
First Nations Post-Secondary Education Handbook for the BC Region

With Reference to the National Post-Secondary Education Program Guidelines

Prepared by the First Nations Education Steering Committee
with Input from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, BC Region



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Introduction

The First Nations Education Steering Committee and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) British Columbia Region have combined efforts to develop this *First Nations Post-Secondary Education Handbook* for use in the administration of the Post-Secondary Education Program in British Columbia.

Although the Post-Secondary Education program consists of three components this handbook focuses on the two programs supporting students:

- 1. Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP)**
- 2. University College Entrance Preparation (UCEP) program**

The third component, the Indian Studies Support Program (ISSP) is not covered in detail in this handbook as extensive documentation already exists.

This Handbook provides:

- summaries and explanations for both the PSSSP and UCEP programs
- checklists and tips for program administration and file maintenance
- a collection of sample Local Policy wording which has generously been contributed by several First Nations

Background

The *Post-Secondary Education National Program Guidelines (2003)* outline the details of the INAC Post-Secondary Education Program, which includes the following components.

The Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP)

The purpose of PSSSP is to provide financial support to allow eligible First Nations and Inuit students to pursue higher education. PSSSP funding is intended to help First Nation students obtain certificates, diplomas, undergraduate degrees, and advanced degrees. The PSSSP allows financial support for tuition, compulsory student fees, required books, incentives, and assistance for travel and living expenses.

University and College Entrance Preparation (UCEP) Programs

The purpose of UCEP is to provide financial support to eligible First Nation and Inuit students to enable them to attain the academic level required **for entrance** into a certificate, diploma, or degree program. The UCEP allows financial support for tuition, compulsory student fees, required books, and assistance for travel and living expenses. There is a one-year limit to UCEP funding.

Indian Studies Support Program (ISSP)

ISSP funding is available to assist with the development and delivery of post-secondary education programs for First Nation students. In BC, the INAC ISSP funding is allocated through an annual proposal process. Because extensive documentation already exists related to ISSP funding requirements, the ISSP program is not discussed in this Handbook. Anyone requiring more information about the ISSP program can visit www.fnesc.ca, www.ainc-inac.gc.ca (programs and services, education) or call the ISSP office at (604) 925 – 6087.

Copies of the *Post-Secondary Education National Program Guidelines* are available in the *Education Programs and Services Handbook*¹ distributed by INAC or by calling (604) 775-8142.

¹ A new version of the Handbook will be available Spring 2005.

Handbook Purpose

FNESC and INAC BC Region have developed this Handbook to provide an overview of the INAC *Post-Secondary Education National Program Guidelines* and to outline some of the documentation that may be required during a Compliance Review.

This document is not intended to direct the activities of First Nations in matters of educational policy or process. It is also not intended to anticipate all of the information or data that will be requested by INAC during a Compliance Review. Rather, the document is intended as a planning and evaluation tool, with the goal of helping First Nations to improve their ability to maintain effective post-secondary education records and to respond to Compliance Review requirements.

Document Overview

- ✓ Sections 1 through 5 make note of key sections of the National Program Guidelines, provide further clarification and note what documentation is required or recommended for each area of the guidelines.
- ✓ Section 6 summarizes the information that should be included in student files for the purposes of both effective program management and preparation for a compliance review.
- ✓ Section 7 offers a number of suggestions for the establishment of local post-secondary policies that are consistent with the National Program Guidelines.
- ✓ Section 8 provides an exercise to assist First Nations in reviewing all of the information included in the Handbook and ensuring that they are fully prepared for a compliance review.
- ✓ Sections 9 and 10 provide short checklists summarizing some of the components of individual student files and appeals processes.
- ✓ Appendix 1 provides a list of public post-secondary Institutes in BC.
- ✓ Appendix 2 is a Frequently Asked Questions section. Anyone with a question that is not included in Appendix 3 is welcome to contact INAC or FNESC, as described below.

- ✓ Appendix 3 includes a variety of sample post-secondary policies that have been generously shared by First Nations throughout BC. The samples are provided for **ideas only**. It is expected that First Nations will revise the samples as necessary to reflect their own priorities and circumstances.

If you have any questions, comments or best practices to share, please direct them to INAC or FNEC. We would be pleased to include your ideas in future versions of this Handbook.

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SECTION 1: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

1.1 Overview

- The Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) *Post-Secondary Education National Program Guidelines* were written in November 2003, but came into effect September 1, 2004. In this Handbook, they are referred to as the 2003 National Program Guidelines or simply the National Program Guidelines.
- The National Program Guidelines outline **maximum** time limits and funding amounts for post-secondary financial support.
- First Nations and other Administering Authorities **do not** have to fund students to the maximum allowances outlined in the National Program Guidelines. However, they **cannot** exceed maximum allowances or study period time limits.
- The National Program Guidelines also outline **minimum** eligibility requirements related to *students, institutions, and programs of study*. First Nations may choose to apply additional eligibility requirements, but the minimum requirements set out in the National Program Guidelines **must** be met.
- First Nations' Local Operating Policies may need to be created or updated to reflect the National Program Guidelines. The National Program Guidelines **require** local guidelines for three items: selection criteria, appeals process, and emergency contingency funding. A Local Operating Policy can incorporate other issues that reflect the priorities of each First Nation. Suggestions for the establishment of a Local Operating Policy are included throughout this Handbook.

NOTE – THE 2003 NATIONAL POST-SECONDARY PROGRAM GUIDELINES ARE NOT SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT FROM THE 1989 GUIDELINES.

The major changes in the new 2003 National Program Guidelines include the following.

- ✓ **Maximum** allowable living allowance amounts, which are consistent with the Canada Student Loan program
- ✓ A stipulation related to allowable travel costs to the nearest post-secondary institution
- ✓ **Enforcement** of a one year time limit on UCEP funding
- ✓ Required on-site program compliance reviews

1.2 Compliance Reviews

National requirements dictate that INAC BC Region must review at least 20% of the province's First Nations/Administering Authorities each year. This means that Administering Authorities can expect a review at least once every 5 years.

During a compliance review, INAC auditors will review the following information.

- ✓ Student files, to ensure that the National Program Guidelines are being followed
- ✓ Local policies, procedures, and appeal policies, to ensure that they are consistent with the National Program Guidelines
- ✓ Financial records, including all payments to and on behalf of each student
- ✓ The documentation used to support all decisions made

At the time of printing, a schedule had not yet been established for reviews in the BC region.

First Nations will be notified two weeks in advance of a compliance review visit.

FNESC and INAC BC Region have prepared this Handbook to assist First Nations in preparing for a compliance review well in advance of the two-week notification. Such preparations include a self-review of all records and files to ensure that the required documentation is in place, and a self-review and possible revisions to local policies to ensure that they are consistent with national requirements.

1.3 A Word About Terminology

Unless otherwise specified, in this Handbook references to the **National Program Guidelines** are to the November 2003 version of the INAC Post-Secondary Education guidelines – i.e. those that came into effect in September 2004.

Wording from the National Program Guidelines is highlighted in italics for easy reference.

This Handbook refers to **First Nations and/or Administering Authorities** as the organizations that have responsibility for allocating the funding provided by INAC for post-secondary students. In most cases, First Nations are responsible for the administration of the post-secondary program. In a few cases, the management of the post-secondary program may be delegated to another First Nation organization, such as a

Tribal Council. Unless otherwise noted, the information outlined in this Handbook applies to any organization that administers the post-secondary education funding provided by INAC.

The term **Local Operating Policy** refers to the policies and procedures created by First Nations or Administering Authorities for the administration of the post-secondary program at the community level. Local Operating Policies must be consistent with the National Program Guidelines. However, the National Program Guidelines do allow some flexibility so that Local Operating Policies can reflect community needs and priorities. The areas of flexibility are described throughout this document.

For more information about Local Operating Policies, see Section 4 of this Handbook.

1.4 Other Definitions

In the National Program Guidelines, the term **Post-Secondary Institutes** refers to institutions that offer higher education programs, including certificate, diploma, and degree programs. In British Columbia, there are 26 public post-secondary institutions, including 6 universities offering undergraduate, graduate and professional programs; 4 university colleges offering selected bachelor degree, career/technical, vocational and adult upgrading programs; 11 colleges offering academic, career/technical, vocational and adult basic upgrading programs; and 5 institutions which specialize in technologies, trades, art and design, law enforcement and Indigenous studies. In addition, there are a number of private post-secondary institutes, as well as a number of post-secondary institutes that are controlled by First Nations (see below).

For a definition of eligible post-secondary institutes, see Section 2.

Throughout BC, there are numerous **First Nations Post-Secondary Institutes** that are controlled by First Nations. These institutes were created to promote greater access to post-secondary education for First Nations students who want to study near their communities, and to promote the inclusion of language and culture in post-secondary programs. To be considered an eligible institution or program for PSSSP funding purposes, the First Nations Post-Secondary Institutes must be affiliated with a public institution or registered with the province as a private trainer.

For more information on eligible institutions and programs see Section 2.2 and 2.3 of this Handbook.

Throughout this Handbook and the National Program Guidelines, reference is made to **full-time and part-time students**. A full-time student is a student who is taking at least a 60% course load as outlined by the program of study at the post-secondary institution. A part-time student is someone who is taking less than a 60% course load. For example, generally a full-time university program is 5 courses (or a total of 15 credits). Therefore, 60% of 5 courses would be 3 courses (or a total of 9 credits), so a student in a university program taking 3 courses per semester would be considered full-time.² But if the student was taking a business administration diploma program, which requires students to carry 8 courses per semester, then the student must be taking 5 courses (60% of 8 courses) to be considered a full-time student. A part-time student is anyone taking at least one course to a maximum of 59% of a full course load as outlined by the program.

Distance delivery refers to courses offered by a post-secondary institution via the internet, video conferencing, and/or self-study. Courses taken by distance delivery through eligible institutions and programs are eligible for PSSP funding.

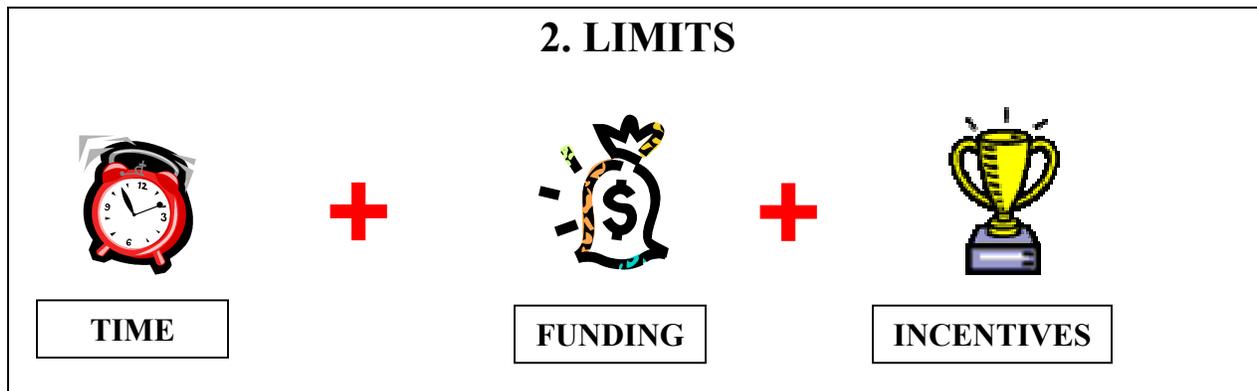
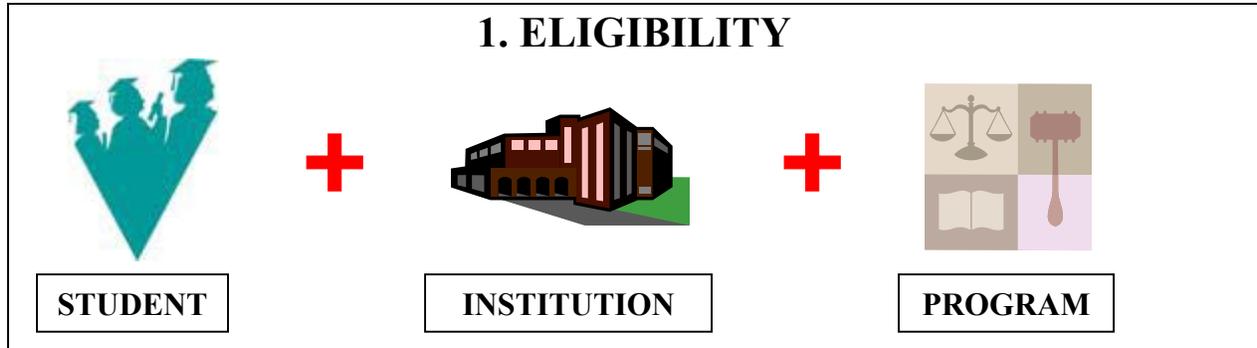
The term **academic year** refers to the period of study as defined by the post-secondary institution. An academic year for most university programs is 8 months in length (September to April). Technical programs, such as office administration, may be 10 months in length. Some programs may be shorter in length. PSSSP funding cannot be used for short training programs such as Residential Care Aide, as this training program may only be 24 weeks in length, which is not considered a full academic year by post-secondary institutes.

The key is that the *institution* defines if a program is a full academic year.

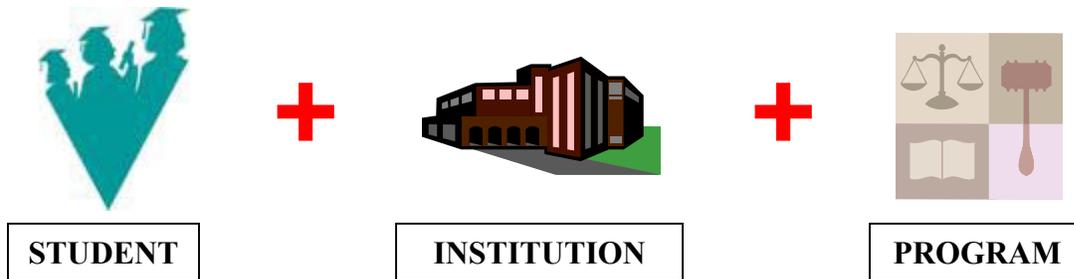
² Courses may range in number of credits.

1.5 Overview

Post-Secondary Education National Program Guidelines – AT A GLANCE



SECTION 2: ELIGIBILITY



First Nations and other Administering Authorities must demonstrate that they are reflecting INAC eligibility requirements related to the student, institution, and program of study.

