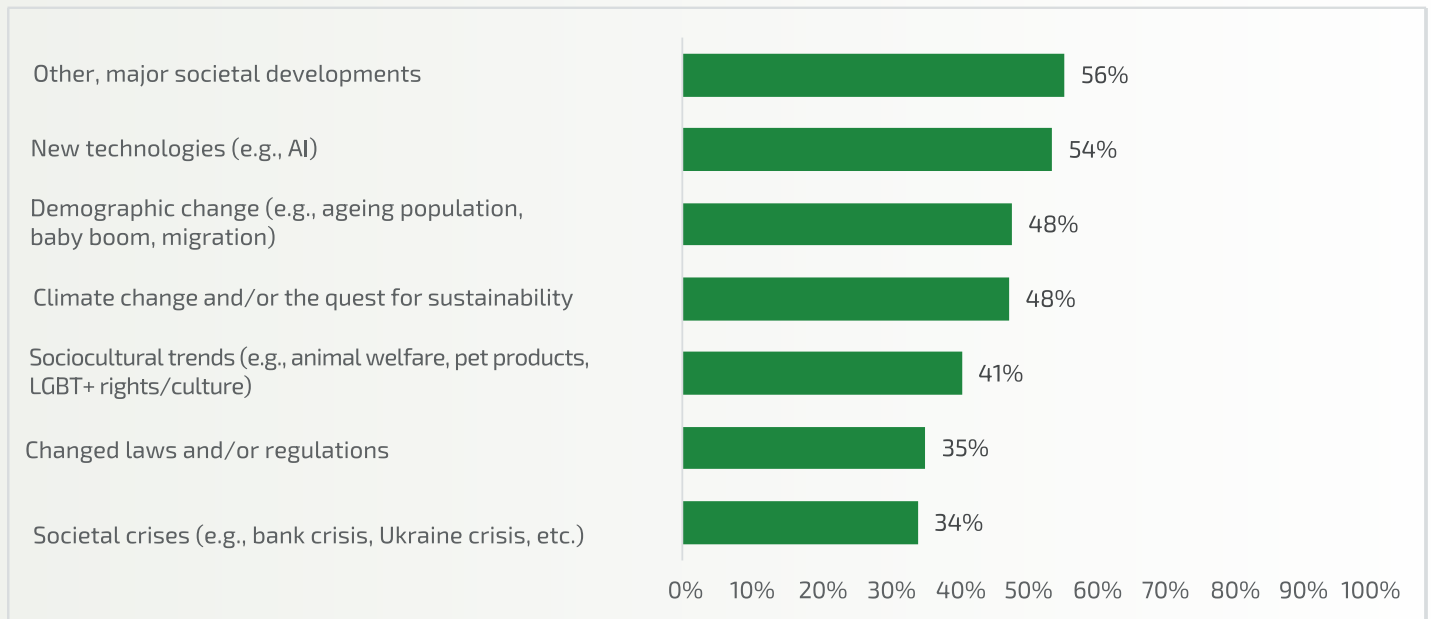
**Figure 15.** Number of co-founders among nascent entrepreneurs

A significant proportion of non-binary people choose to start their projects alone (62%). They are followed by women, half of whom prefer to go it alone, as opposed to 39% of men (Figure 16).



**Figure 16.** Number of co-founders among nascent student entrepreneurs

Figure 17 shows that more than half the ideas of nascent entrepreneurs are influenced by major societal developments (56%) and new technologies, such as artificial intelligence (54%). Almost half (48%) of these same people are motivated by demographic changes, such as the aging population, the baby boom and migration, as well as the quest for sustainability and climate challenges (48%).

