Affordability Framework for Post-secondary Education

November 2006

Alberta
Advanced Education

Affordability Framework

Vision	Policy Principles	Policy Outcomes
A world class affordable system that promotes access for all Albertans, recognizes individual circumstances and rewards excellence	■ Accessible ■ Accountable and outcomes-focused ■ Incentive-based ■ Predictable ■ Quality ■ Responsive ■ Seamless ■ Shared costs and benefits ■ Simplicity	■ Adequate resources while learning ■ Debt manageability ■ Enhanced participation and access among all Albertans ■ Enhanced transitions ■ Enhanced transparency ■ Learner success and excellence ■ Recognize learner diversity ■ Sustainable and affordable advanced learning system ■ Well-informed

Affordability Package

Key Component	Description	Policy Outcome
▪ Expand raising awareness initiatives to include mentorships, learning pathways and ambassador programs.	▪ Focus on providing better information to Albertans and raising the aspirations of potential learners to pursue their passions.	Higher levels of awareness of opportunities, costs, resources, and benefits of advanced education.
▪ Develop partnerships for incentive-based grants for Aboriginal Albertans, High School completers, and learners in shorter-term programs. ▪ Develop a pilot program to expand assistance to learners in immigrant bridging programs for professionals.	▪ Expand grant-based support, particularly creative use of targeted and incentive grants.	Higher levels of participation, transitions, and educational attainment.

Key Component	Description	Policy Outcome
▪ Eliminate the existing gap between actual living costs and student financial assistance living allowances and allow for annual increases. ▪ Relax exemptions for vehicles, part-time earnings and scholarships/ bursaries. ▪ Increase financial support for part-time learners.	▪ Adjust living allowances provided for learners receiving Alberta Student Financial Assistance to recognize current costs. ▪ Expand learner access to student financial assistance by reducing eligibility barriers.	More resources to support students in meeting education and living expenses. Eliminate unmet financial need to support learning success.
▪ Establish priorities for the Heritage Scholarship Fund expansion to include Graduate Student Scholarships, more in-study awards, and targeted awards to achieve participation and access objectives.	▪ Expand use of targeted scholarships to enhance participation and success of under-represented learners. ▪ Reward excellence throughout the learning process.	Excellence and innovation.
▪ Reduce interest rates on student loans for borrowers in repayment. ▪ Extend interest-free status to learners on parental leave; and those completing residency requirements. ▪ Allow lifetime loan limits to be re-extended to returning students that repay all or a portion their loans.	▪ Implement tools to enhance debt manageability, including reduced interest rates, repayment flexibility, and continued emphasis on reasonable debt levels.	Enhanced ability to repay student debt.
▪ Identify opportunities for employers and communities to contribute towards advanced education.	▪ Establish partnerships with communities and employers in a variety of programs including matching scholarships, volunteer rewards, student employment opportunities, and debt reduction programs.	Advance affordability and promote successful labour market outcomes through community and employer partnerships.

Key Component	Description	Policy Outcome
- Annual tuition fee increases linked to inflation. - Expand policy to include more programs and learners. - Continue to allow differential fees and fee increases among programs. - Exempted programs include non-credit, distance learning for non-Albertans, and third-party contract. - Provide funding to address foregone tuition fee revenue for post-secondary institutions.	- The annual change in Alberta's Consumer Price Index used to calculate tuition fee increases. - Provide funding to post-secondary institutions to offset lower tuition fee increases and ensure continued quality. - Reflect that the student contribution level of 30% has largely been attained. - Ensure greater equity by including a broader range of programs and learners.	Tuition fee increases are predictable and stable for learners, while continuing to deliver high quality post-secondary education. Increased equity.
Enhance access to student financial assistance through simplified, user-friendly materials, technology, policies and programs.	Work with federal and provincial counterparts to reduce complexity of student financial assistance. Continue to develop materials and system changes to enhance simplicity for learners.	Increase simplicity and transparency for learners. Enhance responsiveness to emerging needs of students.