

VIU Tuition Waiver Program (VIU TWP) (Questions and Answers)

Vancouver Island University (VIU) offers the VIU Tuition Waiver Program (VIU TWP) to provide support for eligible students who have lived in government care for a combined total of 12 or more months in British Columbia.

Why is VIU undertaking this initiative?

VIU is a values-based institution that embraces accessibility to post-secondary education as one of its core values. In 2013, when the Representative for Children and Youth, Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, challenged universities to offer a tuition waiver for students who grew up in the care system, VIU moved quickly to respond, taking the lead on this initiative.

Does the VIU Tuition Waiver Program (VIU TWP) have an age cap?

There is no age cap on the VIU TWP. Youth under the age of 19 are encouraged to first talk with their social worker or any Ministry of Children and Family Development worker or any delegated agency to review funding options available for youth under the age of 19.

What does the VIU Tuition Waiver Program (VIU TWP) cover?

The VIU TWP covers tuition fees towards a student's first certificate, diploma or degree program. VIU will continue to review additional funding needs of recipients each semester and determine whether other sources of funding are available.

Can students access the VIU Tuition Waiver and other funding sources at the same time?

Students can access the VIU TWP and other types of funding supports providing they have financial shortfalls, which prevent them from accessing university. For more information regarding additional funding opportunities available for youth check out www.agedout.com and/or <https://services.viu.ca/financial-aid-awards>

Must students apply for student loans before they can apply for the VIU Tuition Waiver Program?

No, students are not required to apply for student loans. They will be considered for the VIU TWP upon submitting their VIU TWP application to VIU.

What happens if students have financial shortfalls while accessing the VIU Tuition Waiver Program?

Recipients of the VIU TWP are asked to contact the VIU Financial Aid office at their campus to discuss financial supports available to assist you.

Who is eligible?

VIU offers the VIU TWP to eligible students who are BC residents, studying full- or part-time at a BC public post-secondary institution, who have lived in care for a **minimum of one year** in the British Columbia care system, and who meet at least one of the following legal statuses:

- **Adoption**
- **Continuing Custody Order with a Director**
 - *A protection order in which the court has assigned permanent custody of the child to the Director.*
- **Extended Family Plan**
 - *A parent voluntarily and temporarily places the child in the care of an adult who has an established familial, relational, or cultural connection to the child.*

- **Interim Custody Order with a Director**
 - *A protective order in which the court has assigned interim custody of the child to the Director of Child Welfare (the Director).*
- **Interim Custody Order with person other than a parent**
 - *A protection order in which the court has assigned interim custody of the child to an adult, other than a parent, who has an established familial, relational, or cultural connection to the child.*
- **Permanent Transfer of Custody Order with person other than a parent**
 - *An order in which the court permanently places the child in the custody of an adult, other than a parent, who has an established familial, relational or cultural connection to the child.*
- **Special Needs Agreement**
 - *A parent of a child with special needs may voluntarily and temporarily agree to place the child in the care of the Director.*
- **Temporary Custody Order**
 - *A protective order in which the court has assigned custody of the child to the Director on a temporary basis.*
- **Temporary Transfer of Custody Order**
 - *A protection order in which the court temporarily places the child in the custody of an adult, other than a parent, who has an established familial, relational, or cultural connection to the child.*
- **Under the Guardianship of a Director – Adoptions Act**
- **Under the Guardianship of a Director – Infants Act**
- **Voluntary Care Agreement**
 - *A parent voluntarily and temporarily places the child in the care of the Director*
- **Youth Agreement**
 - *The Director enters into an agreement with a youth (ages 16 – 19) who needs assistance to live independently and cannot be re-established with family.*

If not clear on above criteria, contact student’s former social worker or any Ministry of Children and Family Development office or any delegated agency for assistance.

Is a letter required from a Social Worker confirming student’s time in care before applying?

No, a student is not required to provide a letter confirming time in care. Applicants are required to sign an “Authorization for Release of Information” form to submit along with their VIUTWP application.

Why the focus on Youth in Care?

Programs such as the VIU TWP are a critical piece in ensuring more youth in care can go on to access post-secondary education and the myriad of opportunities it affords, including better employment options and increased self-sufficiency.

Who is VIU working with on this project?

VIU has been working closely with the Ministry of Children and Family Development, the Representative of Children and Youth, the Ministry of Advanced Education and various delegated family service authorities on this program. Discussions are ongoing with individuals and the private sector to raise funds to support this program and additional costs for students.

What has the response been like so far?

The response has been very positive and VIU continues to receive increased interest from social service agencies, foster parent networks and school divisions. VIU has currently funded over 143 students since the implementation of this program in the fall of 2013.

How would you respond to those who may be saying “Why are universities like yours providing this subsidy? Isn’t this just another form of social assistance?”

VIU views this program as an investment in the future. By supporting a student who may not otherwise be able to afford a higher education, VIU is making an investment in the economy and society.

Interested in donating to the VIU Tuition Waiver program?

Annual gifts allow Vancouver Island University to provide much needed financial assistance to students pursuing their post-secondary education. Your gift has immediate, meaningful impacts on our students and allows many to remain in school to achieve their goals. If you are interested in donating to this program, visit our Vancouver Island University Advancement and Alumni website at

www.viu.ca/giving/index.asp

Application Deadlines:

- **March 31** for the summer, fall and/or spring semester
- **October 31** for the spring and/or summer semester

Applicants will be contacted by Vancouver Island University within 4 weeks to confirm eligibility status and details of funding. VIU reserves the right to change criteria based on funding available. **Late applications** will be considered if there is room in the program indicated by applicant.

To learn more and to download an application visit:

services.viu.ca/financial-aid-awards/youth-care-tuition-waiver-program

Nanaimo Campus: 900 Fifth Street, Building 200, Room 205, Nanaimo, BC (250-740-6423)

Cowichan Campus: 2011 University Way, Duncan, BC (250-746-3509)

Parksville- Qualicum Campus: 100 Jensen Avenue East, Parksville, BC (250-248-2096)

Powell River Campus: 100-7085 Nootka Street, Powell River, BC (604-485-2878)