



BEAUSOLEIL FIRST NATION
11 Ogemaa Miikaan,
Christian Island, Ontario
L9M 0A9
TEL: 705-247-2051
FAX: 705-247-2239

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
POST-SECONDARY STUDENT ASSISTANCE POLICY

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BEAUSOLEIL FIRST NATION POST-SECONDARY STUDENT ASSISTANCE POLICY

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Preface

This Post Secondary Student Assistance Program (PSSAP) has been developed to assist the Beausoleil First Nation Education Department to administer the program, and to assist in the eligibility selection process, for approval by Beausoleil Education Advisory Committee (BEAC) and Beausoleil First Nation Chief & Council. Further to help students understand expectations, process and eligibility requirements. The Post Secondary Student Assistance Program also acts as a guide for students to understand expectations, process and eligibility requirements. This Post Secondary Student Assistance Program guides the Beausoleil First Nation Education Department in administering the program and selecting eligible students for approval by the Beausoleil Education Advisory Committee and Beausoleil First Nation Chief & Council.

This policy is subject to amendment from time to time based on changes in the post-secondary system and the needs of the students and the First Nation. When policy change happens, the Education Administration will provide notification changes to post-secondary students receiving assistance, however, it is ultimately the student's responsibility to check the website for updated information. This policy may change due to post-secondary system changes or student/First Nation needs.

It should be noted that decisions made regarding the financial support of First Nation members are made under the provisions of this policy. Decisions will be made in the best interests of the students and are contingent upon the First Nation's ability to fund education programs and the availability of funds from year to year. Students should be aware that financial assistance under this policy is provided to assist students' with pursuing a post-secondary education. Employment during post-secondary studies in **no way** disqualifies First Nation members from receiving financial sponsorship. Financial support for First Nation members is governed by this policy, with decisions made in students' best interests and dependent on available funding.

Mandate

The Post Secondary Student Assistance Program is designed to encourage and support members of the Beausoleil First Nation to acquire qualifications to become economically self-sufficient and realize their individual potential. The program shall provide guidance and financial support, as defined by the Beausoleil Education Advisory Committee, Beausoleil First Nation status members who have been accepted at eligible post-secondary institutions. Guidance to other sources of funding will be provided to non-status members.

Policy Objectives

- The Post Secondary Student Assistance Program is provided to students and is meant to support students with their finances while attending post-secondary programs.
- To ensure that all students are aware of the application process through which these funds are accessed.

- To encourage and support First Nation members to gain access to education; to encourage successful completion of education with the qualifications they require to pursue their chosen careers.
- To meet the increasing high demand by eligible First Nation member for post-secondary assistance and to provide financial assistance for eligible First Nation member as possible.

Eligibility

Applicants must meet all of the following criteria:

- Must submit a completed Post Secondary Application form
- Must be registered to the Beausoleil First Nation and provide a photocopy of status card
- Must submit a detailed letter outlining educational goals, current education level and the length of time required to fulfill these goals.
- Must provide an acceptance letter from the post-secondary institution or a proof of enrollment letter, before the March 15th deadline.
- Must provide official transcripts from the most recent secondary school and/or post-secondary school attended
- Must submit a Consent to Release of Information form
- Evidence of satisfactory completion of last sponsored course (marks and/or official transcripts)
- Letter of permission if attending more than one institution
- Tuition and/or Residence fees statement indicating costs and deadlines
- Signed acknowledgement understanding and acceptance of the Post Secondary Student Assistance Program must be at least two academic years in duration. As required in application package (changed below)
- As required in the application package applicants must sign an acknowledgement of the Post Secondary Student Assistance Program, valid for at least two academic years, as required in the application package.

***All First Nation members attending post-secondary school are encouraged to apply**

Post Secondary Programs Outside of Ontario

Students may attend a post-secondary program outside of Ontario based on their proof of program choices/analysis must also be provided with application. Due to funding limitations, First Nation members who are non-residents of Canada are not eligible for post-secondary assistance.

Continuing Students

As funding is limited, all students must re-apply each year for assistance by March 15th (Fall/Winter terms). Continuing students must provide:

- A completed application form. No late or incomplete applications will be accepted.
- Official university/college transcripts by July 15th of each year or most recent academic term completed. The transcript must also include your current GPA.
- Updated letter outlining educational goals, career goals and length of time needed to fulfill them.

Priority for Funding

The following priority list will identify the priorities of funding.

