

Future Skills Innovation Network for Universities (FUSION)

Project Brief

Context

This report summarizes the findings from the evaluation of the FUSION pilot, with the objective of understanding program reach, participants' program satisfaction and completion, and their early program outcomes.

The FUSION pilot was a project delivered by Future Skills Innovation Network (FUSION) to support university graduates who struggled with finding a job and transferring academic skills to the workplace. FUSION, as a collaborative group of Canadian universities, aimed to use its network model to foster collaboration around skills development, speed the diffusion of successful innovations, and produce a more streamlined and optimized workforce development system. In the spring of 2019, FUSION received a grant from the Future Skills Centre (FSC) to support the design and delivery of the project.

FUSION's national network of Canadian universities includes University of Calgary (AB), Concordia University (QC), Carleton University (ON), Simon Fraser University (BC), the University of Saskatchewan (SK), and Memorial University (NL).

About the Fusion Pilot

The FUSION pilot aimed to build more inclusive forms of skills development into formal and informal learning. From September 2020 to March 2022, an experiential learning intervention was delivered through an online learning platform to undergraduate students who were participating in select programs delivered by partner universities (such as co-ops, internships, and work-integrated learning). Wrapping around these existing programs, this intervention consisted of an integrated curriculum that focused on metacognition, communication, and complex problem-solving, and included guided self-assessments, exercises, reflections, case studies, and other activities.

As a consortium partner of FSC, Blueprint works with partners to generate evidence to help solve pressing future skills challenges. We worked with FUSION to collect data that helped us understand the pilot's reach and the outcomes achieved by participants. FUSION also conducted their own research on the project.

Skills Domains and Learning Outcomes

This pilot aimed to help participants develop skills in the following skill domains:

Metacognition

- Identify and articulate personal strengths and needs in learning and processing information
- Create academic and/or professional goals and plan for how the experience with the university program (such as co-ops, internships, and work-integrated learning) might contribute to those goals

Communication

- Compare and contrast effective and ineffective communication patterns
- Identify what you can change in your communication with others

Problem Solving

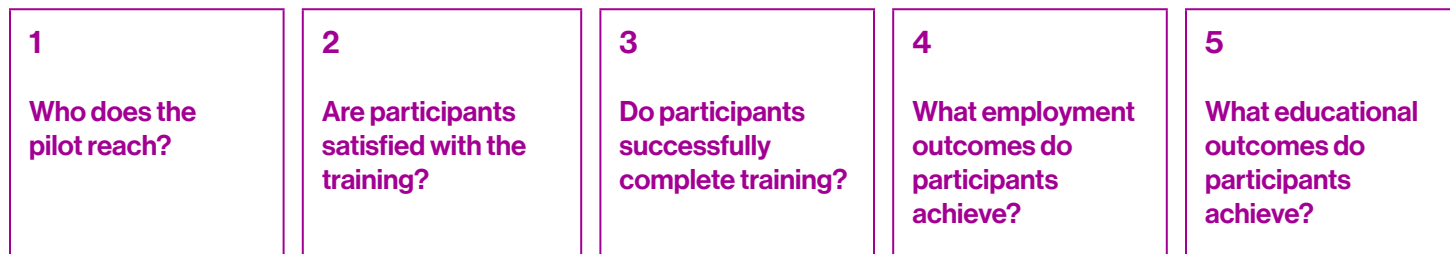
- Classify types of problems given complexity, context, and types of solutions
- Devise a problem-solving strategy based on a complex problem that is occurring in the experience with the university program (such as co-ops, internships, and work-integrated learning)

Overview of Approach

Evaluation Questions

Blueprint collected survey data from participants who consented to participate in our data collection activities. FUSION also shared administrative data with Blueprint to measure program enrollment and completion.

Specifically, this data helped us answer five questions:



Data Sources

- According to the administrative data FUSION shared with us, 2517 students participated in this pilot, among whom 1785 completed the program.
- 190 (11%) of those who completed the program consented to participate in Blueprint's data collection and completed an exit survey.
- Given that only a small proportion of participants took part in our evaluation, the findings presented in this report may not be representative of all participants.

Data Sources		No. of Participants
Administrative data (shared by FUSION)	Program enrollment	2517
	Program completion	1785 (out of 2517)
Participant Survey* (administered by Blueprint)	Exit survey (upon program completion)	190 (out of 1785)

- Our data collection was guided by our Common Outcomes Framework, which is a set of outcomes and participant socio-demographics that can be used to generate consistent, comparable evidence across projects. We are also currently pursuing longitudinal data collection, working with Statistics Canada to use their Social Data Linkage Environment to measure long-term participant employment and education outcomes for FSC project participants using administrative data. We anticipate results from this long-term outcomes monitoring will be available in early 2023

* As participants were expected to be university students, measuring outcomes such as employment and education was not the focus of this pilot. Therefore, no baseline survey was implemented and an exit survey with socio-demographic questions was administered instead.

