

Southern First Nations Post Secondary Program

Student Assistance Policy

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1. BACKGROUND

The Southern First Nations Secretariat is a Tribal Council with seven participating First Nations. The First Nations are;

- Aamjiwnaang First Nation,
- Caldwell First Nation,
- Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point First Nation,
- Chippewas of the Thames First Nation,
- Delaware Nation,
- Munsee-Delaware Nation.
- Oneida Nation of the Thames,

The Southern First Nations Secretariat has a mandate to provide a broad range of advisory and information services, technical and administrative support, and coordination of regional initiatives for First Nation peoples in south-western Ontario.

Southern First Nations Secretariat is governed by a seven-member Board of Directors appointed by the participating member Nations. As it relates to Post-Secondary Education Program, the duties and responsibilities of the Board of Directors are:

- To provide direction to the Executive Director and/or Coordinator of the Post Secondary Education Program of the Southern First Nations Secretariat concerning the overall management of the Program,
- To review annually the student assistant policy,
- To provide guidance to program staff in the review, evaluation, and/or development of recommended revisions to First Nation specific programs provided by the local colleges and universities,
- To review quarterly reports provided by the Post Secondary Program Coordinator and staff of the Post Secondary Education Program,
- To review and approve the three yearly intake submissions (October 1, April 1, and May 15) presented by the Executive Director and the Post Secondary Program Coordinator,
- To establish an appeal's committee to review appeals granted to students.

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2. INTRODUCTION TO THE POST SECONDARY PROGRAM

The goal of the Southern First Nations Secretariat Post-Secondary Program is to assist registered member students of the Caldwell First Nation, Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point First Nation, Aamjiwnaang First Nation, Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, Delaware Nation, and Munsee-Delaware Nation to access post secondary education in order to graduate with the qualifications and skills needed to pursue individual careers.

The Southern First Nations Post Secondary Program objectives are:

1. To the limit of funds available in the budget, the Southern First Nations Post Secondary Program will provide financial assistance to eligible students in the pursuit of their post secondary education.
2. To provide for student counselling as an important part of the Southern First Nations Post Secondary Program.

3. INTRODUCTION TO STUDENT ASSISTANCE POLICY

This document outlines the Southern First Nations Post Secondary Program Student Assistance Policy.

The Objectives of the Post Secondary Program Student Assistance Policy are to:

1. Establish the criteria to be met by students in order to qualify for, and maintain eligibility for financial assistance;
2. Outline the types and maximum levels of allowances that may be available; and
3. Provide for the maximum duration of assistance that may be provided with respect to various levels of post secondary education through the Post Secondary Program.

This policy is effective January 1, 2011, and will apply to all students, including the Winter intake of the 2010-11 academic year, and onward.

4. DEFINITIONS

In this document

- A. "Southern First Nations Secretariat" and the "Secretariat" for the purposes of this Post Secondary Program Student Assistance Policy have the same meaning, and includes

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only those First Nations identified specifically in section (2) as may be amended from time to time.

- B. “Registered member” means a person whose name has been entered on the First Nation membership roll and in the Indian Register Maintained by the Department as defined by the *Indian Act*.
- C. “Department” is as defined by the *Indian Act*.
- D. “First Nation” shall have the same meaning as “Band” defined in the *Indian Act*.
- E. “Post secondary education” means a program of studies, offered by a post secondary institution, for which completion of secondary school studies or equivalent is prerequisite.
- F. “Ticket” is defined as the number of times a student is eligible for sponsorship by the Post Secondary Program, in a certificate, diploma, or degree in a post secondary program.
- G. “First Ticket” is defined as the successful completion of a program of studies and receiving of a certificate, diploma, or degree.
- H. “Second Ticket” is defined as studies in another program field, pursuing graduate studies, or a change in career focus that can be unrelated to the first ticket program of studies.
- I. “Program of Studies’ includes all post-secondary programs leading to a certificate, diploma, or degree. For the purposes of this policy, the program of study is divided into the following categories:
 - Level I:** UCEP, Community College and CEGEP diploma or certificate programs.
 - Level II:** Undergraduate Programs.
 - Level III:** Advanced or professional degree programs e.g. MD., Masters or Doctoral Programs.
- J. “Post Secondary institutions” are degree, diploma, and certificate granting institutions which are recognized by the province of Ontario, and include education institutions affiliated with, or delivering accredited post secondary programs by arrangement with a post secondary institution.
- K. “Canadian public institution” is a post secondary institution which receives the majority

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of its funding from federal and provincial governments.

