

# ADVANCED EDUCATION

## Public Accounts Committee (PAC) Dec. 6, 2022 – FOLLOWUP Q&As

### 1. PAC – Hansard December 6, 2022 – PA-779: – Mr. Schmidt

I want to go back to page 55 and the Alberta study grants. When the deputy minister left off, she said that 17,000 students had accessed the grant before the program was pause.

**a. How many applications were denied or were in the works, I guess, when the program was paused?**

In 2021, more than 120,300 Alberta residents enrolled in full-time post-secondary studies received a mix of federal and provincial loans and grants totaling more than \$2.1 billion and averaging \$18,160 per learner.

The number of students who received the grant in 2021/22 totaled 17,965. Because of the integrated nature of the student aid program, it is difficult to ascertain the number of students who were not able to access the grant program. However, students unable to access the Alberta Student Grant funding for the balance of the year were encouraged to pursue the many other student aid opportunities and resources available. This includes federal and provincial student loans, other grants, and numerous scholarships and awards. The Alberta Student Grant program has resumed for the 2022/23 academic year.

### 2. PAC - Hansard December 6, 2022 – PA-783: – Mr. Schmidt

“According to the briefing provided by the Legislative Assembly office, operating grants to post-secondary institutions have decreased by over \$400 million since the 2018-19 fiscal year ....”

**a. Since 2018/19, how many full-time equivalent positions have been lost at post-secondary institutions because of this shortfall in base operating grants?**

Post-secondary full-time equivalent data is reported in the Alberta Fiscal Plan. The full-time equivalents for the years requested are reported in the table below. It is important to note that the publicly funded post-secondary institutions are governed by their boards of governors, who are empowered to direct financial, academic, and operational matters of their institutions. This responsibility includes determining their staffing complements. Changes in full-time equivalents could be attributed to a number of factors, such as changes to operations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Year	FTE	Change
2018/19	33,588	
2019/20	33,288	(300)
2020/21	32,890	(398)
2021/22	32,140	(750)

- b. Is the ministry keeping track of any programs that have been eliminated because of these budget cuts since 2019? Can the department then table that report to show which programs have been lost since 2018/19?**

Discontinuation of a program may be the result of several factors: a reprioritization of program offerings in response to changes in student demand or workforce needs, standard program housekeeping to ensure currency of programming, an institution's decisions about how to address resource constraints, and so forth.

Data from April 1, 2018 through December 14, 2022 show that just over 1,000 programs were suspended or terminated.

Work Type	Approved	Withdrawn
PSP Change - Suspend Program	116	7
PSP Change - Suspend Specialization	258	36
PSP Change - Terminate Program	167	4
PSP Change - Terminate Specialization	480	14
<b>Total</b>	1,021	61

Additional insight can be gleaned from comparing this data to the previous four years of data (April 1, 2014 to December 14, 2017), which indicates that during that time, just over 940 programs were suspended or terminated as outlined in the following table. Despite budget adjustments, we did not see significantly more suspensions and terminations in the more recent four-year period.

Work Type	Approved	Withdrawn
PSP Change - Suspend Program	100	9
PSP Change - Suspend Specialization	291	36
PSP Change - Terminate Program	173	14
PSP Change - Terminate Specialization	378	41
<b>Total</b>	942	100

### **3. PAC – Hansard December 6, 2022 – PA-788: – Ms. Lovely What has been done to address recommendation no. 6 from the Auditor General?**

The MacKinnon Panel found that Alberta's post-secondary system lacked strategic direction, with consequences for value for investment and outcomes, and that stakeholders, including industry, should be engaged to develop a new vision for the system. As a result, in February 2020, the Minister announced a post-secondary review to guide the development of a long-term strategy.

The Alberta 2030: Building Skills for Jobs strategy was publicly released on April 29, 2021. It defines goals, objectives, and flagship initiatives to position Alberta for the decade ahead.

Over the past several months, the government has made key investments and system improvements, including:

- \$3.6 million to create new work-integrated learning opportunities by partnering with several industry associations in key economic sectors to provide meaningful paid work placements for hundreds of students; and
- \$5.6 million for post-secondary institutions and industry to develop micro-credential programs aligned with Alberta's Recovery Plan, which will help Albertans quickly build the skills they need to re-enter the workforce or pivot in their career.

Other initiatives being advanced under Alberta 2030 were previously identified as possible work that the department would undertake, and these had existing budget allocated to them.

Performance measures work is underway in the department related to several initiatives, such as Investment Management Agreements and the Alberta 2030 strategy.

As part of realizing the vision and goals of Alberta 2030, governance changes are being implemented for the post-secondary system. Informed by visionary thinking, stakeholder engagement, and global trends, the Minister's Advisory Council on Higher Education and Skills, established in June 2022, is responsible for advising the Minister on:

- strategic goals and direction for post-secondary education in Alberta;
- metrics for measuring the performance of public post-secondary and independent academic institutions in Alberta; and
- other matters, as required.

Once timelines for implementation are finalized, they will be communicated with the Office of the Auditor General.

