

HOW ONTARIO COMPARES: FUNDING, AFFORDABILITY, AND FACULTY

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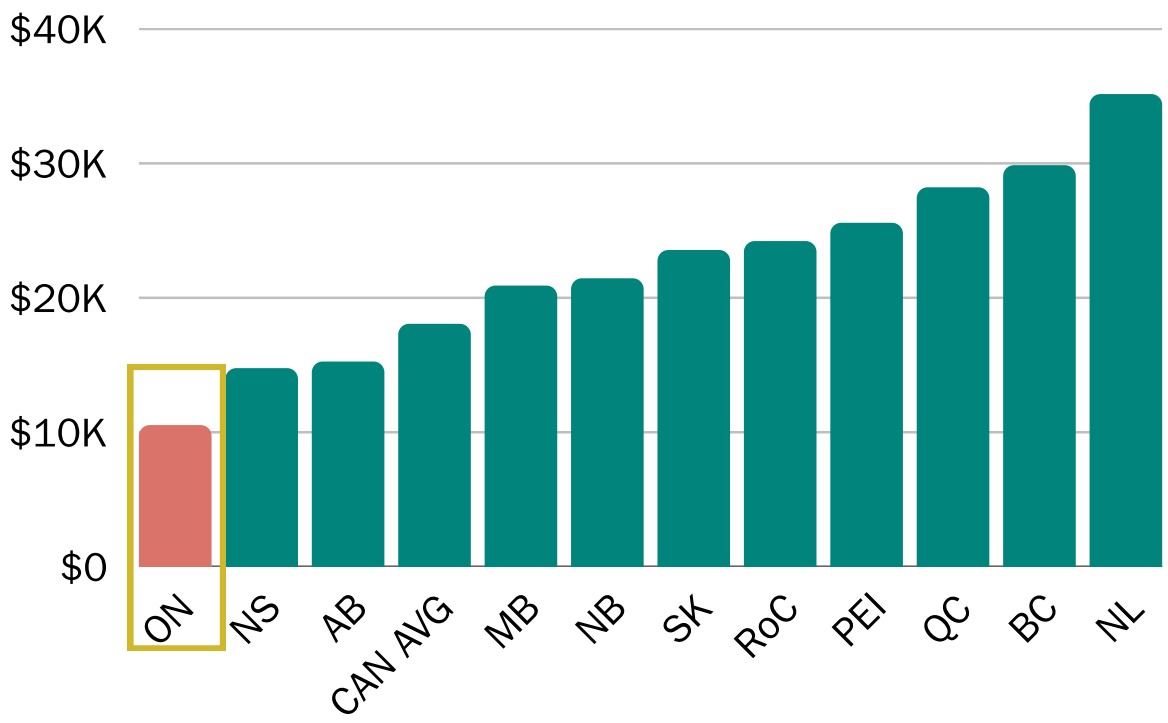
HOW ONTARIO COMPARES

In many of the most important comparative measures of university funding, affordability, and teaching complement, Ontario's universities are a clear outlier nationally. Regrettably, Ontario is an outlier because it is typically the poorest performer in key comparisons. Most prominently, this is clearly the case in provincial funding.

Ontario provided just $10,533 in total university funding per-domestic full-time equivalent student in 2024-25, the most recent year for which comprehensive data is available. This is just 43.5% of the rest-of-Canada average of $24,220. Ontario is so far entrenched in last place that it would take an additional $4,236 per domestic student in total funding for Ontario to merely become second worst.

Included here are charts displaying Ontario's comparison to the national landscape on funding, tuition, affordability, and faculty-student ratios.

