



## **English River First Nation Advanced Education Student Support Program**

Box 89  
Patuanak, SK  
S0M 2H0

PH: 306 396 2161

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# **English River First Nation Post-Secondary Local Operating Guide**

## **Student Policy Handbook**



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The commitment of a post-secondary counsellor to a First Nations community is multifaceted and deeply significant. This role involves supporting Indigenous students as they navigate the academic landscape, advocating for their needs, and fostering a culturally safe and inclusive learning environment. Here are some key aspects of this commitment:

1. **Cultural Understanding and Sensitivity:** A post-secondary counsellor should have a deep understanding of the cultural values, traditions, and historical context of the First Nations community they serve. This understanding is essential for effectively supporting Indigenous students and building trust within the community.
2. **Advocacy and Support:** The counsellor should advocate for the needs of Indigenous students within the post-secondary institution, ensuring that they have access to resources, support services, and culturally relevant programming. This may involve working closely with faculty, staff, and administration to address systemic barriers and promote equity and inclusion.
3. **Community Engagement:** Building strong relationships with the First Nations community is crucial. This includes collaborating with community leaders, elders, and organizations to understand their priorities and concerns regarding post-secondary education. Community engagement efforts can also involve organizing events, workshops, and information sessions to promote higher education opportunities.
4. **Holistic Student Support:** Supporting Indigenous students goes beyond academic advising. The coordinator should take a holistic approach to student support, addressing not only academic needs but also social, emotional, and cultural well-being. This may involve connecting students with counselling services, cultural programming, financial aid, and other resources both on and off-campus.
5. **Cultural Competency Training:** It's essential for the counsellor and other staff members to undergo cultural competency training to ensure they understand the unique challenges faced by Indigenous and how to provide culturally safe and respectful support.
6. **Long-term Relationship Building:** Building trust and rapport with the community takes time and ongoing effort. The coordinator should demonstrate a long-term commitment to serving the needs of Indigenous students and the broader community, continuously seeking feedback and adapting their approach as needed.

Overall, the commitment of a post-secondary counsellor to a First Nations community is grounded in respect, cultural humility, and a genuine desire to empower Indigenous students to succeed in higher education while honoring their identities and heritage.



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### 1. INTRODUCTION

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The English River First Nation is responsible for the development of operating policies and guidelines to guide the administration of the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) and University and College Entrance Preparation Program (UCEPP) for the English River First Nation Post-Secondary Education Assistance Program.

This policy guides the First Nation Education Department in assessing the eligibility of students to receive financial assistance to attend accredited post-secondary institutions in an eligible program of study. It has been ratified by Chief and Council and applies to all students seeking financial assistance from the English River First Nation.

PSSSP funding is meant to assist eligible English River First Nation students to pursue post-secondary programs. PSSSP funding normally covers costs associated with completion of post-secondary, such as tuition, mandatory fees, application fees, books and supplies, initial professional certification and exam fees, official transcript fees, living allowance and travel, tutorial, guidance, and counseling, and childcare services, if it is within the English River First Nation's budget and if the English River First Nation has chosen to provide these services.

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### 2. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES AND ADMINISTRATION

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#### English River First Nation Vision Statement

*The English River First Nation Post-Secondary Program “envisions a future where their community thrives with self-sufficiency and resilience, driven by a skilled and knowledgeable workforce. By providing top-tier, culturally relevant trades training, we aim to build local capacity, create sustainable economic opportunities, and foster a sense of pride and empowerment among our people. Together, we are shaping a prosperous future, rooted in tradition and innovation, where every community member has the tools and confidence to build and maintain the infrastructure that supports our collective well-being.”*

#### English River First Nation Mission Statement

*The Mission of the English River First Nation Post-Secondary Program is to strive to empower students to achieve their educational goals, pursue their passions, and become compassionate leaders who positively impact their communities.*



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### Administration

The Education Department is mandated by Chief and Council to administer the English River First Nation PSE Assistance Program.