- L. "Private post secondary institution" is a post secondary institution which receives the majority of its funding from the student fees, and from sources other than governments.
- M. "Student" is defined as a full or part time post secondary student sponsored by the Southern First Nations Post Secondary Program.
- N. "Full time students" are defined as students who are registered in a recognized post secondary institution and attend classes at least 12 hours per week during any school term, semester or school year. "Part time students" are defined by the post secondary institution.
- O. "Academic year" is as defined by the post secondary institution, but will not be less than eight months duration.
- P. "Course months" are defined as the number of months required to complete a program or course of study.
- Q. "Semester" refers to a part of the academic year, as defined by the post secondary institution. Semesters usually cover the periods from September to December, January to April, and May to August.
- R. "Single student" refers to a student who has no eligible dependents as defined in subsection T of this policy.
- S. "Dependent" means a person under the age of eighteen (18) sometimes over the age of eighteen (18) who is totally dependent on the post secondary student, permanently resides with the student, the student has legal custody, and who does not receive income in excess of the level of net income allowed for a dependent by Revenue Canada's Income Tax Regulations. This definition will be effective December 22, 2009.

A person over the age of eighteen (18) may be considered the dependent of a student if he or she is considered disabled, as evidenced by the student's receipt of the Disability Tax Credit (or other similar documentation) for the person aged over eighteen (18). This definition will be effective December 2, 2011.

- T. "CEGEP" is an abbreviation of College d'enseignement general et professionnel. CEGEPs operate in Quebec.
- U. "Grade average" is the grade assigned to the student by the post secondary institution of registry for the average graded achievement of all courses undertaken in an

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academic year. Where a grade point average is assigned by the institution, they will do the equivalency conversion to A, B, etc.

- V. “Board of Directors” are the Board of Directors of the Southern First Nations Secretariat, as appointed by the participating First Nations.
- W. “Foreign Institution” is any post-secondary institution located outside of the geographic boundaries of Canada.
- X. “Post-Secondary Counseling Unit” are the staff employed by the Southern First Nations Secretariat for the delivery of this program, and includes the Coordinator, Counsellors and Executive Assistant.
- Y. “Mature Student” is defined as a person over the age of 21 and who has been out of school for at least two years and meets all other eligibility criteria in this policy.
- Z. “Extenuating circumstances” are unplanned events of a significant nature and may include medically diagnosed condition or illness, death in the family or accidental injury.
- Z2. “Family” – is defined as a students spouse, child(ren), siblings, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and their spouses child(ren), siblings, parents and grandchildren,
- Z3. “Second Career” – is defined as a student applying to return to studies in a program which differs from their original degree/diploma program.

5. ELIGIBILITY

- 5.1. To be eligible to apply for assistance under the Southern First Nations Secretariat Post Secondary Student Assistance Policy applicants:
 - i. must provide proof of being registered members of the Caldwell First Nation, Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point First Nation, Aamjiwnaang First Nation, Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Delaware Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, or Munsee-Delaware Nation.
 - ii. must possess a grade 12 secondary school graduation diploma or its equivalent and have met university or college requirements. As well, students who have previously received certification from a government recognized educational institution such as CEGEP or an ACE program are eligible. (Effective May 15, 2003 for the September 2003 intake).
 - iii. must satisfy the Southern First Nations Post Secondary Program that they will be attending the closest Canadian post secondary institution to their permanent residence, to which they have met entrance requirements and which offers their program of chosen studies.
 - iv. In the case of “second career” applicants, has had a break in studies for a

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minimum of eight years, since graduation from their original program.

- 5.2 Within the limits of funding received by the Secretariat, through contributions from the Department, the Post Secondary Program will provide financial assistance through the following priority allocation system:

Priority One: Students continuing post secondary studies and in good standing within this policy. Students who have ceased to attend because of medical reasons which can be documented by a valid medical certificate will be considered a Priority 1 when they reapply. Those people upgrading their skills to teach Aboriginal languages.

Priority Two: Students newly graduated from high school and moving directly into post secondary studies within this policy.

Priority Three: Mature students and students returning after a break in post secondary studies, who are in good standing within this policy and meet all other applicable eligibility criteria in this section.

Priority Four: Student graduates of a UCEP program who are in good standing within this policy.

Priority Five: Students who have previously dropped out or discontinued their program. Students who are considered to be on a “second ticket” in accordance with this policy.

- 5.3. The Post Secondary Program does not apply restrictions for eligibility based on age, terminal illness, or learning disabilities.

6. TYPES OF ASSISTANCE: FULL TIME STUDENTS

- 6.1. Tuition Assistance includes students fees for registration, tuition, and the cost of books and supplies which are listed as required by the program of study in the post secondary institution.

- 6.2. Tuition assistance may be provided:

- i. for students attending Canadian public institutions, at the normal rate in Canadian dollars charged by the institution for a Canadian student.
- ii. for students attending Canadian private post secondary institutions where a comparable program is offered by a Canadian public post secondary institution, at the normal rate in Canadian dollars as charged by the Canadian public institution nearest to the student’s place of residence at the time of application.
- iii. for students attending Canadian private post secondary institutions where no

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comparable program is offered by a Canadian public post secondary institution, at the rate in Canadian dollars as charged by the Canadian private institution.

