

TOBIQUE FIRST NATION

Student Handbook

TFN Post-Secondary Education Program

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Dear Students,

Congratulations on the next step of your educational journey! The Tobique First Nation (TFN) Education Program strongly supports the principles of life-long learning, the treaty right to education at all levels and the need for increased funding support from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) for our Post- Secondary students.

The TFN Post-Secondary Education (PSE) Program supports students through funds provided by ISC through the Post- Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) and the University and College Preparation Program (UCEPP).

This handbook is designed to inform the students of the TFN PSE Program Guidelines regarding the Post-Secondary Student Support and University & College Preparation Programs.

The handbook also includes information regarding the application process, selection process, appeal process, and student responsibilities.

If, at any time, assistance is required, please do not hesitate to contact the Post-Secondary Education office.

Sincerely,

Darrah Beaver-TFN Education Director

Richard Bernard-TFN Post-Secondary Education Program Manager

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR POST-SECONDARY STUDENT SUPPORT (PSSSP)?

In order to be eligible to apply for financial assistance under the Tobique First Nation Post-Secondary Education Program an applicant:

1. Must be a registered Status Indian of the Tobique First Nation; and
2. 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;
3. Maintain satisfactory academic standing within that institution;
4. Be at least 18 years of age.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE PREPARATION PROGRAM (UCEPP)?

To be eligible to apply for financial assistance under the TFN PSE Program as a UCEPP student; the student must meet the above conditions as well as:

- 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)

WHICH PROGRAMS OF STUDY ARE ELIGIBLE?

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 PSE program guidelines.
- UCEPP 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 at www.gnb.ca

WHICH INSTITUTIONS ARE ELIGIBLE?

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

- Recognized by the province and in Canada;
- Educational institutions recognized to deliver post-secondary programs by arrangement within an eligible post-secondary institution;
- First Nations designated and designed institutions

HOW TO APPLY - NEW STUDENTS

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

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

These forms can be found in the TFN PSE Application Package on the Tobique First Nation website at **tobiquefirstnation.ca**

The applicants are also required to submit the following documentation **with their TFN PSE 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;

HOW TO APPLY- CONTINUING STUDENTS

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 November 30th.**

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

It is recommended that applicants do not withhold their application pending receipt of the required supporting documentation (i.e. transcripts, letter of acceptance). Applications may be submitted without these documents; however, all supporting documentation must be submitted before final approval is granted. Please notify the PSE Program Manager immediately if courses/schedules and official transcripts are not available by June 30th deadline.

Upon completion of each term of the Fall/Winter, a transcript of your marks is required in order for financial assistance to continue.

All continuing students must submit official semester transcripts and schedule of courses for the Fall semester no later than JUNE 30TH and for Winter Semester, no later than NOVEMBER 30TH

All students are required to have a minimum of 12 credit hours per semester; failing to fulfill these requirements will result in loss of funding/academic dismissal.

All applicants will be assessed with respect to the TFN PSE program guidelines and funding priorities. You will be advised as to the status of your application once this process is completed.

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 Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC).
- All applications will be reviewed based upon a “priority funding” system established by the Tobique First Nation. 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 funding 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.

- (a) Tobique will consider applicants under this category up to two years after high school graduation.

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) Recent PSE graduates who wish to further their studies;
- d) 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;
- e) Part- time students.
- f) Band members who may be directed to take PSE courses to meet the needs of the community as identified by Chief and Council. For example, the training of Native teachers or trades training for the implementation of community economic development initiatives.

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.

Part time students as defined by the post-secondary institution being attended, may receive assistance for tuition and compulsory fees, and the actual costs of books and supplies listed as required by the institution, but they are **not eligible for living allowances or travel costs.**

TYPES OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE TFN PSE PROGRAM

Tuition Support

- Tuition support includes regular tuition fees normally charged by the institution to Canadian students;
- Mandatory registration fees as indicated in the institutions calendar, including mandatory student fees and mandatory testing fees;
- Registration for other program activities e.g, practicums, tutorials and initial professional certification and examination fees;
- Tuition is paid directly to the institute the student is attending.
- Tuition is paid in Canadian dollars.