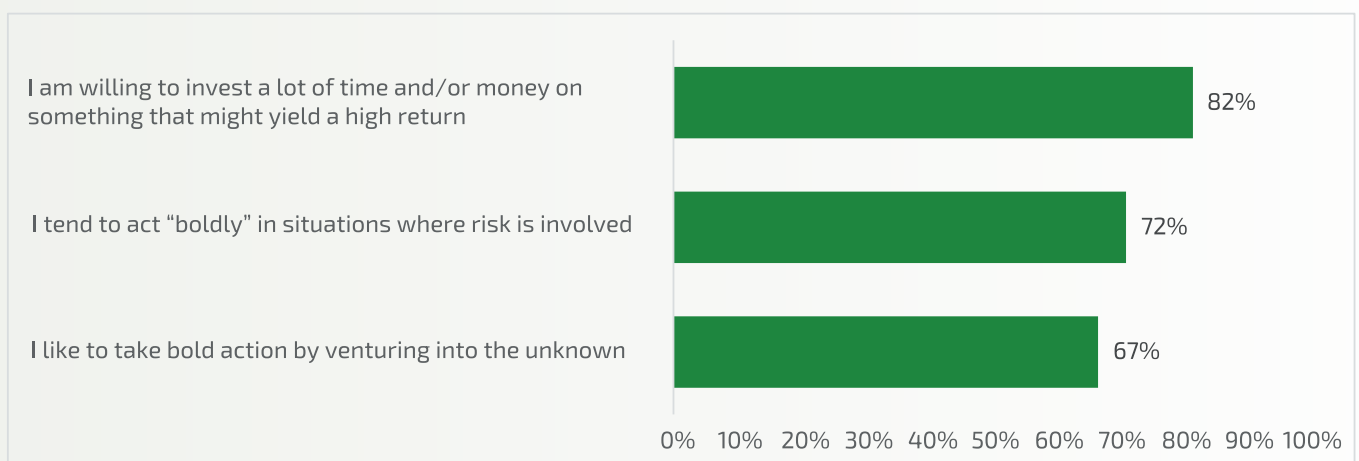


**Figure 17.** Factors influencing the ideas of nascent student entrepreneurs

## 2. Entrepreneurial orientation of nascent student entrepreneurs

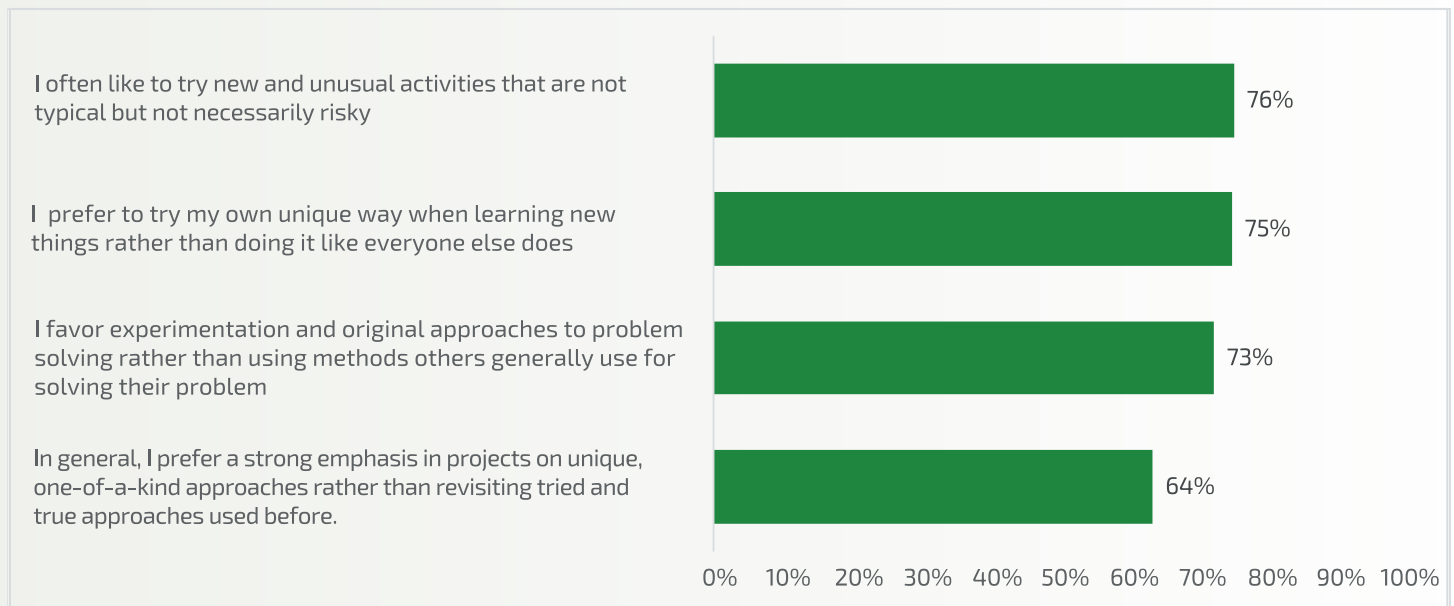
The GUESSS survey also looks at the entrepreneurial orientation of nascent student entrepreneurs, including their attitudes towards innovation, proactivity and risk-taking.

Indeed, risk tolerance and entrepreneurial spirit are strongly linked, influencing people's attitudes towards entrepreneurship. Figure 18 shows the willingness of individuals to take risks in an entrepreneurial context. All three statements reveal high levels of risk acceptance among students. This finding confirms the importance of taking advantage of the transition to university for people interested in entrepreneurship to train them to consider starting up their projects more quickly after their studies.



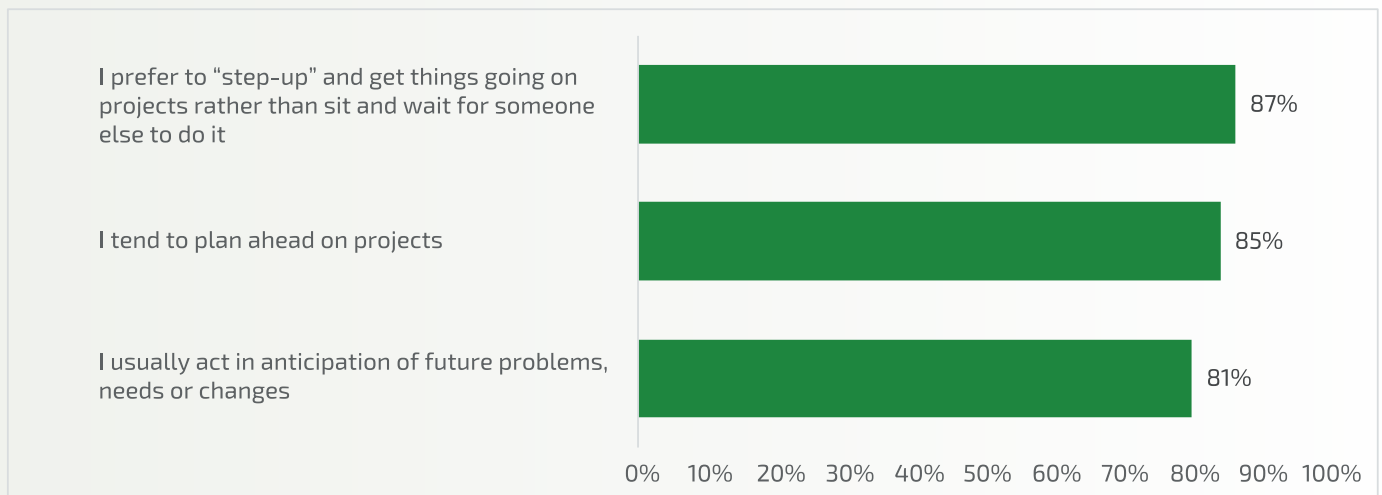
**Figure 18.** Risk-taking among nascent student entrepreneurs

When it comes to innovation, a significant majority of people prefer original and innovative approaches. Indeed, 76% of those surveyed often like to try new and unusual activities that are not typical, but not necessarily risky (Figure 19). Add to this the fact that 64% prefer to emphasize unique and original approaches in their projects, rather than revisiting tried-and-tested approaches, and this demonstrates a strong inclination for innovation. Furthermore, a large majority (75%) prefer to try out their own methods when learning new things, rather than following standard practices. Another 73% favor experimentation and original approaches to problem-solving, rather than using methods commonly employed by others.