- iv. High Cost Tuition Fees: students are encouraged to seek out less costly but similar programs, all tuition fees exceeding \$10,000.00 Canadian funds per annum will be subject to the Board of Directors approval.
- v. Effective January 1, 2011, assistance is not available for students attending foreign institutions. Current and approved students in good standing as of January 1, 2011, are approved to complete their course of studies at a foreign institution in accordance with the eligibility criteria outlined in this policy.

6.3. Travel Assistance: Travel assistance may be provided to:

- i. Students, whose permanent residence is Canada, who are required to live more than 70 kilometers away from their permanent residence in order to attend a post secondary institution may qualify for travel grant, once a semester, at the most economical method and rate, for themselves. Travel assistance will be equal to the cost of return transportation from the student's permanent place of residence to the nearest Canadian post secondary institution for which they have met entrance requirements which offers a similar program of studies to that selected by the student.
- ii. Conference Funding: Students may be eligible for funding that includes registration fees and travel expenses to attend conferences and school trips that are mandatory and directly related to their program of studies by being a part of the regular curriculum which must be supported with a letter of recommendation from their instructor. All mandatory conferences must be known at the start of the program and communicated to their counsellor. Students must provide their counsellor with a written report and expense receipts upon return.
- iii. Students may be eligible for a relocation grant, when it is found to be more economical than providing the travel grants as outlined above. Students who receive the relocation grant will be ineligible for seasonal travel assistance.

6.4. Assistance for Living Expenses: Training allowances to help cover students living expenses may be provided at a rate not to exceed that established by the Secretariat in consultation with the Committee from time to time. The current rates, with last change date, are attached as Annex I. Training allowances are in Canadian funds. Part months will be pro-rated for the first two weeks, and full month assistance for three weeks or greater.

6.5. Exceptional Assistance: Exceptional assistance for legally or institutionally required activities for final professional certification or licensing may be provided as well as special needs as determined by the circumstances of each student

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- 6.6. University and College Entrance Preparation Programs: Student applications for accredited Post Secondary Entrance Preparation programs may be supported from within the Post Secondary Student Assistance Policy.
- 6.7. Distance Education Programs: Students that are employed and receiving wages will be eligible to receive financial assistance with the payment of tuition fees, text books and supplies, travel expenses and a pro-rated living allowance.
- 6.8. Ineligible Assistance: Correspondence programs and Internet programs offered by private institutions will not be funded.
- 6.9. College and University application fee's (eg. OCAS and OUAC) shall not be paid or reimbursed by SFNS except in those situations where, in the opinion of the Post-Secondary Coordinator, non-payment of the application fee's would constitute an "unreasonable barrier" to the applicants education. Payment shall be limited to a maximum of two application fee's per student.

7. TYPES OF ASSISTANCE: PART TIME STUDENTS

Part time students may receive assistance for tuition and the cost of books and supplies as detailed in 6(1) which are listed as required by the post secondary institution.

8. LIMITS OF ASSISTANCE

- 8.1. Assistance may be provided for one time sponsorship (called tickets) in each level, at the UCEP and three levels of post secondary education.

Level I : University/college preparatory programs:

- a) 1 year university transition programs.
1 year college pre-technology, pre-health sciences, pre-business, and Human Services Foundation programs.
- b) 2 year General Arts and Science Program for individuals entering university studies only.

Level II: Community college and CEGEP diploma or certificate programs (2-3 years or 16 to 24 course months)

Level III: Undergraduate programs (3-4 years or 24 to 32 course months)
An additional 8 course months may be granted for the honors program.

Level IV: Advanced or professional degree programs e.g., MD., Master or Doctoral programs (2-3 years or 16 to 24 course months)

- 8.2. Tuition assistance as outlined in 6(1) may be provided to students enrolled in all four levels.

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- 8.3. Assistance for travel and for living expenses as outlined in 6 (3) and 6 (4) may be provided to students to complete one program at each level.
- 8.4. Level III will include assistance for an additional student year at the bachelor level to acquire an honours undergraduate degree.
- 8.5. The duration of assistance will be in accordance with the official length of the program as defined by the post secondary institution in which the student is enrolled.
- 8.6. Students enrolled in Level II and III 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 head of department.
- 8.7. Students enrolled in Level IV may be assisted for up to one additional academic year for medical or personal reasons.
- 8.8. Students may be assisted in Level I studies after dropping out of Level II studies. If a student resumes Level II studies, the previous time spent at Level II will be counted for assistance purposes. Students who have completed Level II studies, with or without assistance from this program are ineligible for level I assistance with the exception of post-diploma programs that specify BA requirements for admission.
- 8.9. Students who have completed a Level III program, with or without assistance from this program, are ineligible for Level I or Level II program assistance.
- 8.10. Students who have completed a Level IV program, with or without assistance from this program, are ineligible for Level I, Level II or Level III program assistance.
- 8.11. Where students change programs within one of the levels, the academic years used for each program within this level will be counted for assistance purposes.
- 8.12. 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 in accordance with 6(2), 6(3), and 6(4).
- 8.13. Second ticket students will only be eligible for books and tuition, subject to availability of funds.
- 8.14. Teacher Additional Qualifications – Assistance may be provided for a maximum of six AQ's, up to and including two specialist qualifications.