2.1 Student Eligibility



2.1.1 Student Eligibility – National Program Guidelines Section 3.2

*All **students** who are funded with INAC post-secondary education funding must meet the eligibility requirements outlined in the National Program Guidelines.*

To be eligible, a post-secondary education student must:

- a) be a registered Indian or Inuit person;*
- b) be resident in Canada for 12 consecutive months prior to application (for students studying outside of Canada, this residency requirement only applies in the first year of study);*
- c) be accepted by an eligible post-secondary institution;*
- d) be accepted into an eligible program of study (i.e. certificate, diploma, degree, or University College Entrance Preparation (UCEP)); and*
- e) maintain continued academic standing with the institution.*



Students must be accepted into an eligible program of study (that is a Certificate, Diploma, Degree or UCEP program)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Each student file must include information indicating the student’s program of study.✓ The acceptance letter (see above) should indicate acceptance into the post-secondary institution as well as the program name.✓ For a definition of eligible programs, see Section 2.3.✓ For a definition of diploma, certificate and degree, see Section 2.3.✓ For UCEP qualifications, see Section 2.3.
Students must maintain continued academic standing with the institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ “Continued academic standing” does not mean that students must pass every course every term. If the Institution allows the student to continue in the program, the student is considered in “good standing” or “continued academic standing.”✓ A copy of the student’s transcript showing the student’s marks must be kept on file (mid-term and final marks). <p>Note: STOP FUNDING</p> <p>You must stop funding students who are not allowed to continue their program of study. Those students would be considered not in ‘good standing.’ Before this happens, discuss with the students how they plan to finish their studies if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- they are failing and may not complete their program at all; and/or- they are failing and may exceed the time limits for funding before completing their program (see Section 3).

2.2 Eligible Institutions



2.2.1 Eligible Institutions – National Program Guidelines Section 3.3

In addition to student eligibility, First Nations and other Administering Authorities must also ensure that students are attending eligible post-secondary institutions, as defined by the National Program Guidelines.



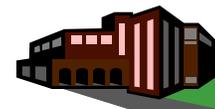
Eligible Institutions are:

- a) *post-secondary institutions that grant certificates, diplomas and/or degrees; and are either*
- b) *recognized as eligible by the province/territory. (In BC, eligible programs are those outlined in the Canada Student Loan program.)*
- c) *First Nations educational institutions affiliated with or delivering post-secondary programs by arrangement with an eligible public post-secondary institution.*

2.2.2 Eligible Institutions – Detailed Information and Required Documentation

Each student file should contain documentation demonstrating that the student is attending an eligible institution. More details about the eligibility requirements and the information to be kept is outlined below.

<p>Eligible institutions grant certificates, diplomas, and/or degrees.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Certificates are awarded to students who successfully complete the required course work for programs that can be completed in one academic year of full-time study. (please note one academic year is defined by the institution and does not necessarily mean a full 12 month program) ✓ Diplomas are awarded to students who successfully complete the required course work for programs that can be completed in 2 or more academic years of full-time study. ✓ Degree means recognition or implied recognition of academic achievement that (a) is specified in writing to be an associate, baccalaureate, masters, doctoral or similar degree, and (b) is not a degree in theology. ✓ Each student file should contain documentation stating the institute in which the student is enrolled. In most cases, the documentation kept to demonstrate student eligibility, such as the acceptance letter and transcripts, will fulfill this requirement.
<p>An eligible institute is recognized by the Province or Territory</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Post-Secondary institutions that are designated for Canada Student Loans purposes are considered eligible. ✓ Confirmation of eligible institutions can be obtained from the Canada Student Loans website at: www.aved.gov.bc.ca/studentservices/welcome.htm (Designated Schools tab)



<p>Public post-secondary institutions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Public post-secondary institutions are considered to be recognized by the province or territory. ✓ A public institution: receives a significant amount of its regular and ongoing operating funds from a government for the purpose of providing post-secondary education; and is governed by a body where the majority of its members are appointed by government officials. ✓ A list of the public post-secondary institutions in British Columbia (as of January 2005) is included in Appendix 1.
<p>Private post-secondary institutions and private training institutions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Private post-secondary institutions are considered to be eligible institutions if they are registered with the province or territory's registration agency. ✓ A private institution is registered and has been given, under provincial or territorial legislation, the right to operate as a business for the purpose of offering private post-secondary training programs. In BC, the registration is with the Private Career Training Institutions Agency (PCTIA). ✓ Check the Canada Student Loan Program web site for designated schools (www.bcsap.bc.ca under the Designated School Lookup tab)
<p>Educational institutions affiliated with, or delivering post-secondary programs by arrangement with an eligible post-secondary institution, are eligible institutions for that specific program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A private or First Nations institution that is affiliated with or delivering a program by arrangement with a degree-granting educational institution is eligible. ✓ Affiliation is typically limited to a specific program or a number of specific programs. It is important to identify the program (or programs) for which the affiliation or arrangement has been established, as only that specific program (or specific programs) is eligible. ✓ Proof of affiliation is required for those post-secondary institutions affiliated with, or delivering a post-secondary program by arrangement with a public post-secondary institution that qualifies for a Canada Student Loan. If the post-secondary institution delivering the program is not listed in the "designated schools list" (see above), then a copy of the agreement between the institutions must be included for verification in the student file.
<p>Institutions outside of British Columbia</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To determine the eligibility of post-secondary institutions outside of BC, contact INAC BC Region at the contact address noted on page 5 of this Handbook.



2.3 Program Eligibility

2.3.1 Post-Secondary Program Eligibility – National Program Guidelines

Students must also be enrolled in a program of study that is eligible according to INAC requirements. Eligible programs include both post-secondary programs and University College Entrance Preparation Programs (UCEP).

A. Eligible Post-Secondary Education programs: *NPG Section 3.1*

- a) are offered by an eligible post-secondary institution (see Section 2.2 above);*
- b) are at least one academic year in length, as defined by the institution (for part-time students, programs must be the equivalent of one academic year); and*
- c) have entrance requirements that include completion of secondary school studies, or its equivalent, as recognized by the post-secondary institution.*

Note: requirement ‘c’ does not necessarily mean grade 12 graduation. For example, the entrance requirements for vocational training, such as Early Childhood Education, are completion of English 12 and an acceptable assessment of math skills. Grade 12 graduation is not required. Students must meet the **program** prerequisites.

2.3.2 Post-Secondary Program Eligibility – Detailed Information and Required Documentation

Each student file should contain documentation demonstrating that the student is enrolled in an eligible program. More details about the eligibility requirements and the information to be kept is outlined below.

Offered by a post-secondary institute	✓ See Section 2.2 above for definitions of eligible post-secondary institutes.
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<p>Includes at least one academic year, as defined by the institution</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The “one-year” is an academic year. That is not necessarily a calendar year. For example, a University academic year is usually 8 months. ✓ Confirmation is required that the program of study is at least one academic year in length. ✓ The academic year is defined by the Institution. If you have questions about whether a course is one academic year, ask the Institution to provide a letter outlining the length of the course (in academic years) to keep in the student’s file.
<p>For part-time students, the equivalent of one academic year</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ This requirement means that the program would take one academic year if the student were attending full time, rather than over more than one year on a part-time basis. For example, if the student is taking an Early Childhood Education program that runs for 10 months (September to June) on a part time basis at the rate of 4 courses per semester (rather than the full-time 8 courses per semester), it will take the student 2 years to complete the one year program. The student can be funded, therefore, for two years on a part-time basis. ✓ Confirmation is required that the program of study is the equivalent of at least one full-time academic year in length, so keep relevant documentation in the student files. ✓ Note: Part-time students are not eligible for living allowance or travel allowance.

2.3.3 UCEP Program Eligibility – National Program Guidelines

B. Eligible UCEP programs:

NPG Section 5.2.1

- a) *provide the prerequisites and/or supporting courses for students to attain the academic level required for entrance into a college or university program;*
- b) *may include Adult Basic Education (ABE) courses (not Ministry of Education K – 12 courses); and*
- c) *must be offered in a Canadian post-secondary institution.*

C. UCEP Requirements:

1. *A statement from the post-secondary institute offering the program which attests that:*



- a. *the UCEP program will provide the student with the necessary courses to attain the academic level for college or university entrance, and*
 - b. *the student will be eligible to be accepted into a regular college or university credit program upon successful completion of the UCEP courses.*
2. *Financial support for the second term UCEP will be subject to receipt of a statement from the institution confirming the successful completion of the first term.*

2.3.4 UCEP Program Eligibility – Detailed Information and Required Documentation

More details about UCEP eligibility requirements and the information to be kept is outlined below.

<p>Provides the necessary courses to attain the academic level for college or university entrance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Students DO NOT need to complete a grade 12 graduation through UCEP. ✓ Students DO need to complete the prerequisite courses for entrance into a post-secondary program of study. ✓ Each student file should contain a letter or statement from the post-secondary institution offering the program stating that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the UCEP program will provide the student with the courses required for entrance into college or university; and ii. the student will be eligible for acceptance into a regular college or university credit program upon successful completion of the UCEP program. ✓ Financial support for second term UCEP will be subject to receipt of a statement from the institution confirming the successful completion of the first term. ✓ A copy of that statement must be kept in the student file.
<p>May include Adult Basic Education (ABE)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Post-secondary institutions are approved to use Adult Basic Education (ABE) courses for delivering secondary (high school) courses to students. That means that ABE courses can be included in a student’s UCEP program.

SECTION 3: LIMITS



INAC requirements include limits on the time allowed for each type of program, as well as limits on funding levels and incentives.

3.1 Time Limits



The INAC National Program Guidelines establish limits on the length of time that students may be funded, depending upon the type of program in which they are enrolled.

3.1.1 Time Limits – National Program Guidelines

A. UCEP Time Limits

NPG Section 5.2.1

*According to INAC guidelines, students may be funded for a **maximum** of one academic year (as defined by the institution).*

Note: According to the new National Program Guidelines, UCEP funding is limited to one year. However, continuing UCEP students (those who were registered in a UCEP program prior to September 1, 2004) may be funded to complete their program, even if it is more than one year in length.

B. PSSSP Time Limits

NPG Section 5.1.2

According to the National Program Guidelines, there are no time limits for funding of tuition, compulsory student fees, and required books.

*However, the National Program Guidelines note **three levels** of post-secondary programming for the purpose of defining time limits for funding of living allowances, travel, incentives, tutoring, and counselling. To be considered for continued support*



under any of these levels, a student must be in academic good standing with the post-secondary institute.

Level 1: Community College Certificate or Diploma Program

- a) Students may receive financial assistance to complete a maximum of **one** program at Level 1, the length of which is defined by the institution; and*
- b) Students may receive assistance for up to one additional academic year, **if** the Dean or Department Head approves a one-year program extension in writing.*

Students Who Are Eligible for Funding for Level 1 Programs

- New students (those who have never taken a post-secondary program before)*
- Students who were previously enrolled in, but did not complete a Level 2 program (either because they dropped out or changed program)*

Students Who Are Not Eligible for Funding for Level 1 Programs

- Students who have completed a program at Level 1, 2 and/or 3 (either with or without INAC financial assistance).*

Level 2: Undergraduate University Programs

- a) Students may receive financial assistance to complete a maximum of **one** program at Level 2, the length of which is defined by the institution; and*
- b) Students may be assisted for up to one additional academic year, **if** the Dean or Department Head approves a one-year program extension in writing.*

Students Who Are Eligible for Funding for Level 2 Programs

- New students (those who have never taken a post-secondary program before)*
- Students who have completed a program at Level 1 only, either with or without INAC financial assistance*
- Students who were previously enrolled in, but did not complete a Level 2 program (either because they dropped out or changed program)*

Students Who Are Not Eligible for Funding for Level 2 Programs

- Students who have completed a program at Level 2 and/or 3 (either with or without INAC financial assistance)*



Level 3: Advanced or Professional Degree Programs (e.g. dentistry, medicine, law, Masters, or Doctoral programs)

- a) *Students may receive financial assistance to complete a maximum of **one** advanced or professional degree program (as defined by the institution); and*
- b) *Students may receive assistance for up to one additional academic year, for medical or personal reasons.*

Students Who Are Eligible for Funding for Level 3 Programs

- *New students (those who have never taken a post-secondary program before)*
- *Students who have completed a program or programs at Levels 1 and/or 2, either with or without INAC financial assistance*
- *Students who were previously enrolled in but did not complete a Level 3 program (either because they dropped out or changed programs)*

Students Who Are Not Eligible for Funding for Level 3 Programs

- *Students who have completed a Level 3 program (either with or without INAC financial assistance).*

3.1.2 Time Limits -- Detailed Information and Required Documentation

UCEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ New students may be funded for a MAXIMUM of one year.✓ Each student file should contain documentation that shows that the student will only be enrolled in a UCEP program for one year.✓ Continuing UCEP students (those who were registered in a UCEP program prior to September 1, 2004) can be funded to complete their program, even if it is more than one year in length.
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<p>Level 1 Certificate (1 year) or Diploma (2 years) program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Students may be funded to complete one program at Level 1.✓ The length of the program is set by the institution the student is attending.✓ Students must be in good standing at the Institution, which means that their marks must be high enough to let them continue in their program of study.✓ Funding may be extended for one year in addition to the regular length of the program, <i>if</i> the Dean or Department Head from the Institution approves the program extension in writing. If this occurs, the approval letter must be included in the student's file.✓ Examples of legitimate extensions would be for a student who took less than a full course load and needed an extra semester or two to complete. Also, if a student failed one or two courses, but still maintained 'good standing' in the program, he or she might require an extra semester to complete the program. Or if a student failed a course that was not offered in the following semester, that would result in an extra semester to complete the required course. Remember ... a student must be carrying at least a 60% course load to be considered a full-time student.✓ Students who have completed a program at Level 1, 2 or 3, with or without INAC financial assistance, are <i>not</i> eligible to be funded for another Level 1 program.✓ If a student changes from one program at Level 1 to another program at Level 1, the total time spent in both programs will be counted for the purpose of the time limit criteria. For example, if a student is enrolling in a program that is 1 year in length, and he has already been funded for 4 months of a previous program, the student is only eligible for 8 months of funding for the new program.
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<p>Level 2 Undergraduate degree program (4 years)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Students may be funded to complete <i>one</i> program at Level 2.✓ The length of the program is determined by the Institution the student is attending.✓ Students must be in ‘good standing’ at the Institution, which means that they must have marks that will allow them to continue in the program of study.✓ Funding may be extended for one year in addition to the length of the program, <i>if</i> the Dean or Department Head from the Institution approves the program extension in writing. If this occurs, the approval letter must be on the student’s file.✓ Students who have completed a program at Level 2 or 3, with or without INAC financial assistance, are not eligible to be funded for another program at Level 2.✓ If a student changes from one program at Level 2 to another program at Level 2, the total time spent in both programs will be counted for the purpose of the time limit criteria.
<p>Level 3 Advanced or Professional Degree program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Students may be funded to complete <i>one</i> program at Level 3.✓ The length of the program is determined by the Institution the student is attending.✓ Students must be in good standing at the Institution, which means that they must have marks that are high enough to allow them to continue in their program of study.✓ Funding may be extended for one year in addition to the regular length of the program for medical or personal reasons. In this case, relevant documentation must be included in the student file.✓ If a student changes from one program at Level 3 to another program at Level 3, the total time spent in both programs will be counted for the purpose of the time limit criteria.



