

# Federal Budget 2019

## Briefing note for members of the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences

March 20, 2019

### Executive summary

- Budget 2019 promises significant new investments that bolster higher education in Canada and create new learning opportunities for the more than one million Canadian students enrolled in the humanities and social sciences (HSS). It builds on last year's budget, which announced major new research investments and an increase in the percentage of research dollars going to the humanities and social sciences.
- In the months leading up to this budget, the Federation advocated for three main priorities: giving HSS students equal access to workplace learning programs; increasing investments in scholarships and fellowships; and improving Indigenous peoples' access to and success in post-secondary education. Budget 2019 speaks to all three of these priorities.

### Highlight by funding category

#### Work-integrated learning

- For the Federation, some of the most significant commitments in Budget 2019 fall under the heading of "work-integrated learning." The government has now pledged that students in the humanities and social sciences will be eligible for the federal Student Work Placement program, which has previously been available exclusively to students enrolled in STEM and business programs. Opening up the federal program will help level the playing field for our fields of study while creating new learning opportunities for deserving students in all disciplines.

- Not only is the government promising to reform the Student Work Placement program, it is also planning to significantly expand it. The Budget commits \$631 million over the next five years to provide post-secondary students with opportunities to apply and expand their knowledge in a work setting. These funds alone will create placements for 20,000 additional students every year, part of a broader set of commitments in the budget to “ensure that every young Canadian who wants a work-integrated learning opportunity [will] get one.”

### Support for graduate students

- The budget also supports graduate students by providing \$114 million over the next five years to the federal granting councils to create 500 more master’s level scholarship awards and 167 more three-year doctoral scholarship awards.
- By 2021, funding for scholarships will have risen by \$26.5 million per year, a significant amount but well short of the \$140 million per year recommended in 2017 by the independent panel of experts appointed to review federal research policy. Of these new dollars, 42% will go to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the largest share earmarked for any of the three funding councils.

### Indigenous peoples

- In this year’s budget, the government makes a broad pledge to “ensure that Indigenous students have better access to post-secondary education, and more student support to ensure that they can succeed during their studies.”
- The budget also includes a number of major funding commitments, which together are worth hundreds of millions of dollars over several years. The largest of these promises is to invest \$327.5 million over five years to renew and expand funding for the Post-Secondary Student Support Program.
- These commitments are encouraging and we will have a better understanding of their real significance as we obtain more information from the government and, more importantly, as we hear more from groups representing Indigenous peoples.

## Conclusion

- For the Federation, one of the most significant aspects of Budget 2019 is its commitment to reform and expand the Student Work Placement program and to give more equal access and new learning opportunities to the 50% of all post-secondary students who choose to study in the humanities and social sciences. The budget's support for graduate students is more modest, but also welcome, as are the government's commitments to work with Indigenous peoples.
- There are other important commitments in this year's budget, including promises to develop and fund a new International Education Strategy and to expand parental leave coverage from six months to 12 months for students and postdoctoral fellows who receive granting council funding.
- This is a living document. We will post it on the Federation's website ([www.ideas-idees.ca](http://www.ideas-idees.ca)) and update it as we collect more information and gain new insights on the commitments contained in Budget 2019.

## About the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences

The Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences promotes research and teaching for the advancement of an inclusive, democratic and prosperous society. With a membership now comprising over 160 universities, colleges and scholarly associations, the Federation represents a diverse community of 91,000 researchers and graduate students across Canada. The Federation organizes Canada's largest academic gathering, the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences, bringing together more than 8,000 participants each year. For more information about the Federation, visit [www.ideas-idees.ca](http://www.ideas-idees.ca).