

HIGH BAR FIRST NATION
Post-Secondary Education
Education Policy



**Please Read this Document before filling out the
Post-Secondary Education Application Package**

High Bar First Nation

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High Bar First Nation Office is open:

Monday to Friday
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Closed on Statutory Holidays

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Preface

This Post-Secondary Education Policy has been written to ensure that students understand the full scope of the High Bar Post-Secondary Education Program and to assist the Education staff in the administration of the program. The policy was developed based on the Post-Secondary Student Support Program Guidelines. This Policy is intended as a guide that will be amended from time to time in response to the changing National Program Guidelines and the needs of Band Members.

Preamble

Each year Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) allocates funds on a national level for post-secondary education. These funds are then distributed to the regional level (provinces). Each region then decides how to allocate these funds to the Bands and First Nations organizations within the region. B.C. Region has implemented a system of distributing the funds that is based on a per capita formula, with the population of each Band determining the level of post-secondary funding.

AANDC has given individual Bands the option to administer their post-secondary education budget using the existing AANDC model or to develop their own policy. This policy has been developed by the High Bar First Nation to administer the post-secondary program equitably for all eligible Band members. Band Council has approved this policy.

Decisions made regarding the financial support of High Bar Members who wish to be considered students under the provisions of this policy, will be made in the best interests of the student, the National Program Guidelines and the Band's ability to fund educational 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.** It should also be noted that part-time or casual employment during educational studies is no way disqualifies Band members from receiving financial sponsorship for post-secondary education programs.

Definitions

The following definitions for terms used in this policy are provided for the information of all applicants.

Academic Probation – a period of time during which a student is under strict academic guidelines, usually because of low or failing grades. An academic probationary period may be imposed either by the Band or the educational institution the student is attending.

Academic Year – the academic year normally refers to two (2) consecutive semesters with an approximate duration of eight (8) months.

Affiliated Band Member – a status person who is registered with the High Bar First Nation by AANDC policy who is not a Band Member per the *High Bar Membership Rules* and who is not a registered member of any other Band.

Band Member – a status person who has met the requirements to become a member of the High Bar First Nation, as set out in the *High Bar Membership Rules* and whose name has been entered on the Band list.

Canadian Public Institution – is a post-secondary institution which receives the majority of its funding from federal and provincial governments.

Continuing Student – a part-time or full-time student who has continued to receive post-secondary funding from the Band, is currently taking a course or courses toward a degree or diploma, is receiving financial sponsorship from the Band, and has not had a gap in funding for more than one semester.

Course Credit Equivalencies – the following course credit equivalencies apply in this policy:
A one-semester course is normally equivalent to 1.5 units or 1.5 credits hours;
A two-semester course is normally equivalent to 3 units or 3 credit hours.

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(1) year prior to application for educational support under this policy. This person is dependent upon the student and does not receive an annual income in excess of \$7,000.00.

Dependent(s) – any person or persons who legally rely on a student for support and is living full-time with that student.

Full-Time Student – The Definition of Full-Time Student is determined by the Post-Secondary Institution the student is attending.

Medical Release – a student who is required, for medical reasons, to be absent from classes for more than a week, is required to provide the Band Education Coordinator, 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.

Part-Time Student – The definition of Part-Time Student is determined by the Post-Secondary Institution the student is attending.

Post-Secondary Institution – Public Post-Secondary Institution that offers a diploma or degree programs recognized by a province or territory in Canada.

Private Institution – a Registered, Private Post-Secondary Institution, which offers a Certificate, Diploma or Degree Programs.

Semester – the time covered by one semester is approximately four months.

Sponsorship – when a student is provided financial support to attend a post-secondary institution. This support may include tuition, books, living allowance and travel allowance as applicable,

Student Success – when a student successfully passes all of their courses.

General Guidelines

To be eligible for post-secondary education funding, you must:

1. Be a registered Band Member of the High Bar First Nation or an Affiliated Band Member of High Bar First Nation, and;
2. Complete an Application for Funding package.

