



Skokomish Indian Nation

Education Department

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Approved

_____, 2010



Skokomish Indian Nation

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Skokomish Nation, WA 98584

Education Department

General Program Policies and Procedures

The Education Department's mission is to offer lifelong educational opportunities for all members of Skokomish Nation. The Education Department is committed to providing educational programs, information advocacy and referral, including referral to different forms of financial assistance. The Department will also provide positive emotional encouragement and support that promotes personal growth, enrichment, empowerment, self-esteem, and pride in our cultural heritage, economic independence and self-sufficiency. The Department will work in the community to provide educational avenues and to create a more positive environment for life-long learning.

These policies as adopted are written into Tribal codes by the authority of the Tribal Council. These policies are not intended to circumscribe or supplant the particular boundaries of Tribal codes or ordinances, or the guidelines, policies and procedures of other Tribal programs.

Scholarships, Financial Assistance, Rewards

Scholarships, financial assistance, and rewards are available to enrolled tribal members of the Skokomish Indian Tribe to encourage attendance in and completion of education provided by accredited learning institutions.

Applicants are encouraged to apply for other financial aid programs, including but not limited to Pell Grant, Supplement Education Opportunity Grant, State Need Grant, College Work Study, Tuition Waiver, Perkins Loan, Guaranteed Student Loan, Veterans and Social Security Benefits, General Assistance, and other public aid and scholarships.

1. Eligibility

- a. Must be officially enrolled in an accredited learning institution: high school (for rewards), college, or career oriented vocational education school approved by the Education Committee.
- b. Continuing students/ recipients must have satisfactorily completed prior quarter/semester coursework.
- c. Satisfactory completion is 2.0 G.P.A. or higher.
- d. Must have a complete application on file by specific deadlines.

2. Student Considerations

- a. Summer Students: Depending on the availability of funds, current students may be funded for summer term upon receipt of written request from the student.
- b. Graduate Students: Skokomish students attending Graduate school are eligible for tribal scholarships.

3. Full- and Part-time Students

- a. Tribal scholarships are available to full-time and part-time students officially registered for classes at an accredited institutions of higher learning (colleges & universities)
 - 1) For full scholarship, college students must be officially enrolled as a full time student at an accredited institution of higher learning.

- 2) For partial scholarship, college students must be officially enrolled for at least half-time at an accredited institution of higher learning. The amount of the scholarship will be based on the ratio of part-time to full-time.
 - b. Vocational education students must be enrolled full time to qualify for a tribal scholarship.
- 4. Scholarship Funding Availability**
- a. Each year the Tribal Council establishes a budget for the Education Department Tribal Scholarship Fund.
 - b. Amounts for scholarships, financial assistance, and rewards are set each year by the Education Committee and approved by the Tribal Council during the Tribal budgeting process.
- 5. Deadlines for scholarship applications:**
- a. The Education Committee meets on a monthly basis to review applications.
 - b. Applications for the Tribal scholarship must be postmarked or emailed or faxed by the end of business day on Friday of the fifth week of the term for which financial assistance is requested.
 - c. Once a student file is complete applications will be reviewed at the next regularly scheduled Committee meeting.
- 6. Time Limit for Scholarship Eligibility**
- a. Students seeking a two year degree or vocational certificate may be financially supported for a total of up to three years while in school (9 quarters or 6 semesters).
 - b. Students seeking a four year degree may be financially supported for a total of up to six years while in school (18 quarters or 12 semesters).
 - c. Students seeking a graduate (Masters) degree after receiving a Bachelors degree may be financially supported for a total of up to three years while in school (9 quarters or 6 semesters).
- 7. Process for scholarships and financial assistance:**
- a. First time applicants: For an initial scholarship application to be processed, the following items must be received by the Education Department before your financial request can be presented to the Education Committee.
 - 1) Fully Completed Application
 - 2) Letter of Intent (long term goal/education plan)
 - 3) Verification of Skokomish Tribal Enrollment
 - 4) Acceptance Letter from College or School (New Students or if changing schools)
 - 5) Proof of current registration for classes
 - b. Continuing students: For a continuing scholarship application to be processed, the following items must be received by the Education Department before an application can be presented to the Education Committee.
 - 1) Written or verbal correspondence with a signed confirmation that answers the following questions:
 - Are you still an enrolled member of the Skokomish Tribe?
 - Are you still at the same address? If not, what is your new address?
 - Are you still at the same school?
 - Are you pursuing the same degree or certificate?
 - Are you still planning to graduate in _____ (year)?
 - 2) Acceptance letter from college or school (if changing schools)
 - 3) Proof of current registration for classes
 - 4) Copy of most current transcripts or grades transmitted directly from school attended
 - c. Processing Applications
 - 1) Once a complete application is received by the Education Department staff, the application is processed for approval.
 - (a) Application is considered complete by authorized Education staff.
 - (b) Incomplete applications will not be processed.
 - (c) The completed application is presented in brief to the Education Committee.
 - Name