First Nation members seeking PSE funding will be provided with a copy of these Guidelines. They may submit their applications in accordance with these Guidelines. The PSE Director/Committee will review completed applications and assess whether they meet the terms and requirements set out in these Guidelines. The PSE Director/Committee will advise applicants as to whether their application for sponsorship has been approved as soon as possible. Where an application is not approved and the applicant wishes to appeal the decision, they may follow the appeal process set out in these Guidelines. All enquiries about the PSE program should be directed to:

Name: Shannon McLeod  
Title: Director of Education  
Address: Box 89, Patuanak, S0M 2H0  
Phone: 1-306-396-2161  
Email: [Shannon.mcleod@mltc.ca](mailto:Shannon.mcleod@mltc.ca)

Name: Stacie Misponas  
Title: Post Secondary Counsellor  
Address: Box 89, Patuanak, S0M 2H0  
Phone: 1-306-396-2161  
Email: [erfn.postsec@erfn.net](mailto:erfn.postsec@erfn.net)

### 3. OPERATING GUIDELINES

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The English River First Nation receives annual funds from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) to provide support to members attending an accredited post-secondary institution. The terms and conditions of ISC is acknowledged and taken into consideration in the policy development and administration of funds by the English River First Nation.

#### 3.1 Definitions

**“Administering Organization”** is the English River First Nation (ERFN), Education Committee under the direction of, and responsible to, the English River First Nation Government, and includes any individuals employed to assist in the administration of the English River First Nation Post-Secondary Support Program.



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**“Academic year”** means the length of an academic year for a Program of Study as defined by the Post- Secondary Institution.

**“Band Member”** means a person who is lawfully registered to the Band List and is a full member. Only full, registered members of English River First Nation are eligible for PSE support through the Band.

**“Dependent”** means a person, other than a Dependent Spouse who is in the maintenance of and supported by the student, under the age of 18 years.

**“Education Committee”** is made up of a selection process adopted by Chief-and-Council.

**“ERFN – AESSP Counsellor”** means the individual employed by the English River First Nation to administer the ERFN Advanced Education Student Support Program (AESSP) and to deal directly with the students, post-secondary institutions, and other outside agencies relevant to the post-secondary program.

**“ERFN Education Appeal Board”** means an ERFN Education group that consists of ERFN Elders and Designates as selected and adopted by Chief-and-Council.

**“Eligible Post-Secondary Institution”** means a post-secondary institution that is listed as a designated institution by CanLearn. This list can be viewed at:  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/jobs/education/student-financial-aid.html>

**“Full-time Student”** as defined by the post-secondary institution that the student is enrolled.

**“New Student”** means an applicant who has not previously applied for the First Nations Post-Secondary Assistance Program.

**“Continuing Student”** means an applicant who is applying for funding to continue their studies after having already been funded through the First Nations Post-Secondary Assistance Program.



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**“Returning Student”** means an applicant who has previously received funding for a program, and is requesting funding for a new program, or who is returning to their studies after a significant hiatus.

**“Graduate Student”** means an applicant who is applying to a Masters or Doctoral program, or who is currently a Masters or Doctoral student. Graduate students may also be new students, continuing students, or returning students as defined in this section.

**“Program of Study” or “Program”** means all post-secondary programs leading to a certificate, diploma, or degree.

**“Satisfactory Academic Standing”** is meeting requirements in accordance with the post-secondary institution.

**“Change of Discipline”** is when the student transfers from one faculty and a specific program to a different one.

**“Mature students”** is someone who is older than the usual age for starting their first degree. Student is usually 21 and older

**“Academic Probation Contract”** is a formal, written agreement between a student and their academic post-secondary counselor. It outlines specific requirements that students must meet to improve their academic standing and avoid dismissal.

