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FIRST NATION

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U27 Williams Lake First Nation Post-Secondary Policy and Procedures

Revised December 2021

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INTRODUCTION

The Williams Lake First Nation (WLFN) Education Department recognizes the importance of providing moral support, advisory services, and financial assistance to WLFN Registered Members. Thus, enabling those WLFN Registered Members to successfully complete their post-secondary education (PSE) and training to pursue their employment endeavors and satisfy our program objectives.

WLFN believes that its registered members have the right to receive support in pursuing their post-secondary and vocational education goals, and to achieve those goals the WLFN Registered Members must assume the responsibility for setting and achieving their educational goals.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the WLFN Post-Secondary education program are to encourage and support eligible WLFN Registered Members to gain access to post-secondary education and support students in budgeting, career planning and assistance in acquiring financial resources to successfully complete their post-secondary studies up to and including graduation.

The WLFN PSE Program operates on the principles of the Indigenous Service Canada (ISC) Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) which is designed to assist WLFN Registered Members to acquire university and professional-level qualifications. Through this strategy the WLFN Education Committee believes its WLFN Registered Members will become economically self-sufficient and realize their individual potential for contribution to their Nation, other First Nation communities and society at large.

PURPOSE

The WLFN PSE Policy and Procedures has been developed to provide students with a comprehensive and detailed guide to the Nation's post-Secondary education program. This document provides guidance to the students regarding program responsibilities, program eligibility, financial support, termination of funding and appeal process. It is essential for all students to fully understand their entitlements and the responsibilities that accompany these entitlements. Through this open administration we can ensure all students are treated in a fair and consistent manner.

The PSE Policy is a guide to assist staff to administer the program and provide administrative and financial support to students who are participants in the PSE program. This policy is subject to amendment based on changes to the PSE program and requirements of students.

The decisions made regarding the financial support of WLFN Registered Members who wish to be considered students under the provisions of this policy will be made in the best interest of all students and are contingent upon WLFN's ability to fund education programs.

In the event students obtain part-time or casual employment during their educational studies, this does not disqualify students from receiving financial sponsorship.

ELIGIBILITY

For a student to be eligible to receive post-secondary education financial support under this program, individuals must meet the following criteria and submit documentation for administrative purposes.

Eligibility Requirements

The student must:

- A. Be a registered member with WLFN.
- B. Have met university or college requirements and have been enrolled or accepted for enrollment into a program of studies at an eligible post-secondary institution.
- C. Be eligible for support (i.e., registered into an eligible program and institution approved by ISC and have lived in Canada for at least 12 continuous months prior to application)
- D. Ensure the program provides certificate, diploma or degree and be at least 4 months in length and require secondary school completion for admission)

Provisions For Accepting Educational Aid From Other Agencies

- A. Government or private scholarships, bursaries and fellowships awarded based on academic performances or need, has no effect on the calculation of support available to the students. These types of support are encouraged and are available online at www.aboriginallearning.ca

StudentAidBC Funding Option

Students who are funded by the WLFN Education Department may also apply for funding through StudentAidBC. The Education Department may assist with the repayment of loans if funding is available, and the student meets all the WLFN funding requirements and has no outstanding arrears with WLFN.

Students who are currently in a WLFN program of study and who will not complete their program within the time limit outlined in their approved WLFN application may apply through StudentAidBC for each year required to complete their program. Please see the Financial Aid office at your public institution for assistance.

APPLICATION PROCESS AND DEADLINES

All students are required to complete and submit to the WLFN Education Department a U26 WLFN PSE application package and include an arrear's confirmation letter from WLFN Finance department as required by the U114 WLFN Arrears Policy 20210609 each year by application deadline to be considered for sponsorship.

New Student

Must provide the following to the Education Department:

- A. Completed and signed Application Form
- B. Photocopy of a recent status card (front and back)
- C. Dependent Income requests MUST provide a copy of the Child Tax Benefit with dependent name(s)

- D. Letter of Acceptance from an eligible post-secondary institution OR expected date of Notification
- E. Official Transcripts from previous academic institution or secondary school
- F. Bank Institution account information for direct deposit
- G. Detailed Letter of Intent
- H. List of Program Fees and course outline for semesters 1 and 2
- I. Letter of recommendation from instructor or employer

Continuing Student

All students currently enrolled in full-time or part-time post-secondary studies are required to renew their application for post-secondary sponsorship each year. Upon renewal those students are required to submit the following documents on or before the application deadlines:

- A. Completed and signed application package.
- B. Dependent Income requests MUST provide a copy of the Child Tax Benefit with dependent name(s)
- C. Course Registration Form or outline of courses for school year.
- D. Void cheque or letter from bank if different from previous year.
- E. Official sealed transcript of grades including all courses from the current year or term.
- F. List of Program Fees and course outline for semesters 1 and 2

Masters and PhD Student

Required to submit the same documentation as the continuing student documents along with submitting an updated **résumé** outlining your previous education, work experience and any other experience or information relevant to your proposed area of study.