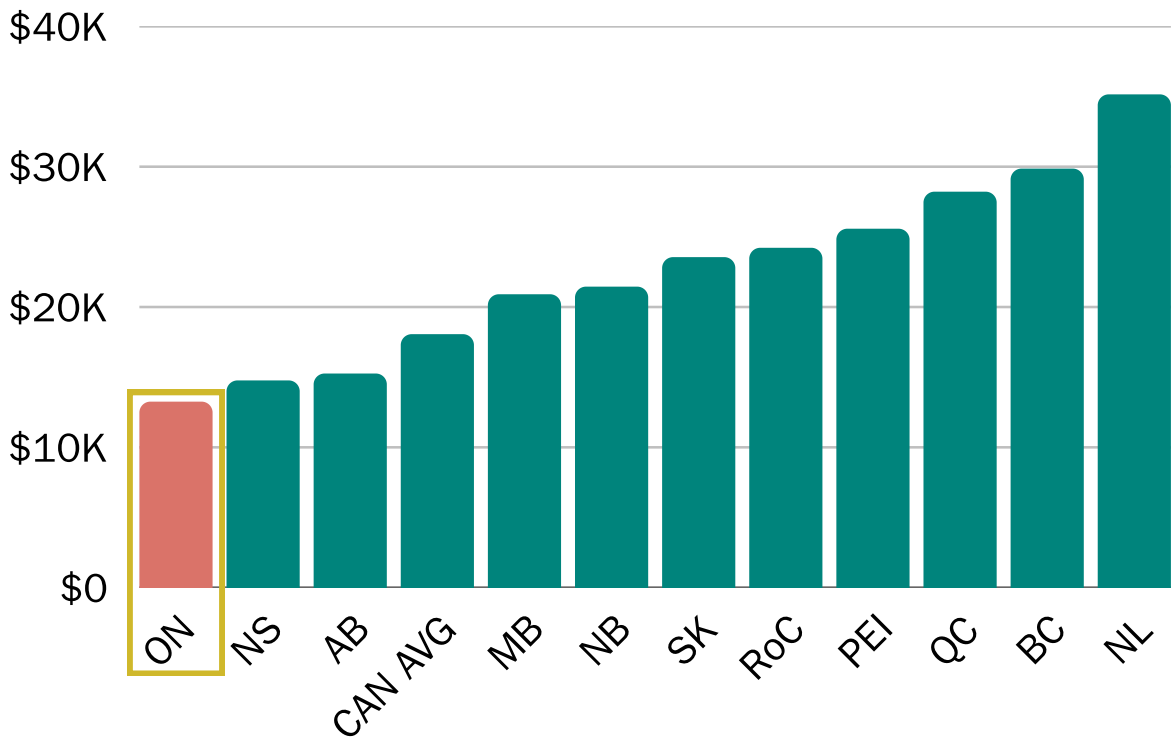
Figure 1: Total Provincial University Funding per-Domestic FTE, 2024-25[1]



The Ontario government has recently provided a new investment of $1.6 billion annually to the province's colleges and universities. According to the province, institutions on average will see a 30% operating funding increase.

While operating funding is not the only source of provincial funding, it is the largest provincial funding envelope and therefore the most important. The table below demonstrates the impact of a hypothetical 30% operating funding increase had it been applied in the 2024-25 academic year.

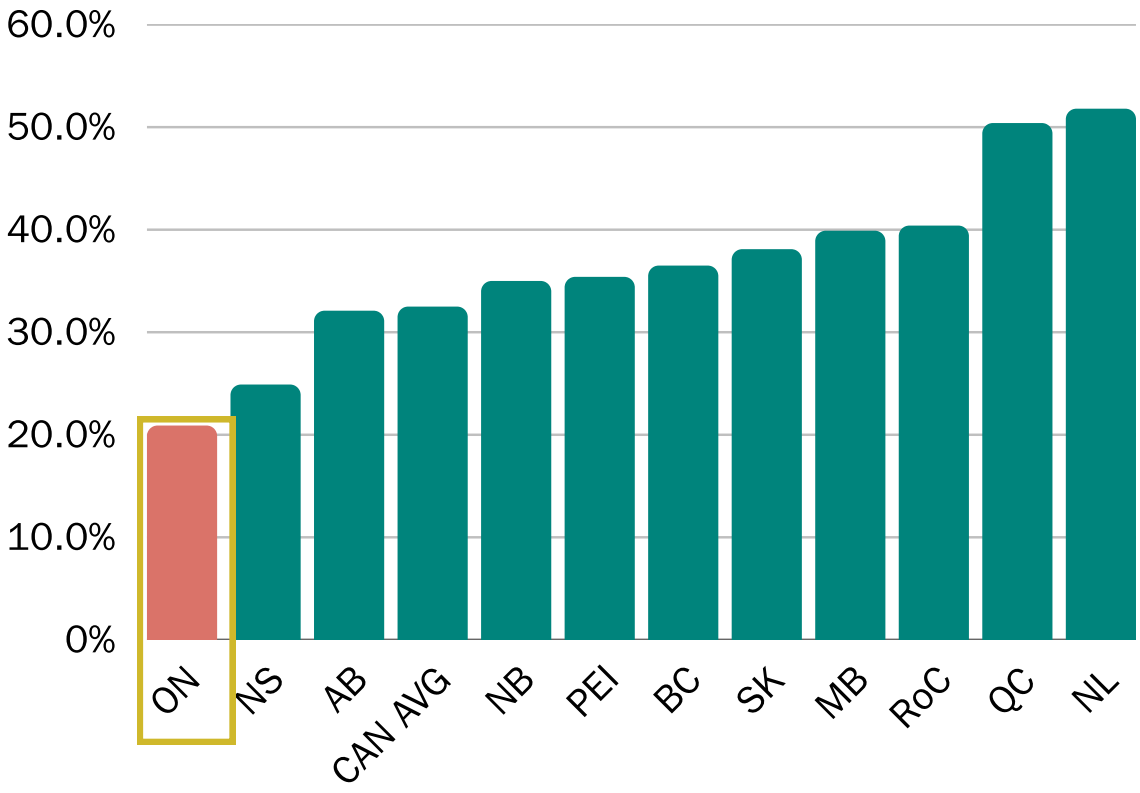
Figure 2: Total Provincial Funding per-Domestic FTE, with a 30% operating funding increase for Ontario, 2024-25[2]