3.2 Funding Limits

The National Program Guidelines outline **maximum** annual funding limits.

Administering Authorities DO NOT have to pay students the INAC maximum annual amounts. Administering Authorities can set lower funding limits at their own discretion. However, the INAC maximum funding amounts cannot be exceeded.

3.2.1 Funding Limits -- National Program Guidelines

A. Per Student Maximums

NPG Section 7.0

The maximum total amounts that can be paid per student per year are as follows. The totals include tuition, student fees, books, supplies, living allowances, travel, tutoring, incentives (if applicable), contingency fees (if applicable), and any funding paid to cover student costs associated with an appeal.

Level 1 (Community college certificate, diploma programs): \$ 35,000 / year

Level 2 (Undergraduate University programs): \$ 35,000 / year

Level 3 (Advanced or professional degree programs): \$ 75,000 / year

Eligible expenditures for PSSSP and UCEP include: *NPG Section 6.1*

- a) *tuition and compulsory student fees, as well as required books and supplies;*
- b) *travel and living allowances for full-time funded students and their dependents (part-time students are not eligible for travel or living allowances)*
- c) *incentives for qualifying students (see Section 3.3); and*
- d) *funding for tutorial, guidance, and counselling services for eligible students enrolled in a post-secondary education program.*

Note: *Part-time students* may receive assistance only for **tuition, compulsory student fees, the actual cost of books and supplies, tutoring, and guidance and counselling.** They are **not** eligible for living allowances, travel or incentives.



B. Tuition and Compulsory Student Fees

NPG Section 6.1.1

Funding for tuition can be provided at the following levels.

- a) *Students attending **Canadian public institutions** can receive the normal tuition and compulsory student fees charged by the institution for Canadian students; or*
- b) *Students attending **private or foreign post-secondary institutions** can receive the same tuition and compulsory student fees charged by the Canadian institution nearest to the student's place of residence (at time of application) which offers a comparable program; or*
- c) *If no comparable program is available at an institution in Canada, students enrolled in a foreign institution can receive the actual tuition rate and other compulsory student fees charged by the foreign institution.*

Maximum – *the actual cost of tuition and compulsory student fees.*

C. Books and Supplies

NPG Section 7.1

Students can be funded according to the actual cost of books and supplies.

Maximum – *\$2,000/year*

D. Travel Costs (can be provided to full-time students ONLY)

NPG Section 7.1

*Students and their dependents can receive the actual cost of one return trip to the student's permanent place of residence from the **nearest** post-secondary institution that offers the program of study selected by the student.*

The allowable travel amount is calculated according to the distance to the nearest institution offering the selected program. The choice of transportation to be funded is at the discretion of each First Nation Authority.

Maximum - *one trip for every 16 weeks of study for a student and his or her dependents, to a maximum of two trips per academic year.*



E. Living Allowances

NPG Section 7.1

Students and their dependents can receive funding to help them pay their living expenses while they are attending a post-secondary institution.

Maximum – The regional living allowances established by the Canada Student Loan Program (CSLP), as amended from time to time. The CSLP Monthly Living Allowance rates are updated annually. Refer to the INAC 2004 *Education Programs and Services Handbook* under the ‘Allowances’ tab for Living Allowances by province. For the most current rates refer to

http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/hip/cslp/Policies/34_po_Table3StudentLivingAllowances.shtml or <http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/> and type “student living allowances” into the search box.

Note: First Nations/Administering Authorities **DO NOT** have to pay the maximum living allowances established by the Canada Student Loan Program. However, those rates cannot be exceeded. The rates that are used should be included in the Local Operating Policy in order to provide transparency and consistency.

3.2.2 Funding Limits -- Detailed Information and Required Documentation

Total funding per full-time student (minimum of 60% of course load)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Funding for students in Level 1 and 2 programs cannot exceed \$35,000 total funding each year.✓ Funding for students in Level 3 programs cannot exceed \$75,000 total funding each year.✓ The total annual funding includes any funding paid to or on behalf of the student for tuition, required student fees, required books and supplies, living allowance, travel, tutoring, guidance and counselling, incentives (if applicable), emergency contingency funding (if applicable), and any appeals costs related to the student.
Part-Time Students (less than 60% course load)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Part-time students qualify for funding for tuition, required student fees, required books and supplies, tutoring, guidance and counseling, emergency contingency funding (if applicable) and any appeals costs related to the student.✓ Part-time students DO NOT qualify for living allowances, travel or incentives.



Eligible Expenditures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Tuition✓ Compulsory student fees (as defined by the institution and program)✓ Books and supplies required for the specific program being taken✓ Travel and Living Allowance for the full-time student and their dependents (Note: day care costs are not funded separately, but are included in the living allowance schedule as part of the extra funding for students with dependents)✓ Incentives (described in Section 3.3 below)✓ Tutoring for the student✓ Guidance and counselling for the student✓ The funding may also pay the salary of the Education Coordinator/Post-Secondary Coordinator if that individual provides guidance, counselling, tutoring, and/or academic advising for students. If that is the case, the salary must be shown on the Post Secondary Schedule in the Audit.✓ Other administrative costs are not eligible expenditures.
Tuition and compulsory student fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Public Institution (see Section 2.2 for definition)<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Eligible expenses include the normal tuition and compulsory fees that students are charged by the institution✓ Private or Foreign Institutions<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Eligible expenses include tuition and compulsory student fees that are not more than those charged by the Institution nearest the student's home that offers the same program✓ Foreign Institution<ul style="list-style-type: none">- If there is no similar program offered closer to the student's home, then the eligible expenses include the tuition and compulsory student fees that are charged by the institution✓ The funding provided for tuition and compulsory student fees cannot exceed the costs that are actually paid.✓ Receipts must be kept in each student files for tuition and compulsory student fees paid to or on behalf of the student.



Books and Supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Funding is provided for books and supplies required by each specific program.✓ The funding provided for books and supplies cannot exceed the costs that are actually paid <i>and</i> cannot exceed \$2,000 per year.✓ Receipts are required for the funding paid for required books
Travel Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Travel costs for the full-time student and his or her dependents are eligible expenses.✓ Travel costs cannot be more than the cost to go to the closest Institution offering a similar program. For example, if a student lives in Vancouver and attends school in Victoria, the travel cost would be calculated based upon the travel to the nearest Vancouver Institute that offers a similar program.✓ The choice of transportation used for student travel is at the discretion of each First Nation Authority and may be an issue for inclusion in Local Operating Policies.
Living Allowance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ A Living Allowance for the full-time student and his or her dependents is an eligible expense.✓ The Living Allowance cannot exceed the Canada Student Loans (CSL) Living Allowance Schedule✓ The CSL Living Allowance Schedule is changed regularly, so check on the CSL website for the latest rates. (See Section E above).✓ Living Allowances can be LESS than the CSL Living Allowance rates. If lower rates are paid, the locally approved Living Allowance Schedule should be included in Local Operating Policy so that students can refer to the rates actually being paid.



3.3. Incentive Limits

NPG Section 6.3

Incentives may be provided to encourage students to enroll in studies that directly contribute to First Nations self-government and economic self-reliance, or to recognize academic achievement. However, the awarding of incentives and scholarships is completely optional.

- ✓ If incentives are awarded, they must be paid for using the Administering Authority's regular post-secondary funding.
- ✓ In the event that incentives are available, the criteria and application procedures should be clearly outlined in the Local Operating Policy so that all students have an equitable opportunity to apply for the financial support.

3.3.1 Incentives – National Program Guidelines

The INAC National Program Guidelines establish the following maximum allowable amounts for incentive payments.

Level 3:

\$1,500 (can be awarded only once per full-time PSSSP student)

- *Student is only eligible upon commencement of the second year of the degree or upon successful completion of the degree.*

Level 2 Strategic Studies Scholarship:

\$3,500 per full-time PSSSP student, to a maximum of 5% of all students funded by the Administering Authority

- *Enrolled in commerce, public or business administration, physical science, mathematics and computer sciences, forestry and engineering;*
- *Eligibility is conditional upon successful completion of one year of the program of study and continuation in it;*
- *Awarded annually at the beginning of each year and thereafter in accordance with the length of the program (defined in assistance limits)*
- *Eligible students may only be awarded either one Strategic Studies Scholarship or one Academic Achievement Scholarship in an academic year.*

Level 1 and 2 Academic Achievement Scholarship:

\$1,000 per full-time PSSSP student who has achieved a grade average of 'B' or higher in their program of study, to a maximum of 5% of all students funded by the Administering Authority



- *Student is eligible upon successful completion of each year of their program*
- *Eligible students may only be awarded either one Strategic Studies Scholarship or one Academic Achievement Scholarship in an academic year.*

Note: For students enrolled in a Level 2 program, only **one** of the above can be awarded to a student each year.

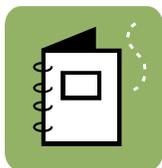
3.3.2 Incentives -- Detailed Information and Required Documentation

<p>Incentives for Students Enrolled in Level 3 Programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ These awards are provided to students engaged in studies which directly contribute to First Nations self-government and economic self-reliance or to recognize academic achievement. ✓ To be eligible, the student must be receiving PSSSP funding and be enrolled full-time in a Level 3 program ✓ Up to \$1,500 can be awarded to each student ✓ Each student can be awarded the incentive only once during the course of their Level 3 post-secondary program ✓ The incentive is payable at the start of the second year of study or after the student has successfully completed the program. ✓ The Administering Authority must retain a record of all scholarships paid.
<p>Incentives for Students Enrolled in Level 2 Programs: Strategic Studies Scholarship</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ These scholarships are provided to encourage students to engage in studies that directly contribute to First Nations achieving self-government and economic self-reliance. ✓ To be eligible, the student must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - be enrolled full-time in a Level 2 program; - be receiving PSSSP funding; - be enrolled in commerce, public or business administration, physical science, mathematics, computer sciences, forestry, or engineering (enrollment in this program must be documented in the file of each student receiving this scholarship); - have successfully completed the first year of the program; and - be continuing in the program.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ The scholarships are to be given at the beginning of the school year and can continue for each additional year of the program.✓ The maximum award is \$3,500 per student per year.✓ Students receiving this award are not eligible for the Academic Achievement Scholarship (see below).✓ Each Administering Authority can award this scholarship to a maximum of 5% of the students being funded. If 5% is less than one student, then one scholarship can be awarded. That means that if between 1 and 20 students are being funded, one scholarship can be awarded.✓ The Administering Authority must retain a record of all scholarships paid.
Level 1 & 2 Academic Achievement Scholarship	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ These scholarships are provided to recognize academic achievement (good marks).✓ To be eligible, a student must:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- be enrolled full-time in a Level 1 or 2 program;- be receiving PSSSP funding; and- have a grade average of 'B' or higher.✓ Students are eligible after successfully completing each year of the program.✓ A maximum of \$1,000 can be awarded to each student each year.✓ Students receiving this award are not eligible for the Strategic Studies Scholarships (see above).✓ Each Administering Authority can award a scholarship to a maximum of 5% of the students being funded. If 5% is less than one student, then one scholarship can be awarded. That means that if between 1 and 20 students are being funded, one scholarship can be awarded.✓ The Administering Authority must retain a record of all scholarships paid.

SECTION 4: PROGRAM DELIVERY

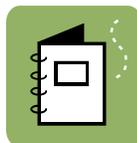


NATIONAL
PROGRAM
GUIDELINE

LOCAL
OPERATING
POLICY

APPEAL
PROCESS

4.1.1 National Program Guidelines



INAC's National Program Guidelines came into effect on September 1, 2004.

- *As described in Sections 1 and 2, the National Program Guidelines establish maximum time limits and funding amounts for financial support. First Nations or other Administering Authorities **are not** required to provide funding up to the maximum level, but they cannot exceed the maximums.*
- *When lower limits are used, the limits set by the Administering Authority should be included in a Local Operating Policy. If a Local Operating Policy is **not** in place, then the National Program Guidelines **MUST** be used. However, all Administrative Authorities **must** have local policies for selection priority criteria, appeal process and criteria for emergency contingency funding.*

It is possible that funding will be recovered by INAC if a compliance review shows that the National Program Guidelines have not been followed. **For the fiscal year 2004/2005, INAC has confirmed that funds will not be recovered.** However, the recovery of funds in future years is a possibility, although as yet this is unconfirmed.



4.1.2 National Program Guidelines -- Detailed Information and Required Documentation

<p>National Program Guidelines</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ The Post-Secondary National Program Guidelines provide maximum funding levels. Administering Authorities do NOT have to provide the maximum amounts or limits.✓ If students are provided less than the maximum allowable amount, the lower limits should be written into a Local Operating Policy.✓ If the National Program Guidelines are provided to students, make sure they understand that the limits included in the guidelines are maximums, and that First Nations and other Administering Authorities have the option to establish their own policy and set funding rates, and they do NOT have to pay the maximums. If you do not pay the maximums, it may be useful to explain why that is the case. For example, you may explain that paying less than the maximum allowable amounts allows your organization to fund more students.
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4.1.3 Local Operating Policy -- National Program Guidelines NPG Section 5.1.1



According to the National Program Guidelines, First Nations have the option of establishing a post-secondary education Local Operating Policy. That policy would outline all criteria related to the allocation of post-secondary funding, including community-established eligibility criteria, application procedures, and funding amounts.

*Local Operating Policies **must** include:*

- 1. selection priority criteria;*
- 2. an appeal process;*
- 3. criteria for emergency contingency funding.*

*Local Operating Policies **may** also include:*

- 1. funding rates and allowances, especially when the First Nation or Administering Authority is using rates that are less than the maximum amounts listed in the National*



Program Guidelines, which are based on the Canada Student Loans Living Allowances...

*Local Operating Policies **should** also include:*

- 1. all other community-determined policies that differ from the National Guidelines.*

4.1.4 Local Operating Policy -- Detailed Information and Required Documentation

<p>Local Operating Policy</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ In the absence of applicable clauses under the Local Operating Policy, the National Program Guidelines will apply. ✓ Administering Authorities are required to establish a Local Operating Policy that addresses the following issues. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) The method used to prioritize applicants for funding in case not all applicants can be funded (See Section 7). b) An appeal process, with at least the items listed below. c) A definition of emergency contingency funding (what you will fund) and how the funding will be distributed (See Section 7). ✓ Any other Local policies that are consistent with Local Authorities' policies/mission statements should be included in your Local Operating Policy (this will help in the event of an appeal).
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4.1.5 Appeal Process – National Program Guidelines

NPG Section 8.0



*To ensure fairness and equitable treatment under the post-secondary education program, Administering Authorities must have an appeal process in place. This process **must** incorporate the following basic elements.*

- a) *A formal statement related to the public distribution of the post-secondary policy and procedures being used (including the National Program Guidelines and the Local Operating Policy).*
- b) *Assurance that each student has a right to an established appeal process, including a hearing with an impartial appeal board.*
- c) *Assurance that each student has access to advisory support throughout the appeal process.*



- d) Assurance that First Nations have an adequate level of participation in the appeal process and its structure. (This criteria would apply to First Nations that have another party, such as a Tribal Council, Education Authority, etc., administer their PSE program.)
- e) Assurance that the Administering Authority will cover any necessary costs for the Appeal Board members and for the student to attend the appeal hearing.
- f) A specific timeframe for the convening of appeal hearings and for decisions.
- g) Confirmation that the Administering Authority will abide by the Appeal Board's decision.