Application Checklist

To be considered a complete U26 Post-Secondary Application package all documents are required to be attached for review by the selection committee.

Annual Application Deadline

1. September to April Sponsorship of every year – Deadline on or prior to June 1 – *(if a student is planning to take Spring and Summer semester courses, they can include this in the June 1 deadline application to avoid repeating an application later in the year)*
2. January to April sponsorship deadline on or before October 1
3. May to August sponsorship deadline on or before March 1

RESPONSIBILITIES

Student's Responsibilities

Once a student has been approved and will receive post-Secondary financial assistance, students are responsible for:

- A. Achieving their post-secondary education goals as outlined in their U26 WLFN application.
- B. Maintaining a minimum grade point average in their program of studies as defined by the post-Secondary institute program guidelines.

- C. Ensuring withdrawals from their institution of studies are made prior to fee reimbursement deadlines. If the withdrawal deadline is not met, the course cost and fee's will be the responsibility of the student.
- D. Submitting a progress report to the WLFN Education department upon request.
- E. Submitting official transcript of grades to the WLFN Education Department within thirty (45) days completing the final semester. Completion of all other semesters will require a unofficial transcript. If not submitted with the time frame the student risks suspension of the PSE monthly allowance until received.
- F. Informing the WLFN Education Department of any program or enrolment changes immediately. In some cases, the changes may affect their status as a full-time student and will affect their WLFN financial support.

WLFN PSE students, who do not complete their course of studies or do not uphold their student responsibilities without prior authorization, must reimburse the WLFN Education Department for all costs incurred on their behalf. No further educational support will be available until commitment to the full reimbursement has been made to the WLFN Education Department. WLFN PSE students must notify the education department immediately.

Education Department Responsibilities

The WLFN Education Department staff is responsible to:

1. Ensure the education program is administered according to existing policies.
2. Assist students in gaining access to post-secondary education.
3. Encourage and support students throughout their educational journey.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Priority for Funding

The WLFN designated the priority of funding for PSE application sponsorship in the following order:

- A. ***Continuing Students*** - students enrolled and continuing in post-secondary studies
- B. ***Grade 12 Students*** - students who have graduated from a secondary school without a break in their studies and who have not previously received post-secondary funding.
- C. ***Deferred Students*** - students whose applications for financial assistance were deferred the previous year for lack of funds and who are reapplying for post-secondary funding.
- D. ***Successful Students*** - students who have completed an undergraduate degree program and are continuing on to an advanced degree program without a break in their studies.
- E. ***Vocational/Part-time Students*** - students who are applying for vocational training or part time post-secondary studies.
- F. Students who have previously received post-secondary funding but did not complete their Post-Secondary education programs. The circumstances under which a student decided not to continue post-secondary studies will be a factor in the WLFN Education Department's consideration of the application for assistance.

Levels of Assistance

For the purpose of the Post-Secondary Education Policies these distinctions determine the categories and amount of funding for which students are eligible, students may be classified using the following categories:

A. University and College Entrance Preparation Program (UCEPP)

- Students can be sponsored part-time or full-time to a maximum of 2 years of college preparation or preparation during Levels 1, 2 or 3.
- Be accepted as a student of a regular university or college credit program upon successful completion of the UCEPP program.

B. Level 1 – Certificate or Diploma Programs

- Students will **only** be sponsored for **one** of the following:
- Certificate Program 1 year
- Diploma Program 2 years

Unless the certificate program tiers into the diploma program.

C. Level 2 – Degree

- Bachelors Degree 4 years

D. Level 3 – Master's or PhD

- Master's Degree 2 years beyond Undergraduate Degree
- Doctoral Degree 2 Semesters beyond master's degree

*A student can apply for an additional year of study if approval is granted in writing by the Dean or Department Head of the Institution and if funding is available by WLFN.

Funding Streams

The funding stream will consist of three types of funding as follows:

- A. Semester consists of 16 weeks per semester with a minimum of 3 courses per semester for full time funding.
- B. Trades/Certificate consists of 90 hours per course and will require minimum of 3 courses per semester for full time funding.
- C. Open Learning consists of 30 weeks to complete a course and will require a minimum of 3 courses per term for full time funding.