Even had this 30% boost to operating funding been applied in 2024-25, Ontario's universities would have remained Canada's least funded on a per domestic student basis by over $1,500. This operating funding increase, while undeniably sizeable, would nevertheless leave Ontario's universities funded at just 54.7% of the per-domestic student provincial funding provided on average in the rest of Canada.

This low funding means that Ontario public university revenues are much less "public" than is typical nationally. Just 20.9% of Ontario university revenues came from the province in 2024-25, roughly half the rest-of-Canada average of 40.4%.

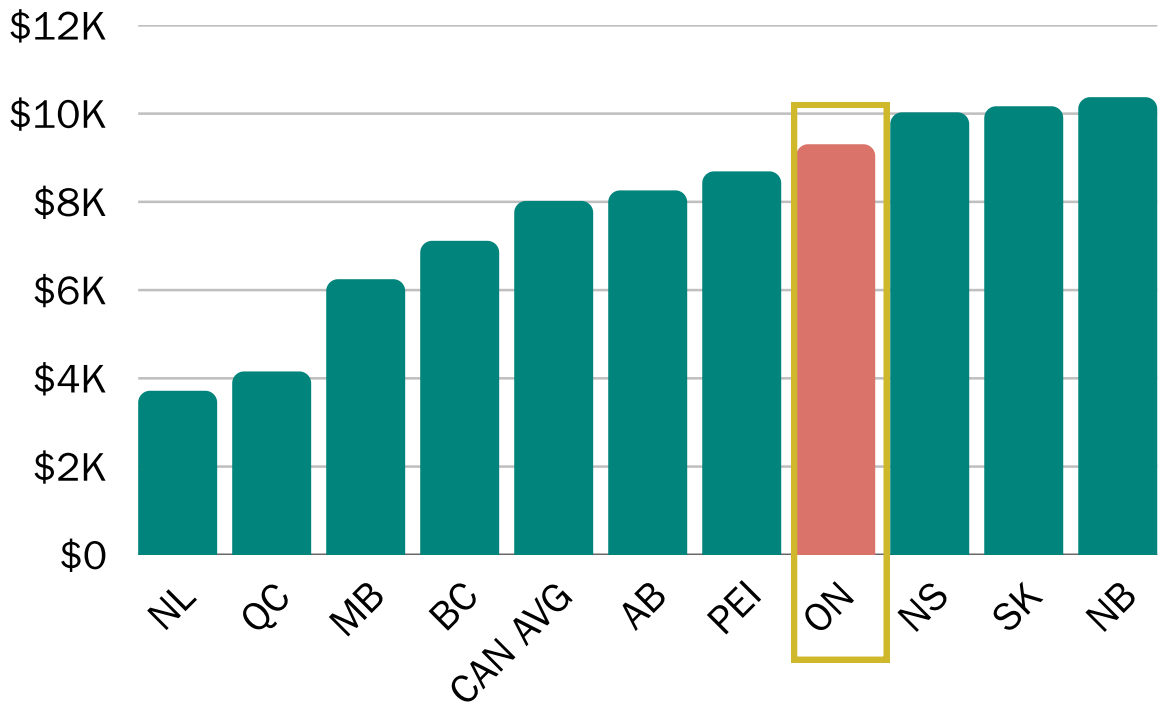
Figure 3: Provincial Revenues as a Portion of Total University Revenues, 2024-25[3]