1. **Continuing Students:** enrolled in post-secondary studies in the previous year and maintained a Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.0 or better, including those students moving up a level (e.g. college to university in the same field of study)
 - a. Part-time Students: Students who request tuition and books only.
 - b. Part-Time Students who wish to attend full time: who have successfully achieved at least five (5) credits through part time studies.
 - c. Students completing their Academic Probation Agreement. Applicants must provide official transcripts with a 2.0 GPA or higher.
2. **Grade Twelve (12) Graduates:** New grade 12 graduates who have achieved a sixty five percent (65%) average overall. who have been accepted into post-secondary program within one year of high school graduation date (Gap year)
3. **Self-funded Students:** Students who have self-funded through other sources for the first academic year and have successfully passed all required courses for the first year of studies, according to their program.
4. **Mature Students:** Students who have been offered admissions as a mature student.
5. **Previously Successful Students:** Students who were successful in previous years, but not moving up a level and waited the thirty-six (36) months before reapplying.
6. **Applicants for Local Training:** who meet the criteria for local training and wish to enroll in a program offered locally.

The following will also be taken into consideration when reviewing applications

- Students identified with an overpayment from Beausoleil First Nation for previous or present education sponsorship.
- Students who breach the academic agreement.

Application Deadline

The post-secondary funding application deadline:

March 15th

Spring/Summer/Fall/Winter

Approved Applications

The following steps will be undertaken:

1. A sponsorship letter will be provided to the institution indicating that the Beausoleil First Nation will sponsor the student, no later than the first week of June. On the letter, the student number will be noted if available. It will direct the institution to invoice Beausoleil First Nation directly for student tuition.
2. A letter is issued to the student indicating approved tuition, living and book allowance, levels and limits
3. Financial/electronic information exchanges begin happening on the student's behalf. Files are stored in a secure and confidential location.
4. Living and book allowance will be deposited into the student's account as per approved timelines.
5. A student file is created on the shared drive and Dadavan.

Funding

Fees will be paid directly to the institution to the **maximum** amount of \$8,000.00 per year.

Tuition assistance is limited to the tuition costs to a maximum amount for a student attending a public or private post-secondary institution. When you apply for education assistance, it is your responsibility to provide the best estimate of tuition costs and mandatory fees. Once the actual tuition fee statement is received, it must be forwarded to the Education Department immediately. It is the student's responsibility to opt out of any optional fees that you are not willing to pay yourself (e.g. health, dental, meal plan, parking pass and/or bus pass).

Book Allowance

Book allowance will be provided to a maximum of \$300.00 for college and \$400.00 for university level courses per semester (Fall/Winter).

Contingency

Contingency Funding for Travel: In the event of death or serious illness in the immediate family, full-time students are eligible for one trip at the most economical rate for travel.

Living Allowance

Effective April 1st, 2015

Post Secondary Funding Rates for Living Allowance

Single Student - Living with Parents	\$800.00 per month
Single Student	\$1,000.00 per month
Students with Dependents:	
1 dependent	\$1,100.00 per month
2 dependents	\$1,200.00 per month
3 dependents	\$1,300.00 per month

Notes:

1. Proof of dependents must accompany the funding application form. Copies of status cards or birth certificates are valid. Dependents must be 18 years or younger and reside with the student during the school year to qualify.
2. Students are required to opt out of health and dental fees. It will be the student responsibility if you don't opt out in time. The First Nation will not cover these costs.
3. Students are responsible for their meal plan, parking pass and bus pass. The First Nation will not cover these costs.
4. Niigaaning Trust Top-Up will only be offered to students attending school for the Fall/Winter terms. It will not be available to students attending school for Spring/Summer.

Probation and Termination of Funding

A student will be placed on immediate academic probation if they fail two (2) or more courses in a semester or if their GPA drops below 2.0. Continuing students who take a leave from studies after the withdrawal date without penalty will be placed on automatic academic probation for a period of one semester, and may be subject to a repayment.

The following procedures will be used: upon reinstatement a probation agreement is required before assistance is processed.

Suspension of Funding

Following an unsuccessful academic probation, the student must attend a Beausoleil Education Advisory Committee meeting highlighting their next attempt to access funding. In the in-person application process the student will again highlight their plan for success and how they will succeed in their educational journey. Suspension of Funding will be on a case-by-case basis following an academic probation and in-person application process.

Two Courses Failed in a Semester

This will result in an automatic probation period for two semesters, with a signed probation agreement.

In order to show commitment to education, the student may be recommended to take out a student loan for one term (e.g. Fall). After successful completion of all courses, the student will be considered for future funding following the same application procedures as regular applicants with the official transcripts for the most recent term.

Withdrawals

1. **From a course** will result in a review of the student's full time eligibility status.
2. **From a program** will result in immediate withdrawal from student sponsorship.

*Students are required to put their withdrawal information in writing addressed to the Director of Education and Post Secondary Coordinator. Then a meeting will be set to discuss their leave, time frame and return date.

Appeal Process

Students may appeal the funding level, funding decision, approval process and priority level or the academic agreement

The student will present their case **in writing** to the **Director of Education who will provide it to the BEAC Chairperson at:**

**11 O'Gema Miikaan,
Christian Island, Ontario
L9M 0A9**

The chairperson will inform the Education Department and schedule an appeal review panel. The envelope must be marked CONFIDENTIAL.

