



WHAT'S NEXT? PLANNING AND FINANCING YOUR POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

10/11



WHAT'S YOUR PLAN?



I always knew that I would continue my education after high school, but I was so busy with school that I didn't think about the details. Then one day, it was time to make a decision, and the world suddenly seemed like a lot bigger place.

"Having a dream isn't foolish. It's not having a dream that's foolish."

At first, I thought I just had to decide what I was going to study, and what kind of a job I wanted when I graduated. That turned out to be one of the easiest choices I had to make. Then I had to decide:

- Where should I go to school?
- Should I take a two or four year program?

KAYLA

Kayla didn't decide to continue her education until she was almost through her last year of high school. After doing some research on the Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS) website and talking with her parents and friends, she decided to enter a general program at university. Her parents had some money saved, and she had a \$2,000 Canada Savings Bond her grandmother had given her years ago, but that was it. Because Kayla is from a small town, she has to live away from home while she's at school – another major expense on top of her tuition and books.

Even with all this uncertainty, she knows continuing her education is a good decision and she's finding ways to make it work. She has lined up a job for the summer, researched and applied for scholarships she may be eligible for, and applied for student funding.

Kayla may have student loan debt when she graduates but she'll also have a university degree.

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- Should I live with my parents to save money?
- Can I afford to go to school?
- Can I afford not to go to school?

You get the picture. I thought deciding to go to school was one of my last choices. Turns out, it was only the beginning.

»» What's your plan?

It's never too early to think about what you want from further education and how you'll pay for it.

If you're thinking about continuing your education, even if you don't know exactly how, it's time to start planning how to pay for it. If your finances are in place, you'll have more options when you're ready to make up your mind. Read about how Kayla and Tom are dealing with the money side of their education.

»» You need a plan.

Everyone has goals for their life, and many of them start with education. If you have a dream, now is the time to think about how you can make it happen.

Whether you're starting post-secondary school or training in two months or in two years, it's never too early to think about what you want from further education and how you and your parents will pay for it. Your plans may change as you get closer to enrolment, but one thing won't change – the fact that the more money you have saved, the more freedom you will have to enjoy your post-secondary experience.



WHICH SCHOOL IS RIGHT FOR ME?

Which school is right for you will depend on a lot of things, including the type of job you want when you graduate, how long you want to be in school, and what subjects you want to study.

There are all kinds of post-secondary options including universities, public colleges, technical institutes, apprenticeship programs, and private vocational colleges. Each offers a broad variety of programs that can lead you to different kinds of careers when you graduate.

It's up to you to research the options and decide which program will help you reach your goals.

» Choices, choices, choices

A lot of things go into choosing a school. Before you can decide what kind of school is right for you and what you should study, think about what you want from your education (be honest):

- Getting a specific job?
- Learning new things?
- Meeting new people?

It's not like you need any more pressure, but choosing your school and program are some of the most important choices you'll ever make.

Don't be intimidated – people make these choices every day, and people change their minds every day.

There's no one right way to make a decision, but there is one wrong way – trying to please someone besides yourself. It's your future and you should be in control of it. Ask yourself the following questions, and think hard about the answers, then decide which choice is right for you.

What am I interested in? What do I like studying? What do I enjoy doing?

Many people are fortunate enough to enjoy their job. A lucky few can make a living from their true passion. Ask yourself what you truly enjoy.

What kind of job do I want when I finish my education?

Sometimes it's easier to start at the end. Consider what kind of job you want to have and work backwards to figure out what education you need to get it. Consider what's truly important to you. For some people it's money, for others it's the chance to be creative, or to travel, or to help people. Which choices will make YOU happy?

How much of a hurry am I in?

Is time a factor for you? Some people are in a hurry to get to work, while others are willing to spend many years at school to get the education or training they want. If you want to be finished with school in a year or two, you may want to research programs offered at colleges or technical institutions.

What if I need help with Career Planning?

- Visit alis.alberta.ca
- Call the Career Information Hotline in Edmonton at 780-422-4266 or toll free in Canada at 1-800-661-3753. Career consultants are available Monday to Friday 8:15 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- Visit your nearest Alberta Service Centre or Canada-Alberta Service Centre

HOW DO YOU PAY FOR YOUR DREAM?



