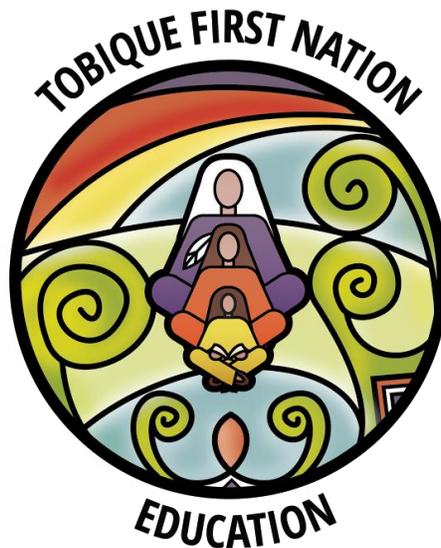


TOBIQUE FIRST NATION

Post-Secondary Education Program Policy

Local Operating Guidelines



This document has been created by the Tobique First Nation to use as local operating guidelines for the Tobique First Nation's Post-Secondary Education Program in the administration of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada's Post-Secondary Student Support Program and the University and College Preparation Program.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The following local operating guidelines are for the Tobique First Nation (TFN) Post-Secondary Education (PSE) Program in the delivery of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) Post- Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) and University and College Entrance Preparation Program (UCEP) and will be in effect as of **August 2015**. These local operating guidelines include program and eligibility information and are consistent with AANDC's National PSSP and UCEP Guidelines and inclusive of regional AANDC compliance requirements.

Note: Any issues that arise concerning the interpretation of these guidelines will be resolved by the TFN Chief and Council in accordance with AANDC National Program Guidelines.

2. OBJECTIVES

Post- Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP):

- To increase post-secondary enrollment and graduation rates for TFN members;
- To improve the employability of TFN members by providing them with funding to access education and skills development opportunities at the post-secondary and trade levels.

University and College Entrance Preparation (UCEP) Program:

- To provide financial support to eligible TFN members who are enrolled in a university and college entrance preparation program offered in a Canadian post-secondary institution, to enable them to attain the academic level required for entrance into degree and diploma credit programs.

3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

A) PSSSP

To be eligible to apply for financial assistance under the TFN PSE Program an applicant:

1. Must be a registered Status Indian of the Tobique First Nation ; and
2. Must have resided within Canada for twelve consecutive months prior to the date of application. For students attending institutions outside Canada, the residency provision applies only to their first year of studies, and;
3. Must have met University or College Entrance requirements and have been enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a recognized post-secondary education program of studies;
4. Maintain satisfactory academic standing within that institution;
5. Be at least 18 years of age.

B) UCEP

To be eligible to apply for financial assistance under the TFN PSE Program as a UCEP student; the student must:

- Be accepted for enrolment in UCEP at a Canadian post-secondary institution; or
- Qualify under the mature student admission requirements of the post-secondary institution; and
- Not have been financially supported previously by TFN PSE program. (exemptions to this condition may be made for medical reasons)
- Obtain a statement from the institution offering the program that attests the UCEP program will provide the student the necessary courses to attain the academic level for university or college entrance and the student will be eligible to be accepted as a student of a regular university or college program upon successful completion of the UCEP.

4. ELIGIBLE PROGRAMS

Under the PSSSP and UCEP program, an eligible post-secondary education program is a program of studies:

- For which the completion of secondary school studies, or the equivalent as recognized by the post-secondary institution, is required, and
- Offered by a post-secondary institution that is at least one academic year of duration (as defined by the institution); and
- Delivered at an eligible institution as defined in section 5.
- UCEP programs must provide the student with the necessary courses to attain the academic level for university or college entrance

For more information on student admissibility to a program of study, refer to New Brunswick Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour web link.

5. ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS

Eligible post-secondary institutions are degree, diploma or certificate granting institutions which are:

- Recognized by the province
- Educational institutions recognized to deliver post-secondary programs by arrangement within an eligible post-secondary institution.
- Where the institution selected by the student is not on the Annual Register of PSE Students, TFN PSE Program Manager will recommend its inclusion to AANDC's regional office for inclusion as per section 4.4 of the National Guidelines, which will

notify the Education Branch, headquarters in order to add it to the data collection instrument for reporting purposes.

