



SUQUAMISH TRIBE

Higher Education and Vocational-Technical Higher Education Program

Policies, Guidelines and Procedures

I. Policy

The Suquamish Tribal Council believes that each Tribal Citizen should have support from the Tribe and the opportunity to achieve their educational goals. The Tribe views the Higher Education and Vocational-Technical Program as an investment in both the Tribal Citizen and the future of the tribal community.

The Tribe will support Tribal Citizens who meet the eligibility requirements to the greatest extent possible. However, the amount of funding available depends on the Tribe's ability to fund and the Tribal Council's annual budget approval. The Suquamish Tribe does not guarantee funding. Financial support from the Suquamish Higher Education Program is not an entitlement or a Tribal Citizen right.

The Higher Education Board and staff administer the Higher Education and Vocational-Technical Program to achieve the policies of the Suquamish Tribe and will use the following guidelines. These Policies, Guidelines and Procedures are effective from the date they are approved by the Tribal Council until rescinded or revised by a new Tribal Council resolution.

Application Deadlines

Fall Quarter/Semester - for the whole academic year

July 1

Winter Quarter/Spring Semester

December 1

Spring Quarter

February 1

Summer Quarter/Semester

May 1

II. Application Process

Step 1: Applicant submits a complete Higher Education Application to the Higher Education Program Manager by the appropriate deadline. Late and/or incomplete applications will not be reviewed.

Step 2: Higher Education Program Manager and Higher Education Board meet after the deadline to review all applications submitted for that deadline.

Step 3: After all applications are reviewed, the Higher Education Program Manager will email each Applicant a letter that states if the Applicant was approved or denied for funding.

Students approved for winter quarter will only have to submit an updated letter for the spring quarter deadline. Students approved for spring semester will not have to submit another application for spring quarter.

ALL students wanting to attend summer term will need to submit a letter to the Higher Education Board requesting funding for attendance. The letter must state why attending classes for Summer is necessary to their educational journey. The student must also submit an academic plan with their letter. Funding for summer is not guaranteed.

If a student does not attend consecutively, in order to return to school/training the student must turn in an application for the next applicable deadline. All students must send in an official transcript at the end of each term or give permission for the Higher Education Manager to access the student's account with login information. If the transcript is not received by the time awards are scheduled for disbursement, a portion or the entire award may be held until the transcript is received by the Higher Education Program.

The Higher Education Manager is able to access a student's account for transcripts if the student allows but will not be responsible for obtaining any other required documents.

III. Appeals from Decisions

1. Applicant must submit a letter of appeal to the Higher Education Board no later than 15 days of the day the Decision Notice is mailed or emailed to the Applicant. The letter of appeal must state the reason that the Applicant believes the Higher Education Board should re-consider its decision.
2. Higher Education Board may reverse its decision but only if the Applicant provides documentation to support their claim that the Higher Education Board's initial decision was based on lack of or incorrect information.
3. Higher Education Board will notify the Applicant no later than 30 days from the date it receives the letter of appeal whether the Board upholds or reverses its initial decision. The second decision of the Higher Education Board is final.
4. If the Applicant is not satisfied with the Higher Education Boards final decision, the Applicant may file an appeal notice with the Higher Education Program Manager which includes specific reasons why the Applicant is not satisfied with the results of the Higher Education Board's final decision. The appeal of the final decision must be filed with the Higher Education Program Manager within three (3) workdays of the date of the written decision of the Higher Education Board. Upon receipt of the appeal, the Higher Education Program Manager will present all necessary documentation to the Education Department Director for a final decision. The Education Department Director will issue a written and signed decision within three (3) work days of the date the Education Department Director

completes its review. The Education Department Director's decision will be limited to only a determination of whether to uphold or deny the action taken. Prior to the delivery of the Appeal decision to the Applicant and Higher Education Program Manager, the decision will be reviewed by the Office of Tribal Attorney to ensure that the decision complies with tribal laws and policies. The decision of the Education Department Director and is not subject to judicial review.