Nothing should stand in the way of your dreams – especially money. There are lots of different ways to pay for your education. The answer is different for everyone. Here are a couple of things to consider.

»» Do you want to go to school full-time or part-time?

Going to school part-time could leave you time to work to help pay for it. But part-time students can't get as much student funding through student loans, scholarships, and grants as full-time students.

»» Where do you want to go to school?

If you choose to go to school outside Canada, you may not be eligible for as much student funding.

If you plan on applying for student funding, here's what you need to know.

»» Government sponsored student loans and grants

Many people use government sponsored student loans and grants to help pay for their education. You can apply for both Canada and Alberta student funding through the Government of Alberta. The student funding program is a partnership between you and the federal and provincial governments to help you pay for your education. Both governments also have grant programs to ensure students who need financial assistance don't borrow more money than they can reasonably pay back.

Education by the numbers

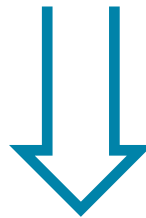
How much will my education cost?

There's no doubt that post-secondary education is a financial investment, but there are student funding programs available that make going to school in Alberta more affordable. Here is approximately how much a year (usually 8 – 10 months) of school and living costs.

Living with parents: \$7,000 - \$9,000

Living independently: \$12,000 - \$14,000*

**These estimates are for single students – if you are married/common law or have children, you'll have higher expenses.*



Tom planned to follow in his father's footsteps and join the police force for as long as he can remember. Unlike his father, who joined the force right out of high school, Tom knew that his best chance of getting in was to continue his education. Because this was always his plan, he saved the money he made from a part-time job in high school and had money in the bank to cover the first year of school. By continuing to live at home, and using some money that his parents had put aside for his education, Tom should be able to get through school without borrowing any money.



WHO QUALIFIES FOR A STUDENT LOAN OR GRANT?

Student loans and grants are given based on your financial need. The government looks at how much school will cost you, then considers the money you have and how much your family (if applicable) should be able to put towards your education. Student loans and grants are intended to help cover the difference. For more information about loans and grants, visit alis.alberta.ca/studentsfinance and click on About Loans and Grants.

»» What if my parents won't pay for my education?

If you've been out of high school for less than four years (or you haven't been available for full-time work for at least two), you are considered a dependent student. That means if your parents make enough money, they are expected to help pay for your education. Even if they don't actually give you anything, their income may affect whether or not you can get student funding. However, the amount your parents are expected to contribute has been significantly reduced. If your family is having financial problems, your situation may be reconsidered.

If you feel you have exceptional circumstances, talk to your high school guidance counselor or the financial aid office at the schools you're considering. You can also call the Student Funding Contact Centre in Edmonton at 780-427-3722 or toll free in Canada at 1-800-222-6485, e-mail the centre using the secure e-Contact service on alis.alberta.ca/econtact, or visit an Alberta Service Centre or Canada-Alberta Service Centre.

»» When Do I Pay Back my Student Loans?

Once you graduate, or stop going to school full-time, you'll have six months to look for a job and get settled before you have to start paying back your student loans. You usually don't have to pay back grants or scholarships.

Your Alberta and Canada student loans will be in interest free status while you are in school full-time. In other words, you will not be required to pay interest on your loans while you are a full-time student. However, interest will begin to accumulate on the outstanding balance of your Alberta and Canada student loans the month after you complete your studies.

After six months, you start making regular monthly payments on your student loans, the same way you would for any other kind of loan. There is repayment assistance available to help if you run into financial difficulty while repaying your student loans.

»» More information...

It pays to find out as much as you can about how student loans work. EDULINX, Alberta's student loan service provider, has an online Entrance Counselling session for students who plan on applying for student loans. It covers topics such as what a student loan is, how you get your loan funding, budgeting tips, and more. The Entrance Counselling session is available at edulinx.ca.