**Figure 19.** Innovation among nascent student entrepreneur

Data on proactivity show that most respondents (87%) tend to act in anticipation of problems (Figure 20). Indeed, 81% of nascent entrepreneurs say they act in anticipation of future needs and changes. What's more, a large majority (87%) prefer to "step up" and move projects forward, rather than wait for someone else to do so.

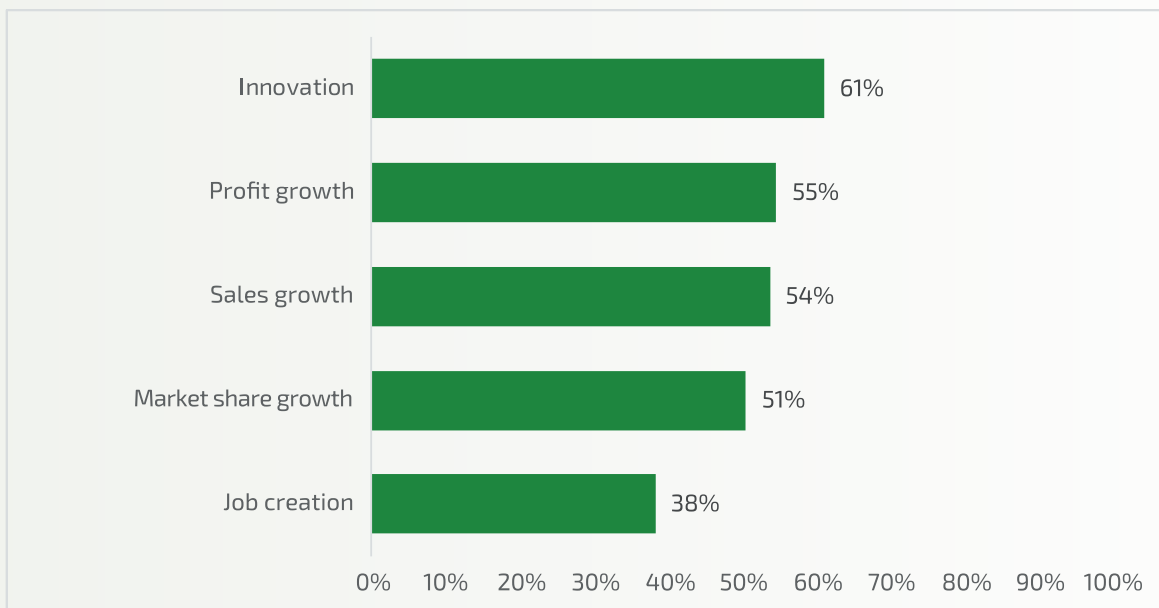


**Figure 20.** Proactivity among nascent student entrepreneurs

## IX- Established entrepreneurship

Established entrepreneurs are those who have already started their own business. As with nascent entrepreneurs, the proportion of women is 47%, compared with 51% for men. 70% of them have started their own business within the last five years.

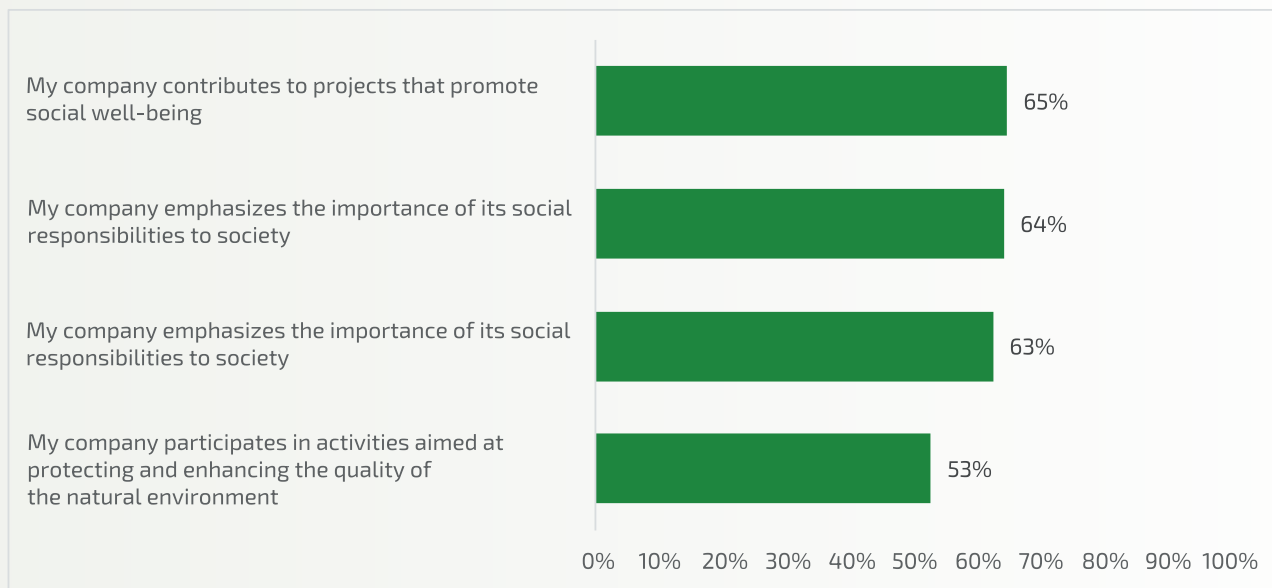
The GUESSS survey also looks at the perceived performance of the companies created by these people. As Figure 21 illustrates, more than half of active entrepreneurs believe that their company is more successful in terms of innovation (61%), and that it has enjoyed growth in profits (55%), sales (54%) and market share (51%) since its launch, compared to its competitors. Conversely, 62% of the same companies rate their companies' job creation performance negatively.



