



INAC Post-Secondary Education Student Support Programs

This document is prepared for First Nation communities, students, parents and others who want to learn more about the post-secondary programs available through INAC and other potential sources of student funding.

This document is for discussion purposes only and should not be used for decision-making.

For more information on INAC post-secondary programs please refer to:

- INAC *Post-Secondary Education National Program Guidelines* (2003)
- INAC *Education Programs and Services Handbook* (2005)
- Your Band or Tribal Council post-secondary education *Local Operating Policies*

These documents are available from INAC (1-800-665-9320) or your Band office.

Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP)

If you want to go to college or university, PSSSP may be the program for you.

This program provides funding support (within specific limits) for eligible students to attend eligible college or university-level certificate, diploma or degree programs at eligible post-secondary institutions.

Eligible post-secondary institutions for PSSSP and UCEP may include public, private or First Nation institutions, including courses offered as distance education or on-line.

University College Entrance Program (UCEP)

If you need specific high school courses to get into a college or university program, UCEP may be the program for you.

This program provides funding support (within specific limits) for eligible students who need pre-requisites (eg. English 12) to qualify for admission to eligible college or university-level certificate, diploma or degree programs. The pre-requisites must be taken at an eligible post-secondary institution.



Funding Amounts

INAC currently provides about \$49 million a year in post-secondary funding support to eligible Inuit and status First Nation students in British Columbia. Students apply for funding through their Bands, Tribal Councils or other designated agencies. The funding may be used to support student costs (within specific limits) for tuition, fees, books and supplies, and in some cases, living allowance and travel costs. About 3,500 students in BC receive funding support from INAC each year.



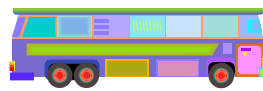
Books



Living Allowance



Supplies



Travel Home



Tuition

Part-time students may receive funding for tuition, books and supplies, while full-time students are also eligible for living allowance and some travel costs.

INAC post-secondary funding is limited and sometimes a Band or Tribal Council will not receive enough to fund every student every year, or to cover all of a student's expenses. Students should be prepared to supplement INAC funding with support from other sources and to ensure they have a back-up plan in place to prevent delays in completing their program.

Bands or Tribal Councils also have *Local Operating Policies* guidelines, listing additional guidelines to the ones provided by INAC. These guidelines might include maximum amounts for expenses that are lower than the maximums provided by INAC. (This is sometimes done to increase the number of students that can receive support.)

Eligibility Guidelines

For a student to be eligible to apply for INAC funding, they must meet criteria in three areas:



**Be an
Eligible
Student**

+



**Attend a
Eligible
Institution**

+



**Enroll in a
Eligible
Program**



Student Eligibility

Students must meet all of the following criteria to be eligible for funding:

- Status (“registered”) Indian or qualifying Inuit **AND**
- Resident of Canada for at least 12 consecutive months prior to application **AND**
- Accepted into an eligible program at an eligible institution **AND**
- Maintain satisfactory academic standing (this generally means good attendance and a passing grade.)

Institution Eligibility

In order to be eligible for funding, a student must attend an eligible program at a school that is either:

- A public institution (eg. University of British Columbia, Douglas College etc.) **OR**
- An eligible private institution **OR**
- An institution that delivers their program through an agreement with an eligible institution. (For example, a First Nation community-based institution may offer a university program on-reserve through an agreement with an eligible college or university.)

Program Eligibility

Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP)

A student must attend an eligible program that meets all of the following criteria to be eligible for funding:

- Be at least one academic year in length (or equivalent for part-time students.) Most eligible programs are at least 8 months long, although some intensive programs as short as 4 months are eligible **AND**
- Require completion of grade 12 (or equivalent, as defined by the school) for admission **AND**
- Be offered at an eligible post-secondary institution (see above).

Post-secondary programs vary, even within the same area of study, and careful research is often required to confirm eligibility. For example, some trades programs are eligible while others are not.



University College Entrance Preparation (UCEP)

A student must attend a program that meets all of the following criteria in order to be eligible for funding:

- Be a maximum of one academic year in length (or equivalent for part-time students) **AND**
- Provide specific courses required for admission to an eligible post-secondary program (eg. English 12, Math 11 and Chemistry 11 to get into a nursing program at a community college) **AND**
- Be offered at an eligible post-secondary institution (see above).

Student Loans, Scholarships and Bursaries

Student loans are available from the federal and provincial governments. In many cases, students who qualify for loans also qualify for special grants or bursaries, which do not need to be paid back.

Useful websites for post-secondary student funding:

www.aboriginallearning.ca for student funding and resource supports for housing, transportation, childcare, scholarships, loans, grants, bursaries

<http://sdiproduct1.inac.gc.ca/abs/main.asp?lang=E> (INAC) for a searchable list of scholarships and bursaries specific to Aboriginal persons

www.studentaidbc.ca (BC Ministry of Advanced Education) for student loans, scholarship and grants, including for students with disabilities and for adult students taking high school courses (Adult Basic Education - ABE)

www.bccampus.ca for financial aid, education planning, course search, applications and discussion boards on housing and transportation

www.studentawards.com for bursaries and scholarships

www.canlearn.ca for loans and to search for schools and programs

www.schoolfinder.com for scholarships searchable by school and area of study

www.naaf.ca (National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation) for scholarships/ grants

www.newrelationshiptrust.ca for scholarships/ student employment subsidies

www.fnesc.ca (First Nations Education Steering Committee) for scholarships, youth and student employment programs (offered through Bands)



You may also wish to contact the Aboriginal Advisor(s) at the institution you plan to attend in order to receive updated and detailed information on funding sources, including those specific to the school. Many school websites also provide scholarship and bursary information online.

Apply for every award you can – including those not specific to Aboriginal students!

Education Planning

Plan Your Education (with help from your Band Education Coordinator and the Aboriginal Advisor at your school)

- 1) Find an area of study that interests you
- 2) Find a program that will prepare you for a career/ employment
- 3) Find an institution that offers helpful support
- 4) Apply (perhaps to more than one school)
- 5) Apply for any potential funding source, including INAC funding from your Band, and back-up funding such as a student loan (6 months to 1 year prior to planned start date)
- 6) Ensure you know the limits of each type of funding, including the INAC guidelines and those of your Band
- 7) Ensure you provide all required documentation
- 8) Apply for available grants, scholarships and bursaries (including any scholarships or incentives offered by your Band) (deadlines are usually in the spring for fall or winter entry)
- 9) Maintain your academic standing
- 10) Don't be afraid to ask for help – from school advisors, tutors, professors, Elders, Education Coordinators, and your family!

