



INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE PETITION CALLING FOR ENHANCED FUNDING OF ONTARIO'S UNIVERSITIES

INSTRUCTIONS:



1. Please find at least 10 residents of Ontario to sign a hard copy of the petition.



2. To be effective in the legislature, each Ontario resident must provide their full name and the full mailing address of their Ontario residence, along with their signature.



3. Please drop off the hardcopy of the completed petition to:

School of Environmental Studies Office (Room 3134)

Biosciences Complex, 116 Barrie Street, Kingston, ON, K7L 3N6

Petitions will be delivered to MPP Ted Hsu's office.

For any additional questions regarding this petition, please contact:

Queen's Prof. Diane Orihel (diane.orihel@queensu.ca) or Paul Grogan (groganp@queensu.ca)

Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA): advocacy@ocufa.on.ca

Queen's University Faculty Association (QUFA): qufa@queensu.ca



BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Ontario's public universities are an essential driver of the Ontario economy, yet they receive nowhere near the level of financial support they deserve from the provincial government.

Ontario's universities stimulate local, regional, and provincial economies. The spending of universities alone contributes approximately \$96 billion annually to Ontario's GDP, 11.7% of provincial GDP.¹ University educations also benefit the economy by producing higher salaries. Among Ontarians aged 35 to 44 in 2020, high school graduates made an average salary of \$46,960 while college graduates made \$56,550. University graduates with a bachelor's degree made much more, at \$80,100.² Those with graduate degrees from Ontario's universities have even higher earnings. These higher wages benefit even those without a university education, building the tax base and circulating in the economy to produce economic spin-off effects that lead to further hiring, investment, and production.

Ontario's universities train the talent needed for Ontario's growth industries. A university education is associated with the most in-demand and highest paying jobs in every region of Ontario.³

A university education equips learners with problem-solving and critical thinking skills that are not only in high demand, but are also unlikely to be replaceable by AI or other forms of automation. This means that Ontario's university graduates are much more likely to be ready for the future of work.

Ontario's universities are leaders in innovation and research. In 2021-22, Ontario's higher education institutions spent nearly \$6.6 billion on R&D, representing approximately 40% of R&D conducted by higher education institutions in Canada.⁴ As Ontario Minister of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security Nolan Quinn attests, "When we invest in research, we invest in our province's future."⁵

Yet Ontario has not been investing enough in universities. Ontario provides its universities with by far the lowest amount of total provincial funding per-domestic full-time equivalent (FTE) student in Canada. In the 2022-23 academic year, Ontario provided just \$10,246 per domestic FTE. This is over \$6,500 less than the Canadian average of \$16,789.⁶ Recent funding increases have been well below what the province's own Blue-Ribbon Panel recommended – recommendations that if adopted would have still left Ontario with Canada's worst university funding.⁷

There is an urgent need to meaningfully increase funding to Ontario's universities. Over half of these institutions are facing a deficit in the 2025-26 academic year.⁸ Without additional investment, universities will soon be unable to educate as many as 100,000 academically qualified students.⁹

Ontario can and must do better. The future of the province's learners and economy depends on it.

SOURCES:

¹ Zafer Sonmetz, *How Universities Benefit Regional Economies: Assessing the Regional Economic Impacts of Universities in Ontario* (Conference Board of Canada, 9 December 2021), 1.

² Statistics Canada, Table 98-10-0411-01: Employment income statistics by highest level of education: Canada, provinces and territories, census divisions and census subdivisions.

³ Government of Ontario Labour Market Information and Statistics, accessible via: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/labour-market-explore-labour-market-by-region>

⁴ Statistics Canada, Table: 27-10-0025-01: Higher education research and development estimates, by funding sector and type of science.

⁵ <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1005382/ontario-investing-92-million-to-support-made-in-ontario-research-and-innovation>

⁶ Statistics Canada, Table 37-10-0018-01: Postsecondary enrolments, by registration status, institution type, status of student in Canada and gender; Statistics Canada, Table 37-10-002601: Revenue of universities by type of revenues and funds; Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations, “Risking Ontario’s Future: The Dangers of Underfunding Ontario Universities (2025),” 7.

⁷ Ontario Blue-Ribbon Panel on Postsecondary Education Financial Sustainability, “Ensuring Financial Sustainability for Ontario’s Postsecondary Sector” (2023), 20.

⁸ Council of Ontario Universities, “Building Tomorrow’s Industries Means Building Talent Today: An investment in Ontario’s universities is an investment in Ontario’s future” (January 2025), 16.

⁹ Kristin Rushowy, “100,000 university spots in jeopardy without more funding in coming years, schools say,” *Toronto Star*, 15 November 2024.