**Figure 21.** Business performance of established entrepreneurs

When it comes to social and environmental performance, survey data reveal that more than half of established student entrepreneurs (64%) demonstrate a real commitment to sustainable growth that takes future generations into account (Figure 22). 53% of these entrepreneurs are involved in activities aimed at protecting and improving the quality of the natural environment. The same trend is confirmed for indicators relating to awareness of the importance of social responsibilities towards society (63%) and contribution to projects that promote the well-being of society (65%).

These data illustrate the strong commitment of respondents to social and environmental responsibility, and the determination of established entrepreneurs to make a positive contribution to society and the environment.

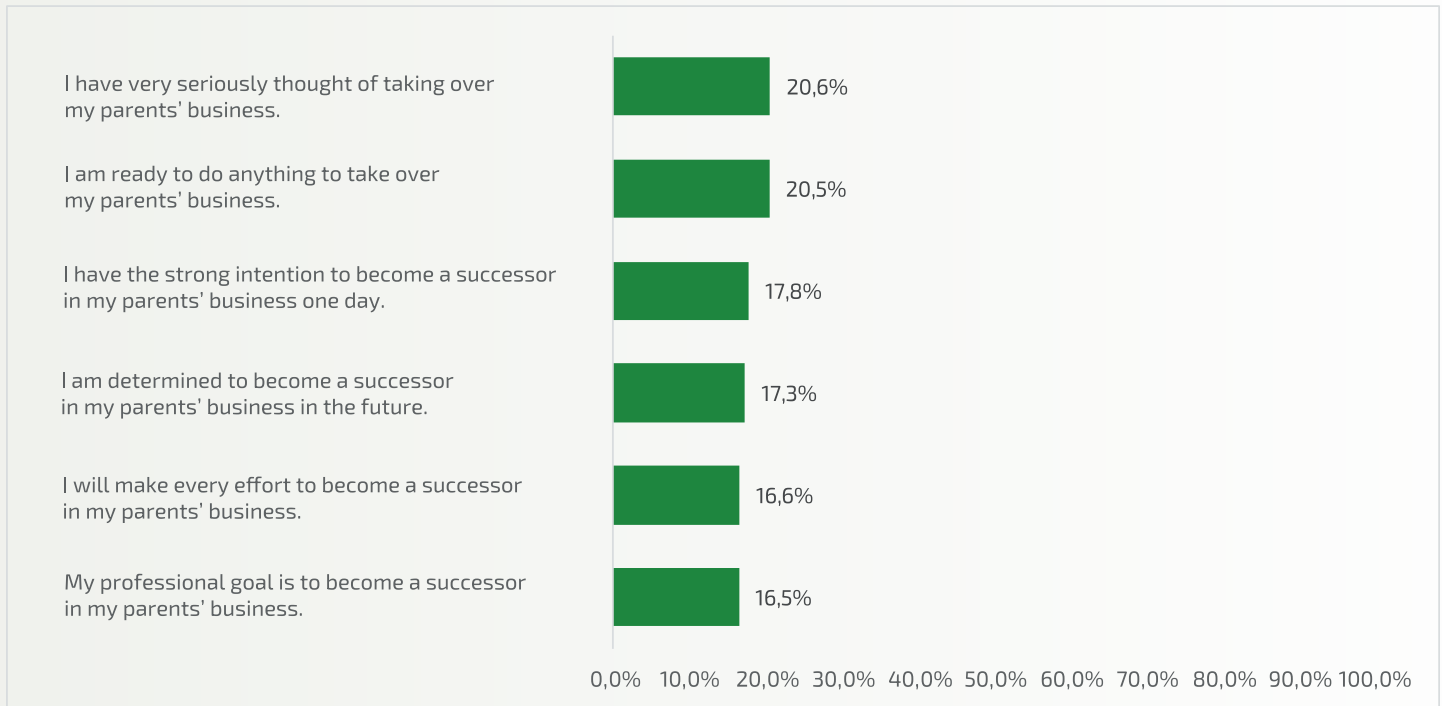


**Figure 22.** Environmental and social performance of established entrepreneurs' businesses

## X- Family business succession

Almost a quarter (n=1000) of the students taking part in the survey confirmed that their parents are self-employed or are owners and involved in entrepreneurial projects. Of these parents, 82% are currently running the business on an operational level. As for students, 84% have no personal involvement in their parents' business, and half do not consider it a family business, with over 58% having never worked there. As far as businesses are concerned, they operate in a variety of sectors. The secondary sector occupies the largest share (26%), followed by the tertiary services sector (24%), while the primary sector, such as agriculture, forestry or fishing, accounts for 16.5%.





**Figure 23.** Intention to inherit among university students with at least one parent in business

When it comes to succession, the results show that students have little intention of taking over the family business. The majority disagree with their commitment to becoming successors (Figure 23). This indicates a weak commitment on the part of the younger generation to perpetuating the family's entrepreneurial activities.

## Conclusion and recommendations

---

The results of the GUESSS survey confirm that entrepreneurship education is positively related to the entrepreneurial intentions and skills of university students in Canada. Based on the results presented, we propose the following recommendations:

### 1- Multiply entrepreneurship education programs

Universities are encouraged to increase the number of entrepreneurial courses on offer. Data shows that students participating in these programs have better entrepreneurial attitudes and greater confidence in their practical skills. As nascent entrepreneurs demonstrate innovation- and risk-taking-oriented characteristics, it's important to take advantage of the transition to university for those interested in entrepreneurship to train them to consider starting up more quickly after their studies.

### 2- Communicating about university support systems

The creation of incubators and gas pedals within universities enables students to benefit from technical, financial, and professional support to transform their ideas into viable businesses. However, the survey shows that almost half of them are unaware of the existence of such structures within their universities. It is therefore important to put in place effective communication strategies to inform and encourage the use of these facilities.