IV. Application Procedures and Check List

Before an Applicant will be considered for an award from the Higher Education Program, the Applicant must submit a complete application. "Complete Application" means that all of following items are complete and have been received by the Higher Education Program staff.

- Application – Suquamish higher education grant award application, initialed academic problems and acknowledgment of receipt and statement of understanding.
- 250-word essay (minimum) – the Applicant must write a 250-word essay introducing them self and stating their educational and career goals, the amount of time they believe they will need to complete the course of study, and how this scholarship will help them achieve their goals. Returning students will write an essay reflecting on how college or their schooling is impacting their educational and career goals. The letter must also include the applicants familial and cultural ties to the Suquamish Tribe and the reservation.
- Tribal Enrollment Certification – new Applicant must either (a) provide a signed Certificate of Enrollment from the Suquamish Enrollment Officer or a copy of their tribal id card.
- Admission and/or Class Schedule – the Applicant must provide either a letter of acceptance or admission from the school or a copy of the student's class schedule from the school. Returning students must submit a copy of their academic plan from an academic counselor.
- Financial Needs Analysis Form- Request the form to be completed by College/University Financial Aid Office. Information must be sent Directly from the College/University Financial Aid Office. (This form must be submitted at the beginning of each academic year.)
- Evidence of Application for an outside funding source - the Applicant is required to apply for at least one scholarship/additional funding from an outside funding source each year (Excluding FAFSA applications). Copies of the application and any response from the funding source must be submitted. Any outside funding source/scholarship received will not be subtracted from the base funding provided by the Tribe, however a tuition waver will be applied to your tuition amount.
- Grade Transcript – each Applicant must submit an official transcript from the school they last attended. If the application is for a first-time Student, the Applicant must submit either a copy of their high school diploma, GED Certificate or transcript from a higher education or vocational-technical school. If the application is for a Continuing or Reinstated Student, an official transcript from the most recent term must be submitted.

V.Scholarship Assistance and Funding Priorities

Scholarships/ Grants/ Waivers

A student receiving a scholarship or grant will have the remaining amount over \$3,500 applied to their tuition and fees per term. This excludes waivers, waivers will be applied directly to the student's tuition for that term.

Associate, Bachelors, Masters or Doctorate Degree and Vocational-Technical Program Associate's Degree or Certificate from Accredited Institution.

A. Within Kitsap County Resident

1. Must reside in Kitsap County at the time of application (Proof of residency may be requested).
2. Funding for Kitsap County Residents is capped at \$25,000 per academic year per student which includes tuition, fees, books, supplies, room and board, and supplemental funding.
3. Potential Funding:
 - a Tuition, fees, books and supplies; and
 - b Supplemental funding up to a maximum of \$1,200 per month for full-time students; part-time students may receive up to \$500 per term.
 - i Supplemental funding for full-time students will be prorated each month based on instructional days determined by their institution.
 - ii Supplemental beyond a reasonable academic timeline (OR based on average amount of time for your program) will be determined by the Higher Education Board or may be requested.
 - c Students may be eligible for supplemental funding OR room & board + meal plan (Must be a double occupancy room and a standard meal plan.)

B. Washington State Resident - Outside of Kitsap County

1. Reside in Washington State but outside Kitsap County at time of application.
2. Potential Funding: tuition, fees, books and supplies up to a maximum total funding of \$10,000 per academic year.

Fulltime undergraduate credit level: 12 or more credits

Part-time undergraduate credit level is: 1-11 credits

Graduate and beyond credit level: 9 or more credits

Part-time graduate and beyond level: 1-8 credits

OR the number of credits determining full-time and part-time enrollment approved by your institution.

VI. Exceptional Circumstances

Academic Challenges

Academically challenged students may be eligible for special, modified eligibility requirements and/or higher education support determined on a case by case basis by the Higher Education Board. Modified eligibility must be supported with relevant documentation submitted to the Higher Education Program Manager. The Higher Education Program can accept letters and any supporting documentation from a Counselor, Doctor, Psychologist, advocate, or from the student detailing the issues and the need for less credits and full support.

