

**The Quality of Postsecondary Education Experienced by
Young Adults With Disabilities – Executive Summary**
*From Inclusive Postsecondary Education and Decent Work:
Effective Links for Young Adults with Disabilities*

Executive Summary

The research provides many details on the characteristics of young adults with disabilities who experience high-quality, midrange quality, and low-quality PSE. Those who are significantly more likely than others to experience high-quality PSE have needs that have been fully or largely met for various supports for learning with a disability, have not had additional expenses for education because of disability, and have never felt avoided, left out, or bullied in PSE because of disability. As well, they are more likely to study in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines, and in business and administration. Individuals most likely to experience high-quality PSE also tend to live in the prairie or the Atlantic provinces and tend to live alone or with non-family or unrelated others beyond the parental home. Those who are significantly less likely than others to experience low-quality PSE have disabilities of moderate, severe, or very severe complexity.

Those who are significantly less likely than others to experience high-quality PSE are those who live in low-income households, or have a hearing disability, or pursue studies in the broad grouping of disciplines that includes the arts and humanities, and social and behavioural sciences.

Young adults with disabilities who live with unrelated others or with extended family members beyond the parental home face an ambivalent situation: they have significantly high odds of experiencing both high-quality PSE *and* low-quality PSE and find less middle ground between these two extremes.

These findings are drawn from research Eviance recently completed in collaboration with its partners at Toronto Metropolitan University, OCADU, St. Francis Xavier University, and ARCH Disability Law Centre.

Recommendations

An aim of the project is to identify and encourage more policies and practices that increase the likelihood that young adults with disabilities will obtain both good-quality postsecondary education (PSE) *and* employment consistent with the International Labour Organization's (ILO) definition of "decent work" (ILO, 2012).

Colleges/CEGEPS/trade schools and universities should continue their efforts to ensure *all* young adults obtain the highest quality postsecondary education possible. Major progress will be achieved by ensuring that young adults who need accessible buildings, technology, learning materials, curriculum/procedures, human support, and miscellaneous other supports for disability have the supports they require for their studies. Also important, however, will be to ensure that young adults with such needs are encouraged, welcomed, and supported to participate fully in PSE and are not under-represented among students. Young adults with disabilities who are interested should be

encouraged and supported to pursue studies in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines, and in business and administration. Attention from PSE leaders, flexible academic accommodation policies, and peer-support and peer-mentoring programs will also be needed to ensure that all students, including those with disabilities, feel safe and valued as equal members of the academic community.

Those particularly in need of attention are young adults with disabilities living away from the parental home with unrelated others or with extended family members, those living on low incomes, and those with a hearing disability. Young adults studying in the arts and humanities, and social and behavioural sciences may be facing a range of difficulties. Lessons on how to ensure appropriate academic and other support for these students could be drawn from successes that are presently being realized in the prairie and Atlantic provinces to ensure students have a) all or most of the disability-related supports they require for studying at college/CEGEP/trade school or university and b) also have positive experiences of safety and inclusion as members of the academic community. Especially for students living on low incomes, difficulties obtaining disability-related supports are in many cases due to the unaffordability of the supports (Morris, Fawcett, Brisebois, & Hughes (2018). Lessons could be drawn from the experiences of both lower and higher income students who have managed to obtain the level of financing they need for their studies and students who live alone or who live beyond the parental home with others. While the support requirements of students with hearing disabilities are somewhat unique, many young adults with hearing disabilities and complex other disabilities and support requirements are studying at college/CEGEP/trade school and university. Administrators, educators, and diversity specialists in PSE should try to mine those students' experiences to learn lessons about how to effectively support young adults to succeed in PSE who d/Deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing.

See the full report for specific directions for policy and practice: *Inclusive postsecondary education and decent work: Effective links for young adults with disabilities*. The full report is available on the Toolkit page of the present website.

References

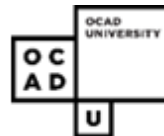
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