### 3- Greater integration of social and sustainable entrepreneurship

Active entrepreneurs demonstrate a strong commitment to sustainable and socially responsible practices. Educational programs should further integrate these dimensions to prepare students to create businesses that contribute positively to society and the environment. Universities are also called upon to raise awareness of the concepts of social and sustainable entrepreneurship through events, conferences, or even social innovation competitions.

### 4- Raising awareness of takeover opportunities

The results show little intention of succession, with few students considering taking over family businesses (2% of students plan to take over an existing business immediately after their studies, and 3% plan to do so five years after graduation). It would therefore be worthwhile for universities to raise awareness among students of this reality, as well as of the opportunities available to them when it comes to taking over a business.

### 5- Supporting women entrepreneurs

Gender differences in entrepreneurial intentions and skills are significant. Women often feel less confident in their entrepreneurial abilities than men. It is therefore essential to develop their sense of competence, remove barriers to their acting, and encourage an inclusive culture of entrepreneurship from the university level upwards.

## Conclusion

---

In conclusion, Canadian universities can play a key role in promoting entrepreneurship and developing the entrepreneurial skills of their students. By strengthening educational programs and developing supportive infrastructures, they can not only improve entrepreneurial intentions but also contribute to the creation of innovative, sustainable, and socially responsible businesses, thereby contributing to sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

## References

---

Carter, N. M., Gartner, W. B., Shaver, K. G., & Gatewood, E. J. (2003). The career reasons of nascent entrepreneurs. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 18(1), 13-39.

Duhamel, M. (2024). Étude nationale du repreneuriat et du transfert d'entreprise au Québec, 2015-2021. Center de transfert d'entreprise du Québec (Québec).

Gartner, W., Shaver, K., Carter, N., & Reynolds, P. (2004). *Handbook of Entrepreneurial Dynamics: The Process of Business Creation*. SAGE Publications, Inc.

Koropogui, S. T., St-Jean, É., & Zakariya, S. (2023). Usefulness of Practice-Based Pedagogical Approaches for Nascent Student Entrepreneurs. *Entrepreneurship Education and Pedagogy*, 25151274231207047.

Newman, A., Obschonka, M., Schwarz, S., Cohen, M., & Nielsen, I. (2019). Entrepreneurial self efficacy: A systematic review of the literature on its theoretical foundations, measurement, antecedents, and outcomes, and an agenda for future research. *Journal of vocational behavior*, 110(Part B), 403-419.

Wilson, F., Kickul, J., & Marlino, D. (2007). Gender, Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy, and Entrepreneurial Career Intentions: Implications for Entrepreneurship Education. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice* 31 (3):387-406.

## Appendix :

### Presentation of partner universities



Université du Québec  
à Trois-Rivières

The **Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières (UQTR)** was founded in 1969 and is a member of the Université du Québec network. With some 15,000 undergraduate and graduate students in nearly 400 programs, many of which are unique in Quebec, UQTR stands out in particular for its collaborations with the socio-economic community, with which it conducts a number of research projects, and its Institut de recherche sur les PME (InRPME), which brings together a research team of nearly 90 people (including graduate students) dedicated to the study of entrepreneurship and SMEs. InRPME also brings together several research Chairs, including the Chaire d'excellence en enseignement UQTR en pédagogie de l'entrepreneuriat, which aims to develop advanced knowledge on teaching entrepreneurship and training entrepreneurs.

In 2018, UQTR also created the Carrefour d'entrepreneuriat et d'innovation (CEI-UQTR), whose mission is to develop an entrepreneurial and innovation culture among the UQTR community and to support people wishing to become entrepreneurs by leveraging the complementary resources of UQTR and strategic players in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. The CEI supports over 150 student entrepreneurs every year, half of whom are from diverse backgrounds or were born outside Canada. Many activities are offered, including Summer Schools on circular innovation or renewable energies, panels of inspiring entrepreneurs, or opportunities for interdisciplinary meetings and networking.

UQTR offers several programs and training courses related to entrepreneurship, including a Bachelor of Business Administration in Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Business Development, an MBA with a concentration in SME Management and a concentration in SME Innovation Management, and a Master of Science in Management with a specialization in Entrepreneurship and SME Management. Many of our programs also offer introductory courses in entrepreneurship or entrepreneurial project management.



**POLYTECHNIQUE  
MONTRÉAL**

Founded in 1873, **Polytechnique Montréal** is the first French-language engineering school in Canada. Located on the campus of the Université de Montréal, its mission is to train high-level engineers and scientists, to conduct innovative research addressing major societal challenges, and to exert significant influence on intellectual, economic, and social levels. Polytechnique Montréal hosts nearly 10,000 students and offers a wide range of engineering programs, all accredited by Engineers Canada. These programs cover various disciplines, including aerospace, biomedical, chemical, civil, electrical, geological, industrial, computer, software, mechanical, mining, and physical engineering. Since its inception, Polytechnique Montréal has trained nearly 60,000 engineers, scientists, and researchers, while contributing to significant discoveries and the development of numerous technologies. Its approximately 60 research units and its faculty, composed of globally recognized experts, reinforce its position as a leader in innovation. The school also places a strong emphasis on experiential learning, offering students opportunities for internships, diverse projects, and active participation in technical societies and student committees. Entrepreneurship has taken on an increasingly important role. Polytechnique created its first entrepreneurship course in the 1980s. This course marked the beginning of the integration of entrepreneurship into the school's curriculum, well before entrepreneurship became a major trend in engineering schools. In recent years, the offering of entrepreneurship courses has expanded, as have initiatives to support the commercialization of research results. Since 2011, a formal entrepreneurship support program has been in place, evolving under different names before becoming Propolys in 2022. Propolys now supports more than 80 startups and raises awareness of entrepreneurship among over 3,000 students each year, while encouraging researchers to commercialize their innovations through its Lab-To-Market support program.



