



Whitefish River First Nation: Post- Secondary Education Policy

2016-2017

Chief & Council Approved (March 22, 2016)



Vision: The Anishinabek of Whitefish River First Nation will work in harmony while maintaining our culture, traditions and knowledge to enrich and empower our people.

Mission: The Anishinabek of Whitefish River First Nation will strive to improve community well-being by collectively protecting, strengthening and developing its resources and culture through mutual cooperation.

PREAMBLE

Whitefish River First Nation (WRFN) highly values and promotes lifelong learning! This is accomplished by combining the Seven Grandfather Teachings (Wisdom, Love, Bravery, Truth, Respect, Humility, and Honesty) through the teachings of the Medicine Wheel (Spiritual, Emotional, Mental/Intellectual, and Physical conditions). Constant development and practice of the Seven Grandfather Teachings and Medicine Wheel will result in our citizens walking in balance!

This Whitefish River First Nation (WRFN) Post-Secondary Education (PSE) Policy supersedes previous versions of the WRFN PSE Policies.

ALL POLICIES CONTAINED WITHIN THIS DOCUMENT ARE SUBJECT TO WRFN PSE AVAILABLE FUNDING.

The intent of this policy, is to assist Whitefish River First Nation citizens, in the pursuit of their college and university education goals. Concurrently, the PSE Policy addresses the challenges of assisting as many qualified applicants as possible, with the limited financial resources available.

Applicants must understand that the WRFN-PSE policy represents a subsidy program and is **not** meant to cover all financial expenses related to students' post-secondary education requirements.

Students are strongly encouraged to save employment income, apply for scholarships and/or bursaries and/or apply to other forms of financial assistance, in order to assist with them with their respective post-secondary education requirements.

Submitted applications for Post-Secondary funding, once received by WRFN are considered confidential, except where the applicant has provided signed authority to release personal information.

As per Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) funding agreements, all WRFN PSE applicants and results are reported to INAC annually.



Applications for Post-Secondary funding are available at the Whitefish River First Nation Administration Office and on the Whitefish River First Nation website at www.whitefishriver.ca.

The deadline date/intake date for WRFN PSE sponsorship applications is May 1ST, 2016.

Definitions:

Sponsorship "Hold": Approved forms of WRFN students' sponsorship support is on hold until the earlier of either;

all terms and/or conditions for sponsorship reinstatement are met to the satisfaction of WRFN, or;

30 calendar days.

Sponsorship "Probation": Approved forms of WRFN students' sponsorship support can continue as per the applicants' May 1, 2016 intake application for a specified duration;

Sponsorship "Terminated": Approved forms of WRFN students' sponsorship support ceases and the student will be ineligible to re-apply for WRFN PSE Sponsorship until May 1, 2019.

1. SPONSORSHIP ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR PSE APPLICATION FEE ASSISTANCE AND/OR PSE SPONSORSHIP

- a. Must be a registered citizen of Whitefish River First Nation and provide proof (I.E. Indian status card) in order to apply for post-secondary funding;
- b. Must have been a resident of Canada for 12 consecutive months prior to May 1st, 2016.

2. APPROVAL LETTERS

- a. Final Approval letters: Students selected for final sponsorship approved for Full or Partial Sponsorship, are students that have submitted a complete application prior to the application deadline and include all supporting documentation. These students will be provided with a Student Sponsorship Final Approval Letter. This letter will outline the sponsorship amounts of assistance based on their complete application for sponsorship. Concurrently, a Tuition Sponsorship letter will be issued to the selected educational institution, with a copy to the sponsored student;
- b. Conditional Approval letters: Students selected for conditional approval for Full or Partial Sponsorship, are students that have submitted an application prior to the application deadline but may be missing pertinent details in the application and or missing supporting documentation. These students will be provided with a Student Sponsorship Conditional Approval Letter. This letter will outline what information and / or document(s) the applicant must provide to WRFN before the applicant will receive a Final Approval letter. Also, the relevant educational institute will not receive a Tuition sponsorship letter, on behalf of the student, until the student has received final approval.