Note: A student cannot appeal to INAC regarding any post-secondary funding decision made by a First Nation or Administering Authority

A short checklist to assist Administering Authorities in ensuring that they have reviewed the relevant issues for consideration is included in Section 10.

4.1.6 Appeal Process -- Detailed Information and Required Documentation

<p>Appeal Process</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To ensure fairness and equitable treatment for all applicants, Administering Authorities must have an appeal process in place. ✓ This process must incorporate the following basic elements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A formal statement related to the public distribution of the policy and procedures b) Assurance that each student has a right to an established appeal process, including the existence of an impartial Appeal Board c) Assurance that each student has access to advisory support d) Assurance that First Nations have an adequate level of participation in the appeal process and its structure. (This criteria would apply to First Nations that have another party, such as a Tribal Council, Education Authority, etc., administer their PSE program) e) Assurance that the Administering Authority will cover the costs for the Appeals Board members and the student to attend the appeal hearing, if necessary f) A specific timeframe for the convening of appeals hearings and for decisions
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g) Confirmation that the Administering Authority will abide by the Appeal Board's decision

✓ More information related to appeals processes is included in Section 10.

Note: A student cannot appeal to INAC regarding any post-secondary funding decision made by a First Nation or Administering Authority

4.2 Deferrals of PSSSP Applicants



Definition of a deferred applicant: the applicant is eligible for post secondary funding under the National Program Guidelines and Local Operating Policy but the applicant is not funded (for any reason, including lack of funds).

Note: If all of your post secondary funds are not allocated, you will report a post secondary surplus. If any other eligible applicants apply (as defined by the National Program Guidelines) the compliance review will determine that you deferred eligible applicants while carrying a post secondary surplus. For 2004/2005, INAC's process for allocating post-secondary education funding will not be changed. However, it is expected that the allocation process **may** change following the post-secondary education review that is now taking place. In future years, if First Nations or other Administrative Authorities show a budget surplus after supporting all eligible students, the surplus funds may be made available for eligible wait-listed students from other First Nations to ensure that the intent of the program is met and the maximum number of eligible students are supported. There has been no decision on how or when this redistribution may occur.

✓ First Nations or other Administering Authorities are required to maintain accurate records to explain the reason for having deferred applicants as well as a budget surplus. Examples, which may result in a surplus, might be a student drops out or a change in dependency status, etc.



Even though your organization may try to administer the PSSSP program within established guidelines, uncontrollable events can occur, such as students dropping out of school. If a student dropping out of school results in a budget surplus, it may be possible to fund a student on your deferred list. Up-to-date records will assist you in doing so quickly. If the funding remains a surplus, make sure you document the reason why there is a surplus. For example, be sure to maintain records if your surplus is due to students experiencing a change in dependents mid-year, leaving school, or changing to part-time status after funding was approved.

4.2.1 MORE DETAILED INFORMATION AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

<p>Deferred Students</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep an accurate record of all students deferred and an active priority list.• Identify any students who can respond quickly to changes in funding status.• Encourage deferred students to seek alternative funding, such as Canada Student Loans.• Identify any funded students at risk of not attending or dropping out mid-year and create an active dialogue to support those students.• Develop and maintain documentation to show your initiatives to support at risk students (such as notes regarding telephone calls, emails, or any other communication you have with the student). This documentation will help in the event of a compliance review.
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SECTION 5: OTHER REQUIREMENTS

5.1 Other Guideline Information

In addition to all of the information outlined above, the National Program Guidelines contain information and requirements in the following areas.

5.1 Program Objectives

NPG 2.0

This section of the National Program Guidelines provides objectives for the Post-Secondary Education program as well as objectives for each of three components of the PSE program: 1) Post-Secondary Student Support program (PSSSP); 2) University and College Entrance Preparation (UCEP); and 3) Indian Studies Support Program (ISSP).

5.2 Eligible Recipients

NPG 3.1

This section of the National Program Guidelines provides a description of organizations eligible to enter into a funding agreement for delivery of the Post-Secondary Education program.

5.3 Delegation of Service Delivery

NPG 4.0

This section of the National Program Guidelines provides the obligations of the funding recipient when the recipient delegates authority or transfers program funding to an agency.

5.4 Funding

NPG 5.0

This section of the National Program Guidelines provides for the requirement of a review of a funding recipient's management and accountability processes and systems.

5.5 Stacking Provisions

NPG 5.4

This section of the National Program Guidelines provides standard wording regarding stacking provision if a program, such as the Post-Secondary Education Program, is funded by different levels of government. This only applies when a program is funded by different levels of government and the program has a surplus.



5.6 Student Registry

NPG 9.0

This section of the National Program Guidelines advises that the completion of the Post-Secondary Student Register (PSSR) is required each fall.

5.7 Indian Studies Support Program (ISSP)

NPG 2.3, 5.3 and 7.2

These sections of the National Program Guidelines provide criteria for delivery of the Indian Studies Support Program (ISSP). Please refer to Introduction of this Handbook for contact information for ISSP.



SECTION 6: FILE MANAGEMENT

It is imperative that First Nations and other Administering Authorities maintain very thorough and well-organized files for all students and the overall post-secondary education program. The information will be critical for both INAC compliance reviews and for responding to any appeals. Detailed information about what should be contained within those files is outlined below.

6.1 Student Records – Students Who Are Funded

6.1.1 Student Registry –

National Program Guidelines Section 9.0

The Administering Authority is required to maintain an individual student record for each student who is provided post-secondary funding. Records are to include, at a minimum:

- *The name of each student receiving funding as of November 1*
- *The institution attended*
- *The program of study*
- *The degree/diploma certificate obtained*

6.1.2 Recommendations for Student Registry

Details about information for inclusion in student files are described in previous sections. In summary, each file should contain the following records.

Proof of Indian or Inuit Status

- a photocopy of the student's Status Card **or**
- the student's Indian Registry number, verified for accuracy of both the number and the spelling of the name



Proof of Residency

- a signed statement of residency **or**
- a residency clause added to the application form that students sign when applying for funding. (Make sure the application is dated, as residency is 12 consecutive months prior to date of application).

Funding Application Form

- All students must complete, date and sign an application form. The application form should confirm the following information:
 - a) that the student is a Registered Indian or Inuit person, by including the student's registry number
 - b) the applicant's residency for the 12 consecutive months prior to application
 - c) the applicant's address and contact information
 - d) the applicant's marital status
 - e) the names and ages of dependents and their relationship to the applicant (for the definition of a dependent, see the Canada Student Loans website)
 - f) the name of the post-secondary institution to be attended by the student (make sure the institution is eligible, see Section 2.2)
 - g) the education program and certificate, diploma, or degree being sought (ensure that the program is eligible, see Section 2.3)
 - h) the length of program being sought (the program must be at least one academic year in length)
 - i) the portion of the program already completed by the applicant (check the time limits to ensure the student has not exceeded time limits for funding)
 - j) the applicant's previous education history
 - k) if post-secondary funding had been received previously, for how long, the program enrolled in, and the educational outcome
 - l) for students attending foreign post-secondary institutions, comparative tuition and compulsory student fees charged by the Canadian institution nearest to the student's place of residence for a comparable program.



Records from the Post-Secondary Institute

- Written confirmation from the post-secondary institution that the applicant has been accepted into a certificate, diploma, degree or UCEP program.
- Transcripts showing grades for the first and final semester of each academic year (to indicate satisfactory academic standing within the institution).
- A list of required books and supplies for the program of study (if available)
- For UCEP students, a statement from the post-secondary institution offering the program attesting that the UCEP program will provide the student with the necessary courses to attain the academic level required for college or university entrance, and that the student will be eligible for acceptance into a regular college or university credit program upon successful completion of the UCEP course of studies.

Receipts

- Receipts are required for the following items.
 - a) tuition and compulsory student fees
 - b) books and supplies purchased for the program of study
 - c) the lower of the actual transportation costs to/from the student's permanent place of residence to the post-secondary institution being attended or the nearest post-secondary institution that offers the program of studies selected by the student.

Financial Records

The Administering Authority is required to maintain records of all payments made either to the student or on behalf of the student, identifying what the payment is for.

Records of the Administering Authority (First Nation)

- A signed authorization and consent to release form.
- ✓ A consent to release form may be needed in order to obtain a student's transcript, which must be in the file of each funded student. In the event that a student does not provide a copy of the transcript, a signed release form will give you authorization to request the transcript directly from the Institution.



- ✓ Also, if you will be sharing any student information with other programs, it is critical that a release form signed by the student be in the file of each student.
- A copy of the letter or documentation provided to the student indicating the approval of post-secondary funding and outlining any requirements for continued funding.

6.2 Student Records – Students Who Are Eligible But Not Funded

For students who are eligible but not approved for funding (for reasons such as inadequate funding available), the Administering Authority should maintain similar records as those kept for a funded student. This will allow the student to be funded quickly if additional funding becomes available, such as in the event that a funded student quits school. In addition, the file for not funded students should contain:

- a copy of all correspondence and notes of phone calls; and
- a copy of the correspondence or letter telling the student that he or she was not approved for funding, and why.

6.3 Student Records – Students Who Do Not Qualify for Funding

Files should also be maintained for all students who apply for post-secondary funding but are found to be ineligible. Those files should contain the following information.

- all documentation and records provided by the student.
- documentation to show that the student, program or institution is not eligible according to the National Program Guidelines and the Local Operating Policy.
- all correspondence sent and received and notes of phone calls.
- a copy of the correspondence or letter telling the student that he or she does not qualify for funding and explaining why.



SECTION 7: LOCAL OPERATING POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Local Operating Policy

In implementing the post-secondary program, First Nations or other Administering Authorities **must** reflect the INAC Post-Secondary National Program Guidelines. In addition, Local Operating Policy for the criteria listed below is **required**. First Nations and other Administering Authorities may also choose to create and use more extensive Local Operating Policies, the details of which are described below.

A Local Operating Policy **must** be consistent with the National Program Guidelines, and at a **minimum** must include the following.

- Selection criteria
- An appeals process (consistent with NPG - Section 8, see also Section 4.3 in this Handbook)
- Criteria for emergency contingency funding

Copies of the National Program Guidelines and the Local Operating Policy **must** be made publicly available.

This requirement can be met by making the documents available upon request, posting the policy/guidelines on a public bulletin board, distributing printed copies, posting them on a website and sharing the website address, and/or sharing them in a community meeting(s).



7.1.1 Local Operating Guidelines -- Detailed Information and Required Documentation

Local Operating Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ To maintain a Local Operating Policy that is consistent with INAC requirements, keep a current copy of the National Program Guidelines for your reference✓ A copy of the Guidelines should also be accessible for applicants to review.✓ Remember ... if your Local Policy reflects an allowable adaptation of the National Program Guidelines, explain that difference to students. For example, if the funding levels provided by the Local Policy are lower than the maximum allowable, explain this difference to students and make them aware that the National Program Guidelines allow for such changes. Help them to understand why your First Nation has chosen to set lower limits, such as the goal of funding as many students as possible.
Selection Criteria Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ The “Selection Criteria” means the criteria that are used to prioritize applicants for PSE funding.✓ Local Operating policy should reflect the needs of the community. For example, your policy may give priority to applicants who are interested in pursuing an education that relates to local training needs and/or the employment situation of your community. It could also give priority to students who meet specific criteria, such as a specified level of grades or attendance rates in secondary school, or time since graduation.✓ The policy should be transparent in its application and in terms of the mechanism for how and when it is revised.✓ To minimize appeals, it is recommended that the policy should not be revised during the cycle when it is being used to prioritize applicants.✓ Changes or revisions to this policy should be done with enough time to adequately inform any future applicants.
Appeal Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ The Appeal Process outlined in your policy must be consistent with the National Program Guidelines. Any additions must enhance the basic elements identified in Section 8 of the National Program Guidelines.✓ For further suggestions, see Section 10.



**Emergency
Contingency
Funding**

- ✓ The 2003 National Program Guidelines do not include a definition of emergency contingency funding, but the 1989 Guidelines offer the following definition: “Contingency Funding” means financial support provided to students for costs related to emergency situations. Emergency situations eligible for contingency funding include individual or family illness, accident or bereavement.
- ✓ Local Operating Policy Emergency Contingency Funding should describe:
 - how much funding will be provided (e.g. Travel home, etc);
 - how students can apply for the funds;
 - the process to be used for approving and distributing the funds; and
 - how you will set aside the emergency contingency fund, such as funding set aside in trust so it cannot be expended elsewhere.
- ✓ Advise your auditor during your financial audit of the emergency contingency fund.



SECTION 8: COMPLIANCE REVIEW SELF-CHECKLIST

The following checklist can be used as a tool when establishing a local policy for the management of PSE programs. Using this checklist to review your policy will help to ensure that all necessary components are addressed, which will help to prepare your organization for a compliance review.

Note: while every effort has been made to ensure that the self-checklist is comprehensive, it may not exactly replicate an INAC compliance review.

How to Use the Self-Checklist

Answer the following 20 questions with a YES or NO based on your current practice or policies. Depending on your answer, each checklist question will highlight if an explanation or documentation is required. An important key to this exercise is to document what is being done to correct the deficiencies in your policies or practices to meet the National Program Guidelines.

QUESTION	RESPONSE	ACTION REQUIRED
1. Did you have a PSE budget surplus for the fiscal period being reviewed?	No	No Action Required
	Yes	a. If surplus is due to students dropping out, ensure that all documentation is in place to demonstrate that fact, and to show your attempts to re-allocate the funding. b. If surplus is due to deferring students, ensure that documentation is in place to demonstrate that fact, and to explain why that situation exists.



