



Aboriginal Affairs and
Northern Development Canada

Affaires autochtones et
Développement du Nord Canada

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada

Post-Secondary Student Support Program and University and College Entrance Preparation Program

National Program Guidelines 2013-2014



Canada 

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1 Introduction

The following Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) and University and College Entrance Preparation Program (UCEP) National Program Guidelines will be in effect as of April 1, 2013.

These program guidelines include program and eligibility information. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) regional offices may provide additional detail for the delivery of the programs and their services.

Any issues that arise concerning the interpretation of the PSSSP and UCEP program guidelines will be resolved by the Programs Directorate, Education Branch, in the Education and Social Development Programs and Partnerships (ESDPP) Sector with the support of Regional Offices.

2 Objective and Outcomes

The objective of the PSSSP and UCEP programs is to improve the employability of Treaty/registered First Nation and eligible Inuit students by providing them with access to education and skill development opportunities at the post-secondary level. This is expected to lead to greater participation of First Nation and Inuit students in post-secondary studies, higher First Nation and Inuit graduation rates from post-secondary programs, and to improve individual, family and community well-being for First Nations and Inuit. It is expected that students funded by this program will have post-secondary educational outcomes comparable to those of other Canadians with similar educational and socio-economic backgrounds.

2.1 The Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP)

The objective of the PSSSP is to improve the employability of Treaty/registered First Nation and eligible Inuit students by providing them with access to education and skill development opportunities at the post-secondary level.

2.2 The University and College Entrance Preparation (UCEP)

The objective of UCEP is to provide financial support to Treaty/registered First Nation and eligible Inuit students who are enrolled in UCEP programs to enable them to attain the academic level required for entrance to degree, certificate and diploma programs offered in Canadian post-secondary institutions.

3 Eligibility

3.1 Eligible Recipients

Funding for the PSSSP and UCEP programs may go from AANDC directly to band councils, or to First Nation organizations designated by band councils (bands/settlements, tribal councils, education organizations, political/Treaty organizations). AANDC may also enter into funding agreements with public or private organizations engaged by or on behalf of First Nation bands or Inuit communities to administer the PSE programs (e.g., private firms or organizations retained as co-managers or third-party managers). In the case where such an agreement does not exist, the regional office in the province/territory where the student is residing is responsible to review and assess the student applications for funding.

Self-governing First Nation members in Yukon that have not yet assumed responsibility for PSE through a *Programs and Services Transfer Agreement* are eligible for funding under this program.

3.2 Eligible Students

Recipients are required to demonstrate the eligibility of students to receive funding.

To be eligible for funding, students:

- Are either:
 - Treaty/registered First Nation individuals who have been resident in Canada for 12 consecutive months prior to the date of application for funding; or
 - Are Inuit who are resident in Canada for 12 consecutive months prior to the date of application for funding but who reside outside their territory and are no longer eligible to be funded by their territory (proof of refusal is required);
- Have been accepted by an eligible post-secondary institution into either a degree, diploma or certificate program, or a UCEP program; and
- Maintain satisfactory academic standing within that institution (as per the institution's definition of satisfactory academic standing).

For students attending institutions outside Canada, the residency provision applies only to their first year of studies.

Funding is limited and not all students may be funded or partial funding may be provided.

3.3 Eligible Programs

Under the PSSSP and UCEP programs, an eligible post-secondary education program is a program of studies:

- For which the completion of secondary school studies, or the equivalent as recognized by the post-secondary institution, is required;
- Offered by a post-secondary institution that is at least one academic year of duration (as defined by the institution), and
- Is delivered at an eligible institution as defined in section 3.4.

Refer to the student's province of residency Ministry of Education for information on student admissibility to a program of study.

3.4 Eligible Institutions

Eligible post-secondary institutions are degree, diploma or certificate granting institutions which are:

- Recognized by a provincial or territorial Minister of Education; or
- Educational institutions recognized to deliver post-secondary programs by arrangement within an eligible post-secondary institution.

A list of institutions can also be found on the CanLearn website <http://www.canlearn.ca/eng/onlinetools/index.shtml>, recognizing that the presence of an institution on the CanLearn list does not automatically imply that the program of study offered is eligible. A program of study must meet the requirements listed in 3.3 and 3.4 of these guidelines to be an eligible program.

If the institution is not included on the above-mentioned list, please contact the regional AANDC office.

4 Program Requirements

When locally administering the PSSSP and UCEP, recipients (as defined in section 3.1) must meet the following minimum standards:

- Provision of funding, within the recipient's budgetary envelope, to all eligible post-secondary education students as per and up to the program guidelines funding maximum;
- Administration and distribution of funding to students;
- Implementation and administration of local operating guidelines (until local program guidelines are in place, National Program Guidelines will apply); and
- Implementation and administration of the appeal process.

4.1 Local Operating Guidelines

Recipients must have local program guidelines in place for the administration of the PSE funds. Local guidelines must be consistent with the guidelines set out in this document. The local guidelines must include:

- Selection priority criteria;
- An appeal process; and
- Criteria for emergency contingency funding.