Student Status

Full-time including Master's/PhD student

To qualify the student must be registered in the following course loads:

- A. A full-time student minimum of three courses/semester or 9 credits in area of study as outlined in the U26 WLFN PSE application package.
- B. A Master's student who in each term or semester take a minimum of 2 courses.

May receive:

- Tuition and compulsory fees
- Funds for mandatory books and parking
- Seasonal Travel Assistance upon availability
- Living Allowance and school support

Part-time Student

Part-time students will be supported if their program of studies leads to a certificate, diploma or degree as outlined in their U26 WLFN PSE application package. Students must be registered in at least one course with a minimum of three credits. The course(s) must be amongst those outlined in the application package.

May receive:

- Tuition and compulsory fees
- Cost of mandatory books
- School support

Out-of-Province Canadian Sponsorship

Tuition will be paid up to the maximum amount of the allowable tuition fees for attending the closest public institution to the student's regular residence.

International Sponsorship

Students wishing to study at the post-secondary level outside of Canada are entitled to do so; students will receive their living allowance in Canadian Funds, equivalent to what students studying in Canada receive. Tuition fees will be paid to the maximum allowable amount to that of the closest Canadian institution and will be paid in Canadian funds. All remaining and additional costs are the student's responsibility.

Assistance Amounts

Distinction is drawn between students according to level and student status. There will be different categories and amounts of funding for which those students will be eligible. Categories of funding may include the following.

Tuition Fees

Tuition Fees include registration, tuition, and mandatory fees issued by the institution. Students must withdraw from the medical fee at the start of the program or will be responsible for this cost. The cost of registration, tuition and mandatory fees will be paid directly to the institution.

Tuition Fees will be paid to the maximum amount of program course fees per academic year as outlined in the post-secondary institute program costs which can vary from institute to institute.

*Students attending out of country programs will be expected to pay exchange costs.

*Audited or failed courses will not be paid and will be considered as time used toward the Funding Limitations. It is the responsibility of the student to pay for a failed course when re-taken.

Books and Parking

The cost of books and supplies listed as required by the post-secondary institution will be covered. Should the cost of required books exceed the course subsidy students must attach all original receipts verifying expenses over the subsidy and will be reimbursed accordingly.

Book allowance will be provided for full-time and part-time students in the following amounts:

Fall Term	Winter Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
\$700.00	\$700.00	\$700.00	\$700.00

Parking will be provided to full-time students only in the amounts of:

Fall Term	Winter Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
\$300.00	\$300.00	\$300.00	\$300.00

If a student does not require a parking pass, they can alter the funding to purchase bus passes.

Living Allowance

Only full-time students are eligible to receive Living Allowance. Living Allowance is expected to assist in covering normal daily living expenditures such as food, lodging and some local travel.

The maximum levels of Living Allowance as of 2019 are as follows:

Category	Monthly Rate
Student Monthly support per student – automatic	300.00
Single Student	1,400.00
Married/Common-Law Student with Spouse	1,400.00
Married/Common Law Student with Spouse	1,400.00
*With each dependent add additional per child	<u>300.00</u>
Total <i>Married/Common-Law</i> Monthly	1,700.00
Single Parent Student	1,400.00
*With each dependent, add additional per child	<u>300.00</u>
Total <i>Single</i> Monthly	1,700.00

* To be eligible to receive a Living Allowance for dependents, the child/ren must be residing with the student. A copy of the Child Tax Benefit entitlement must be provided for administration purposes with the child(ren)s and PSE students name on it.

A student must be accepted in a full-time program to receive a Living Allowance. If a student withdraws from a course during a term and is lower than 3 courses in that semester, the Living Allowance will be adjusted to part-time funding. If there is an amount owing to WLFN then the PSE student will sign a reimbursement plan with the WLFN Education Department.

Student Monthly Allowance will be direct deposited to the student's bank account on the 22nd of every month; the first payable will be direct deposited in August; and the final monthly allowance will be direct deposited in May for a regular September to April School year.

Damage Deposit

Under special circumstances where it is necessary for a student to rent accommodations at a DORM to attend a post-secondary institution and a damage deposit is required, the PSE Program will pay the deposit directly to the Rental Housing, upon completion of the PSE Program, the damage deposit will be returned back to the WLFN Education Department funds.

Seasonal Travel

Seasonal travel, if eligible and/or funding is available will be provided to a maximum of 2 trips/year/student.

Emergency Travel

WLFN Education Department does not provide emergency travel for the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP). The post secondary student can contact the education department for references to other source funding within WLFN.