3. ELIGIBLE PROGRAMS / COURSES

- a. Eligible Post-Secondary Programs:
 - i. Must be at least two (2) semesters in duration;
 - ii. Must have secondary school completion or higher as a prerequisite for admission to the program;
 - iii. Must be a Canadian Provincial or Territorial Community College or University accredited post-secondary institution or an educational institution affiliated with or delivering accredited post-secondary; certificate (1 or 2 yr.), diploma (2 or 3 yr.), degree (Associate or Honours), Masters, or Phd. Program;
 - iv. May be a Private Post-Secondary Institution, however, assistance will be calculated at the public Post-Secondary rate for the same or similar program;
 - v. College & University Preparatory Programs (Law or Engineering);
 - vi. College & University Entrance Programs that result in credit(s) toward a diploma or degree.
- b. Applicants must provide a program syllabus, as per their education plan.
- c. Eligible Post-Secondary Courses:
 - i. To be consistent with the selected course of study, syllabus and the applicants' education plan.
- d. Ineligible Post-Secondary Programs/Courses:
 - i. Non-Canadian based educational institution programs and / or courses;
 - ii. Programs and / or courses taken outside the sponsored program are the responsibility of the student;
 - iii. Any program less than two semesters in duration.

4. APPLICATION FEE ASSISTANCE

- a. College/University Application Fees:
 - i. Eligible applicants may receive reimbursement for eligible program application fees (i.e. OCAS fees), to a maximum amount of \$150.00 per calendar year;
 - ii. Applicants must complete the Application Fee Request Form (Form A) to be considered for assistance;
 - iii. **Note – Important: Reimbursement of college and/or university application fees does not guarantee approval of WRFN PSE sponsorship.**



5. LIMITS / LEVELS OF ASSISTANCE

a. Program Tuition Sponsorship*:

Sponsored students may receive tuition sponsorship and the maximum duration (indicated in the table below), for 1 of each of the following level of education that the applicant does not already possess:

<u>Education Level</u>	<u>Maximum Tuition Sponsorship</u>
1 year Certificate	2 semesters
2 year Certificate	4 semesters
2 year Diploma	4 semesters
3 year Diploma	6 semesters
Associate Degree	6 semesters
Honours Degree	8 semesters
Master's Degree	As per the approved duration, based on the 2016/17 application, and support documentation.
Doctorate	As per the approved duration, based on the 2016/17 application, and support documentation.
* Individual course tuition requests as per 3.c.	

b. Living Allowance:

2016/17 Applicants** are limited to a maximum of 48 months of living allowance, subject to complying with all other sponsorship terms and conditions.;

1. The maximum number of months living allowance is over the entire applicants' career of WRFN PSE sponsorship (i.e. if the applicant has previously received living allowance, that number of living allowance months will be subtracted from the 48 month maximum to determine how many number of months living allowance eligibility remains.



- c. Living allowance levels:
 - i. For applicant: \$1,100.00 / month;
 - ii. For applicant plus 1 dependent: \$1,570.00 / month;
 - iii. For applicant plus 2 dependents: \$1,630.00 / month;
 - iv. For applicant plus 3 dependents: \$1,780.00 / month;
 - v. \$50 additional per month, per each dependent beyond 3 dependents;
- d. Students living in residence at College or University will be sponsored at a maximum rate of \$1,100.00/month and this residence fee will be paid directly to the educational or residence institution;
- e. Residence sponsored students can opt in or out of the residence meal plan, however the maximum residence allowance rate will be maintained;
- f. Where the residence fee or the combination of the residence + meal plan fee is less than the living allowance rate, the student will be entitled to receive the difference in equal monthly installments over the term of their approved sponsorship and in accordance with their 2016/17 education plan;
- g. Where the residence fee or combination of the residence and meal plan fee exceed the living allowance rate, the excess will be the responsibility of the Student.

6. Full-Time Sponsorship applicants may apply for the following;

- a. Tuition (as indicated above);
- b. Living Allowance (as indicated above);
- c. Book Allowance: \$600.00 per semester, to be distributed at the start of the semester. Advances are permitted in situations where multiple semester books are purchased as one package. In this case the applicant must provide bookstore confirmation of the same;
- d. Travel Allowance: \$100.00 per month, distributed monthly;
 - i. An additional \$200.00 Christmas break allowance, distributed on January 28th, for students that are living away from home to attend the Educational Institute, to assist offsetting costs of returning home and heading back to the educational Institute;
- e. Tutorial assistance: up to a maximum \$150.00 / semester, paid directly to the educational institute;
- f. Guidance / Counselling / Social Work Services, as evidenced by a support letter by a health care professional, and subject to available funding.
- g. Student Fees: Reviewed on a case by case basis;
- h. Materials & Supplies: Reviewed on a case by case basis;



7. Partial Sponsorship applicants for Partial Sponsorship may apply for the following;

- a. Tuition (as indicated above);
- b. NO living allowance;
- c. Book Allowance: \$600.00 per semester, to be distributed at the start of the semester. Advances are permitted in situations where multiple semester books are purchased as one package. In this case the applicant must provide bookstore confirmation of the same;
- d. Partial Sponsorship Travel Allowance: Applicants enrolled in eligible hybrid type programs (I.E. programs with elements of distance education and in-class studies), required to attend in-class portions, must provide a budget for travel expenses for the term(s) that coincide with the 2016/17 PSE application. Further, in-class portions of the selected program must be confirmed in writing from the Educational Institution, prior to approving specific travel claims in this type of program;
- e. Tutorial assistance: up to a maximum \$150.00 / semester, paid directly to the educational institute;
- f. Guidance / Counselling / Social Work Services, as evidenced by a support letter by a health care professional, and subject to available funding.