**Saskatchewan Polytechnic** serves students through applied learning opportunities on Treaty 4 and Treaty 6 Territories and the homeland of the Métis. Learning takes place at campuses in Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Regina and Saskatoon and through extensive distance education opportunities. Our certificate, diploma, degree, post-graduate certificate and apprenticeship training programs serve every economic and public service sector. Saskatchewan Polytechnic engages in applied research in partnership with industry to deliver practical solutions to everyday problems. Saskatchewan Polytechnic's Office of Applied Research and Innovation (OARI) hosts an annual Applied Research Student Showcase, celebrating the innovation, creativity and cutting-edge applied research completed by our talented students. Growing each year, the showcase shared 76 applied research projects in 2024. OARI provides additional support and encouragement to students pursuing applied research by offering \$50,000 each year in scholarships.

Saskatchewan Polytechnic's School of Business and Entrepreneurship hosts its own annual showcase to provide a platform for business students to present innovative projects in various disciplines. Students collaborate on projects, either within industry partnerships or through simulated industry experiences, coming up with their own innovative concepts. The School of Business and Entrepreneurship has programs on all four campuses and in 2024 saw 26 student groups participate in the showcase. The School of Business and Entrepreneurship offers a one-year Entrepreneurship post-graduate certificate aimed at immersing students in the entrepreneurial mindset. The program helps students identify and exploit opportunities for start-ups or for growing existing businesses.

According to a 2023 economic impact analysis, Saskatchewan Polytechnic contributes \$2.6 billion to the economy with one out of every 19 jobs in Saskatchewan supported by the activities of Sask Polytech and its students.



JOHN MOLSON  
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

**University of Concordia** is a next-generation university, located in Montreal, Canada. Concordia is the top-ranked university in North America founded within the last 50 years and annually registers some 50,000 students through its innovative approach to experiential learning and cross-functional research. Concordia's John Molson School of Business has been ranked number 40 in the world for entrepreneurship (The Princeton Review's Top 50 Entrepreneurship: Grad rankings). The John Molson School of Business prioritizes entrepreneurship through its course offerings, research and experiential learning opportunities outside the classroom. It offers a Minor in Entrepreneurship for undergraduate students. The School is also home to the CIBC Distinguished Professorship in Entrepreneurship and Family Business, the National Bank Initiative in Entrepreneurship and Family Business, and the Barry F. Lorenzetti Centre for Women Entrepreneurship and Leadership, supporting research projects dedicated to knowledge creation in entrepreneurship.



UNIVERSITY OF  
CALGARY

The **University of Calgary** is situated on a 200-hectare campus with views of the Rocky Mountains and is home to a diverse community consisting of 1,850 academics and 2,900 non-academic staff who serve over 29,000 undergraduate and 7,900 graduate students. The University of Calgary aims to be Canada's premier entrepreneurial university, and central to that vision are the Hunter Hub and Innovate Calgary.

The Hunter Hub for Entrepreneurial Thinking nurtures student entrepreneurship and advances faculty innovation through a set of connected programs. The Embedded Certificate in Entrepreneurial Thinking integrates entrepreneurial skills into any undergraduate degree. Launchpad offers a six-month program for early-stage entrepreneurs, while Map the System is a competition where students apply an interdisciplinary approach to address complex social and environmental issues. The Evolve to Innovate (e2i) program empowers novice graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, and professors to translate their research into practical solutions, and the Experience Ventures program places students in entrepreneurial roles nationwide.

As the university's commercialization arm, Innovate Calgary has been a key driver of innovation for over 30 years by focusing on social innovation, life sciences, energy transfer, and aerospace. These efforts are fueled, in part, by the UCeed fund, which has invested \$3.7 million in 30 companies, generating over \$56 million in additional capital and creating 272 new jobs. Faculty specific initiatives in the Haskayne School of Business include the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, the Trico Centre for Social Entrepreneurship, and the Creative Destruction Lab - Rockies (CDL-R). Since starting in 2017, CDL-R has helped over 380 companies secure more than \$2.3 billion in capital to create 2,100 jobs and generate \$6.7 billion in cumulative enterprise value. Within the Cumming School of Medicine, W21C promotes health innovation through initiatives like its SPARK program in collaboration with parallel connector programs within each faculty across campus.



## UNIVERSITÉ DE MONCTON

### EDMUNDSTON MONCTON SHIPPAGAN

**The Université of Moncton** is a post-secondary educational institution with three campuses (Moncton, Edmundston, Shippagan) exclusively in the French language. It is recognized for the excellence of its teaching and research, as well as for its significant contribution to the development of Acadian and francophone society.

With a vision of "Francophone entrepreneurship at its best", the Centre Assomption de recherche et de développement en entrepreneuriat (CARDE) at the Université de Moncton was created in 1987 through a chair established thanks to the Acadian company Assomption Life. CARDE seeks to promote entrepreneurship research and training among business people and in the three Université de Moncton university centers, as well as to ensure the dissemination of knowledge. CARDE provides a link between the Université de Moncton and the Acadian and francophone business community, particularly in the small and medium-sized enterprise sector. Its objectives are as follows:

- 1- Promote entrepreneurship research and training at the Université de Moncton and in the community;
- 2- To establish partnerships with stakeholders in the fields of entrepreneurship, business and economic development in order to foster exchanges and meet the research and training needs of the business community;
- 3- Prioritize inclusive francophone entrepreneurship, youth entrepreneurship and support for the province's SMEs in its programming and activities.
- 4- Secure additional resources to those already available to achieve CARDE's vision and mission.

Over the years, various activities and initiatives have been undertaken, including the production of a television program, "Temps d'affaires", featuring young francophone entrepreneurs from the Atlantic provinces. Various roundtables, symposiums and conferences were also organized, and business services were offered to the business community.