Tutoring Expense Assistance

Students who require tutoring are responsible to have their designated tutor to contact the Senior Education Manager for pre-approval.

Student Advances

There will be no student advances.

Deferred Studies

A meeting must be set up with the Senior Education Manager upon final approval.

Student/Family – Extracurricular Program Funding

Eligibility will be made available to children of parents that are enrolled into a full time PSE program. These extracurricular program funds are the choice of the parent/family. The WLFN Education Department will provide a maximum of \$350.00/child/year (April 1 to March 31) attending school from kindergarten to grade twelve.

Requests for Alternate Funding or Financial Assistance

On occasion and for a various reasons, full-time post-secondary students may request funding arrangements that differ from those contained in this policy. Such requests will be forwarded to the WLFN Education Department who will consider each request individually.

Approval of requests for alternate funding arrangements will be on an individual basis and will be judged on their own merits.

SUSPENSION

Personal challenges may affect student's studies by personal crisis, such as death in their immediate family, accident, or sickness. A PSE student is required to advise the WLFN Education Department as soon as possible and may apply to suspend their education plan. If this is to occur the WLFN Education Department will review the students funding and determine if there will be funds owed to WLFN and address accordingly. Students are encouraged to seek counseling for support.

Students must submit official and unofficial transcripts, progress reports, course registration forms, receipts and documents requested by the WLFN Education Department identified for

administrative purposes. If the WLFN Education Department does not receive documentation by the deadline date, then the student will be placed on suspension and will not receive their monthly allowance until documentation is received. If the documentation is not received within 30 days, then the suspension will be placed into termination of funding as outlined in the *Termination of Funding* section.

MEDICAL RELEASE

A student who is required, for medical reasons, to be absent from classes for more than one week, is required to provide the Senior Education Manager, within 10 days of the onset of the illness or medical condition, with a note or certification 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 suspension or termination of funding.

WAITLIST

A waitlist will be made each year beginning on June 1 if WLFN funding is less than PSE applications received. A student whose name is on the waitlist will be notified of their position. This waitlist is created by first come basis.

WLFN ARREARS

PSE students are required to request an arrear's confirmation letter from WLFN Finance department as per the U114 WLFN Arrears Policy 20210609. Students owing money to the WLFN and are wishing to receive financial support from the post-Secondary education program must authorize a repayment plan with WLFN to re-pay the amount owed before their funding request is considered.

If a student accrues arrears with any of the WLFN Department's during or after their post-Secondary education program a repayment plan is required to be established immediately.

TERMINATION OF FUNDING

If for any reason a student does not honor the student responsibilities payments the student may be suspended. The following shall apply:

- Suspensions may be in effect immediately.
- All outstanding funds will be payable back to WLFN.
- Upon reinstatement following any period of suspension, a student must be placed on academic probation in accordance with the Guidelines concerning academic achievement.

Change in educational status

The student is registered as a full-time student and does not inform the Education Department in advance of any such change to status and become a part-time student during the semester.

Minimum grade expectations

The student failed to meet the minimum grade required by WLFN or post-secondary institution and is successful in fewer than 75% of the courses for which the student had registered.

Misuse of funding

Students who are registered at a post-secondary institution and received Living Allowance but did not attend classes regularly or withdrew from their courses at the institution must return all allowances to the WLFN Education Department and/or paid out on their behalf. This includes tuition fees, books, living allowance and any other monies which may have been forwarded to the student or to the institution on their behalf.

Note: Students may appeal terminations through the Appeal Process as outlined in the *Appeal Procession* section.

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.

The Education Department will place students who receive failing or incomplete marks on 50% or more of their courses on academic probation. Students placed on WLFN 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-time sponsorship until they successfully complete the courses (or their equivalent) 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 education institution.

APPEAL PROCESS

It is the policy of the WLFN Education Department for all applications receive fair and equitable treatment. However, should any WLFN PSE student have concerns the preceding policy and guidelines have not been fairly applied to their situation the student may appeal within 30 days of the grievance in the following manner:

1. Send a detailed written documentation stating the grievance to the Senior Education Manager.
2. Meet with the Senior Education Manager within 30 days to discuss the policy concern and seek a solution.
3. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the Senior Education Manager, they can proceed as follows:
 - submit a letter within 14 days of the decision in Step 2 to the Chief Administrative Officer. The letter to the Chief Administrative Officer must clearly outline the details of their grievance, the policy concerns they are not satisfied with from the response of the Senior Education Manager's decision.
 - attend the scheduled meeting to answer questions the Chief Administrative Officer may request of the applicant.
4. If the applicant is not satisfied with the Chief Administrative Officer's decision in Step 3 then a letter outlining the grievance can be forwarded, along with the preceding documentation in Steps 1 and 2, to the WLFN Education Appeals Committee. The WLFN Education Appeals Committee will consist of no less than 3 people and will include at least one Elder

and Council Member. The decision made by the WLFN Education Appeals Committee in attendance will be final and legally binding on the applicant.