8. WRFN PSE Sponsorship Request

- a. Students must apply each year for sponsorship;
- b. Sponsorship Deferment: Approved sponsored students who wish to defer their sponsorship for a maximum of one calendar year will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Requests must be made in writing to the WRFN prior to official registration of the sponsored semester. Only one deferment per student will be allowed;
- c. Applicants must complete a WRFN PSE sponsorship application form (Form B) and provide all requisite support documentation to be considered for sponsorship;
- d. Form B and support documentation must be acceptable in both presentation and content;
- e. A complete application package contains the following;
 - i. Page 1: Applicant Identification and Education information and sponsorship request details;
 - ii. Page 2: Education History and Education Plan;
 - iii. Page 3: Consent to release and exchange information with the Program of Study Educational Institution;
 - iv. Page 4: Consent to release and exchange information with Applicant family, guardians and or other members;
 - v. Page 5: Consent to release and exchange information with other Whitefish River First Nation administration and / or programs regarding sponsorship and/or eligibility;
 - vi. Page 6: WRFN PSE Sponsorship Student agreement (if the applicant receives final approval);
 - vii. Support Documentation:
 1. A legible photocopy of the applicant's WRFN Indian status card or proof of same, front and back;
 2. Most recent official transcript from High-school or College or University in accordance with the completed Form 2b Education History;



3. Final acceptance from the applicants' desired educational institution, in their selected program of study;
 4. If applicable, 2 pieces of dependent(s) identification (I.E. Indian Status Card or Birth Certificate or Marriage Certificate), and proof of dependent(s) status and living with the applicant (i.e. 2014 Canada Revenue Agency joint spousal tax return assessment, driver's license, school report cards, utility invoices, and/or March 2016 Child Tax benefit statement);
- viii. Form B must be received by hand, mail, or email (pdf format) and date stamped prior to or on May 1, 2016 at 4:30P.M.;
 - ix. Applications received in the WRFN Education Office on or before the deadline date will be reviewed and assessed on an equal basis according to the priority system;
 - x. Supporting documentation may be received after the deadline, however, the applicant will not be eligible for final sponsorship approval until the application package is deemed complete;
 - xi. If applicable, WRFN will issue a conditional sponsorship approval letter. The letter will outline what outstanding conditions and/or documentation must be met/provided before a final approval sponsorship letter can be issued.

9. Reporting and Compliance Conditions for Sponsorship

- a. For Sponsored students not reporting and/or who are in non-compliance with this PSE policy: Whitefish River First Nation reserves the right to either;
 - i. place a student's sponsorship on hold, or;
 - ii. place a student's sponsorship on probation, or;
 - iii. Terminate / revoke a student's sponsorship.
- b. Reporting: All sponsored students must report their progress, within 14 calendar days after the completion of each semester of sponsorship;
 - i. For graded and/or in-class type courses, the report must indicate the student name, term, courses taken, and marks/grades;
 - ii. For thesis type courses/programs, in the sponsorship education plan, the student must provide a schedule outlining the plan to completing the selected program of study. The schedule includes tasks to be completed and associated completion date(s). The semester progress report then indicates progress of the student, and is also **signed off by the relevant educational institution official/professor/supervisor**;
 - iii. All sponsored students must confirm their intention, to continue a successive semester that has been approved in their 2016/17 education plan, by the 14th of the month preceding the start of the successive semester (I.E. confirm intention by December 14th for the upcoming Winter semester), or the student will not receive the successive months applicable sponsorship.
- c. Compliance Conditions
 - i. A student's sponsorship will be placed on hold when the student has not provided WRFN requested documentation pertaining to their sponsorship;
 - ii. The hold will remain in place until either all conditions for sponsorship are in compliance with this PSE policy; or 30 calendar days from the hold being placed;



