

# COVID-19 and Post-Secondary Education Q & A

Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, post-secondary educational institutions throughout Saskatchewan have closed to the public. In many cases, course instruction is being provided online. See below for responses to some general questions post-secondary students may have during this time. Further information can be found on the COVID-19 web pages on the saskatchewan.ca and canada.ca websites and by contacting your post-secondary institution.

## Student Loans

**Q: Now that classes have been suspended or cancelled, will I still receive my student loan payments?**

**A:** For courses that are proceeding in an alternate format, currently scheduled student loan payments will continue as usual.

**If a program/course is cancelled or postponed,** the student has been notified that no further funds will be disbursed after April 30, 2020 until the program recommences. Students should check their online account for details.

**Q: How are students in the repayment phase of their loans affected?**

Effective March 30, 2020, student loan repayment has been suspended until September 20, 2020. No payments will be withdrawn from borrowers' accounts and no interest will accrue for six months. Borrowers do not need to apply for this repayment pause, however, those who are able and who wish to continue payments must contact the National Student Loan Service Center at 1-888-815-4515 to make arrangements to do so.

**Q: How is the next student loan period for spring and summer classes being impacted?**

**A:** Students may apply for student loans for this time period, but should check with their institution on class availability. There will be no change to the application process.

## Courses Moving Online or to Alternate Delivery Methods

**Q: What if students don't have access to computers or the internet?**

**A:** This is a particular concern in rural and remote areas. Students facing these circumstances should advise their educational institution.

## Course Completion

**Q: What if I can't complete my classes in-person or on-line? How will this affect my final grades?**

**A:** Most institutions have posted information about course grading on their websites. Please contact your institution directly for further information.

**Q: Can my project or student group still meet in person?**

**A:** Everyone is expected to follow the latest provincial direction to avoid gathering in groups of more than 10 and to maintain social distancing of at least two metres. Meeting virtually, rather than in person, is encouraged. Please contact your institution directly for information regarding course expectations.

**Q: If classes have been cancelled, will I receive a refund?**

**A:** Students should contact their institution directly for this information.

## Living in Residence

### **Q: How long can I stay in residence or do I have to return home?**

**A:** Residences remain open, but students who are able to return home are being encouraged to do so to minimize the numbers of students remaining in residence. Please contact your institution directly for the latest information.

### **Q: I left my institution residence quickly to return home. Will I be refunded for the time I'm not actually living there but had already paid for?**

**A:** Residents who completely vacated their room and returned the keys prior to the end of the term, may be eligible for partial refund. Students should contact their residence/housing office directly.

## International Students

### **Q: Will I continue to be able to live in Residence?**

**A:** In many cases, arrangements have been made to keep residences open and food service available for those unable to return home. Check with your institution for details relevant to your circumstances.

### **Q: Will plans for online courses and final exams allow international students to go home?**

**A:** Most classes have transitioned to online delivery and arrangements have been made for final exams. If you are able to complete your work and exams online at your home location, you may make plans to travel home. Please discuss your plans with your institution before leaving.

### **Q: What is the best way for international students to learn how to get home?**

**A:** Students should contact the international studies office at their institution, where available, or visit the **Special measures to help temporary and permanent residents and applicants affected by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19)** section of the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada website at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/coronavirus-special-measures.html>.

### **Q: My student study permit is about to expire, causing me to lose my health coverage. How do I avoid losing my coverage?**

**A:** International students are advised to:

1. submit a Study Permit Extension Application immediately to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/study-canada/extend-study-permit.html>;
2. apply for a six-month extension on their Health Cards at eHealth Saskatchewan. Proof of the study permit extension application **submission and payment are required.** [ehealthsask.ca/residents/health-cards/Pages/Update-or-Replace-a-Health-Card.aspx](http://ehealthsask.ca/residents/health-cards/Pages/Update-or-Replace-a-Health-Card.aspx);
3. Upon receiving the original study permit extension from IRCC, International students need to log into their eHealth account again to complete the saved Notification of an Updated Immigration Document form and upload the original study permit extension electronically.

## **Mental Health related to COVID-19**

**Q: What if I am experiencing difficulties with my own or a loved one's mental health as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?**

**A:** Students should reach out to their institution's counselling services, where available. Further help may be available through a parent or spouse's Employee and Family Assistance Plan.

In addition to counselling services, [The Inquiring Mind](#), through the Mental Health Commission of Canada, is an evidence-based program designed to address and promote mental health. Please check with your institution for availability of sessions.

The [UniWellbeing Course for Post-secondary Students](#) is provided free of charge, however participating students are required to be part of the research study. Full details of the study are available from the organizers.

The World Health Organization also offers a [Mental Health and Psychosocial Considerations During COVID-19 Outbreak factsheet](#).

## **Emergency Bursary Funding for Post-Secondary Students**

**Q. Who qualifies for the emergency bursaries?**

**A.** The emergency bursaries are targeted toward our province's most vulnerable students, attending publicly-funded post-secondary educational institutions in Saskatchewan, including Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs. Funds will go to a limited number of students in need, and support pressing costs such as rent/housing, food, medicine, emergency travel, etc. Students in dire need should contact the student aid office or student counselling at their respective institution.

The bursary amount will be based on individual circumstances and need.

**Q. I am a Saskatchewan resident who attends an institution outside of the province. Am I eligible?**

**A.** No. The Emergency Bursary Program is intended for vulnerable students at Saskatchewan publicly-funded post-secondary educational institutions only. Students attending school outside the province should contact their respective institutions directly to inquire what support programs are offered in that jurisdiction.

### **Additional financial supports:**

In response to COVID-19, the Government of Canada has announced several programs at [canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan.html#individuals](https://canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan.html#individuals) offering financial support for individuals.