**“Time limit”** - is the maximum number of months/years to complete the determined studies.

- 2-year certificate programs – 3 years
- 3-year diploma program – 4 years
- Trades and Apprenticeship – 5 years
- 4 Bachelor programs (University) – 5 years
- Postgraduate:
  - Master’s programs – 4 years
  - PHD programs – 4 years.



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### 3.2 Application Requirements & Deadlines

Students wishing to receive assistance under the Support Program shall submit an ERFN AESSP application to the Post-Secondary Counselor.

Fully completed application forms and required documentation must be received at the First Nation Post-Secondary office or by email (erfn.postsec@erfn.net) by the following deadline date:

- 202\_-202\_ ERFN Application: May 30<sup>th</sup>
- WINTER Term: October 30<sup>th</sup>
- SPRING/SUMMER Term: February 15<sup>th</sup>

#### **New and Continuing Students**

An application deadline date of **May 30<sup>th</sup>** for Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer for new and continuing students.

- Supporting documents: by **June 30<sup>th</sup>**

#### **FOR CONTINUING STUDENTS ONLY:**

An application deadline date of **October 30<sup>th</sup>** for Winter

- Supporting documents: by **October 30<sup>th</sup>**

An application deadline date of **February 15<sup>th</sup>** for Spring and Summer

- Supporting documents: by **April 30<sup>th</sup>**

Only applications received by the deadline dates will be considered for the current intake.

**All continuing students must submit a continuing application form.**

**Note: Funding is not a guarantee.** So please do your due diligence. “Pursuing education is rarely easy, but when it’s your passion and your goal, you’ll rise to the challenge. Even if it means applying for a loan, you’re investing in your future—and that’s one of the best investments you can make.”





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### **Spring and Summer Session – Continuing Students**

The English River First Nation students may apply for Spring (May-June) and Summer (July-August) sessions. The applicant must have met the following:

- i. Achieved the minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) of the institute.

The **Spring and Summer student application process** must include the following:

- a) A completed application form from the student
- b) Submission of marks from the college or university,
- c) Have met the application deadline of **February 15** of each academic year.

**Spring and summer sessions for special programs that usually have spring and summer sessions as part of the program requirements, will require that the student submit a written letter with the following:**

- a) Confirmation from the institute that the classes are a compulsory part of the program,
- b) Dates of start-up and completion.

### **3.2.1 Required Documentation**

The English River First Nation requires the following documentation to assist with the administration of PSSSP and UCEPP:

- a) Copy of Status Card (both sides) or Status Number from **English River First Nation**.
- b) Copy of acceptance letter from an eligible post-secondary program that will be delivered by an eligible post-secondary institution.
- c) Official Transcripts from all institutions attended (official transcripts are signed and sealed by the institution and have not been opened; official transcripts from MyCreds will be acceptable).
- d) Signed release form(s).
- e) Dependent Declaration form(s).



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Students applying for assistance through UCEPP must obtain a statement from the relevant institution (i.e. college or university), which attests that:

- UCEPP will provide the student with the necessary courses to attain the academic level for university or college entrance

### 4.0 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

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To be considered for sponsorship under the ERFN – AESSP, an applicant must be a registered member of ERFN and submit an application that includes:

- A ‘Letter of Acceptance’ (LOA) into a program of eight months or longer that leads to a certificate, diploma, or degree.
- Attending a post-secondary institution on the master list of designated education institutions approved by CanLearn.
- **A completed ERFN Advanced Education Application Form and supporting documents.**

#### 4.1 Time limits:

- 2-year certificate programs – 3 years
- 3-year diploma program – 4 years
- Trades and Apprenticeship – 5 years
- 4YR Bachelor Programs (University) – 5 years
- Post-Graduate:
  - Master’s programs – 4 years
  - PHD programs – 4 years.

If students require additional time, an **extension approval** is required for continuation of funding. Extension approvals can be submitted by email by the student to the Post-Secondary Counsellor and the Director of Education.