Book Support

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.**

Residence and Meals

Students who choose residence and meal programs can do so. The amount of allowance will be deducted from the student's invoice for residence and meals and the remainder will go to the student. If the amount exceeds the allocated allowance amount, the student is required to cover the balance.

Tutorials

Tutoring assistance is available to all TFN students. To those students who find themselves having trouble in a given course, it is recommended that tutoring assistance be pursued. To access funding for tutoring, the following two documents must be completed and returned to the PSE Program Manager:

1. A signed letter of recommendation from your professor and;
2. An invoice for tutoring service from your tutor.

Before funds can be disbursed to cover the actual cost of tutoring, the TFN PSE Program Manager must receive both of these documents, completed and signed by the appropriate individuals. Once these documents are received, your request for tutoring assistance will be processed.

Many students tend to wait until just before final exams are upon them before they decide to seek help from a tutor. The earlier you seek help, the greater your success will be.

If you have difficulty locating a tutor, please call the PSE Program Manager for assistance.

Travel Support

- Travel support does not include moving expenses such as the removal of household effects.
- Students may select any recognized post-secondary education institution for their studies. However, travel support is restricted to the travel costs to the Canadian post-secondary institution nearest to the student's place of residence which offers the least expensive comparable program.
- Travel support may be provided to a student who selects an institution out of province or abroad if one of the following conditions is met:

- 1) The required program of study is not offered at a Canadian post-secondary institution nearest to the student's home;
- 2) The program of studies selected is not available in Canada; or
- 3) The student cannot gain admittance to the Canadian post-secondary institution nearest the student's home.

Living Allowance

- 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.
- 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.

MONTHLY ALLOWANCE RATES

<u>Single Student</u>	\$800/month
With 1 dependent	\$1180/month
With 2 dependents	\$1350/month
With 3 dependents	\$1510/month
<u>Married Student</u> with employed spouse	\$800/month

MAXIMUM AMOUNTS

The maximum amount payable per year allotted by ISC to fund one full-time student from the TFN PSE Program for the PSSSP or UCEPP has increased to better respond to rising tuition costs. The maximum has been increased to **53,000 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.)
- Application fee (one time)
- Mandatory assessment fees
- Transcript fees (one time)
- Travel (twice per year): Subject to the availability of funds

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 program.

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: Masters and Doctorate degree programs.

On an extraordinary and justified basis, the maximum amount payable per year per student in an *advanced or professional degree program (Level III) or a Master or Doctoral program* may exceed **\$53,000 up to a maximum of \$90,000**. Such awards may be granted by special request on a case by case basis and only considered when all other funding priorities have been met.

ACADEMIC DISMISSAL

If a student has failed two or more courses during any semester, the student allowance will be halted for the remainder of the semester.

If a student withdraws from courses and does not carry the required number of credits per semester to qualify as full-time student, which is **12 credit hours**, the allowance will be halted for the remainder of the semester.

It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw from classes when not attending classes/programs to avoid financial penalties; it is the student's responsibility to pay the tuition when not sponsored by the TFN PSE Program.

Students in default of obtaining funds under false pretenses or if it is found that you have been in default of the TFN PSE guidelines, could result in no

sponsoring from the PSE Program, as well any dollars owing will be forwarded to TFN Finance Department for collection.

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 student's 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 INAC 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
- 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.

DATES TO REMEMBER

- **June 30th** is the LAST day to apply for funding for the upcoming academic year;
- **June 30th** is the LAST day to submit official semester transcripts and schedule of courses for FALL semester for continued funding; (*Special consideration will be given to those students who attend Ontario PSE Institutions and others which do not allow access to schedule of courses or transcripts before the June 30th deadline.*) **Please inform the PSE Program Manager immediately if this applies to you.**
- **November 30th** is the LAST day to submit official semester transcripts and schedule of courses for WINTER semester for continued funding; Monthly allowance cheques will be deposited on the 30th of the previous month; For example, September payment will be deposited on August 30th.