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TSAWWASSEN FIRST NATION

Tsawwassen First Nation

Post-Secondary Education Policy (2025)

Date Enacted: 2 September 2025

Order Number: O.073-2025

Last Amended: 3 March 2026

Order Number: O.023-2026

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Chief Administrative Officer

Table of Amendments

Section(s) Amended	Date	Order number	Come Into Force Date
Sections 4.2, 7.1, 7.2, 7.4, 8.1, 8.2 amended	03/03/2026	O.023-2026	03/03/2026

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1. Authority

Section 41(3) of the *Government Organization Act* gives the Manager of *nəwəyəł šxʷqéqəłxən* (Education), or their delegate, the authority to manage education programs on behalf of Executive Council. Further, section 10 of the *Education, Health and Social Development Act* provides that Tsawwassen Members may receive financial assistance to attend post-secondary education or training institutions based on criteria and requirements set out in regulation.

2. Definitions

In this policy

- a) **“Academic Year”** means any 8 consecutive months a student is enrolled in an education program and generally refers to September to April.
- b) **“Annual Maximum”** means the annual funding assistance provided to students for education and living expenses.
- c) **“Department”** means the *nəwəyəł šxʷqéqəłxən* (Education) department.
- d) **“Dependent”** means a student’s legal ward, under the age of 18, who resides with and is financially dependent on the student.
- e) **“Dependent Spouse”** means a student’s legal partner, who has resided with them for at least one year, is financially dependent on the student, and is a person with disability or holds a parental role for the student’s dependents under the age of six, and cannot work full or part time and is not supported by an external source, including but not limited to, TFN, the Ministry of Child and Family Development, Service Canada, worker’s compensation, or a pension.
- f) **“Director”** means the Director of Member Services, or their delegate.
- g) **“Education Program Assistant”** means the Education Program Assistant of the Department.
- h) **“Eligible Post Secondary Institution” or “Eligible Institution”** means any provincial or state approved post-secondary institution that is accredited by a recognized national or international accreditation organization.
- i) **“Eligible Prep Program”** means a program that provides the necessary courses to gain the academic level required to enter a degree or diploma program.
- j) **“Full-Time Student”** means a student enrolled in three or more courses in a term or semester or as defined by an institution.
- k) **“Manager”** means the manager of the Department.
- l) **“On Campus Residence”** means a housing accommodation provided by an educational institution, located on campus, for students enrolled at that institution.
- m) **“Part-Time Student”** means a student enrolled in less than three courses in a term or as defined by an institution.

- n) **“Post-Secondary Application Form”** means the form provided for application under this policy.
- o) **“Spouse”** means a person who
 - i. is married to the student, or
 - ii. lives with the student in a marriage-like relationship for a continuous period of at least one year, or
 - iii. lives with the student in a marriage-like relationship and has a child with the student.
- p) **“Student”** means a Tsawwassen Member who applies or receives support under this policy.

3. Purpose

This policy guides Tsawwassen Members’ access to post-secondary education funding to support their access to education programs, long-term employment and career goals, and higher paying, more desirable careers. This policy is not intended to cover 100 percent of the costs associated with attending post-secondary. Tsawwassen Members are encouraged to seek additional funding to support their education goals.

4. Eligibility and Application Process

4.1. Eligibility

Tsawwassen Members residing both on- and off-Tsawwassen Lands, including outside of Canada, can apply.

4.2. Funding Eligibility

All amounts in this policy are in Canadian dollars. The Annual Maximum funding assistance for each student is \$55,000 for attendance at any Eligible Institution or Eligible Prep Program. Students are not eligible for living expenses, or education or training opportunities funded by other TFN programs or policies while receiving funding under this policy.

Example: If a student receives a living allowance and education expenses from this policy, they cannot receive funding under the Employment and Training Policy.

4.2.1. Private Institutions

With Department approval, students may attend a provincial or state-approved private institution if the program is not provided or available at a public institution. Tuition is only paid to the equivalent cost of a similar or exact public program.

