



**Wasauksing First Nation
Post-Secondary Sponsorship Program Policy
(WPSSP)**

Approved by Chief and Council:

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BCM #

Wasauksing First Nation Education Department
Post-Secondary Sponsorship Program Student Policy

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INTRODUCTION

The community members and its Chief and Council are committed to supporting all members on their education journeys! We are proud to see you here!

“We support our students in following an Anishinaabe Aadziwin learning path.”

The Kinoomaadziwin Education Body (KEB) is the central administrative structure for the Anishinabek Education System and distributes education funding provided by the federal government to the Participating First Nations (PFNs). The KEB takes direction from the PFNs to support the implementation of the Regional Education Councils (RECs) educational priorities, while working with the PFNs to establish system-wide education standards and manage education relationships with the Ontario Ministry of Education.

The Participating First Nations will work together through the KEB to identify and manage their educational priorities and the systems' governance.

The WPSSP is provided to eligible Post-Secondary candidates enrolled in eligible Post-Secondary institutions with set criteria of funding provided by the Government of Canada (accredited).

Although education is a right provided by treaty, there are limits to the amount of financial assistance received for Post-Secondary candidates. While the goal would be to provide FULL coverage of expenses for ALL Post-Secondary candidates, this is not always the case, and the allocation is dependent upon the year that a candidate applies.

This policy is intended to provide candidates with information about how the WPSSP is administered by the Wasauksing Education Department. If the candidate has question, the expectation is to contact your Education Counsellor at education@wasauksing.ca or (705) 746-2531 ext. 407.

GLOSSARY

Applicant:	Anyone can apply
Qualified Applicant:	To qualify for consideration of sponsorship, the applicant must be a registered citizen of Wasauksing First Nation as per the Parry Island Citizenship Code.
Dependant:	Someone who has no income and depends on the WPSSP student for financial support. Children 0-18 years of age that depend on the WPSSP student for financial support (If living with parents).
GED:	General Education Diploma
New Student:	An applicant who has never received educational assistance from the Wasauksing Education Department – WPSSP.
Returning Student:	An applicant who has previously received educational assistance from the Wasauksing Education Department – WPSSP.
Continuing Student:	A student currently being sponsored and who will require sponsorship to complete his/her program of studies.
Married Student:	Spouse or common-law relationship in a conjugal relationship in the same residence.
College/University Resident:	A student who requests/applies for/acquires accommodation from their chosen institution.
AES:	Anishinabek Education System
Linear Pathway:	The student is following an upward progression in levels of education in the same field of study. No waiting period necessary.

Non-Linear Pathway:

The student is opting not to follow a linear progression in education levels and is changing their field of study. They must wait a period of 2 years between each accreditation. E.g., degree to diploma.

Mature Student: Applicants who are over 19 years old and do not have a high school diploma or GED. It is intended to allow applicants who have not completed high school the opportunity to be considered for admission, based on the skills and experience they have acquired since leaving school.

Grade Point Average (GPA):

The 2.00 Grade Point Average will be considered using a 4-point scale. As all post secondary institutions in Canada circulate this average uniquely, a conversion chart will be used to calculate this amount using the above measure as a guide. www.whatsmygpa.ca .

SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE EDUCATION COUNSELLOR'S OFFICE

360-degree support of all issues pertaining to a student/candidate's education journey for all students of WFN. From start to finish and all stages in between, your Education Counsellor is here to support you in any way that will ultimately lead to student success.

OBJECTIVES

WPSSP

The program objective is to improve the employability of Wasauksing First Nations eligible students by providing them with funding to access education and skill development opportunities at the post-secondary level.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

WPSSP

The program is expected to increase post-secondary enrollment and graduation rates among First Nation students who are Wasauksing First Nation citizens.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

If you are a Citizen of the Wasauksing First Nation earning a GED, diploma or secondary school equivalent (course route) from a Ministry of Education regulated, local or regional government regulated secondary school, you are eligible for assistance. The candidate must meet the entrance requirements for and be enrolled or accepted in an eligible Post-Secondary program.

WHAT IS AN ELIGIBLE PROGRAM AND INSTITUTION?

Program Eligibility:

- Must be a minimum one full academic year long
- Offered by accredited post-secondary institutions in Canada and abroad
- Must lead to a certificate a diploma or a degree

Some post diploma or degree programs are one academic year or less in length and may be eligible. These do not include specialized programs such as Additional Qualification Courses for Teachers. (AQ courses?)

Institution Eligibility:

An eligible Post-Secondary Institution is a certificate, diploma, or degree granting institution.