A list of eligible Canadian post-secondary institutions is available on AANDC's website at CanLearn.ca . AANDC's list of eligible institutions is effective as of April 1, 2015.

6. APPLICATION PROCESS

All **first time applicants** must submit to the TFN PSE Program Manager, **no later than June 30th**, a fully completed TFN application for PSE funding which includes:

- Conditions of Agreement
- Student Information Form
- Consent and Direction form
- Student Agreement/Contract
- Application for funding

The application forms can be found in Appendix A of the TFN PSE Student Handbook.

The applicants are also required to submit the following documentation with their TFN application package:

- Copy of Native Status Card;
- Official transcripts (high school or PSE);
- Confirmation of acceptance at a recognized post-secondary institution;
- Courses/Schedule for the upcoming year;.

All **continuing students** must submit official semester transcript and schedule of courses for next semester for **Fall Semester, no later than June 30th and for Winter Semester, no later than Dec 5th.**

Some exceptions will be made for those students who cannot access official transcripts or schedule of courses by the June 30th deadline. (Specifically, those students who attend Ontario PSE Institutions)

7. FUNDING PRIORITIES AND SELECTION PROCESS

- Post-secondary student support will be provided to eligible post-secondary education students within the limits of funds provided by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC).
- All applications will be reviewed based upon a "priority funding" system established by the Tobique First Nation in congruence with AANDC National and Regional guidelines. If funding required to support eligible applicants exceeds current PSE operating budget, lower priority applications may be deferred and re-assessed for sponsorship in the next operating year.

- For non-university training programs of one to two years, students will be referred to Tobique Employment & Training and/ or the Department of Post- Secondary Education, Training, and Labour.

The TFN reserves the right to make funding application decisions based on the following priorities:

FIRST PRIORITY: Any student who is presently enrolled and has productively completed the previous term in post-secondary studies and is continuing his/her studies in the fall semester. This includes the student who completes an undergraduate degree and continues on to post-graduate studies without a break in studies. This also includes the student who completes a community college or UCEP program without a break in studies.

SECOND PRIORITY: Any eligible high school graduate, including GED graduates or mature student residing in either A) NB School District #14 or B) All other high school graduates residing outside the NB School District #14 wishing to enroll in university or a UCEP for the first time and have met the requirements for eligibility and application for admission will be a second priority.

THIRD PRIORITY: Any applicant whose application for funding has been deferred or refused due to lack of program funding in the previous year and are re-applying for support will be a third priority. Deferred students will be funded on a first come first serve basis.

If the TFN PSE budget is not exhausted after meeting the first three priorities then under the fourth priority the following applies:

FOURTH PRIORITY: All other students who meet the application and eligibility requirements in this order of priority:

- a) Returning Students who reside in TFN that left the program in good standing and have not exceeded the limits of assistance;
- b) Mature students residing in the NB School District #14 who have not received funding from the TFN PSE Program;
- c) An applicant who is returning to post-secondary studies who has previously dropped out of college or university and has not completed the previous year successfully;
- d) Part- time students.

Applications received from eligible students after the post-secondary education budget is exhausted will be deferred until the following year or until the budget for the program is reallocated. There is no guarantee of funding. All applicants will be advised in writing as to whether or not they will receive assistance.

8. LEVELS OF POST SECONDARY STUDY

Post-secondary student support is provided for three levels of post-secondary study, which are as follows:

- Level I: Community College and CEGEP certificate or diploma programs;
- Level II: Undergraduate university degree programs; and
- Level III: Post-graduate or professional degree programs, e.g., Masters and Doctorate degree programs.