FUNDING YOUR EDUCATION



If you're like most students, you'll use more than one source of money to pay for school. Most students use a mix of savings, money from family, part-time earnings, scholarships, and student loans and grants. Here are some of the usual sources of financing along with comments about their advantages and drawbacks.

Options	Details to think about
Savings: from jobs, birthday presents, investments, anything	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The money you have is always a good place to start.
Family contributions: What can your parents contribute? Some families use investment programs like Registered Education Savings Plans to save for their children's education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your parents may be expected to contribute to the cost of your post-secondary education. It can be hard to ask for money, but it's important. Even if your family can't give you money, they may loan you some and you'll probably have some flexibility paying it back.
Jobs: Summer jobs when you aren't in school and part-time jobs when you are.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You'll make money and pick up valuable work experience. While you're in school it can be hard to work and have enough time for studying.
Government Sponsored Student Loans: Both the federal and provincial governments sponsor loans to qualifying students. This is a supplemental source of funding for many students in addition to student savings and expected parental contributions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You don't have to make any payments on student loans while you're in school, but they do have to be repaid when you finish. Because loans are awarded based on your need and resources, you may not get one if your family has a high income or other resources.
Government Grants: Both the federal and provincial governments provide grants in addition to student loans. The grants are targeted at low income, high need and special needs students with permanent disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You don't have to repay grants unless you withdraw or do not complete your studies.

Will I Get Student Funding?

Simple Arithmetic

The formula that decides whether or not you get student funding and how much you receive is very simple:

Your allowable expenses – your resources = your assistance (loans + grants)

You won't be living like a movie star on student funding but it should be enough to help cover tuition, books and basic living expenses.



Options	Details to think about
<p>Scholarships and Bursaries: Scholarships are awarded for a variety of reasons, including good grades, athletic achievements, volunteer activities and other achievements. Bursaries are usually awarded based on financial need although other accomplishments may be considered.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is money you don't have to pay back. Apply for as many scholarships and bursaries as you can. Talk to the financial aid office at your school. You don't have a chance if you don't apply! • Search for over 450 scholarships, grants, bursaries and awards on the Scholarship Connections database at alis.alberta.ca/scholarships
<p>Co-op/Apprenticeship/Applied Degree Programs: These programs alternate between school terms and paid work placement terms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These programs let you gain valuable work experience in your field and earn money. • It may take longer to finish your degree or diploma.
<p>Student Line of Credit from Lending Institutions: This may be an option for students who don't qualify for government sponsored student loans.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you don't have a job or a credit history, you may need someone who does (like a parent) to co-sign the loan. • You usually have to make interest payments on these loans while you're in school. • You are not eligible for government grants.



HELP WITH YOUR CHOICES

There are lots of decisions to be made, but you don't have to make them alone.

These choices are some of the most important you'll ever make. There are lots of decisions to be made, but you don't have to make them alone. There are lots of places from which to get help:

- Your high school guidance counsellor
- The financial aid offices at the post-secondary schools you're considering
- Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS) website at alis.alberta.ca/studentsfinance.
- The Student Funding Contact Centre: in Edmonton at 780-427-3722, in Canada toll free at 1-800-222-6485, or use the secure e-Contact e-mail service at alis.alberta.ca/econtact
- Any Alberta Service Centre or Canada-Alberta Service Centre at alis.alberta.ca/lmic

Get as much information as possible and ask as many questions as you need to. Make the choices that will work best for you in the long term. **Study your options and plan ahead – your future starts now. Be ready.**

»» Need more information about student funding?

Check out these resources on alis.alberta.ca/forms.

OWNER'S MANUAL

A Guide To Financing Your Education

Everything you need to know about student funding.

JUST THE FACTS

A Short Guide to Student Funding

A short booklet with key information about student funding.

QUICK TIPS

A Companion to Your Student Funding Application

Explanations for questions on the student funding application.

STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT HANDBOOK

If you're graduating or thinking about how you will pay back your loan, you need this book.

Human Resources and Social Development Canada
Alberta Advanced Education and Technology
Alberta Employment and Immigration

In 1999, the pilot version of this product was jointly funded by the Government of Canada and the Government of Alberta.

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What's Next?

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