This includes an educational institution affiliated with or delivering accredited Post-Secondary programs by arrangement with a Post-Secondary institution.

- Sponsorship to private institutions (e.g., Trios College) will not be considered.
- The following link provides a list that identifies **Canadian Post-Secondary Institutions** accordingly as public or private.

<https://tools.canlearn.ca/cslgs-scpse/cln-cln/reea-mdl-1-eng.do?nom-name=ON> **International Institutions** can be found at the following link:
<https://tools.canlearn.ca/cslgs-scpse/cln/reea-mdl/reea-mdl-1-eng.co?nom-name=inter>

SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMS ELIGIBLE

Certificate Programs: incl. Trades and Post Grad Programs

Registered Full-Time/Part-Time in all courses as outlined in the program course outline and year of study. This course load must be maintained for the duration of each semester.

College Diploma:

Registered Full-Time/Part-Time in all courses as outlined in the program course outline and year of study. This course load must be maintained for the duration of each semester.

University Undergraduate Degree: e.g., BA

Registered Full-Time/Part-Time in all courses as outlined in the program course outline and year of study. This course load must be maintained for the duration of each semester.

University Graduate (any degree above a Bachelor's) E.g., Honours Bachelor.

As defined by the Post-Secondary Institution.

University Post-Graduate Degree (Masters or PhD)

As defined by the Post-Secondary Institution.

A student may follow a non-linear education and career path. They may decide to change career paths. They must wait a period of no less than two (2) years to reapply for sponsorship for a new program. eg. University program to college program.

Full-Time Students

Accepting that there are some circumstances that can change, the goal is for candidates to complete programs in the **typical** time frame if possible. E.g., BA – 3 years, Honours Ba – 4 years, Masters – 2 years, PhD – defined by institution.

Students may receive an additional year of support to complete a program provided they have communicated the reasons for this request to the office of the Education Counsellor (as required). Any decision can be appealed by the student. See Appeals Process at end of this document.

Students may extend assistance for one extra academic year for medical or personal reasons with appropriate documentation.

Part-Time Students

There are no time frame expectations as only Tuition and Books are supported.

WHAT IS A CRITERIA SYSTEM?

The Criteria Ranking System is designed to provide fair and equitable access to the limited WPSSP allocation. Each application is weighted individually for eligibility and reviewed for assessment as a priority. All applications for education assistance are considered according to their priority. *ONLY IF THE DEMAND FROM ELIGIBLE STUDENTS EXCEEDS THE FUNDING AVAILABLE, Will PRIORITY SELECTION CRITERIA APPLY.*

Priority 1 Continuing Student – presently sponsored student attending college or university with acceptable progress and has been allowed to continue to the next semester of their program.

Secondary School Graduates – a student currently enrolled in a secondary school who is applying to a specific college or university program.

Mature Students – see definition in Glossary. Sponsored for the first time. (*GED 1-year certificate*).

Priority 2 Returning Students – a student who has previously received sponsorship in a different program than currently applying for (i.e., graduates, OSAP).

Part-Time Students – a student attending college or university who is enrolled in part-time studies.

Priority 3 Graduate Students – a student enrolling in a graduate program (i.e. Masters, Doctorate).

WHAT TYPE OF POST-SECONDARY ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE?

All sponsorship will be provided in Canadian funds only.

Full-Time Studies

Actual amount of funding will depend on the overall amount of funding in the program and the number of recipients selected.

Post-Secondary Education assistance for full-time students will include:

- Tuition and mandatory fees
- Books - \$460 per semester.
- Monthly Living Allowance (MLA) in the form of direct payment to student OR direct payment to school for residence.
- Travel Support, monthly (\$92, 8x's) and seasonally (\$115, 4x's)
- Application Fees – this is limited to a one-time reimbursement of the OCAS and OUAC fees. Receipts must be provided for reimbursement.

Pending availability of funding, support may also include:

- Program related material (uniforms, equipment etc.)
- Tutoring

Part-Time Studies

Post-Secondary Education assistance for part-time students will include:

- Tuition
- Books
- Travel Support, monthly (while in school)

Refer to the separate WPSSP – Student Success Handbook for further information regarding important dates and budget information.

FALL/WINTER, SPRING/SUMMER

Tuition Assistance

Full-time and part-time candidates are eligible for Tuition Assistance and mandatory student fee reimbursement.

Books

Support for books is paid at the beginning of each semester (**generally** 2 times per year, September, and January), \$460 each semester.