9. LIMITS OF ASSISTANCE (Student months)

- a) Assistance for travel and living expenses may be provided to students to complete one program at each Level. Level 2 may include assistance for an additional degree program at the bachelor level which has a prerequisite an undergraduate degree.
- b) The duration of assistance in (a) will accord with the official length of the program as defined by the post-secondary institution in which the student is enrolled, while the student is in good standing at the institution.
- c) Students enrolled in Levels 1 and 2 may be assisted for up to one additional academic year per level if such an extension is approved in writing by the institution's dean or the head of the department. Students enrolled in Level 3 may be assisted for up to one additional academic year for medical or personal reasons.
- d) Students may be assisted in Level 1 studies after dropping out of Level 2 studies. If a student resumes Level 2 studies, the previous time spent at Level 2 will be counted for assistance purposes.
- e) Students who have completed a Level 2 program, with or without assistance from this program, are ineligible for Level 1 program assistance. Students who have completed a Level 3 program, with or without assistance from this program, are ineligible for Level 1 or Level 2 assistance.
- f) Student support will not exceed the limits set out in (b) and (c). Where students change programs within one of the levels, the academic years used from each program within each level will be counted for assistance purposes. Students who become eligible for assistance and who have previously completed a portion of post-secondary studies without assistance from this program may receive assistance for the balance of their program of studies.
- g) If the demand from eligible students exceeds the funding available, selection priority criteria will apply as listed in these guidelines

10. APPEAL PROCESS

To ensure fairness and equitable treatment under the PSSSP and the UCEP program, applicants have the right to appeal a decision of the TFN PSE Program. The student may file for an appeal to the PSE Program Manager only if the denial was not based on lack of funding;

- a) Within 14 days of the letter of denial;
- b) Be submitted by the student on his his/her own behalf;
- c) Be submitted in writing clearly stating the action or decision of concern together with the student's grounds for grievance;
- d) Present the student's own defense or alternative view.

Upon receipt of a grievance, the PSE Program Manager shall:

- a) Provide the TFN Director of Education and TFN Band Manager a copy of the grievance;
- b) Investigate the complaint with the TFN Director of Education and TFN Band Manager;
- c) Provide a Recommendation for Action/Resolution to the TFN Director of Education and TFN Band Manager based on funding availability, local operating guidelines, and National guidelines.
- d) If no agreement on recommendation, the TFN PSE Manager will submit all recommendations to Chief and Council for resolution;
- e) Provide the student with his/her findings and conclusions, in writing, within 15 working days of receipt of complaint;
- f) Keep all copies of relevant materials in the students records

Note: Notwithstanding the right to grieve, as noted above, it should be understood that such a process does not carry the authority to change the federal government's post-secondary funding policies and guidelines.

A student may not appeal to AANDC the administrative decisions and appeal rulings made by the TFN PSE Program appeal process.

- When an application is approved, rejected, or deferred, students will be informed, in writing, if their application for support was approved, or the reasons for rejecting or deferring the application (*Development of form letter required; include in handbook*)
- Where a student is convinced that the First Nations education department's guidelines are not being fairly applied to his or her situation then the student shall have access to an appeal hearing.
- There is no appeal against refusal of assistance because funds are not available.
- The appeal ruling must be consistent with the intent of the Post-Secondary Student Support Program's policy and guidelines.
- The board's decision is final.

11. ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES

a) PSSP and UCEP

Eligible expenditures for PSSSP and UCEP are:

- The actual cost of tuition and other compulsory student fees;
- Initial professional certification and examination fees;
- Books and supplies required by the student for their program of study (to a maximum of \$2000/year);
- Regional living allowances for the student, each dependent established by the Canada Student Loan Program
- The actual cost of one return trip to the student's permanent place of residence from the nearest Canadian PSE institution that offers the program of studies selected by the student, every 16 weeks (not more than two (2) trips per academic year) for the student and for each dependent;
- Tutorial, guidance and counseling services for students enrolled in PSSSP or the UCEP;
- Scholarship and incentive payments as outlined in the National Guidelines Section 6.4
- Administration costs as outlined in the National Guidelines Section 6.3

NOTE: Application and Assessment fees are no longer eligible expenditures as of April 2015

b) ELIGIBLE TUITION

Tuition support may be provided under the following conditions:

- Students attending public institutions at the normal tuition rate, including compulsory student fees charged by the institution for a Canadian student;

The TFN PSE Program will no longer be responsible for funding the following:

- Private Institutions
- Correspondence Institutions
- Training Institutions

The TFN PSE Program will only be responsible for funding individuals wishing to attend University or College in Canada and the State of Maine, provided they meet existing guidelines.

c) CANADIAN POST SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

Support will be provided for the following:

- Regular tuition fees; that is the tuition fees normally charged by the institution to Canadian students;
- Mandatory registration fees as indicated in the institution's calendar, including student activity fees and only testing fees that are mandatory;
- Transcript fees for enrollment purposes;
- Registration for other program activities e.g., practicums, tutorials and
- Initial professional certification and examination fees.
- The tuition support is calculated using the tuition registration, transcript and application fee rates published by the Canadian public institution for the applicable program of studies for the period of time for which the application is made.
- In the case of an indigenous post-secondary institution, the tuition fees will be those normally charges to students attending a comparable program at a nearby provincial institution.
- The student will provide documentary evidence of tuition, registration and mandatory student activity fees.
- Tuition support may be paid directly to the student.

d) BOOKS AND SUPPLIES

Support for books and supplies will normally cover textbooks and supplies including special equipment, officially listed as required by the university or college for a student's program of studies.

- The TFN PSE Program will provide up to \$500 for books and supplies each semester;
- An amount in excess of \$500, but not over \$2,000 may be approved if a student demonstrated need by submitting copies of the course outlines and the prices charged by the institution's bookstore or suppliers.
- Students must submit course outline and receipts for books and supplies over \$500 and the TFN PSE Program will reimburse the student.

e) TRAVEL (Currently, under Third Party Management, the TFN PSE Program cannot support any travel costs at this time)

- Travel Support Living Allowance are provided to students taking a Level 1, 2, 3, or 4 program of studies as defined in 6.2.1.
- Travel support may include public transport fares or car mileage. It does not include the removal of household effects.

- Students may select any recognized post-secondary institution for their studies. However, travel support is normally restricted to the travel costs to the Canadian post-secondary institution, which offers the selected program of studies, nearest to the student's home.
- Travel support may be provided by the institution selected by the student if one of the following conditions is met:
 - Professional accreditation is required and the required program of studies is not offered at the Canadian post-secondary institution nearest to the student's home;
 - The program of studies selected is not available to the student in Canada;
 - The student cannot gain admittance to the Canadian post-secondary institution nearest the student's home;
 - The program of studies selected is funded by the departments of Indian Studies Support Program.
- Seasonal travel is to be calculated using the most cost-effective mode of public transportation, in accordance with the rates set out in the Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada Travel Directive for government travel, taking into account the time for ground travel in relation to air travel. As between economy air fares and minimum car mileage rates; plus meals and accommodation for the journey, the lesser amount will be paid.

Note: In some cases an institution in the United States may be nearer to a student's home than a Canadian institution. If the United States' program of studies is accepted in Canada it may be cost effective and less disruptive for a student to enrol in the United States' institution.

f) LIVING EXPENSES

- The PSE Program can/ will use the rates in the Student Financial Assistance Estimator found on the CanLearn website as a guide for the administration of the program.
- The living allowances will be paid in Canadian dollars regardless of location of the institution
- Living allowances are paid for Christmas and study breaks. Additional time may be allowed for students to settle into accommodations at the place of study at the beginning of the academic year and to move out at the end of the academic year.
- The TFN PSE Program may provide to students an advance of the living allowance e.g. for rent advances: Where a student is provided an advance, the TFN PSE Program may spread the adjustment over the payment periods of the academic year and make the appropriate deductions from the living allowance for each payment period.
- Where two (2) students are married to each other, and have no dependents, the living allowance for each will be calculated as a married student with employed spouse

- Where two (2) students are married to each other and have dependents, one of them will be designated as a married student with employed spouse with dependents; the other will be designated as a married student with employed spouse.
- **Part Time Students:** as defined by the post-secondary institution being attended, may receive assistance for tuition and compulsory fees, and the actual cost of books and supplies listed as required by the institution, but they are not eligible for living allowances or travel costs.
- Students who are working full-time are eligible for tuition and compulsory fees, the actual costs of books and supplies, but are not eligible for living allowances or travel costs.

