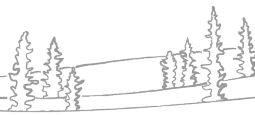




# Have your say

## Proposed Student Financial Assistance Regulations



### Background

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) has reviewed the Student Financial Assistance (SFA) program to ensure that it supports the needs of our students in pursuing their post-secondary education goals.

SFA provides financial assistance to assist with the cost of obtaining a post-secondary education but is not meant to cover all expenses.

The proposed regulation changes will allow ECE to:

- Increase benefit levels
- Remove barriers to accessing post-secondary education

### What happens next?

- **May/early June 2023** - Engagement on SFA regulations
- **June 2023** - Launch of enhanced SFA program

# Amendments to the Student Financial Assistance Regulations

## What do the Regulations include?

### **Basic Grant**

The amount of Basic Grant a student is eligible for will now be dependent on the student category.

The proposed amendments will continue to allow Northern Residents to be eligible for a semester of the Basic Grant for every year of schooling completed in the NWT. Funding available for tuition will increase from \$2,400 up to \$2,655/semester and funding for books will increase from \$550 to \$700/semester.

The proposed regulation amendments will allow Northern Indigenous Residents to have unlimited access to the Basic Grant. Funding available for tuition will increase from \$2,400 up to \$3,320/semester and funding for books will increase from \$550 to \$875/semester.

### Why is it important?

These changes will provide better financial support to NWT students while they are pursuing their post-secondary education.

Students will also now receive the full book allowance, regardless of institution book costs, to allow students to use this funding to access other education services and supports or the cost of program-specific materials. This means that even if the actual costs for books are less than \$700 (Northern residents) or \$875 (Northern Indigenous residents), they will receive the full amount.

Removing the barrier of affordability for students will promote the importance and value of post-secondary education.

In a step towards reconciliation, the Department is increasing the funding available through the Basic Grant for Northern Indigenous students and is removing the limit of semesters that they can access the grant. This will ensure adequate support is provided given the additional stressors and systemic disadvantages that currently exist. Northern Indigenous students will now have more opportunities to pursue their educational goals at their own pace and to continue their post-secondary education beyond undergraduate.

### **Supplementary Grant**

The proposed amendments will increase the Supplementary Grant to assist with Northern Indigenous students' monthly living expenses and will remove the limit of semesters that can be accessed.

To ensure consistency on how living costs are determined, ECE based the grant rates on the [Canada Market Basket Measure](#) for food and shelter and included an additional amount to assist with the cost of internet. The living allowance will continue to be based on family size; however, the income of the spouse will no longer be considered.

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### Why is it important?

The Supplementary Grant amount was last updated in 2015. This increase will ensure the living allowance rates are more reflective of current costs and aligned with the [Canada Market Basket Measure](#).

In a step towards reconciliation, the Department is increasing the funding available through the Supplementary Grant for Northern Indigenous students and is removing the limit of semesters that they can access the grant. This will ensure adequate support is provided given the additional stressors and systemic disadvantages that currently exist. Northern Indigenous students will now have more opportunities to pursue their educational goals at their own pace and to continue their post-secondary education beyond undergraduate.

Proposed changes are in alignment with the [Truth and Reconciliation of Canada Calls to Action](#), the *Report on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women*, and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* in aiming to better support Indigenous students with financial assistance to access post-secondary education.

### Remissible Loan

The following are the proposed amendments to the Remissible Loan:

- Increasing the monthly rate. ECE based the loan rates on the [Canada Market Basket Measure](#) for food and shelter and included an additional amount to assist with the cost of internet;
- Removing the limit of semesters that can be accessed. Students will still need to remain within the \$60,000 revolving loan limit;
- No longer considering the income of the spouse; and
- Expanding to all northern students (to be considered an NWT resident, you must be ordinarily resident in the NWT for 12 months prior to applying). Eligibility will no longer be based on whether the student was schooled in the NWT.

### Why is it important?

The monthly living allowance was last updated in 2015. This increase will ensure the living allowance rates are more reflective of current costs and aligned with the [Canada Market Basket Measure to promote access to post-secondary](#).

Removing the semester limit and expanding the loan to all NWT residents will support anyone wishing to pursue post-secondary education.

### Suspension Penalties

The proposed regulation changes will remove suspension penalties for withdrawing from or failing a course. Students will still be required to repay any benefits they received that they were not eligible for.

### Why is it important?

We recognize that students may experience unexpected challenges while pursuing their post-secondary education that may result in withdrawing or failing a course. Suspensions could become a barrier to a

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### Proposed Student Financial Assistance Regulations

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student's achievement of their post-secondary goals.

Removing the suspension will encourage students to continue with their post-secondary education.

#### Contact information:

Department of Education, Culture and Employment

[www.ece.gov.nt.ca](http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca)

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