<p>2. Did you defer any eligible applicants during the fiscal period being reviewed?</p>	<p>No Yes</p>	<p>No Action Required</p> <p>Ensure that you have a list of the deferred applicants, a student file containing all documentation for each deferred applicant, and reasons for the deferral(s).</p>
<p>3. Did you defer eligible applicants while you had a budget surplus?</p>	<p>No Yes</p>	<p>No Action Required</p> <p>Make sure you document why this occurred. For example, did an eligible student apply after deadlines established in the Local Operating Policy?</p>
<p>4. Are the Post-Secondary National Program Guidelines publicly accessible? For example, can students request a copy? Is a copy available at the Band office?</p>	<p>Yes No</p>	<p>No Action Required</p> <p>Make a copy available. The Guidelines are included in the <i>Education Programs and Services Handbook</i>, or call INAC and request a copy. (604) 775-8142</p>
<p>5. Do you use a Local Operating Policy</p>	<p>Yes No</p>	<p>No Action Required</p> <p>Develop a Local Operating Policy for selection criteria, an appeal process, and emergency contingency funding. These elements are mandatory.</p> <p>Consider developing a more comprehensive Local Operating Policy to reflect community needs. To make the task easier, ask another First Nation to share its policy, or refer to Appendix 3 of this Handbook for sample policies, and adapt the policies to meet your needs.</p>



<p>6. Is your Local Operating Policy available publicly?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>No.</p>	<p>No Action Required</p> <p>Make a copy available. Some First Nations provide copies to all funding applicants.</p>
<p>7. Does your Local Operating Policy contain the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An Appeal Process - Selection priority criteria - Emergency contingency funding 	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>	<p>No Action Required</p> <p>Add the missing sections to your policy. To make your task easier, ask another First Nation to share its policy, or refer to Appendix 3 of this Handbook for sample policies, and adapt the policies to meet your needs.</p>
<p>8. Do you have a file for each funding applicant (including those who are funded and not funded)</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>	<p>No Action Required</p> <p>Create a file for each Applicant. Refer to Section 6 of this Handbook for information that must be included in each file.</p>
<p>9. Do you maintain confidentiality of files, and are files locked so that personal information is kept private?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>	<p>No Action Required</p> <p>Find a cabinet with a lock to keep the files confidential. Limit who can access the files (this should only be the Education staff). Develop a policy outlining who can access the files, for what purposes, and under what conditions.</p>
<p>10. If you awarded Incentives, did they exceed the amount allowed?</p>	<p>No</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>No Action Required</p> <p>Document why you provided Incentives in excess of the guidelines so you can explain the decision.</p>



11. Do you have an established Appeal Process?	No	Develop an Appeal Process that includes the items listed in the National Program Guidelines. See Section 4.3 of this Handbook for more information.
	Yes	No Action Required
12. Is the Appeal Process published and accessible?	No	Create a method to have the appeal process accessible to your students and community members.
	Yes	No Action Required
13. Do you have an impartial Appeal Board (i.e. will it be able to treat everyone fairly, without prejudice)?	No	Create an Appeal Board that is impartial.
	Yes	No Action Required



SECTION 9: INDIVIDUAL FILE AUDIT CHECKLIST

Student Files Include

- Student's application for funding (this may be a letter to the funding authority or an application form)
 - Proof of Registered Indian or Inuit (i.e. - photocopy of Status Card)
 - Proof /statement that residency requirement is met (exception see Section 2.1)
 - Copy of an acceptance letter or registration from the eligible post-secondary institution.
 - Institution meets eligibility requirement
 - Program meets eligibility requirement
 - Prior post-secondary education history
 - A signed authorization and consent to release information form
 - Dependents identified, if applicable
 - A copy of documentation provided to student approving PSE funding.
 - Proof of interim satisfactory academic standing (i.e. first semester transcript)
 - Proof of academic year satisfactory academic standing (final transcripts)
 - Payments made to and on behalf of the student
-



The worksheet below may be used to calculate total funding per student.

Student Name			
Program			
Level			
Funding allocations available for <u>Full Time</u> and <u>Part-time</u> Students:			
Total tuition and compulsory fees funding			\$
Total books & supplies			\$
Total emergency contingency funds			\$
Travel and Living allowances for <u>Full Time</u> Students only:			
Total living allowance (total months of study x monthly allowance)			\$
Total travel allowance*			\$
Study period (weeks):			
Number of funded trips*:			
Total incentives			\$
Total funding:			\$

* Travel allowance based on travel to the closest institution that offers a comparable program of study.



SECTION 10: APPEALS PROCESS SELF-REVIEW CHECKLIST

- The process for students to file an appeal is clear. For example, students may be required to write a letter outlining the reasons they are requesting an appeal, or there may be a form that students are required to complete.
- The process that will be used for making an appeal decision is clearly described. For some examples, see the Local Policy sample wording in Appendix 4.
- The process outlines a method for the student to receive advisory support. For example, the student has access to the student's file documentation prior to the meeting and has the right to access advisory support.
- There is a defined timeframe in which decisions will be made.
- An impartial Appeal Board has been created, and membership of the board is clear. For example, the Appeal Board might include an Elder, the Councilor who holds the education portfolio, a recent post-secondary graduate, the Aboriginal Support Coordinator from the local college or school. The description of Appeal Board members may also include criteria for ensuring impartiality, such as ensuring that board members are not relatives of the student making the appeal.
- The appeal process clearly states that the Appeal Board will make its decisions according to the criteria defined in the Local Operating Policy and funding availability.
- The process by which the Appeal Board's decision will be conveyed to the student is clear.
- The appeals process describes the student's right to address the Appeal Board. For example, the process may allow the student to make presentation to the board during a duly convened meeting. The policy may indicate that an appeal cannot be discussed outside of a duly convened meeting.



- The appeal process clearly outlines what expenses will be paid, such as the costs of holding an appeal hearing and possibly paying the costs for students to attend or participate via videoconferencing or conference call. Please note: appeal policies can maintain that an appeal by the student is not allowed if a student was denied funding based on a lack of funding.
- The appeal process confirms that the Administering Authority will abide by the decision of the Appeal Board.
- The appeal process has been approved by Chief and Council.
- A written description of the appeal process is publicly available.



APPENDIX 1

LIST OF PUBLIC POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTES IN BC Updated 2005

British Columbia Institute of Technology	Burnaby	604-434-1610
Camosun College	Victoria	250-370-3000
Capilano College	North Vancouver	604-984-4966
College of New Caledonia	Prince George	250-562-2131
College of the Rockies	Cranbrook	250-489-2751
Douglas College	New Westminster	604-527-5400
Emily Carr Institute of Art & Design	Vancouver	604-844-3800
Institute of Indigenous Government	Vancouver	604-602-9555
Justice Institute of British Columbia	New Westminster	604-528-5588
Kwantlen University College	Surrey	604-595-2015
Langara College	Vancouver	604-323-5456
Malaspina University College	Nanaimo	250-755-8753
Nicola Valley Institute of Technology	Merritt	250-378-3300
North Island College	Campbell River/ Courtenay/ Port Alberni	1-800-715-0914
Northern Lights College	Dawson Creek	250-784-7527
Northwest Community College	Terrace	250-635-6511
Okanagan University College	Kelowna	250-862-5419
Royal Roads University	Victoria	250-391-2511
Selkirk College	Castlegar	250-365-7292
Simon Fraser University	Burnaby	604-291-4356
Thompson River University	Kamloops	250-828-5000
University College of the Cariboo <i>Note: in the process of becoming Thompson River University in Spring 2005</i>	Kamloops/ Williams Lake/ Lillooet	250-828-5000
University College of the Fraser Valley	Abbotsford	604-853-7441
University of British Columbia <i>UBC Okanagan opens Sept. 2005</i>	Vancouver	604-822-5111
University of Northern British Columbia	Prince George	250-960-6300
University of Victoria	Victoria	250-721-8423
Vancouver Community College	Vancouver	604-443-8421

See the FNEsc web site at www.fnesc.ca for more information about First Nations post-secondary institutes in BC



APPENDIX 2

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Question:** **Can I fund a student from another Band who lives on our reserve?**
Answer: This issue is to be determined by each First Nation, and described in the Local Operating Policy.
- Question:** **Can I fund a student who is taking courses by distance delivery?**
Answer: Yes. Provided the program and institution meet eligibility criteria, student may be funded for courses delivered by distance delivery. However, those students may require additional support structures, such as tutoring and counselling structures.
- Question:** **Can I pay for tutoring assistance for students?**
Answer: Yes, tutoring assistance is an eligible expense for students. Keep all paid receipts for tutoring services in the student file.
- Question:** **Are First Nations required to develop Local Operating Policies?**
Answer: Yes. First Nations may use the National Program Guidelines but at a minimum, Local Operating Policies must be developed to address the following topics.
- ✓ Selection priority criteria
 - ✓ An appeal process
 - ✓ Criteria for emergency contingency funding

Local Operating Policies must be consistent with the National Program Guidelines; they cannot exceed the maximum amounts payable, and they must be publicly available.

- Question:** **Will post-secondary education budgets be increased to reflect increases in tuition and costs of living?**
Answer: Not at this time. The federal government has not made a commitment to increased post-secondary funding because INAC has been unable to confirm that all First Nations fully expend their funding and that all post-secondary expenditures have been used for eligible students.



The PSE program is under joint review nationally with INAC and the Assembly of First Nations, in an effort to ensure that maximum numbers of students are supported with available funds. Program reviews will be used to confirm appropriate expenditures and provide verification that demand exceeds the available funding. Gathering that information is a necessary step in pursuing additional post-secondary education funds.

Question: **How often will compliance reviews take place?**

Answer: Administering Authorities can expect a compliance review at least once every 5 years.

Question: **How can I know when our First Nations can expect a compliance review?**

Answer: INAC will notify First Nations at least 2 weeks prior to a compliance review. That timeframe makes it clear why First Nations must prepare for compliance reviews well in advance, ideally by using the information highlighted in this Handbook.

Question: **What will happen during a compliance review?**

Answer: During a compliance review, INAC auditors will review all student files as well as local policies and appeal processes to ensure that they reflect the National Program Guidelines.

The reviews will also review documentation to ensure that First Nations are not exceeding the maximum funding levels outlined in the National Program Guidelines. Those reviews can include all financial records, including individual student files and all documented payments to or on behalf of each student.

Question: **Will INAC recover funds if a compliance review shows that the National Program Guidelines have not been followed?**

Answer: Potentially yes. It is possible that funding will be recovered by INAC if a compliance review shows that the National Program Guidelines have not been followed. For the fiscal year 2004/2005, INAC has confirmed that funds will not be recovered. However, the recovery of funds in future years is a possibility, although as yet unconfirmed.

Question: **Are compliance reviews required for First Nations under a block funding agreement (a CFNFA)?**

Answer: Reviews will only be required for those First Nations when the five-year agreement is being renewed.



Question: If there is a break in a student's program (but it is considered an "academic year") can it be funded as full-time? (for example, if December and January do not have classes). Would you provide living expenses for the whole year or just for the months in class?

Answer: A student is funded for the length of time their program runs, which may vary. Many courses run for an 8 or 9 month academic year. If there are holidays and semester breaks included in the academic year, these would form part of the funding. They would not get funded for the time between the academic years unless they were taking classes.

Question: What is the best way to demonstrate a 'comparable program' to calculate travel expenses? For example, is the NITEP program special enough to justify travel to it rather than the nearest regular teacher training program?

Answer: The best way to demonstrate a 'comparable program' would be to have an outline of each program on file with a cross-reference showing the difference(s). Also have on file the reason why the student has chosen one program over the other.

Question: Does the UCEP funding count when calculating the number of months a student has used on PSSSP funding?

Answer: The Post-Secondary Education Program has time limits for funding in each level of education. The UCEP program is separate from the PSSSP, which has three levels of education. Time funded under UCEP counts only against the UCEP time limits.

Question: Are students required to declare their INAC funding to Canada Student Loans, (i.e. can they 'top-up' their INAC funding, assuming it's not the maximum allowed under the Canada Student Loans.

Answer: Canada Student Loans is an income tested program and as such students must follow the rules established under the program.

Question: Single students living at home, with employed parents, are to receive a max of \$402 (Canada Student Loans) or \$386 (Oct 31, 2004 INAC study). Define employed parents.

Answer: The Post-Secondary National Program Guidelines specify that the maximum amounts payable are the Canada Student Loans living allowances. The only definitions for a single student are 1) living at home; or 2) living away from home. There is no reference to employed or unemployed parents in the maximum amounts payable. For a 'single student living at home' the maximum amount for living allowance at this time is \$402.00. (CSL Living Allowances do change from time to time).



Question: **Blended families are a national policy issue, not a local policy - correct)? Spouse/partner's children from prior relationships do not count as dependents to the student unless legally adopted? What about if there is an order for maintenance?**

Answer: The definition of 'dependent' for Student Loans covers spouse's and partner's children. Check the booklet entitled *General Information British Columbia Student Assistance Program* at www.aved.gov.bc.ca/studentervices/forms/gionline.pdf. The last section of the booklet provides definitions.

Question: **UCEP - if all other needs are met, can surplus be used for additional time (i.e. beyond the one year)**

Answer: No, the Post-Secondary National Program Guidelines set out the time limit for UCEP as one year with an exception for continuing students enrolled before September 1, 2004. Funding beyond the one year would not be in compliance with the guidelines.



APPENDIX 3

LOCAL POLICIES - SAMPLE WORDING

All policy samples were submitted by BC First Nations; they were not written by the First Nations Education Steering Committee.

The sample policies are provided to give you suggested policy wording. It is expected that communities who make use of the samples will omit, add to, and modify the policies to meet their needs, priorities and funding capacities.

Whenever possible, more than one sample has been offered under each heading. This means that the samples under a main heading like “Eligibility” may be contradictory. Remember to check that all definitions and provisions you use are consistent.

Remember ... if you choose to use the INAC Post-Secondary Education National Program Guidelines, you must still develop Local Policies for:

- eligibility criteria,
- contingency funds, and
- appeal process.

1. Vision Statement and Policy Objectives

In general, the PSSSP policies of some First Nations include a formal vision statement to guide policy development and implementation. Other First Nations do not present a vision statement, but instead list one or more policy objectives.

Sample Vision Statements

- To assist students to access post-secondary education and graduate in order to pursue individual careers and contribute to achieving Indian self-determination and economic self-reliance.
- We, the [First Nations] peoples, are committed through education to maintain and enhance our cultural and traditional values, specifically our natural resources. At the same time, we recognize the importance of excelling in academic and technical areas. We seek to attain a balance in the intellectual, physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of each individual. We are bound together in a common goal to achieve self-esteem for each individual and self-determination for the community.
- The education of our People is the future of our Nation.
- We seek to provide quality education that will enable our students to:
 - attain balance in their intellectual and spiritual beings;



- understand and appreciate our culture; and
 - acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills to be lifelong learners.
-
- The Education Committee recognizes that it is extremely important that moral support, advisory services, and financial assistance be provided to Band members who want to further their education and training and who are eligible for post-secondary funding. Based on the availability of funds, every effort and provision will be made to assist Band members to successfully pursue and complete their education.

