

Credit Checks

What Do They Mean to You?

Student Service Centre
1120 - 2010 12th Avenue
Regina, Canada S4P 0M3
306-787-5620
1-800-597-8278
Fax: 306-787-1608

Who Receives a Credit Check?

If you are **22 years of age or older** and are applying for a Canada-Saskatchewan Integrated Student Loan and Grants for the first time, your credit history for the past three years will be checked before you are awarded financial assistance.

What Happens if You Have a Poor Credit History?

If the credit check shows you have a poor credit history, **you may be denied financial assistance.**

What Is a “Poor Credit History”?

You will have a poor credit history if, **within the three years** before you made your application for financial assistance,

- There were three separate occasions on which you were more than 90 days overdue in your payments on three or more loans or other debt (credit cards, lines of credit, utility bills, car loans, etc.);
- Each individual debt or loan was worth \$1,000 or more; and
- You had control over the circumstances that led to the overdue payments.

What Can You Do if You Are Denied Financial Assistance?

If you are denied financial assistance because of your credit history, you should contact the credit check agency to ensure your credit history is accurate.
Contact:

Equifax Credit Watch™ Credit Education Specialists
Toll-free at 1-866-892-2595
Monday - Sunday 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m. ET

If the information is not accurate, you may submit documentation verifying the correct information to the Student Service Centre:

Student Services Centre
1120 - 2010 12th Avenue
Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 0M3

Phone: 1-800-597-8278 outside Regina or
306-787-5620 within Regina or outside Canada

You may qualify for a review by Student Services if your poor credit history was caused by circumstances beyond your control.

What Are Acceptable Reasons for Review?

Circumstances beyond your control (and/or your spouse’s control, if applicable) may be submitted for review. These circumstances must be directly related to unexpected or exceptional expenses and/or a loss or substantial reduction in income or earnings.

Unexpected or Exceptional Expenses

- Essential home repairs; uninsured home repairs
- Uninsured medical, dental, or optical expenses
- Caring for children with disabilities; caring for elderly/infirm relatives
- Legal fees
- Funeral expenses

A Loss or Substantial Reduction in Income or Earnings

- Layoff, dismissal, or reduction of normal income
- Illness
- Changes in family/marital situation
- Inability to work full-time due to a disability
- Failure of an ex-spouse to maintain family support payments

Do You Qualify for a Review?

Your application for assistance may be reviewed if you submit the required documentation, specific to your circumstances, to Student Service Centre.

Acceptable Reasons for a Review

Following are some acceptable reasons for a review. This list is not exhaustive. Other circumstances beyond your control (and/or your spouse’s control, if applicable) may be submitted for review, but you must be either under 22 years of age or your credit history problems **MUST BE DIRECTLY RELATED** to unexpected or exceptional expenses and/or a loss or substantial reduction in income or earnings.

Under 22 Years of Age

You were under 22 years of age as of the date of your first application for financial assistance. NOTE: Applications are dated as of the day they are received. You must submit acceptable proof-of-age documentation with photo identification (ID) or a notarized copy which clearly shows your date of birth, asserting that you were under 22 years of age as of the date of your first application for financial assistance. Acceptable ID may include the following documents:

- Driver's license
- Provincial health card
- Passport

Unexpected or Exceptional Expenses

Essential home repairs, uninsured home repairs may qualify as unexpected or exceptional expenses if they

- Were necessary for health and safety reasons; and
- Are related to the period of credit problems.

Normally, these expenses are of a one-time-only nature and do not include expenses related to the day-to-day maintenance of a home

(e.g., replacement of an older roof). The home repair cannot be for cosmetic reasons, and must precede your credit history problems.

Submit:

- Receipts itemizing the costs paid; and
- A statement describing the type of repairs and why they were necessary.

Uninsured medical, dental, or optical expenses must be:

- Incurred by you, your spouse, or a dependant and paid by you (and/or your spouse);
- Required; and
- Related to the period of credit difficulties.

These expenses must not have been paid by another person or by a private insurance plan.

Submit:

- A copy of the receipts from the medical practitioner.

Caring for children with disabilities. If a dependent child is disabled and this causes significant child care/attendant expenses to be incurred.

Submit:

- Copies of all child care/attendant receipts for the time period relating to your credit problems; and

- A letter from the family physician/medical practitioner indicating the nature of the disabled child's condition.

Caring for elderly/infirm relatives. If your credit history is poor as a result of incurring expenses to care for an elderly/infirm relative.

Submit:

- Copies of all receipts for costs incurred to care for the elderly/infirm relative for the time period relating to your credit history problems; and
- A letter outlining the details of the situation (i.e., the nature and duration of the care required).

Legal fees may qualify as unexpected or exceptional expenses only if they are:

- incurred and paid by you (and/or your spouse); and
- Related to the period of credit problems.

Submit:

- An itemized account from your lawyer showing the amounts paid, when the payments were made and the reasons the costs were incurred.

Fees related to buying a home or operating a business will not be considered an exceptional or unexpected legal expense.

Funeral expenses may qualify as unexpected or exceptional expenses if they are:

- Incurred and paid by you (and/or your spouse); and
- Related to the period of credit problems.

Submit:

- Copies of all receipts of funeral expenses incurred during the period of credit problems, and
- A copy of death certificate.

A Loss or Substantial Reduction in Income or Earnings

Layoff, dismissal, or reduction of normal income. If you (and/or your spouse) experienced a reduction or an interruption in your regular employment income as a result of a layoff, dismissal, or involuntary reduction to part-time or lower paying work, and this has affected your credit history, submit:

- A letter from you (and/or your spouse) indicating why you were unable to find new or additional employment. The letter must show that a reasonable effort to find full-time work was made.

In the case of a layoff or dismissal:

- A copy of the notice of layoff or dismissal, or a copy of the Record of Employment. Do not include the reason for the dismissal.

In the case of a reduction to part-time or lower paying work:

- A letter from your (or your spouse's) employer indicating the reduction in the amount of time worked or salary earned, and why the reduction occurred.

Illness. If you (and/or your spouse) were unable to work for a substantial period of time as a result of a temporary illness and this has affected your credit history, submit:

- A letter from you (and/or your spouse) indicating the reason that you were unable to work during the period of time the credit problems occurred, and
- A certificate from a physician outlining the nature of the illness, the care required and the period of time you (or your spouse) were unable to work.

Changes in family/marital situation. If a change in your family situations (such as a divorce or separation, the death of a spouse, or the birth of a child) has affected your normal income and caused credit problems, submit:

- A copy the divorce/separation papers indicating that you have a legal responsibility to make payments to the child or ex-spouse and the effective date, or
- A copy of the death or birth certificate.

Inability to work full time due to a disability. If you (or your spouse) has recently become disabled or has an ongoing disability which has substantially reduced your normal income and led to credit problems, submit:

- A medical certificate to substantiate the disability and your (or your spouse's) inability to work full or part time as a result of the disability.

Failure of an ex-spouse to maintain family support payments. If your credit problems were caused by the failure of your spouse/exspouse to meet their court-ordered support payment obligations, submit:

- A letter from your lawyer indicating the amount and the time period during which the payments from your spouse/ex-spouse were not made.