- School
 - Education Goal
 - Standing (good or academic probation)
 - Full-time or part-time
- (d) A majority vote by the Education Committee signifies approval or denial.
- (e) Approved applications are recommended to the Tribal Council for final approval.
- 2) If the scholarship is approved by the Tribal Council, a payment request is processed to the Tribal Accounting Department.
- (a) Purchase order/Check request is attached to the proof of approval by Council.
- (b) Check is processed and mailed to the address on the application unless otherwise specified in writing.
- 3) If denied, a valid reason is recorded and relayed to the applicant.
- (a) Failure to meet deadline date
- (b) Incomplete Skokomish Financial Aid Application
- (c) Not accepted by college/school of choice
- (d) Failure to maintain full- or part-time status as planned
- (e) Failure to maintain required grade point average
- (f) Maximum period of eligibility is reached
- (g) Tribal scholarship funds are not available

8. Satisfactory progress or completion:

- a. All grant recipients will continue to be eligible for Skokomish tribal financial as long as tribal funds exist and academic requirements identified in this policy are met.
- b. Students are required to request from the College Registrar's Office that an Official Transcript or term grade report be submitted to the Skokomish Education Department before further disbursements will be made.
- c. Students must maintain at least a 2.0 G.P.A documented or other documented proof of successful progress or term completion before further disbursements will be made.
- 1) Students whose grades fall below 2.0 G.P.A. or who receives unsatisfactory remarks on a term progress report or who fail to complete a vocational training session will be placed on probation for one term.
- 2) Once probation is completed, student must provide documentation showing the required G.P.A. or other documented proof of successful progress or term completion before further disbursements are made.

9. Status Change

- a. Students MUST notify the Education Department if he/she changes status from full-time to part-time, as funding provided will change.
- b. The student must also notify the Education Department if the student withdraws from school.
- c. Students who fail to notify the Education Department about a change in status or withdrawal from school or courses will be placed on probation for one term.
- d. Once probation is completed, student must provide a written explanation of current status and reason for failing to notify status change before further disbursements are made.

10. Student Transfers

- a. If a student transfers to another school, the student must also complete and submit to the Skokomish Education Department, the following information:
- 1) Letter stating new goals and plans for changing to a different school and whether the student is maintaining the same degree program; or if not, stating the new program and why the change is being made.
- 2) Copy of admission letter to new school.

11. Graduation Rewards/Gift:

- a. Graduation rewards or gifts as approved by Tribal Council in May 2004 are provided as an incentive to complete an educational path. Rewards are available to enrolled Skokomish tribal

members upon graduation from high school, General Education Diploma (G.E.D.) program, college, university, or career oriented vocational school.

- 1) Tribal members who receive a high school diploma or G.E.D. will receive a \$500 reward upon successful completion of graduation requirements.
 - (a) Graduation rewards to tribal members who receive a high school diploma or G.E.D. while incarcerated will be processed as follows.
 - If a valid Power of Attorney is in place, disbursements will be made accordingly.
 - In the absence of a Power of Attorney, disbursements will be made directly to the Department of Corrections for the tribal member graduate.
 - 2) Tribal members who complete a two year degree will receive \$1,000.
 - 3) Tribal members who complete a four year degree will receive \$2,000.
 - 4) If graduates of a two year program continue onto complete a four year degree, they will receive another \$1,000 upon receiving a four year degree.
 - 5) Graduates of career oriented vocational program approved by the Education Committee will qualify for a \$1,000 gift.
 - 6) Students who receive a graduate (Masters) degree will receive \$2,500¹.
- b. For a financial reward to be processed, the following items must be received by the Education Department.
 - (a) Official proof of graduation from an accredited learning institutions, high school, college, universities, or career oriented vocational education school.
 - 2) Once the information is received by the Education Department, a payment request is processed to the Tribal Accounting Department.
 - (a) Purchase order/Check request is attached to the proof of graduation.
 - (b) Check is processed and mailed unless otherwise specified in writing.