Monthly Living Allowance

A monthly living allowance is provided to full-time students and their listed dependents as defined by Revenue Canada.

Students will receive living allowance based on:

1. Marital Status
2. Dependant Child
3. Student Residence (on campus) **to a maximum of \$9096 for the year.**

Additional documentation may be required to support the above.

The living allowance is to assist with living costs of accommodation, utilities, and food.

If you are approved for a Monthly Living Allowance (MLA), then the monthly allowance is automatically issued and deposited into the bank account you provide. Deposits of monthly living allowances will be issued on or around the 25th day of the previous month. E.g., August 25th for September's MLA

If the candidate selects to live in student residence at the Post-Secondary Institution, they must inform the Education Counsellor at the time of applying for sponsorship.

Student Residence (On-Campus Housing)

Students requesting to live in student residence are allocated the same funds as all students based on financial assistance rates. The budget would be the total for the year. ***(i.e., single student - \$1137/month which is \$9096 for the school year).***

Research this option as it may come with a mandatory meal plan which could put you over the budget.

Any costs exceeding annual budget allocation becomes the responsibility of the student.

If there is a balance left after residence fees are paid, the remaining amount will be distributed over the months of the school year to the student.

Please note: Students are responsible for damage deposits. Residence deposits to hold your unit are eligible, however this will be factored into the student's overall budget.

Seasonal Travel Support

Approved full-time students are eligible for support four times a year. Travel to school at the beginning of term, travel home at Christmas, travel back to school after Christmas and travel back home at end of year (April). \$126 each time – total of \$504.

Application Fees

Candidates are required to pay the application fees for Ontario College Application Service (OCAS) and Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC) when applying for Post-Secondary Institutions. WPSSP will cover the costs of all students post secondary application fees. See WPSSP Student Success Handbook for detailed amounts. Receipts will need to be provided.

LIMITS OF ASSISTANCE

In addition to maintaining eligibility for education assistance there are certain limits to assistance that you **MUST** be aware of and take into consideration when making decisions about your education plan.

Some of these limits to assistance have been mentioned in this policy. A summary of limits to assistance follows:

1. All funding will be in **Canadian Funds only**.
2. Monthly Living Allowance (MLA) is for full-time students only.
3. Part-time students are eligible for tuition, books, and monthly travel while in school.
4. WPSSP does NOT cover Medical/Dental insurance fees charged by the institution. Students must opt-out of coverage by contacting the registrar of their school.
5. Students wishing to study outside of Canada must be attending a public institution that is approved and accredited by Indigenous Services Canada. The link indicating approved foreign institutions is provided on page 7.
6. Students wishing to study outside of Canada must also provide evidence that the program in question is recognized in Canada as an acceptable program of studies.
7. Tuition sponsorship for students wishing to study outside of Canada as well as professional fees, licenses etc, will be based on the rate charged by the closest Canadian public institution to your place of residence in a comparable program.
8. Advances will not be given.
9. Reimbursements will be processed when proper documentation is submitted.
10. The fees for initial professional certification and examinations **will be paid once**. For example, Nursing Examination fees.
11. Extension fees will only be provided **once** by the WPSSP, unless adequate explanation for the need for one more extension is discussed with the Education Counsellor.
12. If you are considering a non-linear program change, you must wait a period of 2 years to reapply for sponsorship.

13. If you have previously completed a portion of post-Secondary studies without sponsorship assistance, then you may receive sponsorship for the remainder of the program.
14. If your funding is approved for part-time, you may switch from Part-Time to Full-Time, pending availability of funding.
15. Students who require specific accommodations must request approval for reduced course loads. Documentation required includes:
 - a. Assessment report – WPSSP does not cover these assessment costs.
 - b. Documentation regarding recommended course load from the Special Needs office.
16. If students leave a program for any reason, they must notify WPSSP within 24 hours. Funding may be suspended.
17. WPSSP does not reimburse the Ontario Student Loan Program, the Canadian Student Loan Program, nor retroactive payments from a previous fiscal or academic year.
18. Repeat Classes will be the student's financial responsibility, unless the student has identified any challenges that may have contributed to being unsuccessful in consultation with the Education Counsellor. In which case, the student is provided with a limited coverage for up to two (2) courses, twice during the student's education pathway. Any further repeat courses will become the student's financial responsibility.

HOW TO APPLY FOR THE WPSSP

All eligible applicants must complete and submit the WPSSP Application for Students to the Education Counsellor by the assigned deadlines.