Local guidelines may also include rates and allowances for amounts payable to students, provided that they do not exceed the maximum amounts payable set out in section 5.2. These local guidelines must be publicly available.

4.2 Potential selection priorities

The following is a list of examples of potential selection priorities currently used by some First Nations (other criteria may be applicable as well):

- Continuing students (students already being funded through PSSSP);
- Recent high school graduates;
- Deferred applicants (eligible but not funded in the past due to funding restrictions);
- Recent PSE Graduates (who wish to further their studies);
- New applicants already studying at a post-secondary level (students who have already completed part of their program but were not previously funded by the PSSSP);
- Returning students (students who had stepped out from their post-secondary studies and now wish to return); and/or
- Part-time students.

4.3 Appeal Process

To ensure fairness and equitable treatment under the PSSSP and UCEP program, administering organizations must have an appeal process in place. A student may not appeal to AANDC the administrative decisions and appeal rulings made by the appeal board. The appeal process policy must include the following elements:

- Public distribution of the PSE policy and procedures;
- Student access to an established appeal process. This includes the existence of an impartial appeal board;
- Student access to advisory support;
- Community representatives participate in the appeal process;

- The administering organization will provide funding for board members and the student to attend the appeal hearing, if necessary;
- Specific time frames for the appeal hearing to be set and for decisions to be made; and
- A governance process confirming that the administering organization will abide by the appeal board's decision.

4.4 Contingency Funding

At the recipient's discretion, a contingency fund to provide financial support to students for costs related to emergencies may be established if funds remain after all eligible students have been funded as per program guidelines. Emergencies eligible for contingency funding include individual or family illness, accident or bereavement.

If such a fund is created, the details of how contingency funding is managed and what criteria apply must be described in the local operating guidelines.

4.5 University and College Entrance Preparation Program (UCEP)

Students applying for assistance through UCEP are required to obtain a statement from the relevant college or university which attests that:

- The UCEP program will provide the student with the necessary courses to attain the academic level for university or college entrance; and
- The student will be eligible for admittance as a student of a regular university or college credit program upon successful completion of the UCEP course of studies.

5 Eligible expenditures

Eligible expenditures for PSSSP and UCEP are:

- Tuition and other compulsory student fees;
- Books and supplies required by the student for their program of study;
- Travel and living allowances for funded student and his/her dependents.

Funding may also be used to provide tutorial, guidance and counseling services for students enrolled in PSE programs and for individuals potentially applying to PSE.

5.1 Eligible Tuition

Tuition support may be provided under the following conditions:

- Students attending Canadian public institutions at the normal tuition rate, including compulsory student fees charged by the institution for a Canadian student; or
- Students attending private or foreign post-secondary institutions at the same tuition rate, including compulsory student fees, charged by the public or private Canadian institution nearest to the student's place of residence (i.e., residence at the time of application) which offers the least expensive comparable program; or
- Students enrolled in a foreign institution at the actual tuition rate, including other compulsory student fees charged by the foreign institution, when it is demonstrated that there is no comparable program available at an institution in Canada. Approval from the regional AANDC office must be acquired prior to funding students in such a situation.

5.2 Maximum Amounts Payable to Students

Note: This is a maximum allowable payment per student. No student is entitled to this amount. The maximum amount was established to ensure that the most extreme circumstances could be funded as necessary. The actual amount of funding available to a student will depend on the overall amount of funding available in the program and for each recipient.

The maximum amount payable per year to one full-time student from the PSSSP or the UCEP program cannot exceed the following (whether the method of delivery is in the classroom, through distance education or e-learning):

- The actual cost of tuition and other compulsory student fees;
- Books and required supplies (to a maximum of \$2000/year);
- The actual cost of one return trip to the student's permanent place of residence from the nearest Canadian PSE institution that offers the program of studies selected by the student, every 16 weeks (not more than two trips per academic year) for the student and for each dependent;
- Students taking classes through distance education or e-learning who are required to travel to another location to complete their required exams can be eligible for travel support. However, requests for accommodations such as taking the exam in the local school under the supervision of a teacher or school principal should be examined to minimise travel costs; and
- The living allowances established by the Canada Student Loan Program (CSLP) as amended from time to time. Refer to the CSLP website at http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/learning/canada_student_loan/policies/nat/index.shtml.

For a student in a UCEP, community college or CEGEP diploma or certificate program, or an undergraduate university program, the maximum amount payable per year cannot exceed \$35,000. On an extraordinary and justified basis, the maximum amount payable per year for a student in an advanced or professional degree program (e.g., dentistry, medicine, Masters or Doctoral programs) may exceed \$35,000 up to a maximum of \$50,000.

Part-time students, as defined by the post-secondary institution being attended, may receive assistance for tuition and compulsory fees, and the actual cost of books and supplies which are listed as required by the post-secondary institution but they are not eligible for living allowances or travel costs.

