



**Sumas First Nation**

**Post Secondary Student  
Assistance Program**

**Policy and Procedures Manual**

**Ratified by Chief & Council  
12 January 1999**

**SUMAS FIRST NATION  
POST SECONDARY STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM  
POLICY MANUAL**

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## **1. Introduction**

The Post Secondary Assistance Program is designed to encourage and support pre-qualified, eligible Sumas First Nation students to gain access to post-secondary education and to graduate with the qualifications and skills needed to pursue their chosen careers, and to realize their individual potential for contribution to the community of Sumas First Nation and society at large.

## **2. Policy Objectives**

- 2.1 To provide counselling to students in career and education planning, budgeting, job market research and assistance in acquiring financial resources to successfully complete their post secondary studies.
- 2.2 To ensure that students are made aware of all the sources of funding available to them, and the process by which these funds are accessed.
- 2.3 To ensure that students fully understand their responsibilities under the guidelines of this policy manual.
- 2.4 To meet the ever-increasing demand by SFN members for post secondary assistance and to provide post secondary educational opportunities to as many SFN members as possible.

## **3. Policy Assumptions**

- 3.1 That students take full responsibility for setting and achieving their post secondary educational goals.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 That students have planned for an alternative source of income during the four months (two months for students graduating from Grade 12) prior to entering post secondary studies.
- 3.4 That students will seek to access additional financial assistance through bursaries, scholarships, and work study programs.
- 3.5 That post secondary assistance is intended for direct education expenses only (tuition, books, and living allowance) and not for any other purpose.



**1. Definitions**

**Post Secondary Institutions** are degree, diploma, and certificate 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 post secondary institution.

**Program of Studies** includes all post secondary programs greater than one academic year in duration, leading to a certificate, diploma or degree.

**Academic Year** is as defined by the post secondary institution, but will be not less than eight months in duration.

**Full Time Student** refers to a student who is taking a full course load.

**Part Time Student** refers to a student who is taking less than a full course load.

**Normal Program Length** refers to the number of years normally required to complete a program as outlined in the course of studies.

**Full Program Load** refers to 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 institute.

**Spouse** includes husband, wife and common-law spouse

**Common-law spouse** includes a situation where a couple is residing and maintaining a residence together for at least one year.

**5. Eligibility for Post Secondary Funding**

Approval for post secondary funding will be based on the availability of funds and the following criteria:

5.1 The applicant must be a registered member with the Sumas First Nation.  
Priority will be given to applicants in the following order:

- a) Students who were enrolled in post secondary studies or who graduated from high 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.
- b) Students who have graduated from Grade 12 and who have not previously received post secondary funding.
- c) Students with grade twelve equivalent who have not previously received funding from this program.
- d) Students who have completed an undergraduate degree program and are continuing on to an advanced degree program without a break in their studies.

e) Students whose applications for financial assistance were deferred the previous year for lack of funds and who are reapplying for post secondary funding.

f) SFN members who are applying for vocational training or part time post secondary studies.

g) Students who have previously received post secondary funding but did not complete their post secondary program. The circumstances under which a student decided not to continue post secondary studies will factor in the consideration of the application for assistance.

5.2 The applicant must be accepted into a specific program in an accredited post secondary institution.

## **6. Forms of Financial Assistance**

### **6.1 Full Time Post Secondary Studies**

Students may apply for full time Post Secondary Assistance through Sumas First Nation Education. Sponsorship is contingent upon the following:

i) The student has applied and been approved for post secondary funding through Sumas First Nation Education.

ii) The student is enrolled in a post secondary program leading to a certificate, diploma, or degree.

iii) 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.

iv) The student maintains the grade point average required to continue in the program.

v) The student successfully completes all courses for the duration of the program.

vi) The student completes the program of studies in the normal length of time as determined by the institution plus a grace period of one semester (4 months) for a certificate or diploma program or two semesters (8 months) for a degree.