To complete the initial application, it is the applicant's responsibility to submit the following documents to the Education Counsellor either by a hard copy or electronically.

- Photocopy of VALID Status Card (front and back)
- Copy of Official Transcript: secondary, college or university
- Letter of Acceptance to the post secondary institution the student will be attending.

*Please note: Once a Tentative, Continuing or Successfully Sponsored Student letter is granted, there will be further documentation required. For a more detailed checklist of required documentation, based on criteria ranking, see WPSSP Student Success Handbook.

DEADLINE DATES:

- Spring/Summer – January 25th of each year – sponsorship decisions and student notifications are made by March 1st at the latest
- Fall/Winter – March 1st each year – sponsorship decisions and student notifications are made by June 1st at the latest.

An application is required for each academic year of study. Students must alert the Education Counsellor of any continual study requirements by their school. A separate application must be submitted.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOU APPLY?

Your Education Counsellor will acknowledge receipt of your application and inform you of any need for additional information or documentation. At the time, advice for additional/alternative funding opportunities may be given. E.g., Gezhtoojig.ca for programs not covered by WPSSP.

Once your entire application package has been received, WPSSP Selection Committee (CED, DOE and Education Counsellor) will review all applications for eligibility.

The Education Counsellor is responsible for ensuring that all policy requirements for sponsorship have been satisfied before recommending application for approval.

Provided that:

- a) You are eligible for sponsorship.
- b) The program that you wish to study is an eligible program.
- c) You have been admitted to your program of choice.
- d) You have demonstrated a commitment to your education plan.

Then the WPSSP Selection Committee can recommend your application within the assigned criteria.

All approvals are subject to availability of funds.

If your application is not approved, you will be notified in writing.

APPROVAL OF APPLICATIONS

You will receive an approval letter by email which will outline what your sponsorship will cover. Tuition and residence sponsorship letters (if applicable) will be sent directly to the Post-Secondary Institution that you will be attending. You will be copied on any correspondence to the school in reference to your education there.

The letters will instruct the Post-Secondary Institution to invoice the Education Counsellors office of Wasauksing First Nation directly.

If approval of the application is completed before the tuition deadline deposit date, the tuition sponsorship letter may waive the tuition deposit. Students who are not approved by the tuition deposit deadline, should be prepared to pay for this fee themselves. Upon approval, the student will be reimbursed for the tuition deposit.

You will be required to sign a WPSSP Student Responsibility Contract by the 15th of the month before beginning the school year, if starting in September.

SUMMARY OF HOW TO MAINTAIN ELIGIBILITY

Once you have been approved for sponsorship you must maintain your eligibility for continued sponsorship support.

It is mandatory for newly sponsored students to make at least one contact per month as defined by the Education Counsellor. If you have any questions, please call him or her.

Full-Time Students

If you have been approved for a Monthly Living Allowance, then you must maintain your Full-Time eligibility as defined by the Post-Secondary Institution you are attending.

Acceptable Academic Performance

Full-Time and Part-time students must maintain an acceptable level of academic performance as defined by the Post-Secondary Institution.

If the Post-Secondary Institution that you are attending determines that you do not meet the academic requirements necessary to continue in your program of study, then sponsorship will be suspended.

We understand that life may present some challenges, as a result a student may not be successful in achieving a passing grade in a mandatory course. The WPSSP will support the student by offering support. This will include the cost of up to two (2) repeat courses, twice during the student's education pathway. The student is responsible for identifying any such challenges to their Education Counsellor.

It is the responsibility for students to make program and course selection carefully, to be successful in all courses, **and to know the refund schedule of the Post-Secondary Institution** so that if there is a need to withdraw from a course, it can be done as soon as possible. Late withdrawals may affect a student's standing with the WPSSP and affect future applications.

For you to maintain eligibility, you are responsible for maintaining academic standards. If your Post-Secondary Institution determines that you do not meet academic requirements to continue in your program of study, then sponsorship will be discontinued. It is the student's responsibility to discuss options for regaining eligibility with their Education Counsellor.

Transcript Timeline

An unofficial transcript is required for each academic semester. The deadline for transcripts is:

- January 15th for Fall Semester
- May 15th for Winter Semester
- September 15th for Spring/Summer Semester

If a transcript is not available, a letter is required from your faculty (Department Chair or Head) indicating that:

- a) A transcript is not available.
- b) That you have successful academic performance

If a transcript is not provided this may result in delay or suspension of sponsorship.

Student Accountability

All students are required to communicate with the Education Counsellor on a regular basis and to provide requested documentation on a timely basis as defined by the Education Counsellor and this policy.

