



Fast

FACTS

CANADIAN CENTRE FOR POLICY ALTERNATIVES - MANITOBA

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Graduate Studies and Continuing Fees

Graduate enrolment is steadily increasing in Manitoba, with more students electing to pursue post-graduate programs at both the Master's and PhD level. The growth in graduate student population contributes much to the diversity and breadth of research done on university campuses. Additionally, once graduate students complete their course of study they contribute to the overall economic vitality of the province. Despite increased enrolment, tuition and continuation fees prevent some students from accessing graduate programs.

The average tuition fee to pursue a graduate degree in Manitoba is approximately \$4,363 per year. Manitoba's fees are more affordable compared to other provinces such as Ontario where students pay an average of \$8,456 per year. However, financial barriers are still the main reason why Manitoban graduate students stop their studies.

Currently, graduate students pay regular tuition fees for the first and sometimes second year depending on their selected program of study. Most Master's students pay one year of regular tuition fees while PhD students pay two. During subsequent years, graduate students pay what are known as continuing fees. Continuing fees are paid each semester and commence once course work is complete and independent research and thesis writing begins.

The rate of continuing fees are often lower

than regular tuition because it is understood that graduate students at the thesis stage of their program use fewer university resources while substantially contributing to the development and execution of research on campus. Graduate students are highly engaged in not only their own research but often work for faculty in their research, as well as being employed as teaching assistants, grader-markers or sessional instructors. Graduate students' contributions are invaluable to the productivity and continued success of post-secondary institutions in the province.

Continuing fees are used in a variety of provinces throughout Canada; they are known as post-residency, non-instructional, additional session, re-registration and discounted fees. The rates charged vary from institution to institution, and are a source of anxiety for many students.

Lower socio-economically positioned students are less likely to be able to afford graduate school, especially with the current average undergraduate debt at approximately \$19,000. Those who do elect to undertake additional debt to pursue graduate studies can experience higher stress levels, longer completion times and lower retention levels.

there is an alternative.

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Recently the University of Manitoba Graduate Faculty proposed a 326.7 percent increase to continuing fees for graduate students over three years, increasing fees to \$1,500 in September 2014, \$2,000 in September 2015, and \$3,000 in September 2016. The faculty justifies the increases by claiming that it will be able to attract more graduate students through the provision of increased funding options and additional resources for their programs. However, no formal plan has been submitted to date, even though the faculty attempted to drastically increase this fee in 2010, citing the same rationale.

The new proposal has left University of Manitoba graduates both stunned and confused as to the real reasons behind the sudden and drastic fee increases. Following a recommendation from the provincial government, the Faculty of Graduate Studies has removed their fee-increase proposal from the Council on Post-Secondary Education. According to the Minister of Education and Higher Learning, James Allum, the Faculty must now engage in meaningful consultations with students if it wants to resubmit its proposal next year. Minister Allum stated that the sudden fee increases runs contrary to the government's efforts to provide affordable and accessible education post-secondary education.

Continuing fees are a blatant attempt by university administrations to attempt to seek additional revenue at the expense of students. If the university can demonstrate a financial burden associated with providing high quality graduate programs they should be requesting additional funding from the government of Manitoba. Post-secondary education is part of a publicly funded institution and must remain as such to ensure every person, no matter her/his position in life, can access higher education. Through unqualified and thereby unjustified increases to these fees the University of Manitoba is explicitly saying that money is the ultimate goal - not providing a public education to Manitobans.

Canadian Federation of Students,
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