



Indian and Northern
Affairs Canada

Affaires indiennes
et du Nord Canada

Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) and University and College Entrance Preparation (UCEP) Program

National Program Guidelines

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Table of Contents

1.0	INTRODUCTION.....	3
2.0	PROGRAM OBJECTIVES	3
2.1	The Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP)	3
2.2	The University and College Entrance Preparation (UCEP).....	4
3.0	ELIGIBILITY	4
3.1	Eligible Recipients.....	4
3.2	Eligible Students	4
4.0	DELEGATION OF SERVICE DELIVERY	5
5.0	FUNDING.....	5
5.1	Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP)	5
5.2	University and College Entrance Program (UCEP)	7
5.3	Stacking Provisions.....	7
6.0	ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES	8
6.1.	Eligible Tuition	8
6.2	Incentives.....	8
7.0	MAXIMUM AMOUNTS PAYABLE.....	9
8.0	APPEAL PROCESS	10
9.0	STUDENT REGISTRY	11
10.0	MONITORING, SUPPORT AND ACCOUNTABILITY	11
11.0	REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.....	11
12.0	CONTACT INFORMATION	11

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The following Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) and University and College Entrance Program (UCEP) National Program Guidelines will be in effect as of April 1, 2011.

These Program Guidelines include program and student eligibility criteria, in addition to providing national direction for the delivery of the programs and their services. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) regional offices may provide additional detail.

It is important to note that these Guidelines deal only with federal funding for the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) and the University and College Entrance Preparation (UCEP) program.¹

Any issues that arise concerning the interpretation of the PSSSP and UCEP program guidelines will be resolved by the Program Directorate, Education Branch, in the Education and Social Development Programs and Partnerships (ESDPP) Sector with support of Regional Offices.

2.0 PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The objective of the PSSSP and UCEP programs is to improve the employability of treaty/registered Indian and eligible Inuit students by providing them with access to education and skill development opportunities at the post-secondary level. This is expected to lead to greater participation of First Nation and Inuit students in post-secondary studies, higher First Nation and Inuit graduation rates from post-secondary programs, and to improve individual, family and community well-being for First Nations and Inuit through higher employment rates for First Nation people and Inuit. It is expected that students funded by this program will have post-secondary educational outcomes comparable to those of other Canadians with similar educational and socio-economic backgrounds.

2.1 *The Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP)*

The objective of the PSSSP is to improve the employability of treaty/registered Indian and eligible Inuit students by providing them with access to education and skill development opportunities at the post-secondary level.

¹ Guidelines for the Indian Studies Support Program (ISSP), the third program included under the suite of Post-Secondary Education (PSE) programs, are included in a separate document.

2.2 The University and College Entrance Preparation (UCEP)

The objective of UCEP is to provide financial support to treaty/registered Indian and eligible Inuit students who are enrolled in University and College Entrance Preparation (UCEP) programs, offered in Canadian post-secondary institutions, to enable them to attain the academic level required for entrance to degree and diploma credit programs.

3.0 ELIGIBILITY

3.1 Eligible Recipients

Funding for the PSSSP and UCEP programs may go from INAC directly to Councils, or to First Nation organizations designated by Councils (bands/settlements, tribal councils, education organizations, political/treaty organizations). INAC may also enter into funding agreements with public or private organizations engaged by or on behalf of Indian bands or Inuit communities to administer the PSE programs (e.g., private firms or organizations retained as co-managers or third-party managers).

Self-governing First Nation members in Yukon that have not yet assumed responsibility for PSE through a Programs and Services Transfer Agreement are eligible for funding under this program.

Post-Secondary education is a program of studies offered by a post-secondary institution that is at least one academic year of duration (as defined by the institution), and for which the completion of secondary school studies, or the equivalent as recognized by the post-secondary institution, is required.

3.2 Eligible Students

Recipients are required to demonstrate the eligibility of students to receive funding.

To be eligible for funding, students must be:

- Treaty/registered Indians, on or off reserve, who have been resident in Canada for 12 consecutive months prior to the date of application for funding; or
- Inuit are resident in Canada but outside their Territory for 12 consecutive months prior to the date of application for funding.

Furthermore, to be eligible for funding, students must also:

- Have been accepted by an eligible post-secondary institution into either a degree or certificate program, or a UCEP program; and
- Maintain satisfactory academic standing within that institution.

For students attending institutions outside Canada, the residency provision applies only to their first year of studies.

4.0 DELEGATION OF SERVICE DELIVERY

Where the recipient delegates authority or transfers program funding to an agency (e.g., an authority, board, committee or other entity authorized to act on behalf of the recipient), the recipient shall remain liable to the Minister for the performance of all of its obligations under the funding agreement, including all reporting requirements. Neither the objective of the program, nor the expectations of transparent, fair and equitable service shall be compromised by this delegation or transfer of funds.