12. MONTHLY ALLOWANCE RATES

<u>Single Student</u>	\$675/month
With 1 dependent	\$1045/month
With 2 dependents	\$1205/month
With 3 dependents	\$1355/month
<u>Married Student</u> with employed spouse	\$675/month
With 1 dependent	\$950/month
\$50 /month for each additional dependent	

13. MAXIMUM AMOUNTS PAYABLE TO STUDENTS

The maximum amount payable per year allotted by AANDC to one full-time student from the TFN PSE Program for the PSSSP or UCEP is **\$12,000 per student** and covers only the eligible expenditures listed:

- The actual cost of tuition and other compulsory student fees;
- Books and required supplies (to a maximum of \$2000/yr.)
- The actual cost of one return trip to the student's permanent place of residence from the nearest Canadian PSE institution that offers the program of studies selected by the student, every 16 weeks (not more than two trips per academic year) for the student and for each dependent. **However, under Third Party Management, the TFN PSE Program cannot support travel costs at this time.**

- Students taking classes through distance education or e-learning who are required to travel to another location to complete their required exams can be eligible for travel support. However, requests for accommodations such as taking the exam in the local community under the supervision of a teacher or school principal should be first examined to minimize travel costs; and
- The living allowances established by the Canada Student Loan Program as amended from time to time.

Any amount over and above the maximum of \$12,000/student (which includes tuition and living allowances) is the responsibility of the student.

For a student in UCEP, community college or CEGEP diploma or certificate program, or an undergraduate university program, the maximum amount payable, per full-time student under PSSSP or UCEP cannot exceed \$35,000 per year. On an extraordinary and justified basis, the maximum amount payable per year per student in an advanced or professional degree program (e.g. dentistry, medicine) or a Masters or Doctoral program may exceed \$35,000 up to a maximum of \$50,000. Such awards may be granted by special request on a case by case basis only and considered when a graduate student has extraordinary circumstances that warrant the setting aside of the standard policy on maximum amounts payable. Funding for an individual graduate student above \$35,000 must be reviewed by AANDC regional office before approval is granted.

*Note: This is a maximum allowable payment per student. No student is ENTITLED to this amount. The maximum amount was established to ensure that the most extreme circumstances could be funded as necessary. **The actual amount of funding available to a student will depend on the overall amount of funding available in the TFN PSE program.***

Under the third party management, the TFN PSE Program will not cover travel expenses.

- **ADMINISTRATION COSTS**

Administration costs must not exceed 10% of the sub-total requested before administration costs. AANDC's Data Collection Instrument (DCI) will automatically calculate the amount.

Eligible administration costs include only the actual costs associated directly with administering the PSSSP/UCEP funding. Eligible expenditures could include the following costs:

- Salaries and benefits of personnel directly employed in the administration and delivery of the funding. In the case of multiple responsibilities, the portion of the salary to be included under administration costs should be proportional to the amount of time spent fulfilling PSSSP/UCEP duties;
- Material and resources required for the management of funds;

- Rent and utilities;
- Printing and communication costs;
- Travel and accommodation;
- The collection, maintenance, and reporting of data and information in accordance with the program and financial reporting requirements; and
- Costs associated with ensuring that personal information is appropriately managed and safeguarded during its collection, retention, use, disclosure, and disposal.

Note: Since the TFN PSE Program has further transferred, to a Third Party, funds that were received under the PSSSP/UCEP, the 10% allowed for administration costs are divided between the parties, as agreed to between the parties. The total administration costs retained by all parties must not exceed 10% of the sub-total amount requested before administration costs.

- **INCENTIVES**

The TFN PSE Program may provide incentives, only if funding is available, for students to engage in studies that directly contribute to First Nations achieving self-government and economic self-reliance, or to recognize academic achievement. Scholarships may be made available to a maximum of 5% of the PSSSP funded student population, as described in the next section. Eligible students may be awarded **either one** Strategic Studies Scholarship **or one** Academic Achievement Scholarship in an academic year.

- a) ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT SCHOLARSHIP**

In recognition of academic achievement, the TFN PSE Program may award scholarships to students in Level 1 and Level 2 enrolled as full-time students and who have achieved a grade average of B or higher in their program of studies:

- Students currently receiving support under the PSSSP are eligible
- The amount of the scholarship awarded by TFN PSE Program can be up to a maximum of \$1,000 per year
- Students may be eligible for the scholarship upon successful completion of each year of their program of studies, and awarded at the beginning of the next school year.
- This scholarship will be awarded upon completion of the 2014-2015 academic year.
- This incentive will be awarded annually in accordance with the official length of the program of studies as determined by the institution the student is enrolled in. It will not be awarded for the additional academic year provided for Level 1 and Level 2 students.
- Students receiving a scholarship will be determined by application and recommendation from the TFN PSE Program Manager to the TFN Director of Education and TFN Band Manager and will be awarded in a community celebration manner, if funds are available.

b) STRATEGIC STUDIES SCHOLARSHIP IN LEVEL 2

In order to encourage students to engage in studies that directly contribute to achieving self-government and economic self-reliance to the Tobique First Nation, the TFN PSE Program may offer incentive scholarships if funding is available.