 - The Education Aid Program is designed to encourage and support members of the First Nation to acquire qualifications so that they may become economically self-sufficient and realize their individual potential for contribution to the First Nation community and society at large. The program shall provide counselling and adequate financial support, as defined by the Education Committee, to Band members who have been accepted by an accredited education institute. It is the belief of the First Nation that Band members have the right to receive aid in pursuing post-secondary and vocational education. However, it is also believed that for an individual to be successful in acquiring an education, individuals must take responsibility for setting and achieving their educational goals.

Sample Policy Objectives

- To encourage and support pre-qualified, eligible Band members to gain access to post-secondary education and to graduate from their respective programs with the qualifications they require to pursue their chosen careers, and to realize their individual potentials for contribution to the community and to society at large
- To provide counselling to students in budgeting, career planning, and job market research, and assistance in acquiring financial resources to successfully complete their post-secondary studies
- To ensure that students are aware of all available sources of education funding and the process through which these funds are accessed
- To meet the ever-increasing demand by Band members for post-secondary assistance and to provide post-secondary educational opportunities to as many Band members as possible

2. Preamble

A preamble to the PSSSP Policies is an opportunity to provide background information and to provide an overview of the PSSSP policies. Most preambles contain answers to the following questions.

- Who created the PSE Policies?
- Who administers the PSE funding?
- How were the policies developed?
- What are purposes of the policies?
- What is the structure/format of this set of policies?



Sample Preambles or Purpose of the Policies

The Post-Secondary Student Support Program is designed to assist registered Band members to acquire university and professional qualifications. It is the hope of the Education Committee that such individuals will become economically self-sufficient and realize their individual potentials for contribution to their Nation, to other First Nations, and to society at large.

The Post-Secondary Policies and Procedures Handbook was developed to provide students with a comprehensive, detailed guide to the Nation's Post-Secondary Education Program. In this Handbook, we attempt to fully detail the Department's responsibilities to the students and the students' responsibilities to the Nation. We think that it is essential that all students fully understand their rights and responsibilities. We believe that this open administration will foster the continued development of policies and procedures that will treat all students in a consistently fair manner.

Sample Policy Outline

This document outlines:

- Program policy and guidelines
- Goals of the Education Society
- Eligibility criteria
- Education priorities for funding allocations
- Types and levels of allowances available through the program
- Student responsibilities
- Contingency funding
- Appeal process

Sample Policy Preface

The first Band administered Post-Secondary Education Policy came into effect on (insert date). That policy was developed based on input from community members, Band staff, and post-secondary students. The policy is consistent with the INAC National Program Guideline requirements, combined with the rules and regulations more suited to the Band post-secondary students. The latest amendments have been made as a result of input from education staff and current post-secondary students over the past three years. This Post-Secondary Education Policy is a guide to assist staff who administer the program and provide administrative and financial support to students who are participants in the Post-Secondary Program. This policy is subject to amendment from time to time based on changes to the post-secondary system and the needs of the students and the Band.

It should be noted that decisions made regarding the financial support of Band members who wish to be considered students under the provisions of this policy will be made in the best interests of the student and are contingent upon the Band's ability to fund education programs. Students should be aware that financial subsidization under this policy is provided to cover most of the costs associated with pursuing a post-secondary education, but that the funding is in no way intended to be a replacement for a wage, salary, or any other type of support payment from other sources. Part-time or casual employment during educational studies in no way disqualifies Band members from receiving financial sponsorship.



3. Definitions

Definitions of policy terms help to keep the policy interpretation consistent. Agreement on the meaning of terms is particularly important as the students may encounter a wide range of definitions at their educational institutions.

Sample Definitions

- Academic Plan - the program credit requirements. Each semester, students are to comply with course requirements/prerequisites to complete their certificate, diploma or degree in a timely manner. All registered courses must coincide with the program requirements.
- Academic Probation - a period of time during which a student is under strict academic guidelines, usually because of low or failing grades
- Academic Year - is as defined by the post-secondary institution, and is usually at least eight months in duration
- Canadian Public Institution - is a post-secondary institution that receives the majority of its funding from federal and provincial governments
- Certificate - certification for completion of a college program, usually one year program
- Contingency Funding - financial support provided to students for costs related to emergencies. Emergencies eligible for contingency funding include individual or family illness, accident or bereavement.
- Dependent Spouse - a person who is married to the student or a person who has lived with the student as a partner for a period of at least one year prior to application for educational support. This person is dependent upon the student and does not receive an annual income in excess of \$_____.
- Dependents - any minor aged person who relies on a student for support and is living full-time with that student (for additional information on the definition of dependents refer to the Canada Student Loan web site www.bcsap.bc.ca)
- Diploma - refers to diploma received for completion of a college diploma program, usually 2 years in length
- Full-time Student - a student, who in each term or semester takes a minimum of 60% of the course load of the program as defined by the department and the institution.
- Full Program Load - the total number of courses required in any given year to complete a program in the normal length of time prescribed by the post-secondary institution
- Medical Release - a student who is required, for medical reasons, to be absent from classes for more than one week, is required to provide the Band Education Manager, within 10 days of the onset of the illness or medical condition, with a note or certificate from their doctor or medical institution that provides details of their illness or reason for absence from classes. Failure to do this may result in the student being required to reimburse the Band for all educational funds that have been provided to the student in the semester during which the absence took place.
- Normal Program Length - the length of time normally required to complete a program as outlined in the course of studies
- Part-time Student - a student who takes less than 60% of the required course load as outlined by the department and institution in a term (semester).



- Post-Secondary Education - is a program of studies offered by an accredited post-secondary institute that has the completion of secondary school or required completion of certain high school courses as a pre-requisite.
- Post-Secondary Institution – certificate, diploma and degree granting institutions which are recognized by a province and include educational institutions affiliated with or delivering accredited post-secondary programs with transferable credits by arrangement with a public post-secondary institution.
- Private Post-Secondary Institution - a Canadian or foreign post-secondary institution that receives the majority of funding from sources other than governments. For the purposes of PSSSP funding, private post-secondary institutes must be on the ‘designated schools list’ (see www.bcsap.bc.ca for designated schools list).
- Program of Studies - includes all post-secondary programs at least one academic year in duration, leading to a certificate, diploma or degree offered by an accredited post-secondary institute
- Semester - refers to a part of the academic year, as defined by the post-secondary institution. Semesters usually run from September to December (fall), January to April (winter) and then a variety of spring and summer semester schedules
- Sponsorship - provision of financial support to an individual for attending a post-secondary institution. This support may include tuition, books, living allowance, tutoring, and travel allowance, as applicable.
- Spouse - is a person who has lived with the student as a husband or wife for a period of not less than one year prior to application for educational aid. If the "spouse" is legally married to the student, no time factors are relevant or applicable.
- UCEP: - term used by the federal government for "University and College Entrance Preparation Program"
- Wait List - the Selection Committee will create a wait list of (insert number) students each year. Students whose names appear on the wait list will be notified as spaces become available. This selection of students only occurs if a currently sponsored student withdraws from his/her studies. If students on the wait list are not sponsored within the academic year, they must re-apply.

4. Responsibilities

PSE Policies can list the responsibilities of students, education staff, and First Nation governance authorities surrounding PSSSP funding. Student responsibilities usually include responsibility for the appropriate use of the funding and co-operation with the education staff. Education staff may be responsible for administering the funding according to the policies, and Chief and Council have a responsibility to ensure that education staff are fulfilling their commitments to the students and to the community.



Sample 1 Responsibilities

Student Responsibilities

- to do everything possible to ensure that their education needs are being met in a positive and effective manner
- to notify the Education Committee of tuition payment requirements at least one week before the deadline
- to provide current mailing address, phone numbers and bank account information
- to provide written notification to the Education Committee of program changes (i.e. changing area of study) and provide an updated academic plan
- to provide written notice of course or program withdrawal. Withdrawal must be made prior to fee reimbursement deadline and if withdrawal occurs after the fee reimbursement deadline students may be responsible for tuition costs
- to at all times maintain a full course load as outlined in the Student Support Program Policy
- to maintain the minimum grade point average in their program according to the program policies or the post-secondary institute program guidelines (whichever is higher)
- to notify the Education Committee in writing by the end of April of their academic plans; to provide by January 31 request for summer or spring enrolment, pending funding availability; and to provide in April of the current year a letter requesting that the student be included as a continuing student for the following September enrolment
- to provide course registration documents to the Education Committee at the beginning of each semester
- to provide official transcripts to the Education Committee at the conclusion of each semester

Sample 2 Responsibilities

- That students take full responsibility for setting and achieving their post-secondary education goals
- That students have been planning their career path at least one year in advance of applying for post-secondary assistance
- That students have been planning their finances and preparing a detailed budget, and that students fully understand the concept of "living within your means"
- That students have sought career counselling, thoroughly researched the job market, and have based their selection of post-secondary programs on the availability of employment at the conclusion of their studies
- That students have been employed or plan to be employed during the four months (two months for new Grade 12 graduates) prior to entering post-secondary studies
- That students will seek to access additional financial assistance through bursaries, scholarships, and work study programs
- That post-secondary assistance is intended for direct education expenses only (tuition, books and living allowance) and not for any other purpose
- That post-secondary assistance is not intended to cover personal debts incurred before or during attendance at post-secondary institutions. This includes but is not limited to credit card payments, vehicle loans, outstanding personal loans, and outstanding rental arrears to the Band



Sample 3 Student Responsibilities (full-time students)

- Students will be responsible for submitting receipts for tuition, books, supplies, etc. to the Education Centre.
- Students will sign, date and return to the Education Centre the monthly expense forms sent out with their cheques each month before any additional assistance will be paid.
- Students will be responsible for submitting a monthly progress report to the Education Coordinator at the Education Centre.
- Students will sign and return any additional educational documentation as may be required by the Education Centre.
- Before continued funding can be provided, students will be responsible for submitting their school transcripts to the Education Centre within sixty days after each completed semester.
- If the full-time student becomes a part-time student during the course of the semester, the student must inform the Education Coordinator of the change from full-time to part-time status. Part-time students are eligible for the costs related to tuition and books only.
- Full-time students who do not complete their course of studies, without reason, must reimburse the Education Program for all costs incurred on their behalf. No future Post-Secondary Student Support assistance will be available until full reimbursement is made. All reasons for leaving a Post-Secondary Educational Institution must be brought before the Education Committee within 30 days of leaving the said institution.

Sample Education Staff Responsibilities

- To ensure that the education program is administered according to existing policies
- To assist students in gaining access to post-secondary education
- To encourage and support students throughout their educational journey

Sample Chief and Council Responsibilities

- To ensure that staff are working for the community and that education services are made available to the entire Band membership
- To approve the annual budget
- To approve amendments to the Post-Secondary Education Policy
- To hear appeals to this policy when required to do so

5. Eligibility (Note – The National Program Guidelines require the inclusion of Eligibility provisions within a Local Operating Policy)

To be eligible to receive post-secondary education financial support, individuals typically must meet certain criteria surrounding membership to the First Nation and acceptance into a post-secondary institution. Individuals may also be required to submit documentation that shows that they meet the eligibility requirements.

Sample 1 Eligibility Requirements

- must be a status [First Nation] person; registered to the Band



- must have been a Canadian resident for twelve consecutive months prior to the date of application
- must have met university or college entrance requirements and have been enrolled or accepted for enrolment in a program of studies at a post-secondary institution
- must submit a letter outlining:
 - career and education goals
 - employment trend/job availability
 - previous experience in the chosen field of study
 - steps taken to achieve university or college entrance
 - a projected budget of income and expenses while attending school
 - letters of support
- must submit an application form
- must submit a records release form
- must provide an acceptance letter from the applicant's chosen university or college and/or a document indicating promotion and/or approval to continue studies from the post-secondary educational institution which the applicant has most recently attended
- must provide official transcripts from the most recent secondary school and/or post-secondary school attended
- must submit an academic plan outlining courses to be taken for the duration of the program (all courses for program requirement to outline course enrolment and registration)

Sample 2 Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible to receive aid under the terms of the Educational Aid Program, it is necessary that: The applicant is a member of the First Nation. Priority will be given to applicants in the following order:

- Students currently enrolled in a post-secondary institution returning to a full-time diploma or degree program;
- Students graduating from Grade 12 and entering a post-secondary institution, enrolling in a full-time diploma or degree program;
- Students who have graduated from Grade 12 in previous years and have not applied for/or received funding;
- Band members with Grade 12 equivalency who have not previously received funding from this program;
- Band members applying for training who have not received funding from this program previously and contingent upon available funds;
- Band members re-applying to continue a degree program contingent upon available funds; and
- Non-Band members living on the reserve who have graduated from Grade 12 who have not/could not receive funding from their Band, and at the discretion of the Education Committee in consultation with the Education Resource Facilitator.

The applicant has been accepted by an accredited post-secondary institution and that he/she be enrolled in a minimum of three courses in the first semester of the first academic year, and then four courses during the second semester. This applies to University and College Entrance Preparation Programs. The following years, the number of courses that a student is enrolled in is



based on the institution's criteria for a full load in their program of study. If funds are available, a student may be funded as a part-time student during the spring semester (i.e. two subjects). The applicant provides a letter of acceptance from the institution that the student plans to attend, or a document indicating promotion and/or approval to continue studies from the education institution that the student most recently attended.

The applicant is aware that funds provided to students through this program are not intended to be sufficient to assist the student to pay off personal debts.

The applicant maintains a "C" or two (2) grade point average or equivalent standing in each term in which he/she is enrolled. If a student fails to keep this standing a letter will advise him/her that he/she is on probation and must improve his/her grades in the next term. If a student is below this standing for two consecutive terms his/her case will be reviewed by the Education Committee before he/she returns to school. The Committee has the option of discontinuing the student's aid. Interim reports are to be provided to the Committee.

The student has lived in Canada twelve months prior to application.

Sample 3 Full-time Student Eligibility

Students who have applied for and who have been refused assistance through the British Columbia Student Assistance Program may apply for financial assistance from the Band. Sponsorship is contingent upon the following.

- The student must show proof of having applied for and being refused assistance through the BCSAP.
- The student has applied for and been approved for post-secondary funding by the Education Committee.
- During the 16 weeks prior to the class start date of each school year, the student demonstrates personal responsibility by:
 - Working at least 360 hours (180 hours for secondary school graduates directly out of secondary school) and for at least minimum wage; or
 - Looking for work while volunteering at least 10 hours a week in a Band program or at the school;
 - If you are a parent, caring for your child(ren) age 11 or under; or
 - A combination of the above.
- The student is enrolled in a post-secondary program leading to a certificate, diploma, or degree.
- The student is enrolled in a minimum of 60% of post-secondary courses in the first semester of the first year and a minimum of 80% of post-secondary courses in the second semester of the first year. During all subsequent years, the student must be enrolled in a full program load.
- The student maintains the grade point average required to continue in the program.
- The student successfully completes all courses for the duration of the program.