5.0 FUNDING

Funding is subject to the appropriation of funds by Parliament with respect to the particular programs and services.

INAC shall confirm its authority to enter into an agreement with the recipient to fund the proposed activities. In most cases, PSE would be one of several services to be funded by INAC for a particular recipient, and there would also be an expectation of an ongoing funding relationship between INAC and the recipient. The recipient, therefore, shall be required to provide a complete review of its accountability and management processes and systems. This review shall be based on appropriate accountability and management control frameworks.

Following the assessment, INAC may work with the recipient to prepare a development plan to address issues in the accountability and management framework. Such a plan must address any gaps identified by the assessment and be appended to the agreement. The development plan will remain an integral part of all future funding agreements until all the recommended policies and procedures have been implemented.

Assistance will be provided within the limits of available funding.

5.1 *Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP)*

5.1.1 Local Operating Guidelines

Recipients may have local program guidelines in place for the administration of the PSE funds from this program. Local guidelines must be consistent with the guidelines set out in this document. The local guidelines must include: selection priority criteria, an appeal process (please

see section 8.0), and criteria for emergency contingency funding. They may also include rates and allowances, provided that they do not exceed the maximum amounts payable set out in section 7.0. These local guidelines must be publicly available.

If local program guidelines are not in place, National Program Guidelines will apply.

5.1.2 Limits of Assistance

Assistance can be provided at three levels of post-secondary education:

- Level 1:** Community college and CEGEP diploma or certificate programs;
- Level 2:** Undergraduate University programs; and
- Level 3:** Advanced or professional degree programs, e.g., dentistry, medicine, Masters or Doctoral programs.

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

not be reimbursed for previous expenses.

If the number of eligible student applicants exceeds the funding available, selection priority criteria will apply.

5.2 University and College Entrance Program (UCEP)

Students applying for assistance in UCEP are required to obtain from the post-secondary institution offering the program a statement which attests that the UCEP program will provide the student with the necessary courses to attain the academic level for university or college entrance and the student will be eligible to be accepted as a student of a regular university or college credit program upon successful completion of the UCEP course of studies.

5.2.1 Limits of assistance for UCEP

For all UCEP students, 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 equivalent of one academic year. At the end of the first term (or part of the academic year, as defined by the institution offering the program), financial support for the term will be subject to receipt of a statement from the institution confirming the successful completion of the first term.

Students who are currently enrolled in a UCEP program that is longer than one year may be funded to complete that program, in order to ensure that there is no disruption in services. For any new students funded for UCEP, the maximum time limit for financial support is one academic year.

The support for tuition, travel and living costs for UCEP will be the same as that provided under the PSSSP programs.

5.3 Stacking Provisions

The stacking provisions ensure that different levels of government do not fund a recipient for the same program, service or activity, or that the Consolidated Revenue fund is not funding the same program, service or activity more than once. Proposals from a recipient shall address the requirement that the recipient declare any and all prospective sources of funding for the program, service or activity, inclusive of all federal (other than INAC), provincial, territorial or municipal government source (total government assistance) that are expected to be received. Annual financial reporting shall show all sources of funding received. Where there is more than one source of funding for the same program, service or activity in excess of \$100,000 and, when more total government assistance is provided than was anticipated or actually required, the recipient shall reimburse to INAC a portion equal to INAC's funding to that program, service or activity. The maximum contribution by INAC and total maximum government assistance can be 100% for eligible programs, services and activities.

6.0 ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES

Eligible expenditures for PSSSP and UCEP are: tuition and other compulsory student fees, books, and supplies required by the funded student; travel and living allowances for funded students and their dependents (please see section 7.0 for additional detail). Funding may also be used to provide tutorial, guidance and counselling services for eligible students enrolled in PSE programs.

6.1. Eligible Tuition

Tuition support can be provided at the following levels:

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

6.2 Incentives

Recipients may provide incentives for students to engage in studies that directly contribute to First Nations achieving self-government and economic self-reliance, or to recognize academic achievement.

The administering organization may provide the types of incentives listed in this section. Eligible students may be awarded either one Strategic Studies Scholarship or one Academic Achievement Scholarship in an academic year.

6.2.1 Incentives for students enrolled in Level 3 programs

Students enrolled as full-time students in a Level 3 degree program may receive an incentive from the administering organization, subject to a maximum of \$1,500. This incentive will only be provided once. Students will be eligible for this incentive upon commencement of the second year of the degree, or upon successful completion of the degree.

