

What is Food Insecurity?

Food insecurity is an “inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints.” It’s a major public health issue in Canada, and impacts a higher-than-average number of university students—including many at UBC.

On UBC’s Vancouver campus:

24%

of food insecure undergrads have reduced their course load to afford tuition and living expenses

Food insecure undergraduate students’ grades are, on average,

2.5%
lower

54%

of food insecure undergrads worry about how to pay their tuition and living expenses

Food insecure students are

50%
more likely

To report a mental health condition or physical disability

13%

of food insecure undergrads may need to abandon their studies due to financial reasons



MYTH 1

Food banks have it covered

Reality: Food banks don’t address the underlying causes of food insecurity—low income and lack of affordability.

Myths about food insecurity



MYTH 2

Students just need to budget better

Reality: Students do not have much money to budget in the first place.

MYTH 3

Being a “starving student” is a rite of passage

Reality: It’s never a rite of passage to have to skip meals.

MYTH 4

University students are supported by their families

Reality: 23% of food insecure students at UBC Vancouver report no parental support for tuition and living costs.

MYTH 5

Students can support themselves with a summer job

Reality: Summer jobs often do not pay enough to cover living expenses and tuition. Food insecure undergrads are twice as dependent on student loans for income

MYTH 6

Students will get a good job after they graduate—why worry about temporary food insecurity?

Reality: Temporary food insecurity can have long-term effects. Food insecure students are more likely to have lower GPAs or to drop out, impacting their future prospects.

What can we do?

The *Wellbeing Strategic Framework* sets a target to reduce food insecurity for UBC community members by 2025. Join us in working towards this goal by:



Reducing stigma about food insecurity by talking about it.

Advocating for measures to increase affordability and income.

Encouraging leadership to participate in initiatives to reduce food insecurity.

Convening conversations to address food insecurity on campus and in the community.