- The student is not enrolled in any courses that the Band has previously funded. If the student is required to repeat any courses, the student will bear all costs for completing those courses. Sponsorship will be suspended until the student successfully completes these courses.
- The student completes the program of studies in the normal length of time as determined by the institution, plus a grade period of one semester (4 months) for a certificate or diploma, or two semester (8 months) for a degree.
- Failure to comply with the above conditions will result in sponsorship being terminated.

Sample 4 Eligibility

To be eligible to receive assistance under the terms of the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP), it is necessary that:

- the applicant is a registered Band member and that application is made to the Education Committee; and
- the applicant has attained entrance requirements through successful completion of secondary school studies or equivalency and has been accepted for registration into a program of a public university, community college, CEGEP or institute of technology.

Please note that students wishing to study at the post-secondary level outside of British Columbia are entitled to do so, but such students will receive their living allowance in Canadian funds, equivalent to what students studying in BC receive. Tuition fees will be paid only to a maximum cost for a similar program in BC nearest to the student's place of residence at the time of application and will be paid in Canadian funds.

6. Application Process

PSSSP Policies usually describe the process by which students must apply for funding. The application process component may include the following items.

- Description of how to get a PSSSP funding application package
- List of documents that the students must provide (application form, letter of application, proof of acceptance into a post-secondary institution, waiver, education plan, medical form, transcripts, etc.)
- Date when applications must be received
- Provisions for incomplete applications
- Provisions for late applications

Sample Application Process

Application packages must be received by March 31 prior to the winter semester start date. Any applications received late or incomplete will be put onto a waiting list according to date received and eligibility. September enrolment receives priority funding, and if a program begins at another time, approval of sponsorship will be based upon funding availability and eligibility of applicants.



Sample 1 Deadlines for Application

School Start Date: September Deadline June 1
January Deadline October 1
Summer Session Deadline March 1

Sample 2 Deadlines for Application

For September enrolment June 1

For January enrolment October 1

For inter-session or summer school minimum of one month prior to start of a program, if funding is still available

Sample Application Packages Content

- Letter of Intent - describing your educational goals and definite plans for the next academic year, current level of education, intended course of studies, and how long it will take you to reach your goals. Also, include an outline of the intended courses for the first or next year of the program of studies you intend to follow.
- Student Funding Contract - outlines the student's contractual responsibilities and it must be signed and returned to the Education Coordinator
- Student Authorization/Waiver - this document is necessary to permit education staff to access student records. It is important for funding purposes, and on occasion the Education Coordinator has a need to verify that students are attending and passing classes.

Sample Continuing Students Application Process

Continuing students must provide the following.

1. Completed application package issued by the Education Department
2. Letter of acceptance for next academic year
3. Transcripts from last term
4. Letter of Intent

Sample New Students Application Process

The following must be submitted to the Band Education Coordinator.

- Photocopy of a recent status card
- Completed Post-Secondary application package issued by the Education Department
- Letter of acceptance from the academic institution applied to
- Residency declaration
- Transcripts from previous academic institutions or secondary school
- Detailed Letter of Intent
- Letter of recommendation from instructor or employer

Sample Selection Committee to Evaluate Applications

Each year a Selection Committee is structured. The Selection Committee is responsible for reviewing completed post-secondary application packages using the criteria outlined in the Post-Secondary Policy. The committee will select students for sponsorship (depending on budget) and it will also select and rate four students for the wait list. The Selection Committee will include at least three of the following members.

- Band Councilor - education portfolio holder



- Elder
- Band community member
- Representative from the school board
- Education Coordinator

The Selection Committee will meet in early/mid June to interview applicants for post-secondary funding. The Education Coordinator will arrange interview dates and times. The Selection Committee will meet in early November to interview applicants for January enrolment. Letters of acceptance or non-acceptance will be sent to applicants no later than one week after the interview date.

Sample Application for New Applicants and Returning Students

Students applying for post-secondary funding for the first time and students who wish to return to post-secondary education after an interruption in studies of one semester or more are required to contact the Education Coordinator to arrange a personal interview. During that interview, students will be provided with an application package that must be completed in full before an application will be considered. The completed package will include the following documents.

- Completed and signed education plan for the duration of the program. This must be completed with the Education Coordinator or with an academic advisor from the post-secondary institution
- Copy of the letter of acceptance from the post-secondary institution. All costs associated with applying to the post-secondary institution are the responsibility of the student
- Job search demonstrating opportunities for employment upon completion of post-secondary studies
- A signed statement that the student has read the Post-Secondary Student Assistance Policy and Procedures, fully understands the conditions under which the student is receiving post-secondary assistance, and agrees to comply with the conditions as set out in the policy

Sample Continuing Students Application Process

All students who are currently enrolled in full-time post-secondary studies are required to renew their application for post-secondary sponsorship and to submit the following documents on or before the application deadlines:

- Completed and signed application form
- Official sealed transcript of grades including all courses from the current year or term
- Completed copy of the Loan Remission Qualifier Form

7. Priority

When funding is limited, applicants for post-secondary sponsorship must not only meet the minimum eligibility requirements, they will also be ranked to determine who receives funding that year. Priority can be determined by a number of factors:

- Type of student (returning university student, secondary school graduate, etc.)
- Record of academic success and/or effort to improve study skills



- History of responsible funding use
- Level of need
- Benefit of this post-secondary training to the First Nation's social and economic development

Some First Nations combined Eligibility and Priority considerations in their PSSSP Policies.

Sample 1 Priority for Funding

The applicant must be a registered member with the Band. Priority will be given to applicants in the following order:

- Students who were enrolled in post-secondary studies the previous year
- Students who graduated from secondary school or a college entrance preparation program in the preceding year and who are continuing in a post-secondary program of studies. This includes students who have graduated from Grade 12 and who are entering college or university without a break in their studies.
- Students who have graduated from Grade 12 and who have not previously received post-secondary funding
- Students who have completed an undergraduate degree program and are continuing on to an advanced degree program without a break in their studies
- Students whose applications for financial assistance were deferred the previous year for lack of funds and who are reapplying for post-secondary funding
- Band members who are applying for part-time post-secondary studies
- Students who have previously received post-secondary funding but did not complete their post-secondary programs. The circumstances under which a student decided not to continue post-secondary studies will factor in the Education Committee's consideration of the application for assistance.

Approval of applications by the Education Committee will also depend upon:

- The economic or social benefit of the applicant's intended program of studies to the community - Students will be expected to commit to working for the Band for two years after graduating from their programs provided the opportunity for employment exists.
- The location of the post-secondary institution - Priority will be given to public post-secondary institutions within British Columbia. Students are expected to attend the nearest institution that offers the chosen program of studies.

Sample 2 Priority for Funding

First Priority:

- Continuing Students - students who have attended school on a full-time basis and have successfully completed all courses or students who have completed at least one year of studies and have continued to take courses toward their certificate, diploma or degree on a part-time basis.

Second Priority:

- Graduating Secondary School Students, including:
- students who have graduated from secondary school in the current year with a Dogwood Certificate;
- students who have completed 12 years of education in the public school system and are eligible to attend a post-secondary institution; and



- students who have equivalent training or education (i.e. GED).

Third Priority:

- Students who have started to pay for their own education (the funds that have been spent to date will not be reimbursable)

Fourth Priority:

- Students who have previously attended a post-secondary institution but for academic or personal reasons have had to interrupt their education for a period of more than one semester

Fifth Priority:

- Mature Students - students who may or may not have completed secondary school, are at least 21 years of age, and who wish to return to full-time studies

Sixth Priority:

- All other students

Sample 3 Priority for Funding

The Education Society offers assistance in the following areas - listed in priority in reference to student and program.

- Continuing Students - full-time students currently in a program at a post-secondary institution
- Grade 12 graduates beginning a program at a post-secondary institution
- New students enrolling into a College or University Entrance Program (UCEP)
- New students enrolling in a university or college programs; are encouraged to come back to the community and provide two years of service to the community
- Skills and Trades - two years or less at a post-secondary college, at two per year (trial) (note this education program must meet the eligibility criteria as outlined in the National Program Guidelines)
- Adult Basic Education/Upgrading - part-time sponsorship is available which is tuition, books and supplies only
- Correspondence Courses - through a post-secondary institution

Sample 4 Other Considerations for Funding Priority

Your application for funding will be reviewed with the following being taken into consideration.

- If you owe the Band money for previous or present education sponsorship, you will be required to pay this debt before being considered for further funding.
- If you have been funded previously, you will be required to submit any transcripts pertaining to the period of time you were funded.
- If you are a continuing student or a student graduating from secondary school, you will be required to be in good academic standing and the Education Manager must receive your academic transcripts in order to have funding authorized. If you have failing marks, any courses are incomplete, or you did not write a final exam, you may not be considered for funding.
- If your academic records indicate that you have a history of not completing programs or courses, your application will not be considered until all other applications have been reviewed and only then if there are funds available in the current fiscal year. Approval of an application under these circumstances may involve a probationary period.



- You must meet the admission requirements of the academic institution you plan to attend and a letter must be sent from an advisor or counselor of that institution stating that you meet the academic requirements for admission.

Sample Academic Success Provision

Academic success will be factored into the approval process on an annual basis. Students with high scholastic standing will be granted a higher position on the priority list than other students in the same category, keeping in mind that those students with a full course load will normally be rated higher than those students who are enrolled in less than a full course load.

Sample Full-time Student Assistance

To be considered a full-time student during the school year, the applicant must meet the following criteria: the applicant must be carrying a 60% program course load as defined by the department and institution. Full-time students may receive:

- Tuition Assistance
- Funds for Books, Supplies, and Mandatory Equipment
- Travel Assistance
- Living Allowance
- Be eligible to apply for scholarship incentives, as appropriate
- Contingency Funding

Sample Part-time Student Assistance

Part-time students may be supported if their program of studies is of at least one academic year in duration and/or leads to a certificate, diploma or degree. Part-time students may receive assistance for tuition, the cost of mandatory books and supplies, emergency contingency funding and appeal funding only.

Sample University and College Entrance Preparation (UCEP) Student Assistance

- UCEP students may be either part-time or full-time students and must be enrolled in a University and College Entrance Preparation (UCEP) program of a post-secondary institution. The maximum time limit for financial support will be one academic year (as defined by the institution offering the program), or in the case of part-time students, the time period equivalent to one academic year.
- UCEP students must qualify under the mature student admission requirements of the post-secondary institution they wish to attend.
- UCEP students must provide a statement from the post-secondary institution offering the UCEP program that a) the student can attain the academic level for university or college entrance within the period of one academic year and b) the student will be accepted as a student of a regular college or university credit program upon successful completion of the UCEP program.
- UCEP students may be funded the same as and will fall under the rules and responsibilities of either Assistance-Full-time Students or Assistance - Part-time Students, depending upon their enrolment.



- UCEP students cannot have been financially supported previously by DIAND or the Post-Secondary Education Program for any post-secondary program.
- All UCEP students who do not complete their course of studies, without approved reason, must reimburse the Education Program for all costs incurred on their behalf. No future post-secondary student financial support will be available until full reimbursement is made.

8. Categories and Amounts of Assistance

Bearing in mind the distinctions between the students by level and student status, there will be different categories and amounts of funding for which those students will be eligible. Categories of funding may include the following.

- Tuition Fees
- Living Allowance
- Book Allowance
- Supplies/Equipment Allowance
- Tutoring
- Travel
- Contingency Funding

Sample Tuition Assistance

- Tuition assistance includes students' fees for registration, tuition, and the actual cost of books and supplies that are listed as required by the post-secondary institution.
- The cost of tuition and registration fees will be paid to the institution in which the student is enrolled.
- Students will receive an advance for books and supplies for the first semester only. They will be expected to provide receipts to the Education Coordinator for all books and supplies purchased.
- The second and subsequent semesters, students will be expected to pay for their books and supplies themselves and will be reimbursed upon providing receipts to the Education Coordinator.

Sample Full-time Student Living Allowance

Living allowances are expected to cover normal daily living expenditures such as food, lodging, and local travel. Living allowances are not expected to cover personal debts incurred prior to or during attendance at post-secondary institutions. This includes, but is not limited to, credit card payments, vehicle loans, outstanding personal debts, and outstanding rental arrears to the Band.

- The maximum level of living allowance is determined by the current Education Committee's Schedule of Living Allowances.
- A student must be a full-time student to receive a living allowance. If a student withdraws from a course during a term, thus resulting in less than a 60% course load, the living allowance will be discontinued.



- The student will be required to bear the cost of repeating the course and will not be considered for renewed sponsorship until the course has been completed.
- Dependents of a student may only include the student's spouse and those children of the student and the student's spouse. The division of dependents between the student and the student's spouse for the purposes of calculating the student's living allowance shall be as follows:
If the spouse's annual income is:
 - i) \$2000.00 or less Spouse is a dependent of the student
 - ii) \$2000.01 - 7,600.00 All children are dependents of the student
 - iii) \$7,600.01-12,000.00 One child is the dependent of the spouse; all others are dependents of the student
 - iv) \$12,000.01 - 15,000.00 Two children are dependents of the spouse; all others are dependents of the student
 - v) \$15,000.01 - 20,000.00 Three children are dependents of the spouse; all others are dependents of the student
 - vi) \$20,000.01 and over All children are dependents of the spouse
- If claiming dependents, the student is required to provide a copy of the spouse's income tax return.

Sample Additional Provision Regarding Living Expenses

To be eligible to receive additional living allowance for dependents, those dependents must be living in the same residence as the student.

Sample Special Shelter Allowance

When it is necessary for a student to rent accommodation in order to attend a post-secondary institution and the cost of the accommodation exceeds 25% of the total current income of the student, the student's spouse, and any dependents residing with the student, a compensatory special shelter allowance may be provided. The special allowance is equal to the difference between the actual rental cost of the necessary accommodation and 25% of the total current incomes of the student, the student's spouse, and any dependents residing with the student.

- The accommodation costs include only the actual rental cost of the premises. The special shelter allowance is intended to provide basic and reasonable accommodation for the student, the student's spouse, and any dependents residing with the student. The student will be required to provide information about typical student housing costs to justify receiving the special shelter allowance. Note: the special shelter allowance may not exceed the maximum living allowance allowed under the Canada Student Loan program for the funding year.
- Where it is necessary for a student to rent accommodation in order to attend a post-secondary institution and a damage deposit is required, the program will pay the deposit. The deposit will be subtracted from the living allowance.
- A copy of the rental/lease agreement must be provided to the Education Coordinator to qualify for the special shelter allowance.

Sample High Rent Allowance

Married students with a dependent spouse and two or more dependents, as well as single parents with two or more dependents, qualify for high rent if their place of study is located in a high rental area. The high rental areas are determined annually by Canada Mortgage and Housing



Corporation's rental survey. Note: the high rent allowance may not exceed the maximum living allowance allowed under the Canada Student Loan program for the funding year.

