



STUDENT FINACIAL PLAN

Print this worksheet and fill out the expenses and income sections to see if you have a realistic budget.

Multiply the monthly amounts by the number of months you'll have the expense to get a yearly amount for each category. For example, if you pay \$500 a month in rent for 8 months and move home for the other 4 months of the year, you'll pay \$4,000 in rent that year.

If your expenses are greater than your income, start looking for ways to save.

How to Make a Personal Budget in 6 Easy Steps

- a) Gather your financial paper work
- b) Calculate Your Income
- c) Create a list of monthly expenses
- d) Determine fixed and variable expenses
- e) Total Your Monthly income and expenses
- f) Male adjustments to expenses

One Time Expenses.

Education Expenses	Amount (\$)
Tuition	
Fees (lab, library, etc.) if not included	
Books	
Computer/Laptop/Tablet	
Other Course material	
Other	

Ongoing living expenses.

Housing	\$ per month	\$ per year
Rent/mortgage payments		
Residence fees		
Utilities (hydro, gas, electricity, etc.)		
Home/tenant Insurance		

FINACIAL PLAN

Other		
Communications	\$ per month	\$ per year
Internet		
Cable		
Cell Phone		
Other		
Food	\$ per month	\$ per year
Groceries		
Meal Plan		
Take-out / Order in		
Coffee/tea/snacks		
Other		
Transportation	\$ per month	\$ per year
Public transit		
Parking		
Gas		
Car Payment (loan/lease)		
Car Insurance		
Car maintenance and repairs		
Holiday travel (visit family, etc.)		
Taxi fare		
Ride services		
Other		
Clothing	\$ per month	\$ per year
Cloths		
Shoes		
Accessories		
other		
Miscellaneous	\$ per month	\$ per year
Recreation (sports, gym, etc.)		
Entertainment (movies, outings, bars, etc.)		
Personal care (haircuts, beauty products)		
Laundry		
Vacation		

FINACIAL PLAN

Gifts		
House supplies		
Socializing expenses		
other		
Medical	\$ per month	\$ per year
Medical Insurance (if not included in tuition)		
Dental Insurance (if not included in tuition)		
Medical / dental procedures		
Specialists (chiropractor, physio, etc.)		
Eye care		
Prescriptions		
Other		
Savings	\$ per month	\$ per year
Emergency fund		
Other savings		
Debt repayment	\$ per month	\$ per year
Credit card		
Line of credit		
Personal loan		
Other		
Children	\$ per month	\$ per year
Day care		
Babysitting		
Cloths		
Baby supplies		
Other		
Total Yearly Expenses :		
Income (Source of money)		Amount \$
Sources		
Registered Education Savings Plan		
Part-time work		
Tips		
Scholarships, grants and bursaries		
Other personal savings		

FINACIAL PLAN

Family contributions		
Student loans		
Gifts		
Other		
Total Yearly Income :		
BALANCE		Amount \$
TOTAL EARLY EXPENCES		
TOTAL YEARLY INCOME		
DIFFERENCE :		

Costs to include in your budget

A budget is a plan that helps you manage your money. It will help you figure out how much money you'll get and spend during your studies.

Include all the costs of student life when making your budget.

Tuition fees

Tuition fees are what you pay your university or college to enroll in your program and attend classes.

Tuition fees may vary depending on:

- the program you study
- the school you attend
- the province or territory of your school
- your residency status or citizenship
- the number of classes you take
- the type of classes you take
- whether you're a part-time or full-time student

Check your school's website for details about the tuition fees you'll pay.

Student fees

You'll need to pay other types of student fees such as student union fees and administration fees. The exact fees will depend on your school.

Health insurance

Private health insurance coverage is usually included in student fees. This insurance covers medical or dental costs not covered by your provincial or territorial health insurance.

If you have private health insurance coverage with your job or family, you may be able to opt out of your school's coverage. Check with your school to see if you're eligible. Most schools require you to opt out during the first few weeks of the school year. You may have to provide proof that you have private health insurance coverage from another source.

Books and other course materials

The cost of books and other course materials depends on your program and school. Approximately, \$800 to \$1,000 per year is a reasonable estimate for undergraduate students. Check with your school or with someone already enrolled in your program for a more accurate estimate.

To reduce the costs of books and other course materials consider doing the following:

- buying used books
- buying textbooks from online retailers that may offer items at a lower price than the campus bookstore
- getting the electronic version of course materials such as textbooks and articles
- sharing textbooks with roommates or classmates, if practical
- checking your school library to see if any of the course material is available to borrow
- selling your used textbooks
- using an older edition of the textbook if possible

Living expenses

How much you spend on living expenses will have a big impact on your financial situation when you finish your studies.

