

Inclusive Post-Secondary Education in Canada: A Human Rights Analysis

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Abstract

Inclusive Post-Secondary Education (IPSE) enables students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) to learn and participate alongside non-disabled peers in academic courses, campus activities, and student life. Supported by individualized accommodations and inclusive practices, IPSE promotes belonging, participation, and equitable access to higher education. This study analyzes IPSE programs across Canada using the United Nations 4A Framework for the Right to

Education (Tomasevski, 1999), which identifies four essential dimensions: availability, accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability. Together, these dimensions require education systems to provide sufficient opportunities, ensure equitable access, deliver inclusive and meaningful learning experiences, and respond to diverse learner needs. Findings show that IPSE programs exist in seven of Canada's ten provinces, with no programs identified in the territories. Alignment with the 4A Framework varies considerably across jurisdictions. Availability remains uneven, with some provinces offering multiple program options and others providing few or none. Accessibility is limited by restrictive admissions, geographic disparities, unstable funding, and inadequate

supports. Acceptability is strengthened through inclusive learning alongside non-disabled peers but weakened by the persistence of segregated programs. Adaptability varies across institutions, reflecting differences in accommodations, flexible pathways, and person-centred supports. Overall, access to IPSE remains fragmented across Canada. Advancing the right to education for students with IDD requires expanding inclusive opportunities, establishing equitable funding, eliminating segregated pathways, and ensuring consistent supports nationwide.