Part-time Student

A student may attend a Higher Education or Vocational-Technical accredited institution on a part-time basis and receive financial support from the Suquamish Higher Education Program. The eligibility requirements are the same as full-time students; however, the amount of financial assistance available will be pro-rated based on the number of credits (for example, a student taking 9 credits may be eligible to receive 75% of the available book allowance).

Special Programs

Note: Funding for Special Programs is not guaranteed and is only considered if the approved budget allows.

Tribal Citizens who wish to attend a qualified non-accredited program or institution may receive financial support from the Higher Education Program. “Qualified Non-Accredited Program or School” means a program that has been approved by the Higher Education Board and the Tribal Council and will enhance the Tribal Citizen’s employment or employment potential. The Tribal Citizen must submit a program description from the institution and demonstrate how attendance at the school will enhance their employability.

Examples of Special Programs: conferences, up to one study abroad program, laptops, certification courses, etc.

If a student/Tribal Citizen would like assistance with the costs associated with an educational opportunity not covered by one of the above-described programs, that person must provide the Higher Education Program Manager with documentation from the sponsoring educational organization describing the educational program and its costs. The Higher Education Program Manager will review the documentation and provide this information to the Higher Education Board to discuss. The Higher Education Board will then come to a decision regarding the Special Program and whether Higher Education will assist with the proposed program. This will then be relayed to the student by the Higher Education Program Manager.

VII. Academic problems

Students are expected to take responsibility for their own success. By initialing the following, I understand that if I demonstrate consistent problems with school, penalties and consequences may be imposed as follows:

_____ I understand that if I complete less than all of the number of credits I have received funding for or I fall below a 2.0 GPA for one term, I will be placed on Academic Warning for the next term.

_____ I further understand if I complete less than all of the credits I have received funding for or I fall below a 2.0 GPA for two consecutive terms, I will be placed on Academic Probation for the next term. (Academic Probation means that students who receive supplemental funding will only receive financial assistance for tuition, fees, books and supplies from the Higher Education Program. Students who do not receive supplemental funding who are placed on Academic Probation will not receive funds that would otherwise be awarded for books from the Higher Education Program).

_____ I further understand if I complete less than all of the credits I have received funding for or I fall below a 2.0 GPA for a third consecutive term or I do not receive any credit for one term, I will be placed on Academic Disqualification. (Academic Disqualification means that the student will not receive any financial support from the Higher Education Program until the student qualifies for Academic Reinstatement).

_____ I further understand in order to be considered for Academic Reinstatement, I must successfully complete one semester/term without assistance from the Higher Education Program.

_____ I further understand that if I am placed on Academic Disqualification for failure to maintain at least a 2.0 GPA or failure to maintain the course load that I received funding for, I will be required to reimburse the Higher Education Program the proportional difference between funding awarded and the credits achieved. (Students who are placed on Academic Disqualification for failure to successfully complete any credits for the term the student received funding for will be required to reimburse the Higher Education Program all of the funding received for that term).

_____ I further understand I may petition the Higher Education Board for reconsideration of the disqualification or reimbursement decision. (The Higher Education Board may consider "Special Circumstances" when deciding whether the student is obligated to reimburse a portion or all of the funds received for the term that resulted in Academic Disqualification).

_____ The student will be given an opportunity to enter into a payback agreement, which will most likely entail a voluntary withholding of wages and/or a voluntary garnishment of any distribution the student might otherwise be eligible to receive. Failure to enter into a payback agreement or to abide by the terms of such agreement will result in the Tribe taking legal action to collect on the debt.

