



Lakehead University's Financial Literacy Newsletter

June 16, 2021

Edition 7

A Deeper Dive: Understanding Student Financial Aid

A Message from the Associate Registrar



June is an interesting month because there are a variety of student types at this point: those that just graduated and may be thinking about next steps, those returning to school, those that never left, and the ones that are just beginning.

So to write this introduction it's hard to say what can link all of you together. How about federal, provincial, and territorial budgets. Have I already lost your attention? I hope not, but this month is the most exciting time for financial aid offices because when budgets are announced we are busily looking over the documents to see how it will impact student lending.

This past year as a result of the pandemic the federal government really stepped up on helping to assist students with overcoming costs for post-secondary education. They increased weekly maximums from \$210/week to \$350/week, they doubled many of the grant values available to students, eliminated student and spousal contributions, and halted interest and payments on student loans.

You know what they say though, all good things must come to an end and as a new normal returns, the program is heading back to where it came from, with a few adjustments.

Although the federal budget returned the weekly maximum to \$210/week and again requires student and spousal contributions, it was still very promising for students. The federal government committed to keeping the doubled grants for at least 2 more years, they are waiving interest on student loans until March 31, 2023 and have made adjustments to the repayment assistance program putting more money in your pockets if you have to start to repay. The final small step was a renaming of the federal program from the Canada Student Loans Program to the Canada Student Financial Assistance Program.

Although the name change is considered small, it's important to realize the work that both the federal and provincial governments have been doing over the last few years. By working together, and using the higher value of grant funding available to students, many of the provincial programs have provided more grant funding to students. Although more grant funding is not the case for all students, the federal changes have really focused on trying to help assist lower the overall student debt load. These are steps in the right direction to help ensure that education remains affordable and accessible to students who may not necessarily have the means.

In this newsletter, read on about what this all means to you and if you take away one thing from this newsletter, remember that Government Student Aid programs have changed considerably since your parents or supporters were in school. It doesn't hurt to apply for funding because there is a lot of grant money now available, and why leave the potential of free money on the table.

Sincerely,
Josh



Understanding the Ontario Student Assistance Program

How familiar are you with the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP)? If you are an OSAP recipient, we think it is important for you to understand what OSAP is and how OSAP works. OSAP is an integrated program funded by both the federal and provincial governments which provides financial assistance to students to help them attend post-secondary studies.

What is OSAP?

As you may know, OSAP is considered needs-based assistance, which means one's funding eligibility is determined based on the individual student needs. OSAP is supplemental; it is not designed to cover all costs of post-secondary attendance. Attending higher education is a **shared responsibility** between the government, the student, and their family.

Types of OSAP funding

When you apply for OSAP, you are automatically considered for both grants and a loan. If you don't want to take a loan, and you're a full-time or part-time student, you can decline it after your application is approved. It is important to note, you must opt out of loans in each application.

Are you eligible for OSAP?

Check out this [webpage](#) to see if you meet the eligibility criteria.

How is OSAP funding determined?

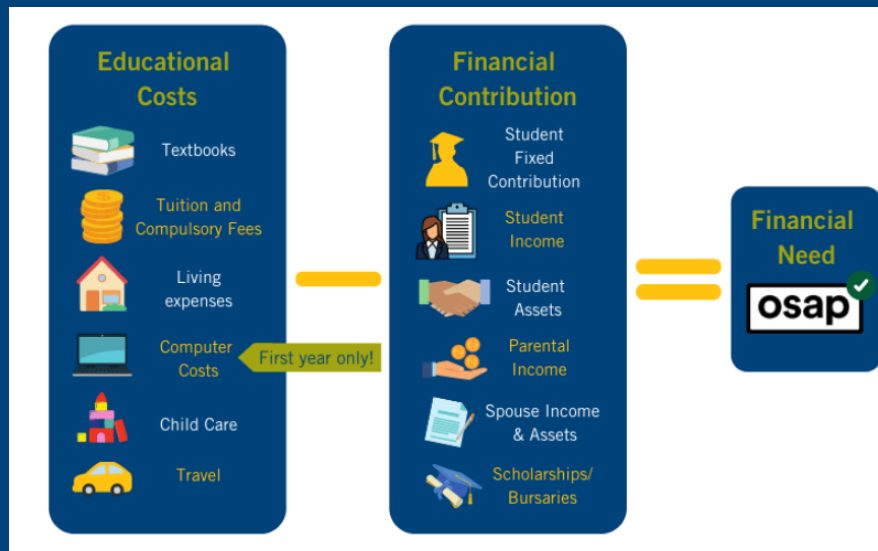
Funding is based on a number of factors including (but not limited to):

- Based on students' personal financial situation

- Parental income
- Size of family
- Your income and savings
- Major scholarships
- Living at home versus away from home

The amount of OSAP a student can receive depends on their unique circumstances. Allowable educational costs include tuition & compulsory fees, books & supplies, equipment, computer costs (first-year only), personal living expenses, and more!