4.2.2. Distance Education

With Department approval, students may attend distance education programs if an in-person program cannot meet their needs. Students are encouraged to attend in-person programs where possible.

Distance education students may be required to meet additional accountability requirements. They are not eligible for post-secondary

funding supports only necessary for in-person attendance, such as the first year residence exception, travel support, commuter travel, and parking permits.

4.3. Application Form Requirements

To apply, students must submit the:

- Post Secondary Education Application Form; and
- An acceptance letter from their institution; and
- Any other documents indicated as required by the Department;

to the Education Program Assistant at least one month before their program start date.

Applications submitted within 30 days of a program start date may experience processing delays and funding approval may not occur before the program start. Retroactive funding is not generally provided for applications received after a program start date.

4.4. Entrance Testing

Tests, transcripts, or other entrance related expenses required to determine entrance or eligibility to an Eligible Institution are funded at cost. Reimbursement is in accordance with section 6.1.4.

4.5. Appeal Process

Students have a right to appeal any decision made by the Department regarding their application, medical or compassionate leave (section 5.6), or probation (section 5.7). Appeals will be made to the Director through the process determined by the Manager. The Director may escalate the appeal to the Chief Administrative Officer.

5. Student Responsibilities

Students are expected to adhere to academic and integrity standards and responsibilities. These standards, if met, should ensure success in their studies. Students are encouraged to contact the Education Program Assistant with questions or concerns.

5.1. Academic Standard

Students must maintain a minimum overall passing grade or equivalent as defined by their institution.

5.2. Attendance Standard

All students must maintain the minimum acceptable level of attendance as defined by their institution.

Students who withdraw from their program, stop attending any or all their classes, or drop any classes that could result in moving from full-time to part-time status, must notify the Education Program Assistant. Failure to notify may result in being placed on probation, increased reporting requirements, or being required to repay education or living allowance expenses.

5.3. Personal Standard

Students are expected to plan, and make informed and reasonable decisions about all aspects of their future education to the best of their ability, including:

- program and class choices,
- place of residence,
- employment, and
- healthy living, including when needed, seeking out assistance and counselling.

Students are responsible for contacting the Education Program Assistant in writing of any significant changes that might affect their performance as soon as practicable.

5.4. Monthly Check-in

By the 15th of each month, students must email an update to the Education Program Assistant on how school is going, including any class or assignment grades received, and report on any anticipated changes to their studies. A completed check-in is required before the next month's living allowance or top-up is paid.

If a student does not check-in, the Education Program Assistant will reach out twice by email, and then by phone if there is still no response. Failure to complete the check-in may result in a delay to a student's living allowance or top-up payment.

5.5. Transcripts

To maintain funding, students must submit unofficial transcripts at the end of each semester, and official transcripts at the end of each Academic Year. The Department reviews transcripts yearly to assess performance and attendance and may request students to submit written explanation or other documentation to support this review.

5.6. Medical & Compassionate Leave

Students facing serious medical or personal situations may apply for leave. To qualify, they must provide the Education Program Assistant:

- Official documentation of a granted academic concession or program or course withdrawal from their institution;

- Where withdrawal is not possible, a letter from their instructor(s) indicating they were performing at a minimum passing level or better prior to the request;
- For medical leave, documentation from a medical professional outlining the circumstance impacting the student's ability to complete their studies; and
- A letter from the student explaining the situation, when they became aware of it, and the perceived impact on their education and school performance.

If leave is approved, students' funding under this policy may be paused. Students must notify the Education Program Assistant about returning to school at least 30 days before the end of their leave term.

5.7. Probation

Students who fall below TFN's academic and attendance standards are placed on probation. Students on probation have one semester to increase their attendance or grades to or above TFN's standards. Students may be required to:

- submit additional transcripts, assignment progress, or attendance records, or
- seek academic or personal counselling.

If a student does not meet their probation requirements, future funding may be withdrawn.