5.2.1 Limits of Assistance

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. In the case of students who already initiated an additional program at a level at which a program was already completed prior to April 1, 2013, they will be grandfathered and will continue to be funded for that specific program as per the 2012-2013 program guidelines.

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 one of the levels or temporarily pause their studies, the academic years or semesters used for each program 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 student applicants exceeds the funding available, selection priority criteria will apply as per local policies.
10. Students receiving funding from the PSSSP must declare support received from this program as a source of income when applying for social assistance.

5.2.2 Limits of assistance for UCEP

For all UCEP students, the maximum time limit for financial support will be one (1) academic year (as defined by the institution offering the program) or in the case of part-time students, the equivalent of one academic year. At the end of the first term (or part of the academic year, as defined by the institution offering the program), financial support for the term will be subject to receipt of a statement from the institution confirming the successful completion of the first term.

The support for tuition, books and supplies, travel and living costs for UCEP will be the same as that provided under the PSSSP programs.

5.3 Administration Costs

Eligible administration costs include only the actual costs associated directly with administering the PSSSP/UCEP funding. Eligible expenditures could include the following costs:

- Salaries and benefits of personnel directly employed in the administration and delivery of the funding. In the case of multiple responsibilities, the portion of the salary to be included under administration costs should be proportional to the amount of time spent fulfilling PSSSP/UCEP duties, without surpassing the 10% maximum;
- Materials required for the management of funds;
- Rent and utilities;
- Printing and publishing costs; and
- Travel and accommodation.

Administration costs should not exceed 10 % of the sub-total amount requested before administration costs. The Data Collection Instrument (DCI) will automatically calculate the amount.

Further distribution of funds by AANDC's funding Recipient: When a funding recipient further transfers, to a Third Party, funds that were received under this program, the 10% allowed for administration costs must be divided between the parties, as agreed to between the parties. The total administration costs retained by all parties shall not exceed 10% of the sub-total amount requested before administration costs.

5.4 Incentives

Recipients may provide incentives for students to engage in studies that directly contribute to First Nations achieving self-government and economic self-reliance, or to recognize academic achievement. Scholarships will be available to a maximum of five per cent of the PSSSP-funded student population, as described below. One scholarship will be available where the five percent maximum is less than one student. Recipients of the scholarship will be determined by the administering organization.

The administering organization may provide the types of incentives listed in this section. Eligible students may be awarded either one Strategic Studies Scholarship or one Academic Achievement Scholarship in an academic year.

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 or degree);
- Level 3:** Advanced or professional degree programs, or masters programs; and
- Level 4:** Doctoral programs.

5.4.1 Academic Achievement Scholarship

In recognition of academic achievement, the administering organization may award scholarships to students in Level 1 and Level 2 enrolled as full-time students and who have achieved a grade average of B or higher in their program of studies:

- Students currently receiving support under the PSSSP are eligible for scholarships in recognition of academic achievements.
- The amount of scholarship awarded by the administering organization 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.

5.4.2 Strategic Studies Scholarships 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, the administering organization may offer incentive scholarships.

- Students who are currently receiving financial support under the PSSSP 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 administering organization 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 length of the program as defined in limits of assistance in section 5.2.1.

5.4.3 Incentives for students enrolled in Level 3 or 4 programs

Students enrolled as full-time students in a Level 3 or 4 degree program may receive an incentive once at either level from the administering organization, subject 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.

6 Funding Arrangement

Funding will be available in the form of a one year or multi-year contribution. Funding will be available in the form of a Set, Fixed or Block contribution depending on the type of institution and the type of services. As well, the results of the General Assessment (GA) of each recipient may impact the recipient's ability to access certain funding approaches. Information on funding approaches and the GA can be found at <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100010035/1100100010036>.

7 Monitoring and Accountability

AANDC is committed to providing assistance to recipients in order for them to effectively carry out the obligations contained in each funding agreement. Regional offices and other departmental contacts are available to answer questions and provide guidance related to AANDC programs and funding.

To ensure that program terms and conditions and funding criteria are being met, that funds are expended on the intended purposes, and that AANDC's accountability to Parliament is being met, in-office and on-site monitoring and compliance activities will be conducted with all recipients.

8 Reporting Requirements

The reporting requirements are listed in the recipient's funding agreement.

The recipient's funding agreement lists the reporting requirements. To access the reports (Data Collection Instruments), log on to the AANDC Services Portal. If you do not have access to the AANDC Services Portal, contact your regional office. The regional offices coordinates can be found at <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100033694/1100100033695>.

9 Contact Information

For further program information, please visit our website at:

<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100033679/1100100033680>.

The regional offices coordinates can be found at: <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100033694/1100100033695>.

You can also write to:

Education Branch

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada

10 Wellington Street

GATINEAU QC K1A 0H4

Fax number: 819-934-1478

education@aadnc-aandc.gc.ca

These National Program Guidelines can be downloaded from the departmental website in the education section at <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100033601/1100100033605>. They can also be accessed through the View Instructions button on the first page of this program's Data Collection Instrument (DCI). To access the Data Collection Instruments (DCIs), log on to the AANDC Services Portal.