Your Application for funding will be reviewed with the following being taken into consideration:

1. If you owe the Band money from previous or present education sponsorship, you will be required to pay this debt off before being considered for further funding;
2. If you have been funded previously, you will be required to submit any transcripts pertaining to the period of time you were funded;
3. If you are continuing student or a student graduating from secondary school, you will be required to be in good academic standing and your academic transcripts must be received by the Education Coordinator 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;
4. 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 received and only when there are funds available in the current fiscal year. Approval of an application under these circumstances may involve a probationary period; and
5. You must meet the admission requirements of the educational institution you plan to attend and a letter from the office of the registrar of the institution must be received by the High Bar Education Department stating that you meet the academic requirements for admission.

Responsibilities

The Post-Secondary Education Policy recognizes the responsibilities of the student, the Education and Band Staff and the Band Council.

The student is responsible for the pursuit of his/her own education. Students should seek academic counseling from the applicable educational institution that they are attending. It is also the responsibility of the student to be the main point of contact with the High Bar Education Staff. Communication through other family members will not be acceptable under normal circumstances.

The Education and Band Staff are responsible to ensure that the post-secondary education program is administered in a fair and equitable manner, according to existing policies, keeping in mind that the needs of post-secondary students should receive a high priority. Education and Band staff will assist Band Members in gaining access to post-secondary education and will encourage and support students throughout their educational journey.

The Band Council will ensure that staff is working for the community and that education services are made available to the entire High Bar Membership. The Band Council will approve the annual budget and amendments to the High Bar Post-Secondary Education Policy. The Band Council will hear any appeals to this policy when required to do so. All decisions made by Band Council are final.

Sponsored Band Members, sponsored Affiliated Band Members, Chief and Council and the High Bar Administration are responsible and accountable to themselves and the High Bar First Nation for doing everything possible to ensure that students' education needs are being met in a positive and effective manner.

Student Eligibility

Band Membership: Band Members and Affiliated Band Members of High Bar First Nation are eligible for sponsorship for post-secondary education. Full-time students are eligible to receive funding for tuition, books, living allowance, tutoring, and travel, while part-time students will normally only receive funding to cover the actual costs of tuition and books.

Academic Achievement: for students applying for sponsorship for the first time, it is important that your Secondary School Grade Point Average (GPA) is as high as possible. This may be a determining factor when the final decision is made regarding who will receive sponsorship.

Letter of Acceptance: New Students must have a Letter of Acceptance or a Letter of Notification for Registration from the post-secondary institution that they are planning to attend.

Student Interview: All first time students must be interviewed by the Band Education Coordinator prior to being approved for funding. In order to be deemed eligible for funding, continuing students must complete an interview with the Education Coordinator each year prior to returning to full-time studies in order to retain their eligibility.

Priority List: Priority lists are established each year to assist the Education Coordinator, the Education Advisory Council, and the Band Council in determining who will receive funding. Status Band Members registered under the High Bar First Nation *Membership Rules* will be considered for funding first and based on the following priority list. Affiliated Band Members will be considered second and based on the following priority list. Priority lists will normally be established on the following basis:

1. **First Priority,** Continuing Students – students who have attended college or university on a full time basis and have successfully completed all courses, or students who have completed at least one full year of studies and have continued to take course(s) towards their diploma, certificate, or degree on part-time basis, without interruption of more than one semester;
2. **Second Priority:** Graduating Secondary School Students -
 - a. Students who have graduated from secondary school in the current year with a Dogwood Certificate;
 - b. Students who have completed twelve years of education in the public school system and are eligible to attend a post-secondary institution and;
 - c. Students who have equivalent training or education (i.e. GED)

3. **Third Priority:** students – who have started to pay their own education. The funds which have been spent to date by the student will not be reimbursable;
4. **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;
5. **Fifth Priority:** Mature Students – students who may or may not have completed secondary school, at least 21 years of age and who wish to return to full-time studies and;
6. **Sixth Priority:** Other – All other students.

Waiting List: A waiting list will be made each year beginning July 1st. Students whose name is on the waiting list will be notified of their position. This waiting list will be affected by varying factors such as the number of returning students, number of graduating students, student success, and the amount of funds available to the Band.

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 a less than full course load.

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 and;

Students who receive failing or incomplete (INC) marks on 50% or more of their courses or less than a 2.0 GPA or equivalent will normally be placed on academic probation by the Education Coordinator. 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 educational institution.