5.8. Failure to Meet Responsibilities

Students unable to meet their responsibilities under this policy may have their support terminated and be required to repay TFN for that semester. Repayment is considered on a semester-by-semester basis and must occur before the Department will consider further financial support.

6. Post Secondary Funding Support

TFN funds a comprehensive set of post-secondary related costs set out in the categories and maximum funding amounts below.

6.1. Annual Maximum Funding Support

Students may receive funding up to the Annual Maximum each Academic Year. It is expected that most students' expenses will be less than the Annual Maximum, and funding is provided based on the lesser amount.

If a student anticipates their education expenses will exceed the maximums set below, they are encouraged to contact the Education Program Assistant for guidance. For items required on a course list, syllabus, or hand out, students must provide their course outlines to the Education Program Assistant each semester.

6.1.1. First-year On-Campus Residence Expenses

To support integration and a smooth transition for first year students, expenses to live in an On-campus Residence building are fully covered, up to and above the Annual Maximum. This funding is separate from the living allowance. No other first year expenses are funded above the Annual Maximum. If a student chooses to live in residence their second year, any expenses above the Annual Maximum must be covered by the student.

6.1.2. Limits to Support for Multiple Degrees

Students pursuing multiple programs or degrees at the same academic level (i.e., two bachelor's degrees) must demonstrate a clear and realistic education pathway that aligns with their defined career goals. In cases where a program or degree does not contribute to a student's defined career objectives, funding may be limited to education-related supports. When applying for funding for the subsequent degree or program, Students may be required to include further details in their application including, but not limited to, a written career plan, identifying how it supports their career goals.

These limitations do not apply to students progressing from one degree level to a higher one (i.e., from a bachelor's degree to a master's degree), who may access the full supports under this policy.

6.1.3. Scholarships & Bursaries

The Department will help students identify and apply for bursaries and scholarships. Awarded scholarships and bursaries are over and above the Annual Maximum.

6.1.4. Reimbursement

Except where otherwise noted, students are reimbursed for incurred expenses following submission of receipt(s) to the Education Program Assistant. If a student cannot assume purchasing costs, TFN may coordinate direct payment on the student's behalf.

6.2. Tuition

Up to the full cost of tuition is funded. Eligible tuition fees include:

- program tuition, including tuition related to semester or year abroad or for speciality courses such as law or graduate school,
- extended medical and dental coverage, and
- student fees.

Tuition may be paid directly to the institution upon invoicing.

6.3. Books

Books indicated as required on a course list, syllabus, or hand-out are funded at actual cost. Where required, book costs may be paid directly to the institution upon invoicing.

6.4. Basic Materials & Supplies

Basic materials and supplies such as notebooks and pens, including those required on a course list, syllabus, or hand-out are funded up to \$500 per Academic Year. Basic materials and supplies may be paid directly to the institution upon invoicing.

6.5. Personal Computers

Personal computers and associated tech accessories are funded up to \$2000, inclusive of software, once every three years. This may include items like a mouse, printer, docking station, keyboard, stylus, monitor, laptop stand, webcam, speakers, and a microphone. Students who accept a computer from their institution are not eligible for a computer under this policy. Students must return any computer provided under this policy if they accept one from their institution.

Students may purchase a computer within 30 days of their program start. If a specialized computer is required that may take more than 30 days to arrive, students are encouraged to contact the Education Program Assistant.

6.6. Computer Repairs

Computer and tech accessory repairs, including for basic servicing and maintenance, and scheduled and emergency repairs are funded up to \$500 per Academic Year. Before having their computer serviced, students are encouraged to check whether their device warranty may cover the repair.

6.7. Special Equipment

Equipment required by persons with disabilities or extraordinary equipment for specialty studies required in a syllabus not covered elsewhere under this policy, is funded up to \$500 per Academic Year. Special equipment costs may be paid directly to the institution upon invoicing.