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### 5.0 STUDENT APPLICATION

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To promote self-sufficiency, independence, and responsibility among the membership of ERFN, the student will be responsible for the following costs:

- i. Retaining a seat for themselves if they have been accepted into a program by the education institution
- ii. Transcripts

#### 5.1 Complete Application Package

5.1.1 A completed Advanced Education funding application form **by the deadline dates mentioned above.**

- Students are required to sign the **‘Release of Authorization’** form (attached – appendix D) as a condition of funding for the application to be complete.
- University of Saskatchewan (U of S) applicants must sign the U of S form provided. All other applicants must sign the ERFN – AEESP Release of Authorization form provided.

5.1.2 All supporting documents by June 30<sup>th</sup> to include:

- **High School Transcripts** obtained from your High School (Unofficial) or the Ministry of Education (Formal Transcripts (MyCreds)).
- **Former Post-Secondary Institute transcripts** (where applicable).
- **Two letters of reference from former teachers and/or employers.**
- **Letter of Acceptance from Institute.**
- **Interview of applicant (in person/virtual) to discuss educational plan.**

5.1.3 Any applicant that experiences barriers in submitting the documentation can ask for assistance from the Post Secondary Counsellor.

5.1.4 The Advanced Education Student Support Program Counsellor will notify the applicant in writing upon receipt of application and potential students will be given four weeks to submit all information required for a complete application package.

5.1.5 All applications will be entered into a database upon receipt of applications.



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- 5.1.6 The Advanced Education Student Support Program Counsellor will prepare a summary of information on each applicant for sponsorship review by the ERFN – AEESP Counsellor and Director of Education. The summary information will include:
- Student name, address, telephone numbers, band membership number, marital status, and number of dependents.
  - Grade 12 transcripts and/or a University Grade Point Average, if applicable.
  - Approximate cost of each applicant for the current academic year includes tuition, books, living allowances, and mandatory fees.
  - Approval of selected students by ERFN – AEESP committee.
- 5.1.7 All students who submit a completed application package will be placed on the selection list for the AEESP committee for funding selection purposes.
- 5.1.8 Approval of selected students by the Director of Education and the Education Committee and adopted by Chief-and-Council.
- All applicants will receive formal written confirmation on the final decision of their application.
  - Students will be notified of the decision **by July 15<sup>th</sup>**.

## 6.0 PRIORITY SELECTION CATEGORIES

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Students will be selected based on the following priority categories:

- (1) Grade 12, Adult 12, Mature admission
- (2) Continuing students with the “institute’s satisfactory academic standing”. Graduate students requiring “After Degree Certification” must submit proof of documentation of requirement before registering for the program.
- (3) Master’s students and PHD students will be required to submit a letter of standing from the institution they are registered at.
  - Students with undergraduate degrees must work in their field of study a minimum of 2 years before they can apply for further funding.
- (5) Returning students to complete the same program for which they had originally registered.



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- 6.5 (6) Returning students for a different program than the original program application. These students will have to complete a **“Change of Discipline form” (Appendix C)** for submission.

## 7.0 TYPES OF ASSISTANCE

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The ERFN – AESSP will provide financial support as follows:

7.1.1 A one-time application fee for approved sponsored students.

7.1.3 Initial professional certification fees.

7.1.3 Books/Materials/Supplies Assistance:

University and programs that do not invoice book costs with tuition:

- The cost of books with receipts upon request.
- Students requiring more than \$500 must submit class/program documentation (book list)

If the educational institution provides books/materials/supplies as part of the tuition, students will not receive this allowance.

7.1.4 Tutorial Assistance based on the following:

- A letter by the student requesting tutorial assistance.
- Confirmation by an advisor or program head indicating need for tutorial assistance, i.e., the name of the tutor, time frame for tutoring, and cost.

