



PRESS RELEASE

Two thirds of students (66%) pursuing skills outside formal education

Online courses and side projects cited by three in ten (30%)

Toronto, Canada, August 21, 2026 — A large proportion (66%) of Canadian students are increasing their skillsets outside of their formal education program. The most frequently cited sources are online course and side projects (both 30%), professional certifications (20%) and AI-related training (16%).

Concerns About the Job Market and Earning Potential Key Factors

A large proportion of students indicate concerns about the job market (76%) have impacted their education and career decisions. Motivations to improve skills most frequently cited are improving earning potential (46%), improving job prospects (43%) and personal interest (40%).

Majority Concerned About Tuition, Though Most Optimistic About Future

Almost six in ten (57%) are concerned about covering their tuition and school expenses, and most (80%) expect to work in the academic year. Despite this, 78% are optimistic about their financial future after graduation. In addition, students are planning ahead as 66% have a financial plan for the next school year, and the same proportion plan to invest some of their summer earnings, while 78% feel confident they are making the correct financial decisions for the future.

About the Study

This poll was completed by Ipsos and conducted between July 7 and 14, 2026 on behalf of CIBC. For this survey, a sample of 500 Canadian post-secondary students aged 18-25 were interviewed online using the Ipsos I-Say Panel. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within ± 4.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Canadian post-secondary students been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

For more information on this news release, please contact:

Sean Simpson
Senior Vice President, Ipsos Public Affairs
+1 416 324-2900
Sean.Simpson@ipsos.com





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www.ipsos.com

35 rue du Val de Marne
75 628 Paris, Cedex 13 France
Tel. +33 1 41 98 90 00