Study Skills: All students who wish to qualify for full financial sponsorship, must either show proof of post-secondary academic success within the previous twelve months or completion of or registry in, a “Study Skills” program offered by the educational institution they have been accepted to attend.

Application Process

How to Apply: Obtain an “Application Package” by contacting the Education Coordinator at the High Bar Office or asking the band office staff for a copy to be emailed. The Package includes forms that must be completed and returned to the Band Office as soon as possible. The application package should be requested in writing so that there is some documentation which can be referred to if necessary.

Application Deadline: Application deadlines are determined yearly by Education staff and are based on the application deadline determined by AANDC. Education staff will ensure that Band Members are aware of Post-Secondary application deadlines each year. Any application received after the deadline of each year will not be considered for full funding in the current fiscal year. A completed Application Package includes the following:

1. **Application for Post-Secondary Education Funding** – it is essential that all required information is included on the form. Failure to provide sufficient information, in particular current address and telephone number, may result in delays in funding being made available. Once your application has been approved and sponsorship confirmed, a signed copy will be sent to you at the address you indicate on the application form.

Important Information: Once you have received sponsorship and are attending classes, you will receive another application package each year in January for the upcoming year. Every student will be required to re-apply for sponsorship and attend an interview with the Education Coordinator each year. Applications will normally be approved approximately 4 to 6 weeks prior to the commencement of classes in each term.

It is important to send your application in as soon as possible.

2. **Education Plan** – the potential student must show commitment to clear educational goals by providing the Education Coordinator with an Education Plan that provides educational details for the next academic year. The Education Plan form must be completed in its entirety in order for the Education Coordinator and Education Advisory Council to make the appropriate decision regarding your sponsorship.
3. **Student Contract** – this document outlines the student’s contractual responsibilities. Please read this document carefully, sign it, and return it to the Education Coordinator. If this document is not returned, your application will be deemed to be incomplete and will not be considered for approval.
4. **Student Authorization / Waiver** – this document is necessary to permit Education Staff access to student records. It is important for funding

purposes and on occasion, the Education Coordinator has a need to verify that all students are actually attending classes. Once, again, if this document is not signed and returned to the Education Coordinator, your application will be deemed to be incomplete and will not be considered for approval.

Types of Sponsorship

Student Status:

1. **Full-Time Student** – to qualify for full-time student status, the student must be registered:
 - a. First Year – in at least three (3) courses or a minimum of nine (9) credit hours in your area of study as outlined in your Letter of Intent;
 - b. Second and Subsequent Years – in at least four (4) courses or a minimum of twelve (12) credit hours in your area of study outlined in your Letter of Intent
2. **Part – Time Student** – students must be registered in at least one (1) course with a minimum of three (3) credit hours. The course(s) must be amongst those outlined in your Letter of Intent
3. **Out – of – Province Canadian Sponsorship** – tuition will be paid up to the maximum amount of the allowable tuition fees as if you were attending the closest public school to your normal residence;
4. **International Sponsorship** – tuition fees will be paid to the maximum allowable amount to that of the closest Canadian Public institution (in Canadian Funds). It then becomes the student’s responsibility to pay any additional costs.

Levels of Funding

Tuition Fees:

The Band will normally pay all tuition costs for qualified students subject to the availability of funds. Tuition support for full and part-time students may include fees for registration, tuition and the cost of books and supplies required for courses. Students are encouraged to attend the closest post-secondary institution that offers their intended course of study. If a student wishes to attend a post-secondary institution that does not meet the above requirements, it may be necessary for the student to pay the difference in tuition amounts if the Band does not have sufficient funds to support the higher rate.