**4. PAC – Hansard December 6, 2022 – PA-788: – Ms. Lovely**

**What has been done by the Ministry to address recommendation no. 7 from the Auditor General’s Office?**

This recommendation is not yet implemented. Alberta 2030 was established as part of a comprehensive, system-wide review of Alberta’s post- secondary system and is a new strategy for the future. This initiative is expected to transform the adult learning system to focus on providing the high-quality education, skills, and training needed to get Albertans back to work, meet current and future labour market demands, and drive innovation to make Alberta competitive in a 21st century global economy.

To model the way, Advanced Education collaborated with employers, industry, students, post-secondary institutions, and other stakeholders over the past year to develop this strategy. This process conducted the broadest engagement by Advanced Education in over 15 years and introduced proven practices in leading change and bringing in diverse perspectives to solve complex challenges, including through the Guiding Coalition. The strategy is expected to set out needed direction and supports for collaborative initiatives and will be completed as Alberta 2030 initiatives are implemented

**Q: How did the job market improve out of COVID (trades industries – what did employment look like)?**

There were no significant differences in graduates’ employment rate before and during the pandemic, based on the Graduate Outcomes Survey.

The results are similar for both graduates from public funded institutions and private career colleges.

	<b>Graduate Outcomes Survey 2018</b>	<b>Graduate Outcomes Survey 2020</b>
	<b>(Public: class of 2015/16)</b>	<b>(Public: class of 2017/18)</b>
	<b>(Private: class of 2016/17)</b>	<b>(Private: class of 2018/19)</b>
<b>Graduates’ employment rate</b>		
Public funded Institutions	93%	93%
Private Career Colleges	85%	87%

*Note: The Graduate Outcomes Survey is conducted by Advanced Education every two years. Graduates of publicly funded institutions surveyed through the Graduate Outcomes Survey are surveyed two years after graduation.*

*Graduates of private career colleges surveyed through the Graduate Outcomes Survey are surveyed one year after graduation.*

Similarly, the proportion of apprentices employed did not change between the last two iterations of the survey of apprentice graduates.

### ***Apprentice Education Survey (AES) - Current Employment Status***

Percent of Respondents		
<i>Base: All graduates</i>	AES 2020	AES 2022
	Class of 2018/19 (n=3,519)	Class of 2020/21 (n=1,761)
Employed	89%	<b>89%</b>

Survey Question E1. Which of the following categories best describes your current employment status?

Note: A survey of apprentice graduates is conducted by Advanced Education every two years. Apprentices are surveyed six to 18 months after graduation.

### **Q: Student satisfaction on the PSI experience, impacted in COVID environment – and sports impacts?**

Starting in March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic brought many challenges for post-secondary institutions and students.

There was physical closure of post-secondary institutions across Canada, and most face-to-face courses transitioned to online (remote delivery), as did many student services.

The percentage of students who used athletic facilities and other recreational facilities on campus decreased dramatically from 2019 to 2020, based on the annual Canadian University Survey Consortium student survey; however, the satisfaction level for students who used the facilities remained relatively stable.

	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>% of students accessed sport related facilities at their institution</b>				
Athletic facilities	27%	30%	9%	21%
Other recreational facilities	15%	14%	5%	12%
<b>Satisfaction with sport related facilities (% satisfied or very satisfied)</b>				
Athletic facilities	93%	92%	91%	95%
Other recreational facilities	97%	95%	94%	96%

Note: 2019 and 2022 represents first year students; 2020 represents middle year students; and 2021 represents final /graduating year students.

Performance Indicator 1.a measures the percentage of post-secondary graduates who reported being employed approximately two years after graduation. In 2020, graduates from the majority of fields of study had employment rates higher than 90 per cent, and the most updated information will be available in the next annual report as this is a biennial survey.

- a. How does this rate compare to post-secondary graduates who reported being employed in other provinces?
- b. Is Alberta below or above average?

Graduates' employment rates for British Columbia (BC), Ontario, and Alberta are listed in the table below. Numbers are for graduates who are in the labour market and employed two years after graduation. Alberta's employment rate is similar to BC's and a bit lower than Ontario's.

#### Employment rate for graduates\*

Province	Credentials	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
BC	Certificate	93%	93%	
	Diploma	91%	91%	
	Bachelor's	92%	93%	
Ontario	All	96%	93%	
<b>AB</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>93%</b>		<b>95%</b>

\*Numbers represent graduates in the labour market who indicate they have found employment two years after graduation. Source: BC Baccalaureate Graduates survey, BC Diploma, Associate Degree & Certificate Students Survey, Ontario University Graduate Survey, Alberta Graduate Outcomes Survey

Notes: Alberta Graduate Outcomes Survey is conducted every two years; British Columbia and Ontario graduate surveys are conducted every year.

- BC conducts separate surveys for baccalaureate, diploma, and certificate students.

- c. How do technical colleges such as Red Deer College compare to universities?

The employment rate for polytechnics (91 per cent) is slightly lower than comprehensive academic and research universities (94 per cent):

Sector	Employment Rate in 2020
Comprehensive Academic and Research Universities	94%
Comprehensive Community Colleges	91%
Independent Academic Institutions	93%
Polytechnic Institutions	91%
Undergraduate Universities	93%
Private Vocational Training Institutions	87%

Source: Graduate Outcomes Survey 2020 (Public = class of 2017/18; Private = class of 2018/19)