



University of Toronto
Governing Council

Policy on Student Financial Support

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Policy on Student Financial Support

1. Statement of Principle

No student offered admission to a program at the University of Toronto should be unable to enter or complete the program due to lack of financial means.

2. Scope of Application

This Policy applies to all student financial support at the University of Toronto, whether funded by restricted funds, funds established under the Ontario Student Opportunities Trust Fund (OSOTF) program or through the University's operating budget, and including awards governed by the Policy on Student Awards. Financial support includes:

- grants, bursaries, scholarships, fellowships as defined in the Policy on Student Awards, whether funded from restricted funds, OSOTF or through the University's operating budget
- outside awards as defined in the Policy on Student Awards
- institutionally-negotiated loan programs; that is, programs negotiated by the University with a financial institution on behalf of students, and in some cases for the subsidization of interest payments by the University
- work-study and other forms of employment-based learning
- teaching assistantships and research assistantships

3. Implementation

- a) The University's guarantee: The financial support programs of the University of Toronto will be designed to guarantee that each student has access to the resources necessary to meet his or her needs as assessed by a common mechanism. This mechanism will be based on the Ontario Student Assistance Plan (OSAP) needs assessment with appropriate modifications as determined by the Vice-Provost, Students, and the University Registrar in consultation with the academic divisions of the University. This guarantee will apply to students in good academic standing, and will be in effect so long as levels of OSAP support remain at least equivalent to those prevailing in 1997-98.
- b) Needs as identified in 3 (a) will be met as follows:
 - i) Full-time Students (except doctoral-stream¹):

Students are expected to rely on OSAP assistance, up to the level of the maximum OSAP loan. Assessed need which remains unmet above the OSAP maximum will be met as follows:

 - for students in first-entry undergraduate programs, need unmet by OSAP should be met primarily through grants
 - for students in second-entry professional programs (both undergraduate and graduate), need unmet by OSAP should be met through a mix of grants and institutionally-negotiated loans. The appropriate mix will vary across second-entry programs.
 - ii) Doctoral-stream Students:

As a base-line, doctoral stream students are covered by the guarantee offered to all full-time students. OSAP-assessed need will be met first by OSAP, and need unmet by OSAP

¹ Doctoral-stream students are students in programs leading to the Ph.D., Ed.D., S.J.D. and Mus.Doc. degrees as well as students in master's programs that constitute the normal route for admission to these programs, and who intend to pursue doctoral work. See Administrative Note appended to this policy.

should be met primarily through grants. Beyond this base-line guarantee, however, the following principles will apply:

- The goal of the University of Toronto should be to give doctoral-stream students multi-year packages of support that are competitive with packages offered by peer universities.
- Support for doctoral-stream students should take into account the student's own ability to contribute to the cost of his or her education.
- As much as possible, packages should take the form of fellowships and grants supplemented by teaching and research assistantships as appropriate. Institutionally-negotiated loans should be considered as a last resort.

iii) Part-time Students:

The University should develop a mechanism to assess the financial needs of part-time students, and to determine how best to support needy part-time students in meeting their educational costs. A pilot project designed to assess and to meet the needs of such students will be put in place for 1998-99. The results of this pilot project, to be assessed in consultation with students, will inform a subsequent amendment to this policy.

iv) Out-of-province Students:

Out-of-province students are expected to rely on programs of government support in their home jurisdictions. Where there is a difference between the level of support received from the home jurisdiction and the level which a comparable Ontario student would have received as an OSAP loan, the out-of-province student will have access to an institutionally-negotiated loan to make up the difference. Out-of-province students are also eligible for support in meeting unmet need on the same basis as Ontario students.

v) International Students:

International students must demonstrate that they have sufficient resources to meet their financial needs in order to qualify for a student visa. They are not eligible for the University's guarantee offered to domestic students. International students will nonetheless be eligible for emergency assistance as determined by academic divisions under guidelines issued by the Vice-Provost, Students, and the University Registrar as described in section 3 (b) vi below.

For international students in the doctoral stream, the goal of the University of Toronto should be to offer a package of support competitive with packages offered by peer universities, as described in section 3 (b) ii above.

vi) Students with special financial needs:

The Vice-Provost, Students, and the University Registrar, in consultation with the colleges, faculties and other academic divisions of the University, may issue guidelines dealing with categories of cases in which it is determined that the OSAP needs assessment mechanism does not reflect the true need of the student.

Students who are ineligible for government support for reasons such as disqualifying credit histories are not eligible for the University of Toronto guarantee, but will be assessed on request on a case-by-case basis to determine the level of support that it is appropriate and feasible for the University to provide.

- c) Within the common principles stated in 3 (a) and (b) above, divisional diversity and flexibility is to be encouraged with regard to the appropriate mix of student aid: grants, loans, debt remission, work-study, etc. and the appropriate mode of administration and delivery. Student participation in the design and delivery of programs of student financial support is to be encouraged at the divisional level.
- d) Consistent with the guarantee in 3 (a) above, need should be a necessary condition of eligibility for the preponderance of financial assistance (other than for doctoral-stream students) at the

University. For some need-based awards, eligibility may require passing a certain threshold of merit.

4. Awards Based on Merit Only

Although need should be a condition of eligibility for the preponderance of financial assistance for other than doctoral-stream students as stated in 3 (d) above, merit-only awards should also exist, consistent with the Policy on Student Awards, to recognize and promote academic excellence among the student body and to provide incentives for academically excellent students to select the University; and the University should also offer other means of recognizing particularly meritorious performance.

5. Financial Counselling

The University and its divisions shall make financial counselling available to students.

6. Administrative Regulations

The Vice-Provost, Students, and the University Registrar may issue administrative regulations under this Policy and shall report such regulations for information to the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs.

7. Annual Reporting

The Vice-Provost, Students, shall issue an annual report on Student Financial Support to include the following:

- levels of student financial need, by academic division, as assessed through the University's common needs assessment mechanism
- student financial assistance provided, by academic division, broken down by category and source (external/University) of assistance: grants, interest-subsidized loans and/or institutionally-negotiated loans, work-study, etc.
- for doctoral students, the full annual value of the packages of support provided to students, by SGS division, broken down by category and source (external/ University) of funding: grants, research assistantships, teaching assistantships, interest-subsidized and/or institutionally-negotiated loans, etc.
- the debt levels carried by students upon graduation from first-entry programs
- the results of regular student surveys directed at assessing the accessibility of the University's programs

This report shall be submitted for information to the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs.

8. Advocacy

In making the case for public policies strongly supportive of an accessible public system of university education, the University will continue to advocate well designed programs of governmental financial support for students, sustained by substantial levels of public expenditure.

March 25, 1998