

Students who identify as Indigenous on the 2020-21 OSAP Application for Full-Time Students are exempt from making the student fixed contribution. The exemption from the student fixed contribution can result in additional OSAP grant and loan support each year.

To be exempt from the student fixed contribution, students must also submit supporting documentation confirming their Indigenous identity.

**How does the exemption from the student fixed contribution work?**

All students who apply for OSAP assistance are expected to contribute \$3,600 towards the costs of postsecondary studies.

Students who identify as Indigenous when they apply for OSAP and provide acceptable documentation to confirm their Indigenous identity are exempt from the student fixed contribution. This can result in additional grant and loan funding for Indigenous students.

The OSAP assistance will not reflect the exemption from the student fixed contribution until documentation is provided and eligibility is confirmed. Once documentation is accepted, the amount of the student's assistance will be re-calculated, and they may be eligible for additional OSAP grants and loans (up to approximately \$3,600 per year).

**What documents are accepted to confirm Indigenous identity?**

Students can provide a copy of ONE of the following documents:

- Status card;
- Band membership card;
- Red card (Haudenosaunee Identification Card);
- Confirmation of Band, Métis Nation of Ontario or other Métis organization funding (for example, Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) or Indigenous Skills Employment Training Program (ISET Program), Métis Nation Post-Secondary Education Strategy, or the Inuit Post-Secondary Education Strategy);
- Membership card from a provincial affiliate of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (for example, Ontario Coalition of Indigenous Peoples);
- Citizenship card issued by a Métis National Council governing member (for example, Métis Nation of Ontario, Métis Nation of Saskatchewan); or
- Land claim beneficiary card.

If students do not have one of the above documents, they may provide:

- A letter from an Indigenous organization (for example, Métis Nation of Ontario, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, or Tungasuvvingat Inuit) on the organization's letterhead that confirms the name of the student and their Indigenous identity. The letter should be signed and dated by a senior representative of the organization and include their name, contact information, and position within the organization; or
- A letter from an Indigenous Friendship Centre, on the organization's letterhead that confirms community involvement, the student's name and indigenous identity. The letter should be signed and dated by a senior representative of the organization and include their name, contact information, and position within the organization; or
- An affidavit from the student confirming their Indigenous identity, including the student's name, a declaration of their Indigenous identity, and a description of the Indigenous persons in

Canada that they self-identify as (for example, First Nation, Métis, Inuk, or an alternative term to describe their Indigenous ancestry and/or identity).

### **What is an affidavit?**

An affidavit is a document where the contents have been sworn or affirmed to be true. It is sworn and signed before a lawyer, a commissioner of oaths, or a notary public.

The affidavit must include a statement confirming the student's Indigenous identity and a description of the Indigenous persons in Canada that they self-identify as.

Students are encouraged to contact their school's financial aid office if they need help getting an affidavit for OSAP.

### **Will OSAP funding be issued if a student's Indigenous identification documentation is pending?**

A student's OSAP funding for the 2020-21 academic year may be issued before the documentation confirming their Indigenous identity has been approved.

Until the documentation has been submitted and approved, the student's OSAP funding will not reflect the exemption from the student fixed contribution. Once the documentation has been approved, the student fixed contribution will be waived from the OSAP assessment. This may result in additional grants and loans for the student.

### **What is the deadline to submit documentation?**

All required supporting documentation must be received 40 days before the end of the student's current study period.

### **Help is available**

Students may have difficulty obtaining or accessing documentation in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. For issues related to accessing documentation and other OSAP inquiries, students studying at a postsecondary education institution within Ontario can contact the financial aid office at their institution.

Students studying outside of Ontario, as well as Indigenous organizations with questions about OSAP, can contact a Ministry representative, Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm:

- Call: 1-877-OSAP-411 (1-877-672-7411)
- TTY: 1-800-465-3958.