6.7.1. Application Process

In addition to the Application Form under section 4.3, students who are a person with disability requesting special equipment must provide one or more of the following to support their request:

- A medical certificate;
- An educational assessment; and/or
- Documents proving receipt of federal, provincial, or state disability assistance.

6.8. Travel Support

Travel costs to or from an institution, including those related to a semester or year abroad are reimbursed up to \$2000 per Academic Year. Students are expected to use the most reasonable means of transportation. Part-time students are not eligible for travel support.

6.9. Commuter Travel

Students with a TransLink U-Pass or a transit pass issued by their institution will receive support as part of their tuition. For students without a TransLink U-Pass or institution required transit pass, commuter funds to institutions are reimbursed according to the number of TransLink zones traveled. As TransLink fees and institution required transit pass fees are subject to change, TFN will cover the monthly rate as it stands as of that Academic Year.

Students who drive to school may apply for and receive amounts equivalent to the applicable TransLink U-Pass or institution required transit pass.

6.10. Parking Permits

Daily, semester, or yearly parking permits are reimbursed at actual cost up to a \$1000 per Academic Year. Students should choose the most reasonable permit to suit their program length. Parking tickets and fines are not eligible for reimbursement.

6.11. Co-operative Education & Internship Fees

Program fees related to work experience programs, such as co-operative education and internships, are funded at actual cost. TFN does not provide wage support for students participating in co-operative education and internships not funded by the Tsawwassen Government.

6.12. Graduation Expenses

Graduation-related expenses are covered by a grant of \$750 for each academic level of achievement. This includes items such as graduation application fees, graduation regalia rentals, ceremony and degree fees, graduation photos, and celebratory events organized by the institution.

7. Living Allowances & Top-ups

Full-time students are eligible for a living allowance for the months they are in school. Part-time students are eligible for a top-up based on the number of courses they are enrolled in. As per section 4.2, students cannot collect a living allowance if they are already receiving one through another program or under another policy. Students are encouraged to reach out to the Department if they require support regarding living allowance eligibility and for the most current rates.

7.1. Living Allowance Rates & Payments

Living allowance payments are made on the last Wednesday of the month for the following month. The living allowance rates are maximums. As of April 2025, the living allowance rates are:

Category	Maximum Monthly Allowance (Maximum applies if not working)
Single	\$2,298.95
With working Spouse	\$2,298.95
With Dependent Spouse	\$3,189.81
Single parent with one dependent	\$3,333.48
For every additional dependent	\$431.05

7.2. Part Time Student Top Up

Part-time students may receive a monthly top-up based on the number of courses they are enrolled in:

Number of courses	Monthly Top-up Amount
Part time – one course	\$447.74
Part time – two courses	\$895.47

Dependents and marital status are not considered in determining top-up eligibility.

7.3. Cost of Living Adjustments

The living allowances and top-ups are subject to change based on cost-of-living adjustments. Adjustments are calculated by the annual change in consumer price index for British Columbia from October (previous year) to October (current year). Living allowance adjustments will occur each spring and come into effect April 1 of the following fiscal year.

7.4. Employed Students

When a student works more than 90 hours a month, their gross monthly income is used to adjust their living allowance in accordance with the following formula - *Applicable living allowance minus 30% of gross monthly income.*

Example 1: Max is a single student with no dependents. They work 60 hours a month and earn \$1,071. Because Max works less than 90 hours a month, their living allowance is not deducted, and they are eligible for the maximum living allowance of \$2,298.95 and their total work income for a total of \$3,369.95.

Example 2: Toni is a married student with a working spouse and one dependent. Toni works 110 hours a month and their gross income from employments is \$1,963.50. The living allowance for a married person with a working spouse is \$2,298.95 and the living

allowance for one dependent is \$431.05. Because Toni works more than 90 hours per month, their living allowance would be adjusted as follows:

$\$1,963.50$ (income) \times 30% (deduction rate) = $\$589.05$ (applicable deduction)

$\$2,298.95$ (married persons with a working spouse) + $\$431.05$ (one dependent) = $\$2,730.00$

Toni's living allowance would be adjusted accordingly: $\$2,730.00 - \$589.05 = \$2140.95$

Toni would also keep all their work income for a total of **$\$4,104.45$**

7.5. Dependents

Students who claim Dependents or a Dependent Spouse must provide relevant documentation, proving that:

- the Dependent(s) live with the student;
- are supported by the student; and
- excluding Dependent Spouses, are under the age of 18.