The student is notified in writing of the date and time of the Beausoleil Education Advisory Committee meeting when his or her case is being presented. The student has the option of being present or having a representative there on his or her behalf. The student appellant should present his/her position directly to the BEAC if attending the meeting in person. All attempts to accommodate the student to present their case will be made (e.g. an out of province student may request a conference call, or communication video conference or another electronic method compatible with Beausoleil First Nation technology).

The student can appeal to the Beausoleil First Nation Chief & Council if he or she is unsatisfied with the BEAC decision. The decision of the Chief & Council will be final.

Funding Limits

Limits of Assistance

Students are expected to progress “up” through the education levels and are limited to education assistance involving full-time assistance allowance for one diploma or degree at each level. Concurrent programs are exempt from this restriction. Students need to continue studying in the same field when leveling up from college to university.

There is a thirty-six (36) month waiting period to be eligible for a second diploma or degree at the same or lower level of study. Essentially, a previously successful student would wait three (3) years before re-applying for a second diploma or degree for consideration.

Beausoleil First Nation employees will not receive tuition and book allowance. They will not qualify for a living allowance or Niigaaning Trust Top-Up.

Students that are attending school part time will only qualify for tuition and book allowance. They will not qualify for a living allowance or Niigaaning Trust Top-Up.

Students that are attending school online will qualify for tuition and book allowance. They will not qualify for a living allowance or Niigaaning Trust Top-Up.

Level	Program	Time Limit/Funding Limitations
One (1)	College <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate • Diploma 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 semesters • 2 or 3 year program (6 semesters max for 2 years; 8 semesters maximum for 3 year)
Two (2)	Undergraduate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University Degree • Professional Designation e.g. CGA, CA, B.Ed., etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 or 4 year degree • 1 year
Three (3)	Graduate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's Degree (M.A.) • Doctoral Degree (Ph.D.) 	As defined by the Institution

Level 1: Community College Certificate or Diploma Program

- a) Students may receive financial assistance to complete a maximum of **one (1) certificate and one (1) diploma** program at Level 2. (e.g. pre-health science)
- b) If a student changes from one program at Level 2 to another program at Level 3, the total time spent in both programs will count for the purpose of the time limit/funding limitations with the exception of an approved lateral move.
- c) Students who have already completed a program at Level 2, 3 may be eligible funding for Level 2 programs may be subject to thirty-six (36) month waiting period – to enhance or increase their qualifications for employability.

Level 2: Undergraduate University Programs

Students may receive financial assistance to complete a maximum of one (1) program at Level 3 in the undergraduate program and may be allowed to take one (1) extra year for a Professional designation.

Level 3: Graduate Programs

Students may receive financial assistance to complete a maximum of two (2) programs at Level 4 e.g. Masters to PhD.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Responsibilities

Students: Students must ensure they understand the eligibility requirements/application deadlines for submitting complete applications with all the required documents including transcripts to the Education Department, prior to the deadline date.

Director of Education/Post Secondary Coordinator: The Director of Education and the Post Secondary Coordinator screen all incoming post-secondary funding applications to ensure eligibility and that applications are complete with the available supporting documentation.

Beausoleil Education Advisory Committee (BEAC): Applications are confidential; the BEAC only approves aggregate totals and ensures policy has been followed.

Beausoleil First Nation Chief and Council: The Beausoleil First Nation Chief & Council will meet no later than four (4) weeks after the application deadline dates to review the submitted post-secondary recommendations of the BEAC for motion and approval.

The Director of Education/Post Secondary Coordinator will act on this motion and contact all applicants regarding the decision of the Beausoleil First Nation Chief & Council regarding approvals, in time to meet institutional deadlines.

Privacy Policy

The privacy policy enacted to protect students that are age of majority. All information provided by students for the purpose of the Post Secondary Student Assistance Policy is considered confidential. To ensure the privacy and confidentiality of the student; parents or guardians are not permitted to speak to the Post-Secondary Coordinator or Education Department staff on behalf of the student regarding their application, funding, or academic progress. Students are required to communicate directly with the Post-Secondary Coordinator or Education Department staff for all matters related to their post-secondary assistance.

Zero Tolerance Policy

The zero-tolerance policy enacted to protect all education staff within our department. Our priority is to maintain a safe, respectful and productive learning environment for everyone. This policy applies to students, parents or guardians, faculty, staff and visitors. Any behaviour that violates this policy will be addressed.

We maintain a zero-tolerance stance towards any form of abuse, harassment or disrespect directed at education staff. This includes, but not limited to:

- Verbal Abuse and threats
- Physical assault or intimidation
- Harassment (including online harassment)
- Disruptive behaviour that impedes the learning environment
- Any action that compromises the safety and well-being of education staff

Any individual found to be in violation of this zero-tolerance policy will face immediate disciplinary action. The severity of the consequences will depend on the nature and severity of the violation.