If a student is unable to provide the necessary documentation required by the assigned dates, payments will not be issued or may be suspended until all documentation is submitted.

Suspension of Funds

Grades reflecting unsatisfactory performance may result in a hold of funding for that current academic year. If a candidate's performance does not improve, upon advisement, funding eligibility may be suspended for the current academic year.

Funding will be suspended if the candidate contravenes the Student Code of Conduct at any Post-Secondary Institution. These extreme cases include bullying, harassment, physical threats, academic dishonesty, or plagiarism.

At the end of each term, it is the responsibility of the student to maintain eligibility to continue the program of studies or financial assistance will be suspended. If funds are suspended it is the sponsored student's responsibility to officially withdraw from the Post-Secondary Institution. Please contact your Education Counsellor to support you in this process with the school.

REGAINING ELIGIBILITY

There are opportunities to regain eligibility if you have an overpayment or have had your assistance suspended due to withdrawal or unsatisfactory academic performance. Please contact your Education Counsellor to support you in this process with the school.

Academic Performance:

If your sponsorship was suspended due to academic performance, to regain eligibility, the student must have passed all failed courses successfully and is now ready to continue in the program.

Withdrawal:

If returning to a program after withdrawal, pending no issues with academic performance, the student will be required to submit a letter from the Registrar, stating that they have been allowed to continue in the program.

If returning to a new program after withdrawal from another program, the student must wait a period of two years after withdrawal of the program in question, before reapplying for sponsorship. The student will also be expected to submit the same documents as a new student due to the change in educational goals. Please see “Required Documents” in the WPSSP Student Success Handbook for the documents required for “New/returning Students”.

Overpayments

An overpayment is any sponsorship payment or expenditure received or accepted for which you were not eligible. ***An overpayment must be reimbursed to the WPSSP before a student is eligible for any further funding or has a plan in place with the WPSSP to address the overpayment.***

The following summarizes how an overpayment may occur:

Education Allowance:

If you fail to maintain your Full-Time education status as defined by the Post-Secondary Institution and yet continue to accept monthly allowance payments for which you are no longer eligible, then any sponsorship \$'s issued to you during this period of ineligibility becomes an overpayment. E.g., you get your monthly deposit on November 25th for December, yet you withdraw or quit school at the beginning of December. That December MLA is an overpayment and is owed back to your First Nation.

Tuition:

If funds are suspended, it is the candidate's responsibility to officially withdraw from the Post-Secondary Institution. If the candidate fails to withdraw, the candidate is responsible for payment of the tuition to the Post-Secondary Institution. Not returning to school is not officially withdrawing. The school has no idea what your status is until you officially withdraw.

It is the WPSSP position that “life happens” and that there is generally a reason for everything that takes place in the life of a student. Overpayments will always be expected to be paid back to your First Nation. Work with your Education Counsellor to make payment arrangements that work with your circumstances. The student must provide a written letter of request outlining the proposed payment arrangement including any other documentation that may be required to support the student’s individual situation.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

STUDENT RIGHTS

Each student has the right:

- To the privacy of confidential information
- To be informed of the WPSSP policies and procedures
- To be treated respectfully by the staff of the Wasauksing Education Department
- To discuss academic circumstances without fear of reprisal
- To have WPSSP issue resolved in a fair, equitable and timely manner
- To file a complaint or appeal without fear of reprisal

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the student’s responsibility:

- To be informed of the WPSSP policies and procedures
- To comply with the WPSSP policies and procedures
- To treat WPSSP staff, institution staff, faculty, and students with respect
- To provide program/course work on time as assigned by the school
- To attend all required classes and tutorials
- To arrive on time for class and remain for the duration of the lesson/tutorial.

- to consult with your Education Counsellor prior to withdrawal from a course and/or program

Student Contracts

Students will be required to sign the WPSSP Student Responsibilities Contract. Your Education Counsellor will provide them for you each year. They are found in the WPSSP Student Success Handbook.

APPEALS

APPEALS ARE LIMITED TO SPONSORSHIP OR FUNDING DECISIONS. CONTACT YOUR EDUCATION COUNSELLOR TO REVIEW THE PROCESS.

OTHER BURSARIES

THE WASAUKSING POST SECONDARY SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM IS INDEPENDENT OF ANY OTHER BURSARY OR FUNDING SOURCES AND THEREFORE WILL NOT BE AFFECTED BY ANY AMOUNTS SECURED BY STUDENTS FOR THEIR SCHOOLING.