

POST-RESIDENCY FEES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

What are post-residency fees?

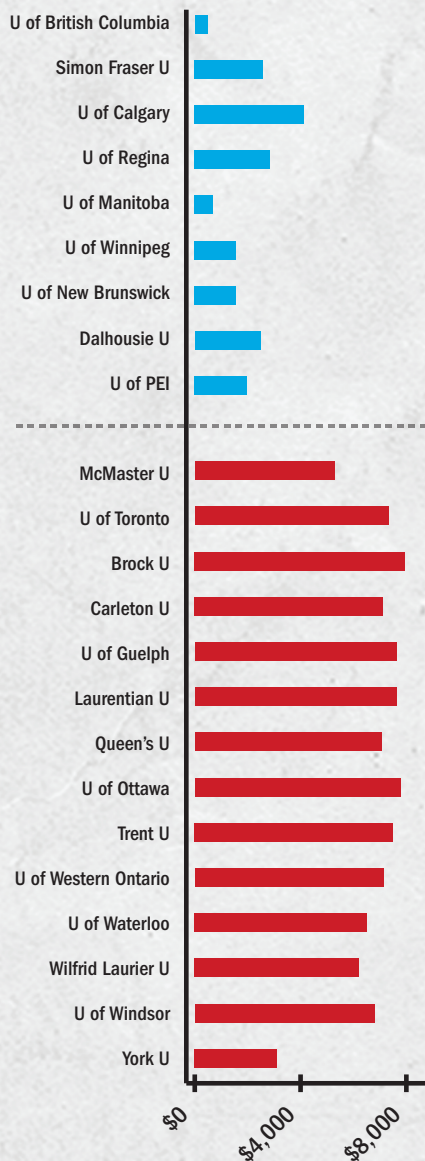
“Post-residency fees” refer to reduced tuition fees paid by graduate students once they have completed their course work and are undertaking the independent research and thesis-writing stages of their degree.

Post-residency fees are known by several names that vary between institutions. Terms such as “continuing,” “maintenance of status,” “additional session,” “post-program,” “re-registration” and “discounted” fees can refer to post-residency fees.

Post-residency fees recognize that graduate students make significant research and labour contributions to their institutions and utilize university resources very differently when not taking classes.

Fees in Post-Residency Period

Canada Ontario



Toward Accessible Graduate Studies

Post-residency fees provide some relief for students trying to complete their degrees. Although graduate enrolment in Ontario has expanded rapidly over the last decade, the push to expand graduate studies has not meant that graduate education has become more accessible for students. With average student debt after the completion of a four-year undergraduate degree topping \$25,000, many students are discouraged from applying to graduate school. For those who do enter graduate studies, financial difficulties are cited as the primary reason for taking longer to complete their programs or for withdrawing entirely.¹ Indeed, average completion times for doctoral programs have increased in all disciplines except the health sciences.²

Historically, graduate programs across the country have charged graduate students reduced fees later in their degrees. These post-residency fees are still widespread across the country but during the 1990s, universities in Ontario began eliminating post-residency fee systems. Today, almost all graduate students in Ontario pay full tuition fees throughout their degree. The elimination of post-residency fees, along with massive tuition fee hikes, continuing to make graduate programs inaccessible.

Why Post-Residency Fees?

Graduate students who finish the course component of their degrees and are working on their research, thesis or dissertation make

significant labour and research contributions to the university during this phase. It is during this time when graduate students are presenting at conferences, authoring and co-authoring papers, and producing original research. Post-residency fees are a recognition of the contributions graduate students make to their institutions as well as an understanding that they are utilizing fewer university resources.

Post-residency fees help graduate students in Ontario afford the high cost of pursuing and completing a graduate program. The implementation of post-residency fees further recognizes that despite the availability of some graduate funding through assistantships, grants and scholarships, levels of financial support vary from student to student. Since the upfront cost of tuition fees is the largest barrier to accessing post-secondary education, post-residency fees improve access to graduate studies. A recent study in Quebec found that students were more likely to graduate when they received funding through government research council scholarships.³

Financial hardship also affects the quality of research performed by graduate students. Graduate students under financial stress often shorten their fieldwork, forego publishing and conference presentations, and rush the writing phase of dissertations in order to complete more quickly. Consequently, there is a negative effect on the overall quality of research at universities.

Consequences of Higher Fees

Financial barriers remain the primary reason for post-secondary graduates not continuing their studies.⁴ Graduate students may be offered funding packages that include working as teaching assistants (TAs) or research assistants (RAs) at the institution during their studies. However, these positions still constitute employment outside of their study obligations and are not guaranteed to cover the cost of tuition as well as living expenses.

Higher tuition fees force some graduate students who don't have funding packages - and even for many who do - to take on additional employment off-campus to finance their education,

thereby reducing their time available to research and extending time-to-completion. Heavier financial burdens increase the risk that graduate students will quit their programs before they finish.² Higher fees have a greater impact on those with less ability to pay, such as international students, students with disabilities, single parents, women, racialized students and Aboriginal students.

Conclusion

Universities have not made the effort to accurately track and publicize graduate student progress, likely because they do not want the data to be revealed. Reducing fees for graduate students in the post-residency phase of their

studies could improve access and reduce student debt. Furthermore, post-residency fees could play an important role in improving retention and time-to-completion in Canadian graduate programmes.

- 1 Canadian Association for Graduate Studies. November 2004. The Completion of Graduate Studies in Canadian Universities: Report & Recommendations.
- 2 Tamburri, Rosanna. 2013. "The PhD is in need of revision" University Affairs.
- 3 Larivière, V. (2013) Ph.D. students' excellence scholarships and their relationship with research productivity, scientific impact and degree completion. Canadian Journal of Higher Education.43(2), 27-41.
- 4 Culture, Tourism and Centre for Educational Statistics. Government of Canada. 2009.

CANADA

Institution	Tuition Fees (2014-15)	Post-residency Fees	Post-residency Fee reduction	Applies to Masters Students	Applies to Doctoral Students
U of British Columbia	\$4,524.84	\$2,067.24	54%	✓	✓
Simon Fraser U	\$5,186.40	\$2,593.35	50%	✓	✓
U of Calgary	\$5,593.50	\$1,627.38	71%	✓	✓
U of Regina	\$4,871.25	\$1,623.75	66%	✓	✓
U of Manitoba	\$4,455.70	\$717.60	84%	✓	✓
U of Winnipeg	\$5,954.60	\$2,971.52	50%	✓	-
U of new Brunswick	\$6,264.00	\$4,313.00	31%	✓	✓
Dalhousie U	\$7,856.00	\$2,700.00	66%	✓	✓
U of PEI	\$3,958.50	\$501.00	87%	✓	✓

ONTARIO

McMaster U	\$7,008.00	\$3,249.00	54%	-	✓
U of Toronto	\$7,115.00	none	-	-	-
Brock U	\$7,695.39	\$6,500.22	16%	✓	✓
Carleton U	\$6,811.59	none	-	-	-
U of Guelph	\$7,468.05	none	-	-	-
Laurentian U	\$7,845.00	none	-	-	-
Queen's U	\$8,149.34	none	-	-	-
U of Ottawa	\$7,377.00	none	-	-	-
Trent U	\$7,987.37	none	-	-	-
U of Western Ontario	\$7,986.00	none	-	-	-
U of Waterloo	\$7,449.00	none	-	-	-
Wilfrid Laurier U	\$8,321.16	none	-	-	-
U of Windsor	\$7,665.90	none	-	-	-
York U	\$5,527.08	none	-	-	-