7.1.5 Practicum Grant is available to students whose course requires them to be outside the normal classroom setting.

Students must submit registration documentation for each practicum grant request as required by the program. Students can be eligible for costs of room, board, and travel. Requests will be reviewed by the Director of Education and the Education Committee and adopted by Chief-and-Council on a case-by-case basis.

7.1.6 Tuition and Mandatory Fees

English River First Nation will pay approved tuition amounts directly to the post-secondary institution upon receiving an invoice. In the case that a post-secondary



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institution does not bill English River First Nation directly, students are responsible for forwarding invoices directly from the institution to English River First Nation along with any necessary supporting documentation, information, and deadlines.

- i) Students attending Canadian public institutions at the actual tuition rate, including compulsory student fees charged by the institution for a Canadian student; or
- ii) Students attending private or foreign post-secondary institutions at the same tuition rate, or the tuition rate that is the least amount, including compulsory student fees, charged by the public or private institution nearest to the student's place of residence (at the time of application) which offers the least expensive comparable program.
- iii) 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 Director of Education and the Education Committee and adopted by Chief-and-Council must be acquired prior to funding students in such a situation.
- iv) Advanced Education Student Support Program funding available to a student will not be reduced by the number of bursaries for similar expenses by the student from other sources.

**Tuition support does not include fees imposed by the post-secondary institution for late registration, late withdrawal of classes, and not opting out from health and dental. This is the sole responsibility of the student. Students that have these charges from the institution will have these amounts reviewed by the Director of Education and the Education Committee and adopted by Chief-and-Council on a case-by-case basis.**

### 7.1.6 Travel and Living Allowance

Living Allowance – as determined by the availability of funds and with approval of the Director of Education and Chief-and-Council. Students with dependents can apply for further subsidies to offset additional costs as in Child Care

### 7.1.7 UCEPP level (University and College Entrance Preparation Program)



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The maximum time limit for financial support will be one 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), continued financial support for the term will be subject to receipt of a statement from the institution confirming the successful completion of the first term.

Students receiving UCEPP funding must declare the support received from this program as a source of income if applying for social assistance.

**Level 1:** Colleges (example: Sask Polytechnic, Northlands College, GDI)

**Level 2:** Undergraduate University programs – duration of program

**Level 3:** Master of Professional degree programs – 4 years as per institution requirements

**Level 4:** Doctoral programs/post doctoral – 4 years as per institution requirements

Doctoral applicants must have worked a minimum of two years upon achieving a Master's degree.

1. Assistance may be provided to students to complete only one program at each level.
2. With exception, programs that require a Bachelor before entry to a professional program (Law, Medicine, Veterinarian Sciences, etc.) will be considered for continuation of studies.
3. 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, if the student is in satisfactory academic standing.
4. Where an extension is warranted, students must submit an extension request for approval with the institution, and the Post-Secondary Counsellor. These extension requests should indicate the length of extension that is required to complete their studies at that level registered.
5. Students may be assisted for up to one additional academic year for medical or personal reasons.
6. A student who decides to change their program/drop a class requires consulting with the ERFN – AEESP Counsellor and/or Director of



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Education.

7. Student support will not exceed the limits set out in the paragraphs above.
8. 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 students exceeds the funding available, waitlist selection criteria will apply.
10. Students receiving funding from the PSSSP or UCEPP must declare support received from this program as a source of income if applying for social assistance.

### 7.2 Waitlist Selection Criteria

- Students who do not have any post-secondary education
- Students who have paused their studies and are returning. (Academic standing is satisfactory)
- Application is kept current.

## 8.0 GRADUATION INCENTIVES

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Each student upon written verification of graduation by the institution will receive a flat rate allowance of one thousand (\$1,000) dollars. Travel assistance may be provided for the graduate and parents of the graduate to attend the ceremonies.