The following actions will be taken in the event of policy violation:

- First Offense: if you demonstrate an inability to adhere to the rules of this policy, you will be immediately placed on academic probation.
- Second Offense: a subsequent violation of this policy may lead to more severe consequences, including the potential loss of funding.

Post-Secondary Student Mental Health Support Policy

Purpose

Beausoleil First Nation (BFN) is committed to supporting the educational success and overall wellbeing of our post-secondary students. We recognize that mental health challenges can affect a student's ability to continue studies without interruption. This policy ensures that requests for support, up to and including leave from studies, are treated with compassion, empathy, and fairness, while protecting students' long-term access to funding.

Guiding Principles

- **Compassion and Respect:** Students will be met with dignity and understanding when disclosing mental health concerns.
- **Human Rights:** In accordance with the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, mental health is considered a disability, and students have a right to accommodation without discrimination.
- **Equity and Inclusion:** This policy aligns with BFN's values of Pride, Unity, Strength, and Vision, ensuring no student is disadvantaged for seeking help.

Policy Statement

- 1. Right to Request Leave**
 - A student who is experiencing significant mental health challenges may request a temporary leave from their post-secondary program without automatic loss of funding eligibility. The student is required to write a letter to the post-secondary coordinator outlining their right to request leave and why.
- 2. Medical or Professional Documentation**
 - Students may be asked to provide documentation from a licensed healthcare professional (e.g., doctor, counsellor, psychologist) confirming the need for medical or mental health leave.
- 3. Length of Leave**
 - Approved mental health leave may be granted for up to **8 consecutive months**. Extensions may be considered with updated documentation on a case-by-case basis.
- 4. Funding Continuity**
 - Students approved for leave will not be penalized under the “thirty-six (36) month reapplication rule.”
 - Funding will be paused during the leave period and reinstated when the student returns to studies, subject to standard program guidelines.
- 5. Return to Studies**
 - Students returning from leave will be reinstated into the funding program at the same priority level as before their leave.
 - Students are encouraged to work with the Post-Secondary Coordinator to develop a return-to-school plan.
- 6. Support Services**
 - Post Secondary Coordinator will make students aware of available counselling and crisis support within their school.
 - Refer to the Kinoomaaddziwin Education Body (KEB) Health Portal: Home - Anishinabek Education System Wellness Portal - aeswellnessportal.ca
- 7. Confidentiality**
 - All information shared by students regarding their mental health will remain confidential and used only for the purpose of administering this policy.
- 8. Appeals**
 - Students who feel their request for leave was not handled fairly may appeal to the Director of Education, BEAC and/or Chief & Council.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are provided for all applicants and are used within this policy for information purposes.

Academic Probation – specific 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 and is usually at least eight (8) months in duration for undergraduates and twelve (12) months for graduates.

Certificate Program – usually a ten (10) month program that awards a certificate upon completion.

Contingency Funding – financial support provided to students for costs related to emergencies. Emergencies eligible for contingency funding include: individual or immediate family illness, accident or bereavement. Please be advised that the presentation of a “good reason” does not necessarily constitute an emergency. This decision for financial support in the case of emergencies is made at the discretion of the Director of Education.

Dependents – any children 18 and under who live full-time with the student and rely on the student for support.

Diploma Program – a college-level academic program typically two (2) years in length.

Funding Overpayment – payments made to/on behalf of a student, where circumstances have led to program failure or withdrawal. Does not include deliberate/fraudulent misuse of funds. Misuse of funds will be grounds for immediate and future ineligibility and potential criminal charges.

Graduate Full Time Student – a student who for each term or semester, takes a minimum of two (2) credit hours of course work or who are enrolled in full time thesis research or thesis project.

Local Training – training initiatives offered on Christian Island which results in formal certified training that enhances the education and employability of the student.

Mature Student – an applicant over the age of eighteen (18) who has been out of school for at least one year.

Part Time Student – a student who registers in less than three (3) credits or equivalent hours per semester at both the College and University levels.

Post Secondary Education – a program of studies offered by an accredited post-secondary institute (non-private) that requires completion of secondary school or certain high school courses as a pre-requisite.

Post Secondary Institute – certificate, diploma or degree granting institutions that are recognized by a province and include educational institutions affiliated with or delivering accredited post-secondary programs by arrangement with a public post-secondary institution.

Private Institution – a privately-funded institution.

Semester - refers to a part of the academic year, as defined by the post-secondary institution. Semesters usually run from September to December (Fall), January to April (Winter) and April to August (Spring/Summer).

Undergraduate Full Time Student – a student who is enrolled in a minimum of four (4) credits per academic year.