VIII.Higher Education Terms and Conditions

The following terms and conditions will apply to all Higher Education Program awards:

- A. Awards will be distributed each quarter or semester. The award for tuition and fees will be sent directly to the school. The award for books and supplies will be sent to the student before the beginning of the term and the supplemental funding award, if any, will be sent to the student at the beginning of each month.
- B. The student must notify the Higher Education Program immediately if the student withdraws from a class or registers for fewer credits than indicated on the student's application. Students must submit a copy of the approved add/drop form or withdrawal form. Students who (i) fail to notify the Higher Education Program within 7 days of withdrawing from classes or failing to register for sufficient credits or (ii) who drop classes or withdraw from school after the tuition reimbursement deadline will be subject to Academic Warning or Academic Disqualification and may be obligated to reimburse any funds disbursed on the student's behalf.
- C. If a student withdraws within the withdraw date from the college/university to receive any refund, that refund must be returned to the Higher Education Program. Students who fail to return that refund will not be eligible to apply to the higher education program until all funds are repaid. Students will be allowed to make payment arrangements if necessary.
- D. Any student who engages in intentional academic misrepresentation including misrepresentation of grades, plagiarism, or other fraudulent academic action will not be eligible for funding for at least three (3) years from the date the intentional academic misrepresentation is discovered by the Higher Education Program or the student's education institution. Reinstatement of a student's eligibility for financial assistance after completion of the three (3) year period of suspension will be determined by the Higher Education Board on a case-by- case basis and will depend on whether the student adequately demonstrates a change in circumstances which reflects the student's current situation in a positive light. Students who engage in intentional academic misrepresentation must reimburse the Higher Education Program any amounts of previous funding (during the time of the misrepresentation). Intentional misrepresentation or fraud may also subject the offender to civil and/or criminal liability under tribal, state, and/or federal law.
- E. The Tribe will not support funding to attend "for-profit" institutions, for example, the DeVry Institute or the University of Phoenix, unless the institution is approved by an appropriate accrediting board and the Higher Education Board approves.
- F. Applicants are eligible for progressing degrees (i.e. Associates, Bachelors, Masters, Doctorates, or a professional degree equivalent). but the Higher Education Program will not provide funding for a degree that is equal to one previously supported by the program.



SUQUAMISH TRIBE

Higher Education Program Policies

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT AND STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

To finance your education, a partnership is formed between you, the college/university, and the Suquamish Tribe. You are making adult decisions and taking on adult responsibilities. We expect responsible and appropriate adult behavior with regard to your college career choices and commitments. By initialing the following, I understand that:

_____ I am responsible for following all directions carefully and completely, adhering to deadlines, and keeping copies of all documents.

_____ I am responsible for turning in my complete application by the posted deadline. If I do not turn in my application by the deadline, I will not be eligible for any funding for that term.

_____ I am responsible for abiding by all tribal, state, and federal laws regarding truthfulness and misrepresentation and understand that the Suquamish Tribe will rescind any funding awarded should it discover an omission or misrepresentation has occurred.

_____ I am responsible for communicating with the Higher Education Program staff as early as possible any changes in my college career including, but not limited to: dropping classes, changing credit load, academic issues, dropping out of school, changing programs, and graduating.

_____ I am responsible for informing the Higher Education Program of any changes in my contact information. I understand that if the Higher Education Program cannot contact me, i.e. disconnected phone, returned mail, or no response on my part, the Higher Education Program will rescind financial support for my education.

_____ I am responsible for courteous treatment of the Higher Education Program staff and the Higher Education Board members during my education career (Including but not limited to social media and written/verbal communication with any entity).

_____ I understand that funding is NOT guaranteed and is based on the funding approved from Tribal Council for that fiscal year.

I have read and agree to adhere to the responsibilities outlined above. I have read the Higher Education Program Policies, Guidelines and Procedures and agree to comply with the policies and rules contained in the Guidelines. I also acknowledge that any failure to carry out these responsibilities and abide by the requirements of the Higher Education Program Policies may result in my obligation to pay back some or all of the funds received or withholding of future Higher Education funding. Failure to do so may result in legal proceedings.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