- iii. If the student is in non-compliance after 30 calendar days, the student may have their sponsorship terminated;
 - iv. For graded courses; students must maintain a **minimum of 60%** or C in their term grade point average (GPA);
 - v. For course placements; students must achieve a passing grade;
 - vi. Failure to achieve the minimum GPA and/or placement pass, may result in sponsorship probation, or sponsorship termination;
 - vii. Sponsorship probation is the result when a student does not for the first time, not achieve the minimum term GPA, as evidenced by the semester final grades or not adhering to the thesis progress report schedule. A student placed on sponsorship probation must submit a revised Education Plan that must be approved by WRFN prior to sponsorship reinstatement consideration. The revised Education Plan will review the learning conditions in the previous semester, best practices going forward, and outline how the student will achieve the minimum term GPA, or get caught up on their thesis schedule, as the case may be;
 - viii. Sponsorship termination can be the result when a student does not achieve the minimum term GPA for a second semester in a row, as evidenced by the semester final grades, or not getting caught up on their thesis schedule;
 - ix. Students will be notified by registered mail if their sponsorship is placed on; hold, or sponsorship probation or sponsorship terminated. The letter will also indicate the duration of the status change.
- d. Student withdrawal or Sponsorship termination: If a student withdraws from their selected program of study indicated on their relevant 2016/17 sponsorship application, or has their sponsorship terminated, the student will not be considered for sponsorship until April 1, 2019. The student will be informed in writing by registered mail of this decision.
- e. When a revised /and/or updated education plan is required, as per this policy, the Education Director will have discretion to;
- i. Extend tuition allowance to the next scheduled WRFN PSE intake deadline or a maximum of 2 consecutive semesters beyond the WRFN PSE intake deadline;
 - ii. Extend living allowance to the next scheduled WRFN PSE intake deadline or a maximum of 2 consecutive semesters beyond the WRFN PSE intake deadline.
 - iii. The Education Director will report any discretionary changes or extensions to the Band Manager.

10. PRIORITY SYSTEM

- a. All applications for Post-Secondary Funding/Sponsorship will be considered according to their priority. This system is designed to provide fair and equitable access to available Post-Secondary Funding;
- b. **The Priority System** is as follows:
 - i. **Priority 1 (P1) 2015/16 Returning Students:** Students sponsored in the Spring/Summer/Fall 2015 or Winter 2016 Terms and who are returning to their program of study as pertaining to their 2015/16 PSE application;
 - ii. **Priority 2 (P2) Grade 12 High School Graduates:** Students, who have never received WRFN PSE sponsorship and who have graduated from Secondary School within the past 2 years, (i.e. Between April 2014 and March 2016). If the (P2)



student applies and is not sponsored due to lack of funding, the student will remain Priority 2 until sponsored. Priority 2 sponsored students will be allowed to make **one change to their selected program of study**, within the first year of their sponsorship, without WRFN considering the student withdrawn from their original selected program of study;

- iii. **Priority 3 (P3) All Other Potential Students:** All other eligible applicants that do not fall into the Priority 1 or 2 categories.

11. INTERVIEWS AND TESTING

- a. Where an interview or testing is mandatory for a Post-Secondary institution, a student will be responsible for arranging Testing and Interviews with the nearest Post-Secondary Institute willing to accommodate the Students Testing/Interview;
- b. Prior Learning Assessment - maximum is 2 PLA challenges per academic year.
- c. Cost coverage for 11.a and b to be determined on a case by case basis.

12. NOTICE TO WITHDRAW

- a. A student who withdraws from an academic program, must complete the necessary College or University forms within the specified time period according to the selected Institutions' policies and must forward a copy of the official Withdraw to the WRFN Education office;
- b. For students approved by WRFN to withdraw from one program and enter a different Educational Institution and/or program of study, the student must provide an updated PSE application.

13. APPEAL PROCESS

- a. There is no appeal process for late submissions;
- b. Where a Student is denied WRFN PSE sponsorship, the student may appeal the decision. The appeal must be submitted in writing, citing the appropriate section of the policy that was not properly applied;
- c. The written appeal must be forwarded to the Whitefish River First Nation Band Manager within 15 days of the date of refusal;
- d. The Band Manager and the Education Representative on Council will review the appeal. The student will be notified in writing of the decision with respect to the appeal, by the Band Manager and Education Representative on Council;
- e. The decision of the Band Manager and Education Representative on Council will be final;
- f. Where there is a Conflict of Interest regarding the Band Manager and/or the Education Representative on Council, the Band Manager will present the Appeal to Chief and Council for resolution;



14. WHITEFISH RIVER CHIEF AND COUNCIL APPROVAL

The Whitefish River First Nation wishes everyone academic success and trusts that this Policy will assist all Sponsored Students in achieving their academic goals.

Approved this __22nd____ day of __March____, 2016.

Motion #__03-05-16_____ accepting the 2016-2017 WRFN PSE Policy.

Chief and Council of the Whitefish River First Nation.