With low provincial funding, Ontario's universities are unusually reliant on private revenues, particularly tuition dollars. Ontario possesses the highest international undergraduate tuition in Canada, at over $50,000 annually. This astronomical level of tuition is designed to make up for the revenue shortfall resulting from inadequate public funding.

However, low public funding also leaves Ontario domestic undergraduates paying comparatively high rates of tuition.

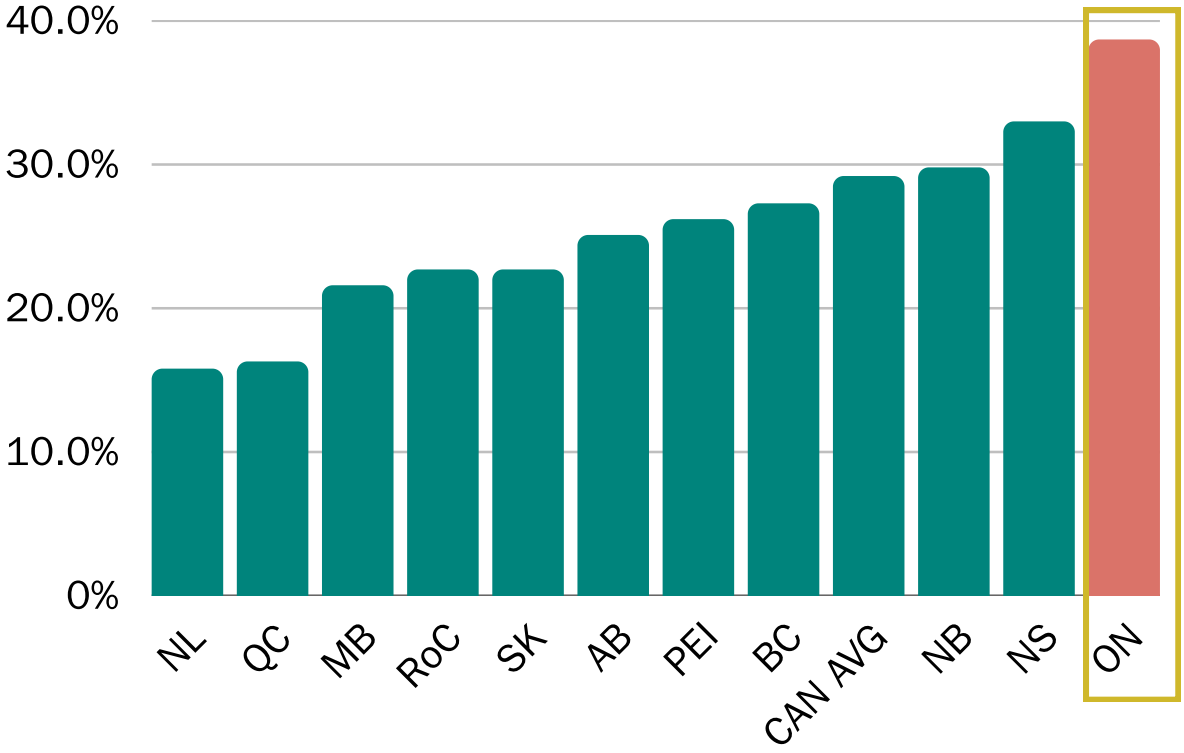
Figure 4: Average Domestic Tuition for Undergraduate Programs by Province, 2026-27[4]



Ontario's domestic university students pay an average tuition of $9,306 in the current 2026-27 academic year, nearly $1,300 more than the Canadian average. Only the provinces of New Brunswick, Saskatchewan, and Nova Scotia charge higher rates of domestic tuition. Notably, each of these provinces provides significantly more per-domestic student funding than does Ontario. In 2024-25, Saskatchewan provided over $13,000 more per domestic full-time equivalent student than did Ontario, while New Brunswick and Nova Scotia provided $11,000 and $4,000 more respectively.[5]

The comparative lack of public funding means that Ontario's universities are Canada's most tuition reliant. In 2024-25, Ontario universities relied on tuition dollars for 38.7% of their revenues. The average in the rest of Canada was just 22.7%.

