

CANADA STUDENT FINANCIAL
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

CONSULTATION ON AGE AND
REGENCY OF
PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL
ASSESSMENTS

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Introduction

The Canada Student Financial Assistance Program (CSFA Program) is conducting a review of its policy on the use of psychoeducational assessments for verifying learning disabilities.

Under the current policy, the “best standard” is to use a psychoeducational assessment that **was conducted when the student was 18 or older, or within the previous 5 years**.

Please review the following information regarding the supports that are available to students with disabilities, and the disability verification process for students with learning disabilities.

You are invited to share your views on this policy and its impact on students by responding to [this survey](#).

CSFA Program Supports for Students with Disabilities

In addition to the grants and loans available to all students, the CSFA Program offers targeted supports to help students with disabilities access and afford post-secondary education:

- \$2,800 per year in [Canada Student Grant for Students with Disabilities](#), for the 2024-2025 academic year;
- Up to \$20,000 per year in [Canada Student Grant for Services and Equipment for Students with Disabilities](#) for exceptional education-related costs;
- The [Repayment Assistance Plan for Borrowers with Disabilities](#), which reduces or eliminates payments for borrowers in financial difficulty;
- The [Severe and Permanent Disability Benefit](#), which forgives the entire amount of Canada Student Loans for borrowers whose disability prevents them from participating in substantially gainful employment for their expected life;
- Payment-free leave of up to 18 months for students taking a temporary leave from their studies for medical reasons (including mental health); and,
- An exemption from the requirement to contribute up to \$3,000 towards their education, which results in a higher amount of funding.

Additional in-study flexibilities are also offered to students with disabilities:

- While students without disabilities are only eligible for aid for a standard program length plus one additional period of studies, this limitation does not apply to students with disabilities, who can therefore continue to receive student financial assistance for longer periods of studies;
- Students with disabilities are allowed to study at only 40% of a standard course load and still be considered full-time students (whereas students without

disabilities must take at least 60% of a standard course load to be considered full-time students); and,

- Students with disabilities can receive aid for up to a lifetime maximum of 520 weeks (whereas it is 340 weeks for students without disabilities).

Disability Verification for Students with Learning Disabilities

In order to be eligible for the above supports, students with disabilities must provide proof of their permanent disability, or persistent or prolonged disability.

The CSFA Program's Disability Assessment Guidelines for the 2024-2025 academic year state that a psychoeducational assessment (or summary report) completed by a registered psychologist that is no more than five years old (or completed when the student was 18 or older) is **the acceptable best standard for assessing students with learning disabilities**. However, provinces and territories have discretion to consider other forms of documentation that may sufficiently demonstrate a permanent disability, or a persistent or prolonged disability.

If a disability is considered permanent, students should only need to apply and verify their disability status once to access available supports. Students with verified permanent disabilities should not be asked to re-verify their disability except in exceptional circumstances that would warrant a re-verification, such as when a student requests changes to their disability status.

Reimbursement for the Cost of Psychoeducational Assessments

The [Canada Student Grant for Services and Equipment](#) covers **100% of disability verification costs up to \$3,500 per year**, which may include the cost of a psychoeducational assessment. Students are required to pay for their assessment or documentation upfront and are eligible for reimbursement only once a disability is confirmed.

Questions for feedback

The CSFA Program would like to request your feedback on the following questions. To assist us with compiling and analyzing stakeholder feedback, it is preferred that responses be provided via [this survey](#).

1. In your view, what is the best way to verify that a student has a learning disability?
2. Are students having difficulty accessing psychoeducational assessments? Why? What are the barriers?
3. The CSFA Program's Disability Assessment Guidelines identify as "best standard" for verifying learning disabilities, the use of a psychoeducational assessment that was conducted when the student was 18 or older, or within the previous 5 years. In your view, should this policy be updated? If so, please describe the update that you would recommend.
4. Are you aware of any research or best practices that the CSFA Program should consider when reviewing this policy?
5. Please share any details regarding your experience with this policy that you consider relevant to this review.