Living Allowance:

Living allowance is designed for students who require financial assistance and who have little or limited other means of support, and will normally only be provided up to a maximum of eight (8) months in any given calendar year. The following is the monthly level of support provided for living expenses:

1. Full-time Students:

Single student away from home

Shelter	\$733
Food	\$236
Miscellaneous (personal & health care, clothing, communications)	\$289
Local public transportation	\$91

TOTAL MONTHLY ALLOWANCE \$1348

Single Parent (without dependents)

Shelter	\$1,145
Food	\$236
Miscellaneous (personal & health care, clothing, communications)	\$328
Local public transportation	\$91

TOTAL MONTHLY ALLOWANCE \$1800

Married Student & Spouse (no dependents)

Shelter	\$1,614
Food	\$472
Miscellaneous (personal & health care, clothing, communications)	\$483
Local public transportation	\$182

TOTAL MONTHLY ALLOWANCE \$2,751

Each Dependent Person

Shelter	\$238
Food	\$195

Miscellaneous (personal & health care, clothing, communications)	\$114
Local public transportation	\$91
TOTAL MONTHLY ALLOWANCE	\$638
Single Student Living at Home	
Shelter	\$0
Food	\$280
Miscellaneous (personal & health care, clothing, communications)	\$192
Local public transportation	\$91
TOTAL MONTHLY ALLOWANCE	\$515

Notes on Living Allowance:

- a. Living allowance rates will be reviewed annually by the Band Council and may be adjusted as per the rates of the Canada Student Loan Program. To be eligible to receive additional living allowance for dependents, those dependents must be living in the same residence as the student while they are attending college or university or other classes.

1. **Part – Time Students:** Part-time students and students attending summer session will not normally be sponsored for living allowance. The Band will cover actual costs for tuition and books only.

Books and Supplies Allowance:

Support for books and supplies will normally cover textbooks and supplies including special equipment, officially listed as required by the university or college for a student's program of studies.

The Student may receive up to \$500 for books and supplies

An amount in excess of \$500, but not over \$2,000 may be approved if a student demonstrates need by submitting copies of the course outlines and the prices charged by the institutions bookstore or suppliers.

Requests from students enrolled in "specialized" programs which require more expensive books, supplies, and/or equipment will be considered on an individual need basis. Depending on funding available, some or all of the additional expenses may be reimbursed.

Travel support allowance may be provided to students at the four levels of post-secondary education listed in the funding limitations section below.

Travel support may include public transport fares or car mileage. It does not include the removal of household effects.

Students may select any recognized post-secondary institution for their studies. However, travel support is normally restricted to the travel costs to the Canadian post-secondary institution, which offers the selected program of studies, nearest the student's home.

Travel support may be provided to the institution selected by the student if one of the following conditions is met:

- Professional accreditation is required and the required program of studies is not offered at the Canadian post-secondary institution nearest the student's home;
- The program of studies selected is not available to the student in Canada;
- The student cannot gain admittance to the Canadian post-secondary institution nearest the student's home;
- The program of studies selected is funded by the AANDC's Indian Studies Support Program

Seasonal travel is to be calculated using the most cost-effective mode of public transportation, in accordance with rates set out in the Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada travel directive for government travel, taking into account the time for ground travel in relation to air travel. As between economy air fares and minimum car mileage rates; plus meals and accommodation for the journey, the lesser amount will be paid.

Note: In some cases an institution in the United States may be nearer to a student's home than a Canadian institution. If the United States' program of studies is accepted in Canada it may be cost effective and less disruptive for a student to enroll in the United States' institution.

Other Costs: Requests for funding involving other educational requirements will be considered on an individual need basis subject to the availability of funds.

Requests for Alternate Funding or Financial Assistance: From time to time, for a variety of reasons, full-time post-secondary students may request alternate funding arrangements that differ from those contained in this policy. Such requests will be forwarded by the student to the Education Coordinator who will make recommendations to the Education Advisory Council, and if necessary 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 and on their past academic record. Approval of a request for alternate funding will only be made by Band Council if the granting of the request is within the parameters of the *Alternate Education Policy* and budget availability.

