



POLICY 9.18

POSITION POLICY

Government Tuition Tax Credits

POLICY INTENT

To outline the position of AUSU regarding government tuition tax credits.

POLICY RESEARCH

In 2018 Alberta Advanced Education released a report, which states that “those with a post-secondary credential see significant increases in their earning potential in the long run.”¹ However there exist several important financial barriers to post-secondary education in Alberta, especially for part-time Athabasca University (AU) students. For example, 83% of undergraduate program students at AU work while studying,² 50% of AU students are supporting dependents (which results in higher costs as compared to other students)³, and as few as 13% of AU students access full-time student aid (with only 1.7% of AU students accessing part-time student aid.)⁴ In 2015, it was reported that a Bachelor’s degree graduate carried an average debt load of over \$26,000.⁵ Additionally, AUSU council emphasizes the importance of tuition tax credits, as these credits are often the only financial benefit available to part-time students or students who work while studying.

Between 2016 and 2020, most provinces and territories eliminated their education and/or tuition tax credits. In addition, the federal education and textbook tax credits were eliminated in 2016 in favour of increased grants for funded students, leaving the tuition tax credits for all students in place. This unrelenting erosion of the tax breaks given to students who continue to see increases in their costs of post-secondary education can place further barriers in place for students, especially non-traditional students who have less access to other student financial aid.⁶

Be it resolved that the Athabasca University Students’ Union supports increased access to financial support for all students including part-time students, especially continued access to tuition tax credits.

¹ Alberta Advanced Education. (2018, February 01). *Labour market outcomes of graduates of Alberta post-secondary institutions*. Open Alberta Publications. Retrieved March 6, 2018, from open.alberta.ca: <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/9871460137185>

² Athabasca University. (2019, 01 15). *Athabasca University at a Glance*. Retrieved from athabascau.ca: <https://www.athabascau.ca/aboutau/glance/>

³ Athabasca University. (2019, 01 14). *About AU*. Retrieved from athabascau.ca: <https://www.athabascau.ca/aboutau/media/aufacts/>

⁴ Olver, V. (2019, 01 15). Coordinator, Athabasca University Office of Student Aid. (AUSU, Interviewer)

⁵ Prairie Research Associates. (2015, July). *2015 Graduating University Student Survey*. Canadian University Survey Consortium. Retrieved March 6, 2018, from www.cusc-ccreu.ca: http://www.cusc-ccreu.ca/CUSC_2015_Graduating_Master%20Report_English.pdf

⁶ Tuition, Education and Textbook Tax Credits. Retrieved. (n.d.) Retrieved July 29, 2020 from <https://www.taxtips.ca/filing/students/tuitiontaxcredit.htm>.