***Failure to comply with the above conditions may result in sponsorship being terminated.***

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## 6.2 ***Part Time Post Secondary Studies***

a) Part time students may apply to Sumas First Nation Education for assistance for tuition and the cost of books and supplies which are listed as required by the institution under the following criteria:

- I) The selected courses are part of a planned program of studies leading to completion of a certificate, diploma, or degree. The student will meet with the Education Coordinator to complete an education plan prior to registration in courses.
  - ii) The student has successfully completed all previous courses for which the student has received tuition assistance.
  - iii) Tuition assistance will be provided for each course only once. If the student withdraws from or fails to complete a course without a good reason, the student will be responsible for paying tuition costs to repeat the course which must be completed successfully before tuition assistance will be provided for succeeding courses.
- b) Part time students are not eligible for living allowances, but may be eligible for travel, child care or special clothing allowances. (See 7.3, 7.5 & 7.6)

## 6.3 ***Vocational Training***

- a) For training programs of less than one year in duration, students who are eligible for Employment Insurance benefits will be required to apply for sponsorship through Human Resources Development Canada.
- b) Students who are ineligible for sponsorship through HRDC may apply to Sumas First Nation Education for assistance. Approval will depend on availability of funds.

## 6.4 ***Adult Basic Education (Upgrading)***

- a) Students will be required to apply to the Adult Basic Education Student Assistance Program for tuition, books, and supplies. Students apply to ABESAP through the College and Career Preparation Program at the University College of the Fraser Valley. Students on ABESAP are not eligible for living allowances, but may be eligible for a travel allowance.

(See 7.3)

## 6.5 ***University College Entrance Program (UCEP)***

A student is eligible for one year of full time financial assistance in a college entrance program provided that:



- a) The student can attain the academic level for university or college entrance within the period of one academic year.
- b) The student will be accepted as a student of a regular university or college credit program upon successful completion of the UCEP program.
- c) The applicant has not been financially supported previously by Sumas First Nation Education. Exemptions to this condition may be made for medical reasons.

UCEP students approved for financial support as full-time students, will receive support during the UCEP program up to a total time period of two semesters of the institution offering the UCEP program. Students accepted as part-time will be provided support for tuition and books and supplies required by the institution.

## **7. Categories and Levels of Financial Assistance**

The following categories and levels of financial assistance apply to students who have been approved to receive financial assistance through the Sumas First Nation Education Department.

### **7.1 Tuition Assistance**

- a) Tuition assistance includes students' fees for registration, tuition, and the cost of books and supplies which are listed as required by the post secondary institution.
- b) The cost of tuition and registration fees will be paid to the institution at which the student is enrolled. Students will be expected to provide receipts to the Education Coordinator for all books and supplies purchased.
- c) If it is necessary for a student to enroll in a private school, a decision will be made, based on the circumstances, as to how much of the course fee will be paid by this program. The total amount available to the student will be based on the costs of sponsorship to a similar course at a public institution. Students are encouraged, whenever possible, to enroll in public institutions.
- d) Funds to attend a foreign institution are only provided if a comparable program is not available in Canada. In this case the foreign institution rate will be paid. All other costs will be at the policy rate in Canadian funds.

## 7.2 *Living Allowance*

- a) Living allowances are expected to cover normal daily living expenditures such as food, lodging, and local travel.
- b) The maximum level of living allowance is determined by the current Sumas First Nation's schedule of Living Allowances.
- c) A student must be carrying a full program load to receive a living allowance. If a student withdraws from a course during a term without good reason, the living allowance will be pro-rated for the remainder of the term. Sponsorship will be discontinued at the end of the term. The student will bear the cost of repeating the course.
- d) Dependants of a student may only include the student's spouse and those children of the student and the student's spouse. The division of dependants between the student and the student's spouse for the purposes of calculating the student's living allowance shall be as follows:

If the spouses's monthly income is:

- i) Above the "Low Income Cut off Rate" (poverty level) according to Statistics Canada the children are all dependents of the spouse.
- ii) At or below the "Low Income Cut off Rate" (poverty level) according to Statistics Canada the children are all dependents of the student.

If claiming dependents the student is required to provide a copy of their spouses most current pay stub and will be responsible to report any changes in their spouses income immediately to the education coordinator.