9. PROCESSING APPLICATIONS FOR ASSISTANCE

There may be three intakes for review of student applications. For the purpose of clarity, applications may be confirmed as having been received for review if they have arrived by fax, been postmarked as mailed, or delivered in person for:

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- September enrolment, by May 15
- January enrolment, by October 1
- Intersession/summer school, by April 1

Applications for assistance will be reviewed and decisions communicated to the last known address provided by the students within 30 days of the deadline established for each session. Applications received after the deadline date will be eligible for tuition and books only, on an available funding basis. Intersession will be funded only when it is a regular scheduled semester for continuing students in addition to Native specific programs which are only offered during the summer, ie. Native Teacher Training, Native Language, Native Classroom Assistant.

10. APPEAL PROCESS

To ensure fairness and equitable treatment, any student may appeal any decisions made under this policy following the outlined procedure:

- a) All Post Secondary appeals must be made in writing within (10) working days of receipt of notification.
- b) All appeals must be forwarded to the Executive Director of the Southern First Nations Secretariat.

The Appeal Board shall be comprised of three Directors, but not the Director representing the First Nation from which the appealing student is a member.

- c) All inquiries related to any appeal must be directed to the Executive Director of the Southern First Nations Secretariat.
- d) All information to be used in the appeal must be provided in writing to the Executive Director of the Southern First Nations Secretariat
- e) All decisions made by the Appeal Board must be finalized in writing within sixty (60) days of receipt of the appeal.
- f) All decisions of the Appeal Board are final.

11. STUDENT REGISTRY

The Secretariat may maintain a student registry. At a minimum, it would include the student's name, the institution attended, the program of study, the support provided, the results obtained, and any additional information which may be required from time to time. This information will be used for statistical purposes only and will remain confidential. The Secretariat may report

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this information, in confidence, annually to the Department.

12. STUDENT NOT IN GOOD STANDING

Any expenditure made to or on behalf of a student for which that student is ineligible, places that student in a “not in good standing” status within this policy. Examples may be for accepting an award under Section 10(3) and not attending the following year, for accepting training allowances under Section 6(3) while not attending required classes and/or allowing tuition payments under Section 6(2) to be made on one’s behalf where a stop-payment opportunity exists and is missed.

Other examples are unsatisfactory academic progress, incarceration, giving false/invalid information at the time of application, and the inappropriate use of funds. There may be other reasons published from time to time by the Board Of Directors. The Post-Secondary Counseling Unit may set terms and conditions to allow the student to regain “in good standing” status. Those conditions could include the repayment of funds expended for the period of ineligibility and/or the requirement of the student to use their own financial resources to attend and successfully complete at least one full semester or term before being reconsidered for sponsorship. Where possible, the student deemed to be “not in good standing” will be given a written warning prior to disqualification from financial assistance.

13. ANNUAL POLICY REVIEW

The Board of Directors will meet in November of each year with the Post-Secondary Counseling Unit Staff to conduct a review of this policy. Any changes to the policy resulting from the review will, if at all possible, be made effective for the September intake following the meeting. In a timely fashion, changes will be communicated to First Nations, students, and appropriate post secondary institution support personnel.

14. BOARD OF DIRECTORS RIGHT TO REVIEW DECISIONS

The Board of Directors reserves the right to review and rescind any decision made under this policy as may be justified by new and relevant information.

15. INFORMATION AND APPLICATIONS

For further general information or information on process and deadlines for applications for assistance, call 1-800-668-2609 or 1-519-692-5868 or write to:

Southern First Nations Secretariat,
22361 Austin Line,
Bothwell, Ontario.

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Attention: Post Secondary Program Coordinator

Fax: (519) 692-3062

Southern First Nations Secretariat
Post Secondary Program
Monthly Allowance Rate Schedule

SINGLE STUDENTS	\$800.00
STUDENTS WITH DEPENDENTS	
1 Dependent	\$1,095.00
2 Dependents	1,255.00
3 Dependents	1,405.00
4 Dependents	1,455.00
5 Dependents	1,505.00
6 Dependents	1,555.00