## 9.0 MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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- a) Students are responsible for library fines, examination rewrites, fees for dropped classes, and withdrawal fees if the student does not meet the institution withdrawal date. Students must make sure that all outstanding accounts are cleared before registration or submission of application for funding. Such outstanding accounts will be reviewed by the Director of Education and the Education Committee and adopted by Chief-and-Council.
  - b) All information provided by the student to the Support Program in their funding application or throughout the academic year must be **true** and **accurate** and the student must immediately advise the Post-Secondary Counsellor of any changes in their academic program, and any other personal changes relevant to their funding under the Support Program.
  - c) Any student who provides false or inaccurate information in their application will be





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- reviewed by the Director of Education and the Education Committee and adopted by Chief-and-Council.
- d) Students will be deducted any funds received through the Support Program if said funds were received based on:
    - i. False information provided in their application for funding.
    - ii. False information provided to the Support Program throughout the academic year.
    - iii. Information being withheld from the Support Program concerning changes in their academic standing, or any change in their personal circumstances which is relevant to their funding under the Support Program.
  - iv. **These cases will be reviewed by the Director of Education and the Education Committee and adopted by Chief-and-Council.**
  - e) ERFN – AESSP Student Academic Probation
    - A student whose academic marks indicate that they are falling below the institution's minimum passing grade, will be placed on an ERFN – AESSP Academic Probation Contract which will include an in person/virtual meeting to develop an educational plan.

**The application as a continuing student will be based on academic performance and the completion of all the requirements of the Academic Probation. The following are conditions of your probation:**

- Make an Education Plan outlining the plan to succeed in the Term and changes to obtain the GPA needed.
- To raise the GPA to meet the minimum set by the Post-Secondary Institution.
- To seek out Academic Advising from the program Academic Advisor.
- To seek Tutoring Assistance from the program.
- To initiate and maintain regular bi-weekly contact with the ERFN – AESSP Counsellor for the duration of the academic probation and notify this Counsellor immediately of any new developments, changes, or problems if they arise; and
- The student is required to sign the ERFN – AESSP Academic Probation Contract.



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### 10.0 APPEALS PROCESS

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- 10.1. Every student has a right to appeal a decision made by the Post-Secondary Education Committee in writing by email. This appeals process will not be considered for a student's application that has been refused because funds are fully committed or because a student has clearly exceeded the academic entitlement. The Post-Secondary Counsellor must reply within 14 days.
- 10.2. When misuse of funding is suspected, the student will be notified in writing. When misuse of post-secondary funds is discovered, the Post-Secondary Counsellor will adopt the following procedures:  
Write a letter to the individual stating the findings. If the student is, in fact, found to be misusing funding, arrangements will be made by the Post-Secondary Counsellor for repayment by the student over overpayment(s) received and will be a condition of any future funding.  
If there is no response, funding will be terminated. The student may appeal within 14 days.
- 10.3. If the issue is still not resolved after the first appeal, the Post-Secondary Education Committee can hear the appeal in person or by teleconference. The Post-Secondary Education Committee's decision is then final.

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### 11. Online Students studying at home.

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- Online students qualify for tuition and books for the area of study.
- Living allowance will be determined by the financial need of the student.

### **Conclusion:**

Rates are set dependent on availability of funding in the ERFN-AESSP.

### **Summary of application process:**

Demographic form – (information of the applicant)

Interview (virtual or in person) – be prepared to discuss your career plan.

Document submission (Treaty card, acceptance letter, reference letter, and transcripts)

Dependant declaration form



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Release form

### **Important Dates to remember:**

- 1. Application date: May 30<sup>th</sup>**
- 2. Documentation submission date June 30<sup>th</sup>**

If the applicant has any issues in filling out this form, or barriers in acquiring the documentation, please contact the post-secondary counsellor or Director of Education for possible assistance.

Additions:

- A) Application form- needs revision
- B) Dependent Declaration Form
- C) Change of Discipline form
- D) Release of Authorization Form
- E) Travel for moving (new students)

# Organization Chat

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