The current "Low Income Cut off Rate" will be updated with Statistics Canada's current rates and will be calculated at a monthly rate to determine students eligibility.

See "Low Income Cut off Rate Cart (attached) for current Statistics Canada Rates.



e) Schedule of Monthly Living Allowances:

I)	Single student	\$800.00
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ii)	Married student with:	
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	Employed spouse	800.00
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	and one dependant	975.00
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	and two dependants	1,155.00
--	--------------------	----------

	and three dependants	1,330.00
--	----------------------	----------

\$50.00 per month for each additional dependant

iii)	Married student with:	
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	Dependant spouse	\$1020.00
--	------------------	-----------

	and one additional dependant	1,170.00
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	and two additional dependants	1,330.00
--	-------------------------------	----------

	and three additional dependants	1,480.00
--	---------------------------------	----------

\$50.00 per month for each additional dependant

iv)	Single parent with:	
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	one dependant	\$1,170.00
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	two dependants	1,330.00 –
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	three dependants	1,480.00
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\$50.00 per month for each additional dependant

7.3 **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 kilometres, 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 dependants. These costs will be based on the most appropriate method of travel.

b) Daily Travel

A student may receive a daily travel allowance of up to \$100.00 per month if the student is not receiving a living allowance and is not working full-time, and if the location of the student's accommodation in relation to the post secondary institution requires extraordinary travel costs when the daily round trip exceeds 70 kilometres.

7.4 ***Special Shelter Subsidy***

Housing subsidies may be provided subject to available funds and dependent on financial need. Applications will be reviewed by a selection committee. Upon approval subsidies will be provided according to the following:

- a) When it is necessary for a student to rent accommodations in order to attend a post secondary institution and/or the cost of their accommodations exceeds 25% of the total current income of the student, the student's spouse, and any dependants residing with the student, a shelter subsidy may be provided. The subsidy will equal the difference between the actual rental cost and 25% of the total current incomes of the student, the student's spouse and any dependants residing with the student.
- b) The accommodation costs include only the actual rental cost of the premises.
- c) The special shelter subsidy is intended to provide basic and reasonable accommodation for the student, the student's spouse, and any dependants residing with the student.
- d) 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.
- e) A copy of the rental/lease agreement must be provided to the Education Co-ordinator to qualify for the special shelter allowance.

7.5 ***Child Care***

A special allowance can be provided to a part time student to assist with baby sitting or day care if:

- a) The student has not received a living allowance
- b) There is no one in the student's home who can care for the child(ren)

The special allowance is to cover costs to a maximum of \$100.00 per month.

7.6 ***Special Clothing and Equipment***

- a) If specified by the education institution as necessary for the student's program of studies, an allowance to cover the cost of rental or purchase of special equipment and/or clothing will be provided.
- b) The student will be required to provide written proof of the need for these items. This could involve the need being set out in the institution calendar of studies or written notification from an official of the institution.
- c) A practicum allowance will be provided for students who require clothing or other materials. The allowance will not exceed \$300.

7.7 ***Incentive Awards***

a) Academic Achievement Scholarship: \$1000

- i) Academic Achievement scholarships are available to full time students upon successful completion of one year of studies in any diploma or degree program. To be eligible students must be enrolled in a full time program of studies and achieve at least a B average (3.5 G.P.A.)
- ii) Students must provide transcripts to the Education Co-ordinator no later than May 31.

b) Graduation Incentive

Upon completion of a program, students will be eligible for a graduation incentive award. The categories are as follows:

- i) Certificate Program: \$300
- ii) Diploma Program: \$500
- iii) Degree Program: \$1,000
- iv) Post Graduate Studies: \$1,500

The student must provide a copy of the certificate of completion or degree to qualify for the graduation incentive award.

8. **Procedure for Applying for Post Secondary Financial Assistance**



### 8.1 ***First Time 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 Co-ordinator 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:

- a) Completed and signed application form for post secondary financial assistance.
- b) Signed Student Contract
- c) Completed and signed education plan for the duration of the program. This must be completed with the Education Co-ordinator or with an academic advisor from the post secondary institution.
- d) Copy of the letter of acceptance from the post secondary institution.
- e) Job search demonstrating opportunities for employment upon completion of post secondary studies.