Students are encouraged to reach out to the Department for any questions about Dependent eligibility.

7.5.1. Dependent Spouse Eligibility Criteria

Spouses without income or financial support who live with the student can only be claimed as a Dependent Spouse if there are Dependent(s) in the home under the age of six. If a spouse is a person with disability, they may be claimed as a Dependent Spouse even if there are no children in the household under the age of six.

Students are required to provide appropriate documentation or examples proving their spouse's disability designation.

7.5.2. Additional Dependents

Students can only claim additional Dependents if they are a newborn child or the student becomes the legal guardian of a child. Students must provide documentation proving formal guardianship.

7.5.3. Child Support

Any children that a student is paying court-ordered child support for and does not have shared or full custody of cannot be claimed as a Dependent. If both of a child(s) guardians are receiving support under this Policy, only one student can claim them as a dependent.

7.5.4. False Claims

Any student found to falsely report Dependents, or a Dependent Spouse will be required to repay the relevant amount to TFN.

7.6. Students Receiving Income Assistance

Students in TFN's income assistance program are not eligible for the living allowance. To qualify for the living allowance, students must withdraw from the income assistance program and alert the Education Program Assistant and the Family Services Department of the change.

Students receiving provincial or state income assistance are encouraged to contact their relevant authority to determine their eligibility to receive a living allowance without affecting their assistance. Students must inform the Education Program Assistant of their eligibility and report any living allowance received to their income assistance provider.

7.7. Students Receiving Disability Assistance

Students receiving provincial or state disability assistance are encouraged to contact their relevant authority to determine their eligibility to receive a living allowance without affecting their assistance. Students must inform the Education Program Assistant of their eligibility and report any living allowance received to their assistance provider.

8. Graduation Awards

TFN values education and wishes both to encourage Members to pursue education and to celebrate significant post-secondary milestones. Graduation awards are excluded from the Annual Maximum. Students applying for an award must provide a photocopy or electronic copy of their transcript to the Education Program Assistant. Students can also provide a photocopy of their certificate/diploma.

8.1. Post-Secondary Graduation Awards

Students who graduate from colleges, technology institutes, and university are eligible for the following awards:

- Certificate or equivalent credential recognizing graduation from a one-year post-secondary program: \$500;
- Diploma, associate degree or equivalent credential recognizing graduation from a two-year post-secondary program: \$1000;
- Certificate of Qualification or equivalent in a trade: \$1000;
- Professional designation or Red Seal Trade endorsement: \$1500;
- Undergraduate Degree: \$2000;
- Master's Degree: \$3500; and

- Honorary Degree or Doctorate Degree: \$5000.

Regardless of how long a student takes to complete a program, one and two-year post-secondary programs designed to be completed in one or two years of full-time study, are awarded as such.

8.1.1. Certificate Programs Less Than One-year

Awards are not issued for certificate programs of less than one year. However, if a program is divided into multiple certificate programs that together form a full-Academic Year, the student is eligible for the one-year certificate award.

8.2. Multiple Awards

Only one award is delivered at each accomplishment level, even if a student earns a second degree or certificate at the same level. The same coursework cannot be used for two awards; however, students can earn credits that build towards a higher award. *Example: if a student earns the \$500 award for completing a one-year certificate and then studies for a second year in the same program to earn a two-year diploma, that student will receive another \$500 award.*

Each student can receive a lifetime maximum of \$2000 in awards for completing any combination of undergraduate-level programming and achievement, including:

- technical programs,
- college diplomas,
- trade certifications, and
- undergraduate degrees.