12. Grievance of Committee Decision

- a. The Skokomish Education Committee strives to make fair and objective funding decisions that benefit the Tribe as a whole and wishes to promote open communication regarding each decision.
- b. Every student has the right to grieve the funding decision made by the Education Committee.
- c. All decisions made regarding denial of scholarships or rewards will be made in writing and will be mailed to the address noted on the Skokomish Financial Aid Application.
- d. Notification will clearly identify the reason for the decision and the process for an appeal.
- e. The process and timeline includes:
 - 1) Within thirty days of the written notification of a negative funding decision, the student will present a written letter to the Education Director.
 - 2) At the next regularly schedule Education Committee meeting, the Education Director will present the grievance letter to the Education Committee.
 - 3) The Education Committee will review the written information and either stay or change the initial decision with a directive to the Education Director to notify the student of the decision.
 - 4) Within five days of the second decision, the Education Director will relay the Committee's decision to the student in writing.
 - 5) Within fifteen days of the date of the written communication, the student will accept or re-grieve the decision of the Committee to the Tribal Council at the next regular scheduled Tribal Council meeting.
 - 6) At the Tribal Council meeting, the Education Director will present the grievance letter to the Tribal Council.

¹ Tribal Council directive dated May 2004 states that tribal members who receive a doctorate degree qualify for a graduation reward. However, no amount is specified.

- 7) The Tribal Council will review the written information and either stay or change the decision of the Education Committee with a directive to the Education Director to notify the student of the decision.
- 8) Within five days of the third decision, the Education Director will relay the Council's decision to the student in writing.
- 9) The Tribal Council's decision is final.
- f. The student filing the grievance shall be free from restraint, coercion, discrimination, or reprisal as a direct result of filing a grievance.
- g. All files of grievance proceedings are confidential, and grievance hearings are closed to the public. Participants in grievance proceedings, including, but not limited to, parties, representatives, Committee members, and authorized staff, shall sign a confidentiality agreement to ensure their adherence to the strictest standards of confidentiality in the adjudication of the grievance.

13. Right to privacy & information authorization:

- a. The Family Educational Privacy Rights Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. §1232g, governs disclosure of student information to inquiring parties.
- b. Although not required under FERPA, the Skokomish Indian Tribe Education Department requires prior consent of students over the age of 18 or post-secondary education students for disclosure of any information for purposes of financial aid eligibility determination and verification a student may supply to the Education Department within this application.
- c. The Skokomish Indian Tribe Skokomish Education Department may be asked by post-secondary education institutions or governmental agencies for information for purposes of verification.
- d. The Department will keep confidential all information at all times unless requested in writing by the student.
- e. The Skokomish Indian Tribe Education Department may be asked to disclose the following information:
 - 1) Student Information Form or partial information from the form
 - 2) Letter of Intent
 - 3) Verification of Tribal Enrollment
- f. The following information will not be disclosed by the Education Department regardless of inquiry:
 - 1) Admissions Acceptance Letter
 - 2) Proof of current class registration
- g. Students have the right to request notification in writing of any inquiry made to the Skokomish Indian Tribe Education Department on his/her behalf, including copies of items disclosed.

A. Definitions

Unless the Tribal Education Ordinance indicates, the following definitions apply:

- Education Committee – means the body created by the Tribal Government charged with administering the Tribal Education Ordinance.
- Full-time Student: An undergraduate student who is registered for 12 or more credits per quarter or semester. A full-time graduate student is registration for 10 or more credits per term.
- Grade Point Average (G.P.A.): A calculated index number that signifies the student's academic performance during a quarter (term) or entire collegiate experience (cumulative). It is expressed on a decimal scale from 0.00 to 4.00. It is calculated by the following formula: $G.P.A. = \text{Total Grade Points} / \text{Total Graded Credits Earned}$. Grade points are the product of course credit times grade earned in each UW residence course. Non-graded and deductible credits may/may not be excluded. Any decimal grades reported in the 0.10 to 0.69 range are converted to 0.00. "S" and "CR" grades do not enter into G.P.A. calculation but do count as credits earned toward graduation. "NS" and "NC"

grades are both excluded from G.P.A. calculations and do not count as credits toward graduation. Extension course and credit-by-examination grades are also excluded from G.P.A..

- Part-time Student: An undergraduate student who is registered for less than twelve credits per quarter or semester. A part-time graduate student is registration for 5 or more credits per term.
- School – A place, institution, or process for formal teaching and learning.
- Student – Anyone who is officially enrolled in an accredited institution (school) or actively seeking certification and accreditation in a field of study.
- Tribal Council – the Skokomish Tribal Council.
- Tribal Government – “Tribal Government” means the official government of the Skokomish people.
- Skokomish – or “tribal” means the Skokomish and includes the Skokomish people as a distinct cultural, ethnic, geographical, and political entity.
- Successful Progress Report - in the absence of a regular grading system (GPA): Some academic institutions do not assess student progress with grades and do not use the G.P.A. system as a measurement of progress. They most often use an end of term progress report outlining successful/unsuccessful or satisfactory/unsatisfactory progress.