Expected financial contribution includes the student fixed contribution, the student, parental, and spousal income as well as student & spousal assets. To determine how much aid a student is eligible to receive an OSAP needs assessment is run. Financial need is based on their allowable educational costs minus their financial contribution.



How to Apply to OSAP

1. You can find the OSAP website through this link [HERE](#). If you applied to Lakehead through OUAC, you would be directed to the OSAP website
2. Click “Register” if you are a new user – you will create an OSAP profile and be assigned an OSAP Access Number (OAN)
3. Complete an application
4. Gather all required supporting documentation and upload it through your application
5. Complete the MSFAA online (Master Student Financial Assistance Agreement, which is your lifetime loan agreement)
6. Track the status of your application online

Common Questions about OSAP

Q: Should I claim mine or my parent's RESP withdrawal?

A: Families are not required to report their RESP withdrawals during the application process. Find what income you should and should not report on your OSAP [HERE](#).

Q: Do I need to claim my Scholarships/Awards on OSAP?

A: Short answer, yes and no! Long answer, do not report anything received from Lakehead University if we inform you in writing that the award will be reported to OSAP directly on their behalf. If no notification is received in writing, you must report the award to OSAP.

Q: What is the threshold for employment during academic term(s)?

A: Currently, the threshold is \$5,600 per term and \$11,200 for Fall/Winter.

Q: How do I Report Parental Income if my parents are divorced/separated?

A: You will want to provide details of the parent who holds primary custody. If your parents have shared custody, you are advised to complete the full-time OSAP application by reporting the income information of the parent (and their spouse, if applicable) who you currently live with or you last lived with before moving away to go to school.

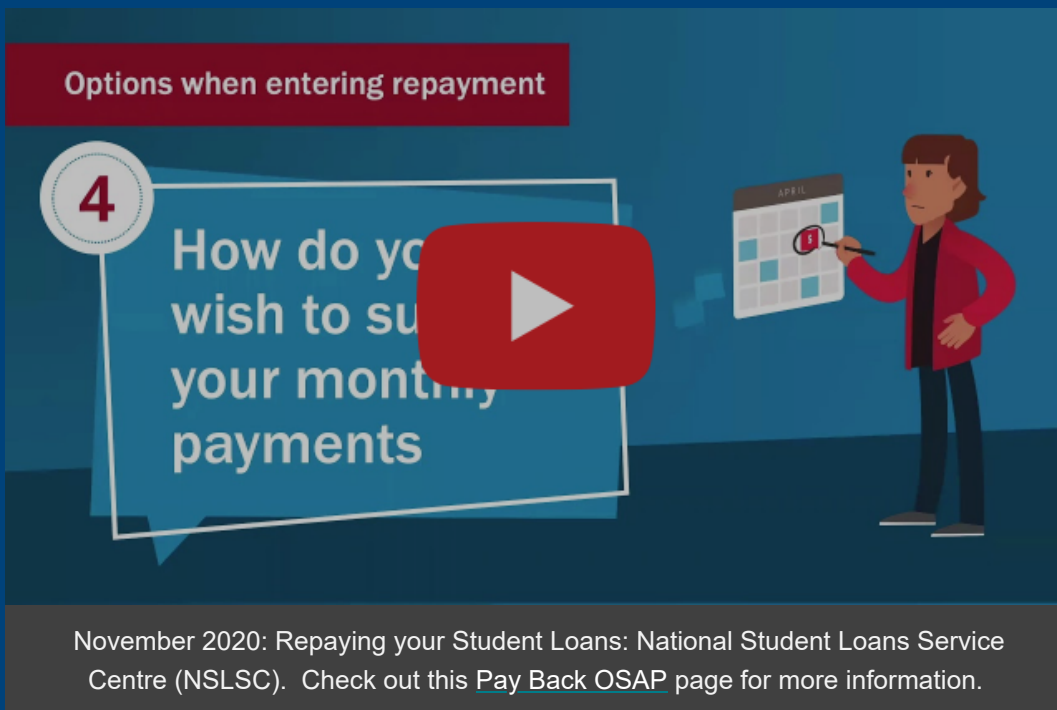
If your parent has remarried or is in a common-law relationship as defined by OSAP, the parent's partner's income will be considered.