- Students who are currently receiving financial support under the PSSSP and who are enrolled full-time students in a program of studies in the areas of commerce, public or business administration, physical sciences, mathematics and computer sciences, forestry and engineering are eligible for the Strategic Studies Scholarships
- The amount of the scholarships awarded by the TFN PSE Program can be up to a maximum of \$3,500 annually.
- Eligibility will be conditional upon successful completion of one year of the program of study and continuation in it. The scholarship can be awarded annually at the beginning of each year and thereafter in accordance with the length of the program as defined in the Limits of Assistance.
- The scholarship is for a full academic year commencing in September. There will be no partial awards of this scholarship.
- In accordance with the National Program Guidelines, this scholarship will not be provided for an additional year due to approved extension for medical or personal reasons. Refer to NPG 2014-15 Section 6.4.2
- This scholarship will not be provided to a student who is a current recipient of the Academic Achievement scholarship
- Students receiving this scholarship will be determined by application and recommendation from the TFN PSE Program Manager to the TFN Director of Education and TFN Band Manager and will be awarded in a community celebration manner, if funds are available.

c) INCENTIVES FOR STUDENTS ENROLLED IN LEVEL 3 OR LEVEL 4 PROGRAMS

Students enrolled as full time students in Level 3 or 4 degree programs may receive an incentive once at either level from the TFN PSE Program, to a maximum of \$1500, if funding is available. This incentive will only be provided once. Students will be eligible for this incentive upon commencement of the second year of the degree, or upon successful completion of the degree.

- See Limits of Assistance
- The PSE Program Manager can include this incentive in the calculation of level of support for a student enrolled in the second year of a Level 3 program of studies

- Students who have completed two or more years of their program of studies at Level 3 without PSSSP funding will receive the incentive upon commencement of the first year they are supported by the program. See NPG Section 6.4.3.

d) OTHER SCHOLARSHIPS RECEIVED BY STUDENTS OF THE TFN PSE PROGRAM

- Students are encouraged to apply to any and all scholarships and bursaries available to them. (Insert website or links here)
- It is the student's responsibility to provide all scholarship documentation to the TFN PSE Program Manager.
- The TFN PSE Program Manager will notify the Finance Director of any and all scholarship payments and payment schedule.
- When a student's scholarship is applied directly to the tuition cost, the TFN PSE Program will reimburse the student directly the amount of the scholarship deducted from the tuition cost.

- **FUNDING ARRANGEMENT**

As of July 2015, the TFN PSE program is currently under Third Party Management.

- **MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

The TFN is committed to ensuring that AANDC PSE PSSSP and UCEP Program Terms and Conditions, funding criteria and reporting requirements are being met, that funds are expended on the intended purposes and that TFN's accountability to membership is being met. The TFN PSE Program is also committed to being accountable to AANDC for PSSSP/UCEP funding and that all terms and conditions of the program are being met, that funds are expended on the intended purposes document and that all reporting and program compliances to AANDC are met.

The TFN PSE Program Manager is responsible for the following program monitoring activities:

- Receive and review all applications to the TFN PSE Program utilizing the Funding Priorities and Selection Criteria listed in these guidelines;
- Provide letters of acceptance or deferral to all applicants;
- Document and maintain a record of all students and deferred applicants;
- Monitor length of deferral for applicants.

- **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

The TFN PSE Program Reporting requirements are listed in the funding agreement and details on these requirements are available in AANDC's Reporting Guide. The TFN PSE Program accesses the reporting forms (Data Collection Instrument) through a password protected account with AANDC Services Portal. The confidentiality of the information will be managed in accordance with the Privacy of Information legislation. In addition, the TFN PSE Program Manager is responsible for the following reporting requirements:

- Document and maintain a student record for each applicant;
- Document and maintain a deferred student file;
- Enter all required data into AANDC's Data Collection Instrument;
- Provide updates to the TFN Education Director, TFN Finance Department and TFN Chief and Council