In 2015, the Patrick Albert Entrepreneurial Mentoring Program (PMEPA) was launched, offering individualized service to Université de Moncton students and the province's business community. This year, considering the preliminary results of the GUESSS, CARDE is launching an ENTREPRENEURIAL PATH divided into 4 phases (Ideation, Validation, Start-up and Growth) where, for a period of two months, training will be offered on one of the above-mentioned phases. We plan to offer around 40 workshops during the university sessions from September 2024 to April 2025.

The aim of this initiative is to provide entrepreneurship training and knowledge dissemination not only to PMEPA mentees, but to the entire student population of the Université de Moncton, to be a model of excellence in entrepreneurial innovation for the community.



Université de  
Sherbrooke

The **Université de Sherbrooke** was founded in 1955, and today has more than 30,000 undergraduate and graduate students on its three campuses.

Faculty research and teaching are carried out in eight faculties and 16 research and teaching centers and institutes such as the Quantum Institute, Quantum Space 1 (in the Quantum Innovation Zone), the MiQro Innovation Collaboration Center, the Advanced Technology Center and the Creative Studio, the Institut interdisciplinaire d'innovation technologique, the Accélérateur d'entreprises technologiques (ACET).

The Desjardins Entrepreneurial Coach (AED), under the direction of a professor in the Entrepreneurship Department, accompanies and supports the entrepreneurial projects of Université de Sherbrooke students. Over the past five years, more than 4,500 students have seen more than 500 entrepreneurial projects get off the ground.

In 2019, the Université de Sherbrooke created an Entrepreneurship Department in the School of Management. In addition to overseeing all 45 entrepreneurship courses at all undergraduate and graduate levels in all faculties and schools of the Université de Sherbrooke, its seven professors conduct research in several areas of entrepreneurship studies while carrying out numerous collaborations with Sherbrooke's entrepreneurial community.

The appointment of an Assistant Vice-Rector for Innovation, Partnerships and Entrepreneurship is further evidence of the importance the Université de Sherbrooke places on entrepreneurship.

Quantum Space 1 (in the Quantum Innovation Zone) provides access to state-of-the-art co-working spaces, facilities and equipment for start-ups in the quantum sector. The Creation Studio serves as a production Fablab for startups and a place for creation, exhibition, knowledge enhancement, technological innovation, training and entrepreneurship.

Among the actions undertaken to promote entrepreneurship, we note: The MBA-Entrepreneurship program in Martinique, in which the Centre Laurent-Beaudoin team has helped to train Martinique company executives in entrepreneurship; The graduate micro-program in business takeover and transfer trains individuals to take over SMEs in Quebec.



University  
of Windsor

The **University of Windsor** was officially incorporated on December 19, 1962, and by July 1, 1963, became southwestern Ontario's first autonomous degree-granting institution, affiliated with Canterbury, Iona, and Holy Redeemer colleges. Currently, the university offers 140+ programs, serving over 16,000 students. UWindsor provides nine cooperative education programs benefiting 1,100 students and boasts a global network with more than 135,000 proud University of Windsor alumni. The EPICentre, founded to support the transformation of people into entrepreneurial thinkers, and innovative ideas into successful economic and social enterprises through training, mentorship, and networking, delivered four cohort-based programs in 2022-23, which included two RBC Founders programs in both summer (full-time) and fall (part-time) semesters, supporting 16 venture teams. As the funding from the Government of Ontario's Women Entrepreneurship Strategy ended, the fifth and final Venture Women Program concluded with eight venture teams. A total of 3,877 individuals participated in workshops and webinars delivered by the EPICentre. Strategy and Entrepreneurship is among the seven areas of Specializations offered at Odette School of Business, University of Windsor.

UQAC  
UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC  
À CHICOUTIMI

Founded in 1969, the **Université du Québec à Chicoutimi** is part of Canada's largest university network, the Université du Québec. It is located in the heart of Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, a French-speaking region renowned for the beauty of its fjord, and has a university studies center in Sept-Îles as well as a digital school in Montreal. Building on the success of its nearly 70,000 graduates, UQAC welcomes more than 6,500 students every year, including over 2,000 from some 50 countries around the world. Renowned for its close-knit relationship with its university community, UQAC offers a unique experience and more than 200 programs of study. Through its departments, continuing education center, Nikanite First Nations Centre and École de langue française et de culture québécoise, it also offers customized training both on campus and abroad.

The Centre d'entrepreneuriat et d'essaimage de l'UQAC (CEE-UQAC) was founded in 1998 in response to a government initiative to set up entrepreneurial centers in universities to stimulate entrepreneurship, promote research and support business start-ups. CEE-UQAC celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2023. The organization offers a range of services to support and accompany the creation of new innovative projects, as well as providing start-up grants, for example through the Star-tech program.

UQAC offers entrepreneurship courses in its undergraduate and graduate management programs. However, in the fall of 2024, a new short program in entrepreneurship will be introduced at the undergraduate level. This program will be offered in all other undergraduate programs at UQAC, either as an enrichment course or for attestation purposes.



Founded in 1969, **Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM)** is a member of the Université du Québec network. With approximately 33,000 undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in nearly 350 programs, many of which are unique in Quebec, UQAM stands out in particular for the creation of the Carrefour Entrepreneuriat à Impact, which brings together 5 research units working on alternative forms of entrepreneurship, underrepresented groups or behaviors at the margins of entrepreneurship. These centers of expertise are: the Chaire Entrepreneurship, Otherness 7 Society (partner in this study), the Center for economic autonomie of indigenous community, the Center for Studies in International and Intercultural Entrepreneurship, the Observatory Gender & Entrepreneurship, and the Research Team in management of collective and social organizations. GAREE, designed and run by PhD students, is responsible for developing activities to raise awareness of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship research among students.

