

Project Proposal: Students' Affordability Considerations for Post-Secondary Access

Background

Affordability is a decision-making razor that defines expectations, plans, and actions in many aspects of everyday life. As post-pandemic turbulence continues to exert budgetary pressures on individuals and institutions, the current cost of living increase in Canada—the highest in thirty-two years (StatCan, 2024)—will influence post-secondary learners' experiences and behaviours when it comes to enrolment, persistence, and transfer considerations.

This project explores how the affordability of post-secondary education is assessed and defined in different sectors and institutions. To what extent does learners' [in]ability to pay the costs associated with post-secondary education drive their decision-making?

Purpose/Goal

To explore how affordability of education influences post-secondary access.

Scope

BC Transfer System institutions.

Objectives

1. To define "affordability of education" in the BC post-secondary context via a post-pandemic environmental scan of BC regional price indices.
2. To conduct a BC review of institutional tuition and fee structures (i.e., mandatory student fees charged by the institution and by the student union), in addition to Canadian and US comparators.
3. To explore availability of data and information on students' perceptions of affordability of post-secondary education in student surveys conducted at and for BC Transfer System institutions.
4. To assess perceptions of institutional staff (e.g., admissions staff, advisors) and students across different post-secondary sectors, regions (including part-time/full-time, domestic/international, transfer/non-transfer learner subgroups).
5. To analyze perceptions of emergent and projected trends in affordability of post-secondary education and institutional measures to ensure access to post-secondary of diverse student groups.
6. To identify areas for further research.

Timeline

Dependent on start date, completion date for this project will be no later than March 2025.

Budget

Maximum budget available for this project is \$ 25,000, inclusive of all hourly charges, travel and associated costs, and GST.

BCCAT's [Proposal Template for Research Projects](#) present guidelines for submitting the proposal.

References

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