

# Canada

## National Higher Education Equity Policy

### Governance & Higher Education Policy Documents

Who is responsible for defining national policies in higher education?

- There is no federal ministry or department responsible for education in Canada. Policy for higher education is managed at the provincial level. However, the Federal Ministry for Human Development (currently called *Employment and Social Development Canada*) makes policy decisions (for example support for learners) that influence higher education.
- As a result, there is no federal higher education strategy as such.

### Equity in Policy Documents

What broad and specific equity objectives do the policy documents identify?

- Each province defines its own equity objectives.

Which equity target groups are identified in the policy documents?

- The following groups are not necessarily targeted through policy documents, but they do benefit from targeted actions in higher education policy.
  - Low-income students
  - Gender groups
  - Indigenous groups

Does the country have concrete targets for the participation of specific equity groups?

- Not at the federal level

Canada does not have a standalone policy document dedicated to equity promotion in higher education.

Are there specific anti-discrimination provisions?

Canadian Human Rights Act (1977) protects from nondiscrimination in admissions to higher education. Universities are under the jurisdiction of provinces and provincial anti-discrimination legislation would apply.

What specific interventions and/or instruments of equity promotion are included in the official strategy and policy documents (monetary and non-monetary)?

### ***Monetary Policy Instruments***

- No tuition fees or low fees in public institutions / No fees for certain groups
- **Needs-based scholarships and grants / Other grants targeted for equity groups:**
  - First Nations and Inuit students may be eligible for financial support for their higher education studies. Eligible costs covered by the program may include tuition, books, travel support and living allowances. The maximum amount payable per full-time student cannot exceed \$50,000 per year.
  - One-year financial support for First Nations and Inuit students to help them meet academic requirements for post-secondary education.
  - Income-based grants are available for full-time and part-time students, based on income
  - Grants are available for full and part-time students with dependents
  - Grants are available for students with disabilities
- **Student loans:** Canada Student Loans Program is the federal program, but provinces also provide financial aid at the provincial level. These loans are need-based.

### ***Non-Monetary Policy Instruments***

- No federal programs exist in this area. At the provincial level, the following interventions are available in some cases.
  - Institutions set up in remote areas / Support from more advanced universities to institutions in remote areas / Distance education available to equity groups living in remote areas
  - Specialized institutions targeting underrepresented groups
  - Outreach and bridge programs
  - Academic and career guidance and counseling
  - Flexible pathways and transfers / Recognition of prior learning
  - Retention programs

### **Financial Resources**

What financial resources does the country devote to equity promotion measures?

- Not available

**Quality Assurance**

- Quality assurance is the responsibility of each province.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

- No federal agency is responsible for monitoring the impact of equity promotion measures.

## **Dedicated Equity Promotion Agency**

Canada does not have an agency dedicated to equity promotion in higher education.

## **Sources**

“Post-Secondary Student Support Program” Government of Canada,  
<https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1100100033682/1531933580211>

“University and College Entrance Preparation Program” Government of Canada  
<https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1100100033688/1531936422341>

“Canada Student Grant for Full-Time Students”  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/education/grants/full-time.html>

Usher, A., (2018). *The State of Post-Secondary Education in Canada*, 2018. Toronto: Higher Education Strategy Associates.