Sample Orientation Travel

The Education Committee will review and approve requests for travel (equivalent to Greyhound rates) and meals for the student to attend an orientation with the post-secondary institute, only if it is a requirement of the chosen institute. This trip will count as one of the two allowable trips per academic year.

Sample Travel Allowance

a) Seasonal Travel

When a student must change his/her place of residence to attend a post-secondary institution and the distance is greater than 250 kilometers, the student shall be eligible for a travel allowance equal to the cost of one return trip per semester for each year the student is enrolled. Travel costs will be paid in full for the student, and when necessary, the student's dependents. These costs will be based on the most appropriate method of travel.

b) Daily Travel

Daily travel is considered part of the living allowance, which is paid only to full-time students.

Sample Emergency Travel

In the event of a death or illness in the immediate family (father, mother, brother, sister), full-time students are eligible to receive one trip at the same rates as outlined under Seasonal Travel.

Sample Book Allowance

Book allowance will be provided for full-time and part-time students based on actual amounts. Requests from students enrolled in specialized programs that require more expensive books, supplies, and/or equipment will be considered on an individual need basis. If any student has legitimate books and supplies expenses over and above the amount provided, they are to submit all receipts for books and supplies purchases to the education staff in the winter term. Depending on funding availability, some or all of the additional expenses may be reimbursed.

Sample Requests for Alternate Funding or Financial Assistance

From time to time, for a variety of reasons, full-time post-secondary students may request funding arrangements that differ from those contained in this policy. Such requests will be forwarded to the Education Manager who will make recommendations to Band Council on the advisability of supporting the request. Approval of requests for alternate funding arrangements will be on an individual basis and will be judged on their own merits. Approval will depend upon the student's past record of financial dealings with the Band, their maturity as a student as judged by the Education Manager, and their past academic record. Band Council will only approve a request for alternate funding if the granting of the request is within the parameters of the INAC National Program Guidelines and Band Financial Bylaw. Requests for financial assistance will normally only be accepted from "senior: students", i.e. students in the last two years of an undergraduate degree, post-graduate students, or students in the last semester of a diploma or certificate program.



Sample Travel

Students who must travel a distance of more than 100 kilometers and are living away from their normal place of residence are eligible for reimbursement of travel costs twice each year to and from the closest public post-secondary institution offering their program of study. Reimbursable travel expenses will normally be the lowest priority for funding.

Sample Student Advances

There will be no student advances. Due to direct depositing, student advances will not be accommodated. Budgeting is the student's responsibility.

Sample Parking Passes/Bus Passes

Students are expected to provide their own bus and parking passes. In urban areas, the cost of public transportation is often included in the tuition fees. Check with the post-secondary institution.

Sample Deferred Studies

Sponsored students may defer their studies for up to one year. The student must be in good academic standing and have made arrangements with the Education Coordinator.

Sample Personal Challenges

Should a student's studies be seriously affected by personal crisis, such as death in the family, accident or sickness, they are advised to notify the Education Coordinator advising them of their situation. Students are encouraged to seek counselling for support.

Sample Waiting List

A waiting list will be made each year beginning June 1. A student whose name is on the waiting list will be notified of their position. This waiting list will be affected by factors such as the number of continuing students, number of graduating students, student success, and the amount of funds available of the Band.

Sample Tutoring Expenses Assistance

Students that require tutoring in any of the courses leading to the completion of their programs are required to advise the Education Coordinator and get permission to employ the services of a tutor, pay the fee, and submit all receipts to the Education Coordinator for reimbursement. After receiving approval from the Education Coordinator, students may also choose to have the tutor invoice the Band directly. All costs must be pre-approved by the Education Coordinator.

9. Funding Limitations

PSSSP Policies usually state the maximum number of months or school semesters that a student is eligible for funding. This requires taking into consideration the reasonable length of time needed for completing a program of studies, as well as making provisions for students who change their academic goals partway through their studies. (Note – local policy funding limits cannot exceed INAC National Policy Guidelines.)



Samples Funding Limits

Colleges and Universities

Length of Program Funding Limitation

2 years 3 years or 6 terms or semesters

4 years 5 years or 10 terms or semesters

5 years 6 years or 12 terms or semesters

Masters Degree 3 Semesters beyond Undergraduate Degree

Doctoral Degree 4 Semesters beyond Masters Degree

Sample College Preparation Program

The Band will sponsor students for one year, or two semesters, of college preparation for six courses or eighteen credit hours at the rate of closest public institution. If a student chooses to attend another institution, it is the student's responsibility for any additional costs incurred.

Sample Limits of Assistance by Level

- Level 1 - Community college, vocational or technical institutes and CEGEP diploma or certificate programs.

Students registered in a Level 1 program are eligible for a maximum of 16 months of assistance to complete a program leading to a diploma, certificate or license.

- Level 2 – Undergraduate programs

Students registered in a Level 2 program are eligible for a maximum of 24 months of assistance to complete an undergraduate program leading to a Bachelor degree.

- Level 3 – Graduate and Post-Graduate programs/doctoral programs

Students registered in a Level 3 program are eligible for a maximum of 56 months of assistance to complete an undergraduate degree plus post-graduate program, masters or professional degree.

- Changing programs uses up student months within each of the levels. Once you have completed 16 months in a Level 1 program, with or without Band funding, no further Level 1 programs are available to you. Once a Level 2 program is complete, a student may not be funded for future Level 1 or Level 2 programs. Upon completion of a Level 3 program, students are not eligible for further Level 1, Level 2 or Level 3 assistance.
- Funding will not be backdated to cover time before the Education Committee accepts a student's application for assistance.

Sample Tuition Fees Limits

Fees will be paid to the maximum amount of:

- \$2000 - college tuition fees per academic year
- \$2400 - university tuition fees (e.g. Bachelor of Arts) per academic year
- Note: Students who are on probation are expected to pay 1/2 of the first semester's tuition fees.
- Students attending out of country programs will be expected to pay exchange costs.
- Audited or failed courses will not be paid.
- Tuition fees will be paid directly to the college or university by a letter of sponsorship.



10. Termination of Funding

It is common for PSSSP Policies to detail the circumstances in which a student's funding may be decreased, withheld or terminated. If, for instance, the student does not honour the contract they made when they applied for funding, payments to the student may stop. Some of the most common reasons for terminating funding include:

- change of status from full-time to part-time without informing the Education Committee;
- poor class attendance;
- failure to meet the minimum grade expectations required by the Band or their post-secondary institute;
- misuse of funding; and/or
- failure to submit required documents such as transcripts.

Sample Conditions for Termination Funding

Student suspensions will automatically be issued for:

- dishonesty
- harassment, including sexual harassment
- withdrawal from a program without notification to the Education Committee
- violation of the express or implied conditions of this program or the program of studies amounting to insubordination or willful disobedience

Sample Other Provisions

- Suspensions shall be in effect for not less than one semester and not more than five calendar years.
- The Education Coordinator or the Administrator has the power to revoke or change the conditions of any suspension, subject to these guidelines.
- Upon reinstatement following any period of suspension, a student must be placed on academic probation for at least the first semester, in accordance with the guidelines concerning academic achievement.

Sample Misuse of Band Education Funds

In the event that a student drops out and receives funds or the Band pays funds on their behalf of the student, the student is liable to repay the full amount to the Education Department. Payment options can be discussed with the Education Coordinator. If repayment of fees is necessary, all/any post-secondary sponsorship will be withheld until the Education Department receives full payment.



Sample Termination of Educational Assistance

The Education Committee will terminate educational assistance to a student who:

- is registered as a full-time student and does not inform the Education Committee in advance of any such change in status and becomes a part-time student during the course of the semester. The student must inform the Education Committee of any change from full-time to part-time status;
- the Education Committee will determine if the reasons given by the student are adequate for a second chance. An agreement between the student and the Education Committee will be signed, to ensure that the student attends regularly and submits all course requirements. If no improvement is demonstrated by the end of the next semester, the student will be asked to withdraw;
- students who register at a post-secondary institution and who receive the student allowance, but do not attend classes at the institution, must return to the Post-Secondary Program all allowances which were received and/or paid on their behalf. This includes tuition fees, books and supplies, living allowances, and any other monies which may have been forwarded to the student or to the institution on their behalf;
- Full-time students who leave their program of studies prior to the completion of their semester and who wish to receive funding for future semesters, must provide written proof from the institution that they were in full-time attendance during the period of the semester for which they were funded. Failure to provide such proof will result in the student being denied future funding as well as owing to the Post-Secondary Education Program all funds received and/or paid on their behalf, for the semester they did not complete; and/or
- Students who owe money to the Post-Secondary Education Program and who wish to return to post-secondary studies and furthermore who wish to receive financial support from the Post-Secondary Education Program must make arrangements to pay back the amount owed before any future funding is provided.

Sample Academic Probation

- Students placed on academic probation by their educational institution will normally not be sponsored for one academic year or until they are accepted by an educational institution back into an academic program as a full-time student. Such students will not be guaranteed sponsorship by virtue of changing their program of studies or institution.
- Students who receive failing or incomplete marks on 50% or more of their courses will be placed on academic probation by the Education Manager. Students placed on Band-imposed academic probation will be required to sign a letter stating that unless they achieve a passing grade on all courses in the following semester they may be removed from full sponsorship until they successfully complete the courses (or their equivalents) which they failed or failed to complete. Students placed on academic probation may also be required to participate in a study skills program offered by their education institution.



11. Emergency Contingency Funding (Note – Emergency Contingency Funding is a required Local policy)

The PSSSP Policies must outline the circumstances and financial support provided to students to cover emergencies. Examples might include additional travel costs to return home for a funeral of an immediate family member, to attend to a sick family member or to attend a cultural ceremony.

Sample Contingency Funding for Emergency Travel

In the event of a death or illness in the immediate family (father, mother, brother, sister), full-time students and dependents are eligible to receive one trip at the rate most appropriate for travel.

12. Student Appeal Process (Note – Appeal Process is a required Local policy)

The PSSSP Policies must describe actions that students can take if they believe that the PSSSP Policies were applied unfairly to their situation. The process usually begins with the student contacting the Education Coordinator for a meeting, and, if the issue remains unresolved after this meeting, continuing to higher authorities such as the Education Board of Directors and Chief and Council. Deadlines for filing the appeal and the levels of decision-making authority should be clearly stated.

Sample 1 Student Appeal Process

It is the policy of the Education Committee that its students receive fair and equitable treatment; however, should any student be concerned that the preceding regulations and guidelines have not been fairly applied to his or her situation, the student may appeal in the following manner.

- Meet with the Education Coordinator within 15 business days and state the grievance. The Education Coordinator will be obligated to discuss the student's problem and try to resolve it. In the case of the absence of the Education Coordinator, appeals should be made directly to the Education Committee.
- If the student is still not satisfied with the decision of the Education Coordinator, then they must submit in writing the details of their grievance to the Education Committee.
- The student's grievance will be reviewed by the Appeal Committee. The student must attend the scheduled meeting of the Appeal Committee to answer questions that Committee members may request of the student. The Appeal Committee will make their decision within 10 business days.
- The decision made by the Education Appeal Committee will be final and legally binding on the student.

Sample 2 Student Appeals Process

A student who believes that he/she has been unjustly treated with regard to the application of the Post-Secondary Policy has the right to appeal within (30) consecutive days. The student must appeal on his or her own behalf. Appeals by a family member will not be considered.



Procedure:

- The student discusses the issue with the Education Coordinator in an attempt to resolve any dispute with regard to the Post-Secondary Policy.
- If a satisfactory resolution is not achieved and the student wishes to pursue the matter, he/she should discuss it with the Band Education Board Chair.
- If a satisfactory resolution is still not achieved and the student wishes to pursue the matter further, he/she must submit a formal appeal to the Education Board Chair.
- The Board Chair will arrange with the Appeal Committee and the student, the date, place and time of the appeal hearing.
- The Appeal Committee will submit a report on the appeal hearing to the student within 15 business days: the Education Department, Band Council, and the Band office will keep a copy on file.
- Decisions made by the Appeal Committee will be final.

Sample Additional Provisions Regarding Appeals

- Every student has a right to appeal an Education Committee decision regarding funding. However, in cases where a student application has been refused because there are no funds the appeal will not be considered.

13. Incentives and Scholarships

In order to encourage students to pursue studies that enhance their education, the Band may award incentives (awards for completing a degree or a certificate) or scholarships (awards for academic achievement or other school achievement). If these awards are listed in the PSSSP Policies, they can include:

- name and description of the incentive or scholarship;
- eligibility requirements;
- application deadline;
- who to contact for an application package; and/or
- date that applications will be reviewed and procedure for the review.

Sample Scholarships/Incentives

a) Academic Achievement Scholarship: \$1000 (two)

Academic achievement scholarships are available to full-time students in a diploma or degree program. Students must be returning to full-time studies in the fall and have an overall average of B or better.

To apply, students are required to send a letter and an official sealed transcript of grades to the Education Coordinator no later than May 31. Faxed letters will not be accepted.

The Education Committee will review all applications. Applicants will be notified of the Committee's selection by June 30.



b) Post-Graduate Incentive: \$1500 (one)

Full-time students entering the second year of a post-graduate program may be eligible for a one-time maximum \$1500 incentive. Students must have an overall average of B or better. To apply, students are required to send a letter and an official sealed transcript of grades to the Education Coordinator no later than May 31. Faxed letters will not be accepted. The Education Committee will review all applications. Applicants will be notified of the Committee's selection by June 30.

c) Academic Incentives

Academic achievement term incentives are available to full-time students carrying a full program load. To qualify, students must have achieved a final grade average of B or better for the term.

To apply, students are required to send a letter and an official sealed transcript of grades to the Education Coordinator no later than May 31. Faxed letters will not be accepted.

Incentives will be paid upon receipt of the letter and the official sealed transcript provided the student meets the qualifications for the incentive.

Sample Special Situations

The Education Committee reserves the right to offer bursaries to its students dependent upon the availability of funds.

14. Amendments to the Policies

The procedure by which provisions of the PSE Policies can be changed may be stated within the policies.

- Who can recommend amendments?
- To whom are the recommendations made and who has the authority to make changes?
- When will the recommendation for amendments be considered?
- When will the amended policy take effect?
- How will the students/communities be notified of the amendments?

If the Band has a general amendment procedure for all Band policies, then reference can be made to this procedure.

Sample 1 Amendment Process

- Amendments to the Band Education Policy can only be made by the Education Board
- All amendments must be ratified by Chief and Council
- Amendments to the Band Education Policy can only be made at the September and January board meetings.
- A quorum must be available to make changes.
- Changes made must be unanimously agreed upon before being passed.
- Changes made will be posted in the Band monthly newsletter and sent to current students who are attending post-secondary schooling



Sample 2 Amendment Process

- Recommendations for amendments to this policy can be submitted by any Band member or Band staff and are to be submitted to the education staff by December 31 of each year.
- Any policy amendments approved by the Band Council will take effect at the beginning of the next fiscal year.