### 8.2 ***Renewal of Post Secondary Sponsorship***

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 as specified in 8.3:

- a) Completed and signed application form.
- b) Official sealed transcript (or instructors grades of grades including all courses from the current year or term.

### 8.3 ***Application Deadlines***

- a) Deadlines for applications for all students are as follows:
  - i) For September enrolment: June 30
  - ii) For January enrolment: December 15

Applications received prior to the above dates will be prioritized according to the student priority categories. (5.1)

**“Low Income Cut Off Rate” Chart***As per Statistics Canada’s current rate*

<b>FAMILY UNIT SIZE</b>	<b>CURRENT LOW INCOME CUT OFF RATE</b>
Single person	\$14,931
Two person family	\$18,664
Three person family	\$23,213
Four person family	\$28,098
Five person family	\$31,409
Six person family	\$34,720
Seven (or more) person family	\$38,032

Applications received after the application deadlines will be held to determine whether funds are available after processing the first batch of applications. If funds are not available, these late applications will be treated as deferred applications.

**Note:** *Continuing students will be placed on the deferred list if their applications are received after the deadlines.*

## **9. Abuse of Policy**

Abuse of any section of this Education Policy will result in the loss of funding. The repayment of any fraudulently obtained funds is mandatory.

## **10. Appeals Procedure**

The Sumas First Nation is obligated to allocate funds in a fair and equitable manner and according to the guidelines set out in this Policy Manual. Every student has a right to appeal a decision regarding Post Secondary funding. However, in cases where a student application has been refused because of lack of funds, the appeal will not be considered.

The Sumas First Nation may terminate sponsorship at any time to a student who has not abided by the rules outlined in this Post Secondary Student Assistance Policy Manual or has not shown any willingness to meet academic and financial criteria. If a student is convinced that the policy has not been fairly applied in his/her situation, the student will have access to an appeal process.

The student will discuss the matter first with the Education Co-ordinator. If unresolved, the student may appeal the matter to the Sumas First Nation Chief and Council in the form of a written letter explaining the situation. Chief and Council may choose to respond in writing or to request a meeting with the student. In either case the decision of Chief and Council is to be consistent with the Sumas First Nation Post Secondary Student Assistance Policy and is final and binding. A response must be made to the student within 14 days after receiving a written grievance.

## **11. Amendment Provision**

Amendments may be made in this Post Secondary Student assistance Policy to allow for necessary changes to be made. The amendment procedure requires a quorum of Chief and Council and the Education Coordinator to agree on the amendment(s) at a duly convened meeting of that group.



## **STUDENT CONTRACT**

*I understand the following conditions apply to my sponsorship by the Sumas First Nation for post-secondary studies.*

1. I will accept the responsibility to adhere to the institution regulations and meet the standards required by the institution for continuation in my course of studies.
2. I agree to attend classes regularly.
3. I agree to consult with student services, the First Nations Access coordinator or the Sumas First Nation Education Coordinator if any problems arise academically, emotionally, physically or financially.
4. I agree to complete an education plan with the Sumas First Nation Education Coordinator or with an academic advisor from the post secondary institution.
5. I agree to provide a copy of my grades to the Sumas First Nation Education Coordinator as soon as possible upon completion of each semester or term.
6. I agree to report any changes to my student and/or program status promptly to the Sumas First Nation Education Coordinator, including changes in marital status, number of dependents or spouses employment status. I understand that it is a serious matter to provide false information and/or fail to report such changes.
7. I authorize the Sumas First Nation Education Coordinator to obtain information from persons, agencies or institutions to determine and/or verify my eligibility for sponsorship under the Post Secondary Student Assistance Program.
8. I declare that all the information provided to the Sumas First Nation Education Department is true and complete.
9. I understand that I have the right to appeal any decision made with respect to my application for sponsorship in accordance with the Post Secondary Student Assistance Program Policy manual.

*I hereby agree to the terms/conditions for financial assistance that are outlined above.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date