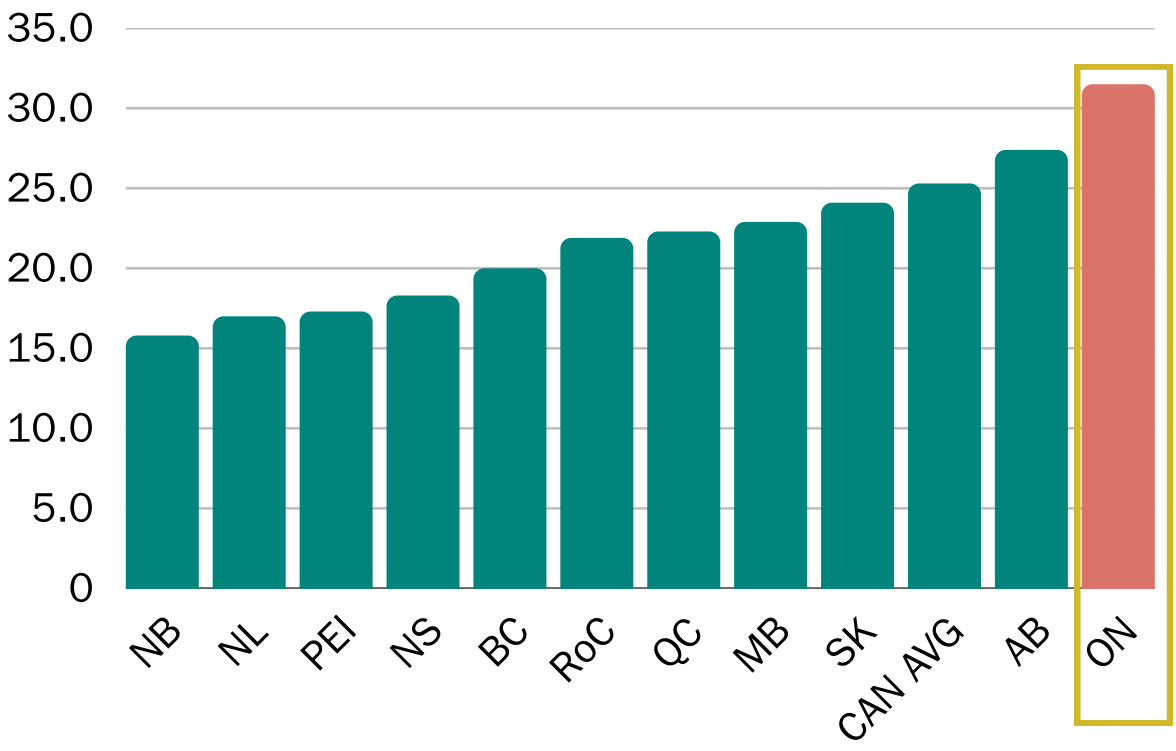
Figure 5: Tuition Revenues as a Portion of Total University Revenues by Province, 2024-25[6]



Uniquely, in Ontario tuition is the largest individual source of university revenue. This is because of comparatively low public funding.

The paucity of public funding also directly affects the education that students receive, leading to larger class sizes and fewer full-time professors per capita than elsewhere in Canada.

Figure 6: Student-Faculty Ratios by Province, 2024-25[7]



Ontario is home to Canada's worst university student-faculty ratios, with 31.5 full-time professors per student as of 2024-25 compared to the rest-of-Canada average of just 21.9. This means that students in other provinces are likely to have many more opportunities to meaningfully engage with their professors on a one-on-one basis and to be taught by full-time instructors with job security who can be expected to remain with the university throughout a student's program of study.

The data is clear: Ontario is an outlier on key measures of quality and affordability. It is time to invest in Ontario's universities to ensure that Ontario students and faculty are not put at a competitive disadvantage with their national peers.

References

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2. Ibid; Ontario Newsroom, "Ontario Investing $6.4 Billion to Support Postsecondary Sector's Long-Term Success and Sustainability," 12 February 2026: https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1007034/ontario-investing-64-billion-to-support-postsecondary-sectors-long-term-success-and-sustainability
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