Out-of-Province Student Loan Programs

Lakehead University has students from all across Canada (and the world!). Below are some links to help you get started with Canadian student loan programs:

- Alberta: [Alberta Student Aid](#)
- British Columbia: [StudentAid BC](#)
- Manitoba: [Manitoba Student Aid](#)
- New Brunswick: [New Brunswick Student Financial Services](#)
- Newfoundland and Labrador: [StudentAidNL](#)
- Northwest Territories: [NWT Student Financial Assistance](#)
- Nova Scotia: [Nova Scotia Student Assistance](#)
- Nunavut: [Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students \(FANS\)](#)
- Prince Edward Island: [P.E.I. Student Loans](#)
- Québec: [Québec Student Financial Assistance](#)
- Saskatchewan: [Saskatchewan Student Loans](#)
- Yukon: [Yukon Student Financial Assistance](#)
- Federal: [Canada Student Grants and Loans](#)
- [International Student Financial Assistance](#) through Lakehead

What Does Repaying Your Loans Look Like?



Options when entering repayment

4 How do you wish to schedule your monthly payments

November 2020: Repaying your Student Loans: National Student Loans Service Centre (NSLSC). Check out this [Pay Back OSAP](#) page for more information.



Taking Spring/Summer courses?

Don't forget to submit your Spring/Summer OSAP extension form!

Additionally, you may wish to apply to our Lakehead University Spring/Summer Part-time Bursary (TUSBI) that opened on May 1st through the [myAwards](#) portal.

If you received full-time OSAP for the most recent Fall-only, Fall/Winter or Winter-only term(s), you may be eligible to extend your Fall, Fall/Winter or Winter-only OSAP application to cover some of your Spring/Summer courses.



Thinking of applying to OSAP next year?

The 2021-2022 application for OSAP is now open through the OSAP website. Remember that if you don't want to take on student loans, you should still apply to OSAP to see if you qualify for grant funding, as you can request to receive grant funding only.

Don't want OSAP funding next year but have received full-time loans in the past and want to keep them in interest free status? If you are returning to full time studies, consider submitting a [Continuation of Interest-Free Status \(CIFS\) application!](#)

Student Zone



Sarah Simpson is entering her last year of the HBASc (Interdisciplinary Studies) Concurrent BEd (P/J) program and is a student worker as our Recreation and Wellness Assistant.



In your own words, describe what financial literacy means.

To me, financial literacy means learning how to effectively and consciously spend or save your money. Being aware of your financial situation and the benefits or consequences of your spending is so important and can impact almost everything that we can do.



What is something that you do on a regular basis that you consider financially savvy?

It seems simple and a little obvious, but making sure you are paying your bills on time! In the future this can bite you in the butt and hurt your credit or put you in a position where you're overspending and contributing to an already growing debt you have as a student. You have to remain conscious of when your bills need to be

paid and that you have the money to pay them. You can't spend on your "wants" or "wishes" until you make sure your needs are covered.



What are the resources you use to make financial decisions?

I use TD Myspend to track all of my spending and set out targets for saving money. The app allows you to set "wishes" with a goal amount and you allocate a percentage of your savings to each of your wishes monthly. It also gives you a timeline for when you can expect to afford your wishes. TD Myspend makes it easy to see where your money is going -- it breaks down your expenses into categories such as bills, groceries, education, shopping, and entertainment so you can see exactly where you spend the most.

For big financial decisions, I always make sure to discuss the decisions with people that I trust to be real with me and to bring up points that I may have not thought of so I can truly evaluate if it is the right time to make a big decision. Taking time to think through the big money spending decisions and not making snap decisions allows you to look at all the factors into how you can afford the expense.



A piece of advice for your fellow Lakehead Thunderwolves.

Be aware of the resources and supports available to you! Take the time to find resources and to learn about financial literacy -- this can help you so much in the long run. If you do not have experience with budgeting or need some help learning about other skills essential to financial literacy, reach out to staff on campus that can help guide you through the process of learning how to be financially savvy. Your bank or financial institution might also have tools you can use to keep on top of your finances, so look out for those too!

Meet a Team Member!



Hi, my name is Cheryl! I began working in Student Awards & Financial Aid as a

Financial Aid Specialist in December 2012. My main focus now is entrance and in-course scholarships, awards & bursaries, work study, NSERC and Bursaries for Students with Permanent Disabilities.

My biggest piece of financial literacy advice for students is to budget, budget, budget! Know your “needs” and be smart about your “wants”. Eliminate stress by planning how you are going to pay for tuition, books, rent & food and understand how much is leftover for “wants or extras”. If you come up short, figure out your options sooner rather than later.

Mark Your Calendar

June 16 at 3:30PM: RBC Presents "Budgeting 101"

June 23 at 3:30PM: RBC Presents "Your Brand Matters"

June 30 at 3:30PM: RBC Presents "Fraud: What it is, how it happens, and how to protect yourself"

June 30: Deadline to apply to The Young Money Scholarship Fund

Visit our [website](#) for information on Financial Literacy, Lakehead funding opportunities, and more!

Our next edition is **August 18th, keep your eye out for it!**

Questions? Email us at studentcentral@lakeheadu.ca