6.2.2 Strategic Studies Scholarships in Level 2

In order to encourage students to engage in studies that directly contribute to First Nations achieving self-government and economic self-reliance, the administering organization may offer

incentive scholarships.

- i) Students who are currently receiving financial support under the Student Support Program and who are enrolled as full-time students in a program of studies in the areas of commerce, public or business administration, physical science, mathematics and computer sciences, forestry and engineering, and others as defined in the reporting template, are eligible for the Strategic Studies Scholarships.
- ii) The amount of the scholarships awarded by the administering organization may be up to a maximum of \$3,500 annually.
- iii) Eligibility for the scholarship will be conditional upon successful completion of one year of the program of study and continuation in it. The scholarship will be awarded annually the beginning of each year and thereafter in accordance with the length of the program as defined in limits of assistance (b) (please see Section 5.1.2).
- iv) The incentive program will be available to a maximum of five per cent of the student population funded by the program. Recipients of the scholarship will be determined by the administering organization. One scholarship will be available where the five per cent maximum is less than one student.

6.2.3 Academic Achievement Scholarship

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

- i) Students currently receiving support under the PSSSP are eligible for scholarships in recognition of academic achievements;
- ii) The amount of scholarship awarded by the administering organization will be up to a maximum of \$1,000 annually;
- iii) Students may be eligible for the scholarship upon successful completion of each year of their program of studies, and awarded at the beginning of the next school year;
- iv) Scholarships will be available to a maximum of five per cent of the student funded by the recipient. Recipients of the scholarship will be determined by the administering organization. One scholarship will be available where the five percent maximum is less than one student.

7.0 MAXIMUM AMOUNTS PAYABLE

PLEASE NOTE: This is a maximum allowable payment per student. Every student is NOT entitled to this amount. The maximum amount was established to ensure that the most extreme circumstances could be funded as necessary. The actual amount of funding available to a student will depend on the overall amount of funding available in the program.

The maximum amount payable per year to one student from the PSSSP and UCEP program cannot exceed the following:

- The actual cost of tuition and other compulsory student fees;
- Books and supplies (to a maximum of \$2000/year);
- The actual cost of one return trip to the student's permanent place of residence from the nearest PSE institution that offers the program of studies selected by the student every 16 weeks (not more than two trips per academic year) for the student and for each dependent;
- Incentive payments in accordance with the guidelines established by the recipient consistent with section 6.0 of the guidelines; and
- 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.

For a student in a UCEP, community college or CEGEP diploma or certificate program, or an undergraduate university program, the maximum amount payable per year cannot exceed \$35,000. On an extraordinary and justified basis, the maximum amount payable per year for a student in an advanced or professional degree program (e.g., dentistry, medicine, Masters or Doctoral programs) may exceed \$35,000.

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

8.0 APPEAL PROCESS

To ensure fairness and equitable treatment under the PSSSP and UCEP program, administering organizations must have an appeal process in place. This process must incorporate the following basic elements:

- a) Formal statement and public distribution of the PSE policy and procedures;
- b) Ensuring that the student has a right to an established appeal process. This includes the existence of an impartial appeal board;
- c) Ensuring that the student has access to advisory support;
- d) Ensuring that community representatives have an adequate level of participation in the appeal process and its structure;
- e) The administering organization will provide costs for board members and the student to attend the appeal hearing, if necessary;
- f) The establishment of specific time frames for appeal hearing to be set and for decisions to be made;
- g) Confirmation that the administering organization will abide by the appeal board's decision.

A student may not appeal to INAC the administrative decisions and appeal rulings made by the appeal board.

9.0 STUDENT REGISTRY

The administering organization is responsible for maintaining a Student Registry. This registry will 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 and any additional information which may be required from time to time. This information will be recorded and confirmed through INAC's PSE database.

10.0 MONITORING, SUPPORT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Performance and financial accountability are conditions of all funding agreements. Monitoring and reporting activities are aimed at ensuring that the recipient receives adequate support from INAC, and that program funds are used in the most efficient and effective manner to achieve positive outcomes for students as well as value for money.

INAC is committed to providing assistance to recipients in order to effectively carry out the obligations contained in each funding agreement.

11.0 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Please refer to the [*Recipient Reporting Guide*](#) which can be downloaded from the website at http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/dci/dcilog_e.asp.

12.0 CONTACT INFORMATION

For further program information, please visit our website at:
<http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/edu/ep>

You can contact your regional representatives at:
<http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ai/scr/rgcon-eng.asp>

You can also write to:
Post-Secondary Student Support Program or University and
College Entrance Preparation Program
Education Branch
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
10 Wellington Street
Gatineau QC K1A 0H4
Fax: 613-995-9393