Living on campus

If you plan to live on campus, check student residence and meal plan costs on your university or college website. Consider living in a shared residence room because shared rooms often cost less than single rooms.

Living off campus

You may choose to live off campus rather than in residence. This could mean living with roommates, living on your own or living with your family. Choosing to live with your family while you study could cut your living expenses by thousands of dollars a year.

Some school websites provide estimated costs for living off campus. The cost of living off campus will depend on where you study. For example, rent in a small town in Nova Scotia may be much less than in downtown Toronto.

FINACIAL PLAN

Remember to consider the cost of heat, electricity, Internet and tenant's insurance. Living with roommates is a way to reduce all these costs.

Cost of food while living off campus

Make sure you include the cost of meals in your budget. Some grocery stores offer student deals on certain days of the week. Ask about student discounts whenever you shop.

Many schools also offer meal plans for students living off campus. Contact your school for more information on these plans.

Transportation

If you need to use public transit to get to school, check the price of a public transit pass. Some schools provide students with transit passes as part of tuition fees.

If you have a car, check your school website to see how much you'll have to pay for parking. Also, consider the cost of gas for getting to and from school each day. You may find that taking public transit is much cheaper than driving to school every day.

If you live away from home, make sure to include the cost of going home for a visit or summer vacation. Most airlines, bus companies and passenger trains offer discounts to students.

[Many of these discounts are available with the International Student Identity Card.](#)

Entertainment costs

Entertainment, clothing and cell phone costs are examples of other expenses you'll need to consider. To reduce these costs, look for ways to save by focusing on what you need instead of what you want.

You may be able to save money on these costs by using student discount cards.

Consider rising costs

Your tuition and living costs may rise each year that you're a student.

The cost of your books and living expenses may increase due to inflation. Inflation is the rising cost of consumer goods and services. In recent years, the average rate of inflation in Canada has been 2% per year.

Remember to include these increases in costs when making a budget for student life. You may want to consider making a new budget for each year that you're a student.

Sources of income

When making your budget for student life, consider where your money will come from. Your income may come from personal savings or from working while going to school.

[Learn about working to help pay for your education.](#)

To add to your income you also need to consider:

- [scholarships](#)
- [grants](#)
- [a government student loan](#)
- [a student line of credit from your financial institution](#)

Student credit cards

University and college campuses are popular advertising spots for credit card companies. The average annual interest rate for student credit cards in Canada is 18.11%.

Be cautious: credit cards are a very expensive way to borrow money if you don't pay off the balance in full each month.

[Use the Credit Card Comparison Tool to find the credit card that best suits your needs.](#)

Tax deductions and tax credits for students

There are many tax deductions and tax credits available for students. What you're eligible for depends on if you're a part-time or full-time student. Make sure to file your return on time each year to avoid penalties.

A tax deduction reduces your taxable income for the year. For example, as a student you may be eligible for tax deductions for moving expenses and child care expenses, as well as other tax deductions.

A non-refundable tax credit reduces the amount of tax you owe. You may be eligible for non-refundable tax credits for costs that include:

- tuition fees
- books
- public transit
- interest paid on your student loans

Taking advantage of these tax credits and deductions will have a big impact your annual tax return.

[Learn how to claim the tax deductions and tax credits available for students.](#)

Why make a budget

A budget is a plan that helps you manage your money. It helps you figure out how much money you get, spend and save. Making a budget can help you balance your income with your savings and expenses. It guides your spending to help you reach your financial goals.

A budget is especially important if you:

- don't know where your money is going
- don't save regularly
- have problems paying off your debts
- feel overwhelmed by your finances
- feel like you're not in control of your finances
- want to make the most of your money
- are planning for a major purchase or a life event

Making a budget can help you:

- set spending limits
- find ways to pay down your debts
- reduce costs and save more
- live within your means
- reduce stress
- have more money for things that are important to you
- feel in control of your money

What to consider before you start a budget

Take these simple steps before you make your budget.

Think about your financial goals

Identify your short-term and long-term goals. Make saving for those goals part of your budget.