Funding Limitations

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

- Level 1: Community College and CEGEP diploma or certificate programs;
 - Level 2: Undergraduate university programs (certificate, diploma, degree);
 - Level 3: Advanced or professional degree programs, or masters programs; and
 - Level 4: Doctoral programs
1. Financial assistance for tuition, compulsory student fees and required books may be provided to students enrolled in all four levels.
 2. Assistance may be provided to students to complete only one program at each level.
 3. Exceptionally, Level 2 may include assistance for an additional degree at the bachelor level which has as a prerequisite an undergraduate degree or undergraduate courses.
 4. The duration of assistance will accord with the official length of the program as defined by the post-secondary institution in which the student is enrolled, as long as the student is in satisfactory academic standing at the institution as per the institution's definition of "satisfactory academic standing".
 5. 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 or 4 may be assisted for up to one additional academic year for medical or personal reasons.
 6. Students may be assisted in Level 1 studies after dropping out of Level 2 studies if not previously funded for Level 1.
 7. Students who have completed a Level 2, 3 or 4 program, **with or without assistance from this program**, are ineligible for program assistance for lower levels.
 8. Student support will not exceed the limits set out in the paragraphs above. Where students change programs 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.
 9. If the demand from eligible students exceeds funding available, selection priority criteria will apply as per the priority list in the student eligibility section above.
 10. Students receiving funding from the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) must declare support received from this program as a source of income if applying for social assistance.

Appeal Process

Appealing a Decision: Each student has the right to appeal any decision regarding funding issues and financial sponsorship from the High Bar First Nation

The first step in the appeal process is discussion with the Education Coordinator in an attempt to resolve any disputes with regard to the Post-Secondary Education Policy.

If the appeal is not dealt with to the satisfaction of the student, the next step in the appeal process will be dealt with the by Band Education Advisory Council. The student wishing to appeal the decision of the Education Coordinator will submit their appeal in writing to the Education Advisory Council, providing a full explanation of the reason for their appeal. The Advisory Council will address those concerns and attempt to come to some resolution with the student and the Education Coordinator.

Should a student not be satisfied with the decision of the Education Advisory Council, the final step in the appeal process is a written letter of appeal to the Band Council. The reason(s) for the appeal are to be outlined clearly in writing and submitted to Band Council for a decision. The decision of Band Council is final.

Policy Amendments

Amendments to this Policy: recommendations for amendments to this policy can be submitted by any Band Member of Band Staff and are to be submitted to the Education Coordinator by December 31 of each year. Any policy amendments supported by the Education Advisory Council and approved by Band Council will take effect at the beginning of the next fiscal year.

Incentive

High Bar First Nation Post-Secondary students who engage in studies, which directly contribute to First Nations achieving self-governance and economic self-reliance may be eligible for incentives. Incentives may also be provided to recognize academic achievement. Eligible students may be awarded either one Strategic Studies Scholarship or one Academic Achievement Scholarship in an academic year.

Academic Achievement Scholarship

In recognition of academic achievement, a post-secondary student enrolled in Level 1 or Level 2 programs, are enrolled in full time studies and who have achieved a grade average of B or higher in their program of studies may be awarded a scholarship:

- The amount of scholarship awarded by the High Bar First Nation will be up to a maximum of \$1,000 annually.
- 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.
- This incentive will be awarded annually in accordance with the official length of the program of studies as determined by the institution the student is enrolled in. it will not be awarded for the additional academic year provided for Level 1 and Level 2 students.

- A process for awarding these scholarships will be established by Chief and Council in consultation with the Education Coordinator and the Education Advisory Council.
- The manner of awarding scholarships will be made publicly available.

Strategic Studies Scholarship 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, High Bar First Nation may offer incentive scholarships.

- Students who are currently receiving financial support under the Post-Secondary 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 are eligible for the Strategic Studies Scholarships
- The amount of the scholarships awarded by the High Bar First Nation may be up to a maximum of \$3,500 annually.
- 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 at the beginning of each year and thereafter in accordance with the funding limitations section of this Policy.
- The scholarship is for a full academic year commencing in September. There will be no partial awards of this scholarship. For example, a student who enrolls in January in one of the programs of studies identified below will not be entitled to half of the scholarship.
- In accordance with the National Program Guidelines, the Strategic Studies Scholarship will not be provided for an additional academic year due to approved extension for medical or personal reasons.
- A process for awarding these scholarships will be established by Chief and Council in consultation with the Education Coordinator and the Education Advisory Council.
- The manner of awarding scholarships will be made publicly available.

Incentives for students enrolled in Level 3 or Level 4 programs

Students enrolled as full-time students in a Level 3 or 4 degree program may receive an incentive one at either level from the High Bar First Nation 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.
- Students who have completed two or more years of their program of studies at Level 3 without support from the Student Support Program will receive the incentive upon commencement of the first year they are supported by the program.