

## Federal Funding in Post-Secondary Education



University  
of Windsor

### Introduction

Publicly funded universities are largely autonomous with flexibility in setting their own admission standards, degree requirements and managing their own financial affairs. That being said, the vast majority of government funding is through the province which determines the operating funding and the tuition fee policies. The federal government provides revenue for postsecondary education (PSE) indirectly through transfer payments to provinces<sup>1</sup>. Federal funding directly to PSE is limited to language, Indigenous affairs, human resource development and funds to support sponsored research<sup>2</sup>. The total federal PSE funding derived from the Canada Social Transfer, research, and human capital formation in 2020/21 was estimated at \$15.7 billion<sup>3</sup>.

In Budget 2021, the federal government proposed \$5.7 billion over five years to help students pursue and complete their education, provide relief from student loan debt, and create 215,000 new job skills development and work opportunities<sup>4</sup>. More than half of this funding (\$3.1 billion) is to help with student financial aid over two years, and more than \$1.4 billion is for work-integrated learning placements over five years<sup>5</sup>.

### Facts and Figures

- For government funding, the University of Windsor received \$5.7 million through the Student Work Placement Program (SWPP) for students hired into paid roles at UWindsor from Summer 2020 to Summer 2021. For 2021 to date, \$3.4 million has been received, with the Fall 2021 funding pending approval.
  - Winter 2021 – 956 students hired into 1057 qualifying roles = \$2.1 million
  - Summer 2021 – 447 students hired into 506 qualifying roles = \$1.2 million
  - Fall 2021 – 1171 students hired into 1360 qualifying roles = \$ TBD
- Beyond these funding sources, the Federal Government also supports infrastructure aimed at new building, capital renewal, climate adaptation and other community building projects that supports campus development and regeneration. Over the last 5 years, UWindsor has received \$14.8 million in federal funding for capital projects on campus.

<sup>1</sup> Higher Education Strategy Associates. (2021). *The State of Post-Secondary Education in Canada*. <https://higherstrategy.com/state-of-postsecondary-education-in-canada-2021/>

<sup>2</sup> Office of Parliamentary Budget Officer. (2016). Federal Spending on Postsecondary Education. [https://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/web/default/files/Documents/Reports/2016/PSE/PSE\\_EN.pdf](https://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/web/default/files/Documents/Reports/2016/PSE/PSE_EN.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Office of Parliamentary Budget Officer. (2016). Total Federal Contributions to Postsecondary Education. [https://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/en/PSE\\_chart](https://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/en/PSE_chart)

<sup>4</sup> Government of Canada. (2019, April 4). *Budget 2021: A recovery Plan for Jobs, Growth and Resilience*. <https://www.budget.gc.ca/2021/report-rapport/p2-en.html#chap3>

<sup>5</sup> University Affairs. (2021). Federal Budget provides relief to postsecondary students, makes some investments in research. <https://www.universityaffairs.ca/news/news-article/federal-budget-provides-relief-to-postsecondary-students-makes-some-investments-in-research/>

- Another primary source of federal funding comes in the form of research funding from the various research councils and funding agencies. Table 1 highlights the funding in the most recently available years and how that funding was distributed. UWindsor has also received significant indirect costs grant (approx. \$3 million) from the federal government.

**Table 1.** Total Research Funding by Agency

Funding Agency	Date	Canada	Ontario	U Windsor
Canadian Institutes of Health Research	2020/21	\$1.4B	\$719.3M	\$2.5M
Social Sciences Humanities Research Council	2020/21	\$933.1M	\$432.7M	\$1.6M
Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council	2018/19	\$1.3B	\$486.8M	\$7.9M
Canadian Foundation for Innovation	2021/22	\$77M	\$24.0M	\$2.9M
Canada Research Chairs	2021/22	\$125.3M	\$68.4M	\$1.4M
Research Support Fund	2020/21	\$369.4M	\$146.0M	\$3.2M

### Best Practices

Government funding is distributed for a wide variety of reasons including demonstrated need, proportion of population, [alignment with objectives](#), political necessity (or alignment with the political priorities of the government in power) and efforts to test new funding approaches. Having [a strategic plan helps the University tell its story](#) in the context of the federal environment and find areas of alignment where relationships and partnerships can be developed between upper levels of government and the institution.

### Thinking Questions

1. How can the University better tap into federal funding?
2. Although federal funding will not support core operations of the University, how should we prioritize certain funding envelopes to target for funding and support?
3. Do you feel that we should set targets (internally or externally) around federal funding?