For example, goals may be:

Short-term goals:

- paying off your credit card
- reducing your weekly expenses
- starting to build an emergency fund

Long-term goals:

- paying off all of your debts
- saving to buy a home, a car or booking a trip
- saving to have children, to go to school or to retire

To deal with unexpected situations, create an emergency fund. Your emergency fund should provide you with enough money to cover your living expenses for 3 to 6 months. These amounts can sometimes seem out of reach. That is why you should start by saving a small amount on a regular basis.

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Having an emergency fund will help you reduce financial stress and avoid getting trapped in a debt cycle.

[Learn how to build an emergency fund.](#)

Know where your money is going

Tracking your money will help you figure out what comes in and what goes out of your pocket. Every dollar you spend affects your overall budget.

For example, if you spend \$2.50 a day on coffee, it will cost you more than \$900 a year.

To keep track of where your money is going, take note of what you spend.

Try this exercise for 1 or 2 months:

- keep track of everything you buy, from groceries to a daily cup of coffee
- keep a copy of bills you pay during this period
- try dividing your expenses into 2 categories: “needs” and “wants”

Small changes to spending habits can have a major impact on your budget and your ability to save.

[Use the Expenses Calculator to see how small purchases can add up over time.](#)

Evaluate your needs and wants

Knowing the difference between your needs and your wants is key to making a smart budget.

A "need" is something that is necessary, required or essential. For example, a roof over your head, clothing, food, or medication.

A "want" is something that you'd like, but don't necessarily need. For example, meals at a restaurant, a trip, a gym membership, or designer shoes.

Needs and wants aren't the same for everyone. One person's “want” may be another person's “need”. For example, if you live near a bus route, a car may be a want rather than a need. However, if you don't have access to public transit and can't cycle to work, you may need a car.

Your needs and wants may also change over time. For example, a large house may be a need while you're raising a family. However, a condo or a smaller home may be what you need when your children move out.

Once you've figured out your needs and wants, you're ready to start your budget.

How to make a budget

In order to make a useful budget you need an effective tool that is easy to use.

The Budget Planner is a tool that allows you to create a personalized budget and save it online. It gives you tips and guidelines and helps you figure out your next steps with suggestions. It also creates charts that show you where your money goes. You also have the option to compare your budget with those of other Canadians like you.

[Use the Budget Planner to make a budget.](#)

Steps to make a budget

Take the following simple steps to make your budget.

Step 1: List your income, savings and expenses

- take your recent pay stubs, bills, and account statements
- enter the amount of income, savings and expenses into each category of the Budget Planner
- if you can't find a field for a specific item, you can always add and name your own items

When you're done, review the amounts to make sure you didn't forget anything. These items should represent your current situation.

As you're entering data, the tool will give you tips to help you save more and/or spend less. Consider those tips in order to balance your budget.

When you're done creating your budget, save it online so you can return to it anywhere, at any time.

Step 2: Review your results

The results section provides you with average guidelines. These guidelines tell you what Canadians usually spend or save for each budget category, for example, food, housing, clothing, insurance, etc.

Look at the different alerts you receive for each category:

- Thumbs up: this amount is within the average range
- Warning sign: this amount is slightly above the average range
- Stop sign: this amount is above the average range

These alerts will help you determine where you should focus your attention or try to reduce costs. Everyone's situation is different and while the guidelines can't apply to everybody, they provide a good starting point.

Review your results graphics, they give you a clear visual of your overall budget. You'll see a graphic that shows you how your budget compares to those of other Canadians in similar situations. It's valuable to compare your financial habits with people with the same age, income, housing and family situation.

Step 3: Review your next steps

In the next steps section, the tool gives you personalized suggestions. These suggestions are based on your situation and what you have entered in your budget. They help you figure out your next steps whether you have money left or are overspending.

Read them carefully and follow the links to useful educational tools and content in order to improve your budget.

Tips to help you stick to your budget

Now that you have a budget, try to stick to it and improve it as you go.

To help you with this task, try the following:

- keep all your receipts and bills
- limit your spending as much as possible to what is in your budget
- Up-date your budget with any changes, for example, a pay raise, a bill increase, etc.
- compare your budget to what you actually spend at the end of each month

Evaluate your budget from time to time. If your actual spending often varies from your budget, readjust your figures to make it more realistic.

When comparing your budget to your actual spending, ask yourself the following questions:

- are there large differences between your actual spending and your budget
- which categories have the largest differences
- are differences due to an unusual situation or is this likely to happen each month
- can you save enough money to reach your financial goals or pay off your debts

Continue with this exercise each month. You can set a reminder or book time in your calendar to make sure you review your budget regularly. If you make it a habit, you are more likely to stay on track.

