

Financial information of universities and degree-granting colleges, 2017/2018

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Canada's 147 public universities and degree-granting colleges spent \$28.9 billion in 2017/2018, up 5.1% from \$27.5 billion in 2016/2017. Revenues, in turn, decreased 1.2%, from \$30.1 billion in 2016/2017 to \$29.7 billion in 2017/2018.

Understanding these institutions' revenues and expenditures is important given the key role postsecondary educational institutions play in developing a highly skilled workforce and ensuring the successful labour market outcomes of graduates.

Government funding is the largest source of revenue

Universities and degree-granting colleges receive most of their funding from government sources (47.0%) and tuition fees (28.3%). The remainder comes from donations, private grants, investments, and other minor revenue sources.

Governments are the single main source of revenue, accounting for \$14.0 billion of all revenues in 2017/2018. The majority of government funding comes from the provinces and totalled \$10.8 billion in 2017/2018, unchanged from 2016/2017. As a proportion of total funding, provincial funding decreased from 40.0% in 2012/2013 to 36.4% in 2017/2018.

The federal government was the direct source for \$3.9 billion of revenues in 2017/2018. The vast majority of federal government funding (88.4%) is directed toward sponsored research through research granting programs, such as the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and the Natural Science and Engineering Research Council. Provincial funding, in turn, is primarily earmarked for operating costs and capital spending.

Tuition and other fees account for a growing portion of revenue

Institutions received \$8.4 billion in revenue from tuition and other fees in 2017/2018, up \$404.3 million from 2016/2017. Revenue from tuition fees increased 27.4%, from \$6.6 billion in 2012/2013 to \$8.4 billion in 2017/2018. The proportion of revenue from tuition fees grew from 24.1% in 2012/2013 to 28.3% in 2017/2018.

Key factors for the overall rise in the proportion of tuition revenues were increased tuition fees, and increased enrolment of international students, who pay higher tuition fees than Canadian students. From 2012/2013 to 2016/2017, the latest academic year for which data are available, the number of international undergraduate university students rose by 30.9%, compared with a slight decline of 0.4% for Canadian students.

International undergraduate students paid an average annual tuition of \$25,549 in 2017/2018, more than three times the average for Canadian students, who paid \$6,618 (unadjusted for inflation).

Sponsored research comprises nearly one-fifth of revenues

Funds to support sponsored research are those that are earmarked specifically for research. While the federal government is the primary source of this type of revenue, other sources include private industry and private donors. Revenues for sponsored research rose by 1.2% from 2016/2017 to \$5.8 billion in 2017/2018. In 2017/2018, sponsored research comprised 19.3% of total revenue, compared with 18.9% in 2016/2017.

The largest share of expenditures goes towards salaries, wages and benefits

The largest proportion of university expenditures was for staff compensation (salaries, wages and benefits), accounting for \$16.7 billion in 2017/2018, up \$179.0 million from 2016/2017. As a proportion of total expenditures, total compensation declined from 59.3% in 2012/2013 to 57.7% in 2017/2018.



Capital spending increases as a percentage of total expenditures

From 2016/2017 to 2017/2018, net capital expenditures by universities and degree-granting colleges increased by \$1.1 billion to \$3.7 billion, accounting for 12.7% of total expenditures. Capital expenditures cover longer-term acquisitions like property, buildings, large renovations, and equipment purchases. Large annual fluctuations are common in capital spending. This is because capital expenditures are recorded when the expense takes place and amortization costs are not recorded over the life of the asset.

Note to readers

Revenue and expenditure data are distributed by fund. These funds are: general operating (reserved for the institution's primary activities of instruction and research, other than sponsored research), special purpose and trust, sponsored research, ancillary, capital and endowment.

Data in this release cover 147 universities and degree-granting colleges. All dollar figures are adjusted for inflation unless otherwise specified.

Caution should be taken when comparing provincial data directly since provinces have different funding formulas and mechanisms.

Available tables: [37-10-0026-01](#) and [37-10-0027-01](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [3121](#).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).