If the applicant resides outside the community and is unable to attend in person, the meetings will be conducted via teleconference, ZOOM or Microsoft Teams. The applicant can have one person attend on their behalf with an original signed letter of permission to be provided to the Education Department prior to the start of the Appeal Process.

AMENDMENTS TO THE POLICY

Revisions to the WLFN Education Policy can only be made by the WLFN education department and all revisions must be ratified by WLFN Chief and Council. The revised policy will be made available on the WLFN Website and sent to post-secondary students who are currently sponsored.

Motion:

December 13, 2021

It was moved and seconded that:

Council supports the revised changes to the U27 WLFN Post-Secondary Education (PSE) Policy as presented.

The motion was adopted 5 for; 0 against

APPENDIX A - DEFINITIONS

Academic Plan	The program credit requirements. Each semester, students are to comply with course requirements/prerequisites to complete their certificates, diploma, or degree in a timely manner. All registered courses must coincide with the program requirements.
Academic Probation	A period during which a student is under strict academic guidelines, usually because of low or failing grades.
Academic Year	Is defined by the post-secondary institution, usually eight months in duration.
Appeal	A challenge of a judgment to a higher authority. If an applicant is not satisfied with the decision based on the policy, the applicant has the option to follow steps outlined in the <i>Appeal Process</i> .
Registered Member	A person who has met the requirements to become a registered member of WLFN, as set out in the WLFN Membership code and whose name has been entered on the First Nations list.
Canadian Public Institution	A post-Secondary institution that receives majority of its funding from federal and provincial governments and is approved by ISC.
Certificate	Certification for completion of a college or university program.
Dependents	Any person(s) who relies on a student for support and is living full-time with that student as identified in the Child Tax form.
Diploma	Refers to diploma received for completion of a college or university program.
Full-time student	A student, who in each term or semester takes a minimum three courses or the equivalent to 9 credits. A Master student who in each term or semester take a minimum of 2 courses.
Full Program Load	The total number of course required in any given year to complete a program in the normal length of time prescribed by the post-Secondary institution.
Harassment	Unwelcome conduct, which is physical or verbal in nature which detrimentally affects the work or study environment or leads to adverse job or work-related consequences for the victim of the harassment.
Medical Release	A student who is required, for medical reasons, to be absent form classes for more than one week.
Normal Program Length	The number of years normally required to complete a program as outlined in course of studies.
Part-time Student	A student who takes less than three courses or less than 9 credits per semester.

Post-Secondary Education	A program of study offered by an accredited post-secondary institute, that has the completion of secondary school or its equivalent as a pre-requisite.
Post-Secondary Institution	Certificate, diploma, degree, granting institutions, which are recognized by a province and ISC and include educational institutions affiliated with or delivering accredited post-secondary programs with transferable credits by arrangement with post-secondary programs with transferable credits by arrangement with a post-Secondary institution.
Private Post-Secondary Institution	A Canadian or foreign post-secondary institution that receives majority of funding sources other than governments.
Program of Studies	Includes all post-secondary programs at least four months in duration, leading to a certificate, diploma or degree offered by an accredited post-secondary institute.
Semester	Defined by the post-Secondary institution.
Sponsorship	Provisions of financial support to an individual for attending a post-secondary institution. This support may include tuition, books, living allowance, tutoring, and travel allowance, as applicable.
Spouse	A person who has lived with the student as a Common-Law for a period of not less than one year prior to application for education aid. If the 'spouse' is legally married to the student, no time factors are relevant or applicable.
Waitlist	A list that is created as of June 1 when there are more PSE student applications than funding.

APPENDIX B – WLFN (PSE) FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES

From time to time the WLFN PSE program may receive additional funding from sources other than Indigenous Service Canada (ISC).

When this occurs the following PSE application process will apply:

- Comply with the WLFN U27 PSE Policy
- Complete the WLFN U26 WLFN PSE Application Package and Checklist and include all the criteria required.

The PSE process that will change:

- The PSE application submission and approval process can take place at any time during the fiscal year April 1 to March 31.

PSE applications that fall under funding from other sources, if approved, will be for the current fiscal year only even if the application is for more than one year.

WLFN Registered Members applying for WLFN PSE funding will be notified when the additional PSE funding from other sources is depleted.