Key Findings

Summary of Key Findings

Among participants who consented to data collection activities:

Program Reach

- **64%** (121/190) were female
- The average age was 26 years
- **51%** (96/189) self-identified as a racialized person
- **4%** (8/188) were Indigenous
- **10%** (7/68) were newcomers to Canada

Program Satisfaction

- **83%** (155/187) were satisfied with the program overall
- **57%** (106/187) would definitely recommend or have recommended the program

Program Outcomes

- **77%** (144/186) were either employed or enrolled in education or training upon program completion

Employment Outcomes

- **56%** (105/186) were employed upon program completion
- Among those employed, **41%** (43/105) had a permanent job and **29%** (29/102) made more than \$40K

Education Outcomes

- **50%** (92/184) were enrolled in education or training upon program completion
- Among those enrolled in education or training, **91%** (84/92) were enrolled in a university degree, diploma or certificate program

Among all participants:

Program Completion

- **71%** (1785/2517) completed the program

Program Reach

The program reached a diverse group of undergraduate university students.

Among respondents to the socio-demographic survey questions:

- **64%** (121/190) were female
- The average age was 26 years
- **51%** (96/189) self-identified as a racialized person
- **4%** (8/188) were Indigenous
- **10%** (7/68) were newcomers to Canada

Socio-Demographics		% of Respondents
Gender	Male	35% (66/190)
	Female	64% (121/190)
	Another option	1% (3/190)
Age	19 and under	5% (10/190)
	20 to 29	76% (144/190)
	30 to 39	17% (32/190)
	40 and over	2% (4/190)
Racialized		51% (96/189)
Indigenous		4% (8/188)
Newcomers (immigrated to Canada in last five years)		6% (5/88)

Program Completion

The overall program completion rate was high.

The administrative data FUSION shared with us shows that:

- Out of a total of 2517 participants across the partner universities, 1785 (**71%**) completed the program
- Program completion rates varied from **64%** to **83%** across the partner universities

Program Completion	% of Participants
University of Calgary	83% (247/297)
Simon Fraser University	81% (135/166)
University of Saskatchewan	80% (266/334)
Memorial University	79% (123/155)
Carleton University	65% (810/1244)
Concordia University	64% (204/321)
TOTAL	71% (1785/2517)

Program Satisfaction

Respondents were in general satisfied with the overall program and different program components but were less likely to recommend the program

Among exit survey respondents when they completed the program:

- **83%** (155/187) were satisfied with the overall program and at least **76%** were satisfied with different program components
- **57%** (106/187) would definitely recommend or have recommended the program to someone

Program Satisfaction		% of Respondents
Somewhat or very satisfied with:	Program overall	83% (155/187)
	Orientation	76% (143/187)
	Metacognition	87% (162/187)
	Communication	80% (150/187)
	Problem solving	84% (158/187)
	Apply	77% (144/186)
	Reflect	83% (155/187)
	Self-assessments	83% (156/187)
Would definitely recommend or have recommended program to someone		57% (106/187)

Program Outcomes

Among exit survey respondents when they completed the program:

- **77%** (144/186) were either employed or enrolled in education or training

Please see the next page for the breakdown of employment and education outcomes. Due to a lack of baseline data, changes in participants' employment or education status since baseline are unknown.

Program Outcomes	% of Participants
Employed or enrolled in education or training	77% (144/186)

Employment Outcomes

Among exit survey respondents when they completed the program:

- **56%** (105/186) were employed, among whom **41%** (43/105) had a permanent job and **29%** (29/102) made more than \$40K

Employment Status	% of Respondents	Salary	% of Respondents
Employed	56% (105/186)	Under \$20,000	46% (47/102)
Permanent job	41% (43/105)	\$20,000 - \$39,999	25% (25/102)
		\$40,000 and above	29% (29/102)

Education Outcomes

Among exit survey respondents when they completed the program:

- **50%** (92/184) were enrolled in education or training, among whom **91%** (84/92) were enrolled in a university degree, diploma, or certificate program.

Education Status	% of Respondents
Enrolled in education or training	50% (92/184)
Enrolled in a university degree, diploma or certificate	91% (84/92)

Additional Socio-demographics

Socio-Demographics		% of Respondents
Marital Status	Never legally married	84% (157/186)
	Legally married (and not separated)	10% (19/186)
	Living with a common-law partner	4% (8/186)
	Separated, but still legally married	1% (1/186)
	Widowed	1% (1/186)
Language	English only	65% (46/71)
	Both English and French	35% (25/71)

Next Steps

Due to the low survey response rate, findings of participant satisfaction and outcomes presented in this report may not be representative of all program participants. Therefore, the exact effectiveness of this program and the implications of the findings are unknown.



About the Future Skills Centre

[FSC](#) is a forward-thinking centre for research and collaboration dedicated to preparing Canadians for employment success. We believe Canadians should feel confident about the skills they have to succeed in a changing workforce.

As a pan-Canadian community, we are collaborating to rigorously identify, test, measure, and share innovative approaches to assessing and developing the skills Canadians need to thrive in the days and years ahead.

FSC was founded by a consortium whose members are Toronto Metropolitan University, Blueprint and The Conference Board of Canada, and is funded by the [Government of Canada's Future Skills Program](#).

Blueprint

About Blueprint

[Blueprint](#) was founded based on the simple idea that evidence is a powerful tool for change. We work with policymakers and practitioners to create and use evidence to solve complex policy and program challenges. Our vision is a social policy ecosystem where evidence is used to improve lives, build better systems and policies and drive social change.

Our team brings together a multidisciplinary group of professionals with diverse capabilities in policy research, data analysis, design, evaluation, implementation and knowledge mobilization.

As a consortium partner of the Future Skills Centre, Blueprint works with partners and stakeholders to generate evidence to help solve pressing future skills challenges.