In 2004, UQAM also created the Center for Entrepreneurship ESG UQAM to provide interdisciplinary entrepreneurial support to students from all faculties. Every year, around 200 projects pass through the center, which organizes an annual competition to promote the best projects that contribute to the responsible development of society. UQAM is also home to the MTLab, an accelerator of opportunities in tourism, culture and entertainment, which hosts 4 programs and offers 2 certifications with ESG+. In particular, this center allows entrepreneurs and companies to network in a spirit of open innovation.

UQAM has a number of programs and courses related to entrepreneurship, including a Bachelor of Business Administration - Entrepreneurship Profile, an MBA with a concentration in Entrepreneurship, and a Certificate in Entrepreneurial Dynamics. It is the first Canadian university to offer a graduate program in entrepreneurial support.



Université du Québec  
à Rimouski

**The University of Quebec at Rimouski (commonly known as UQAR)** is a public university located in Rimouski, Quebec, Canada with a campus in Lévis. It was created in 1969 and has awarded more than 50,000 diplomas. In addition to its campuses in Lévis and Rimouski, UQAR offers academic training throughout eastern Quebec, notably in Chaudière-Appalaches, Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Haute-Côte-Nord and in Manicouagan. It also has permanent offices in Gaspé and Rivière-du-Loup. UQAR is part of the University of Quebec network, and welcomes approximately 7,000 new students each year, including approximately 550 foreign students from more than 45 countries. It has considerable strengths in the fields of marine sciences, regional development and northern studies.

In 2012, UQAR created a university entrepreneurship center supported by the Ministry of Economy and Innovation as well as economic development and private partners. This center called Entrepreneuriat UQAR (EUQAR) supports around fifty students each year. Its mission is to promote entrepreneurial culture among the UQAR university community. In addition to ensuring this mandate, EUQAR supports the creation of new businesses through a wide range of services and stimulating activities in conjunction with community partners. It offers consulting service support for the ideation, pre-start-up and start-up phases, offered exclusively to students and recent graduates (less than 2 years), for all levels of studies and for all fields. EUQAR is focusing on a collaborative business model to complete its service offering; he maintains a strong link with the various stakeholders in the regions served by UQAR, in Bas-Saint-Laurent, in Chaudière-Appalaches, on the North Shore and in Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine.

UQAR has some programs and training related to entrepreneurship, including a bachelor's degree in business administration – entrepreneurship profile as well as a certificate in entrepreneurship. Other programs also have introductory courses in entrepreneurship or entrepreneurial project management.



A member of the Université du Québec network, **the Université du Québec en Outaouais (UQO)** began offering its teaching activities over 40 years ago, in 1971 in the Outaouais region and for nearly 15 years in the Laurentians. In recent years, UQO has experienced increased growth, and today boasts a number of study paths in both Gatineau and Saint-Jérôme. With over 7,000 students, UQO has established itself in the Outaouais and Laurentians as a key player in social, economic and cultural development. UQO offers several business programs at all levels of study, including bachelor's degrees with concentrations (general path, entrepreneurship, finance, real estate management and evaluation, people management and marketing), master's degrees in business administration (MBA) with essay or thesis, a master's degree in financial economics and another in project management, as well as a doctorate in administration-project management. Specialized post-graduate diplomas, certificates and short programs round out the range of possible career paths in administration. As part of its administration programs, UQO offers students-es concentrations in entrepreneurship, notably in the Bachelor of Administration and MBA programs. In addition, UQO offers a short graduate program in entrepreneurship. These concentrations/programs invite students-es to embark on careers in entrepreneurship. Pedagogical methods place students-es in real-life entrepreneurial situations through pedagogical cases, meetings with entrepreneurs and through simulations. In addition, every year in March, UQO organizes Entrepreneurship Week (Gatineau and St-Jérôme campuses), where activities, seminars, workshops, training and conferences are offered to the entire student community. UQO also organizes the Grand Rendez-vous Entrepreneurial des Laurentides on the St-Jérôme campus, an entrepreneurial symposium bringing together students and entrepreneurs.

UQO partners with Cilex, a business incubator-accelerator based at UQO's Gatineau campus. Cilex propels startups and companies through innovation. In addition to participating in entrepreneurship research projects with UQO professors-es (e.g. Professor Julie Bérubé's project on innovative entrepreneurship in the regions, funded by the FRQ Société et culture's PERSEIS program), Cilex offers its services free of charge to the entire UQO student community. UQO also relies on its entrepreneurial laboratory, Étincelle for students-es on the St-Jérôme campus. Étincelle offers coaching to students-es who aspire to become entrepreneur-es. These services are available to the entire UQO student community.



Founded in 1663, **Université Laval** is the first French-language university in North America. With its 17 faculties, 1,665 professors and 2,410 lecturers, it offers some 600 programs of study to over 55,000 students annually. In 2023, Times Higher Education named Université Laval the 9th best university in the world and 4th in Canada for its efforts to combat climate change. Through its mission, Université Laval supports responsible entrepreneurship. Each year, ULaval offers credited training programs in entrepreneurship at the certificate, bachelor's and master's levels to over 9,000 students from all disciplines. Its intensive week-long summer school for doctoral students is taught by 15 professors renowned in the field, both in Canada and internationally. Since 1993, its incubator, Entrepreneuriat ULaval, has supported over 40 student entrepreneurs each year, with a brigade of alumni organizing sharing circles. Its animation activities welcome over 1,200 participants annually. Since 2017, the Entrepreneurial Academy has supported more than 60 entrepreneurs in their innovation and growth projects, 96% of which are still in operation. EGGenius more specifically supports science and engineering entrepreneurs through networking activities with business people and dedicated financing. For the past eight years, a training platform in agricultural entrepreneurship has been equipping entrepreneurs in this field, who are also offered an Agricultural Training Camp. ULaval is home to a Leadership Chair in Entrepreneurship and Teaching, as well as an International Entrepreneurship Research Centre. Over \$200,00k is devoted annually to research in this field by a team of 10 researchers.

