

PLAN OF OPERATION¹
NEZ PERCE TRIBAL HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

1. PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Nez Perce Tribal Higher Education Scholarship Program is to encourage and financially assist tribal members to seek higher education through available tribal funds. An overall goal is to expand educational opportunities as a means for individual tribal members to reach cultural, economic, and social prosperity and to contribute to protecting and advancing the sovereignty and way of life of the Nez Perce people. Assistance will be awarded on the basis of tribal enrollment, initiative, scholastic rating, and the availability of funds.

2. AUTHORITY:

Scholarship assistance shall be budgeted from the Isaac Broncheau Memorial Fund, Nez Perce Tribal Gaming Revenue Fund, Nez Perce Higher Education Scholarship Endowment Fund, and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) PL 93-638 Higher Education Scholarship Fund and any other scholarship that may become available. All scholarship funds will be managed collectively as the "Nez Perce Tribal Higher Education Scholarship Program."

The Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee (NPTEC) authorizes the Nez Perce Education Department Manager to fully administer the Nez Perce Tribal Higher Education Scholarship Program. The Education Manager shall receive, review, approve, and process all scholarship applications with the assistance of the Nez Perce Education Department's Administrative/Higher Education Specialist. Other tribal Education staff will be trained as backup. The Tribal Education Department will also have an Administrative Consultation Team that includes NPTEC Education Liaisons to provide input to Education Manager on policy and appeals. The Education Manager will submit a full accounting report of scholarship awards to the NPTEC Human Resources Subcommittee with quarterly reports submitted to the tribal Government Executive Director.

Effective starting in the 2024/25 school year, the scholarship award shall not annually exceed the following amounts:

- A. Tribal Scholarship Fund (Isaac Broncheau Memorial, Nez Perce Tribal Gaming Revenue, and Higher Education Scholarship Endowment Funds): \$4,000 per school year (excluding summer school) for an undergraduate degree and \$7,500 per school year (excluding summer school) for a graduate degree.

¹ NPTEC Administrative Action #8-#10, December 23, 2024

- B. Higher Education Scholarship Fund (BIA PL 93-638): \$4,524 per school year for undergraduate degrees. Graduate funding is not guaranteed and is based on availability of funding after all undergraduate degrees and dual credit funding is processed.
- C. Review of Tribal Scholarship and BIA Higher Education Scholarship funding levels will be scheduled a minimum of every 5 years.

3. ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS:

Scholarships may be granted to enrolled tribal members seeking dual credits in high school and post-secondary education:

- A. Time limits: Five (5) semesters or 7.5 quarters for a two-year degree, 10 semesters or 15 quarters for a four-year degree, 6 semesters or 9 quarters for a Master's degree, and 10 semesters or 15 quarters for Doctorate/Professional degree.
- B. Completion of credits to maintain enrollment status: Members receiving scholarships are required to complete the credits per term for enrollment status they were funded by the Nez Perce Tribe. This includes full-time, three quarters (3/4) time, half (1/2) time, and less than half (1/2) time. See section 9, Probation, Disqualification, and Reinstatement.
- C. Enrollment status for undergraduates:
 - Full-time is 12 credits and above, i.e. minimum of 12 credits.
 - Three-quarters (3/4) time is 9-11 credits, i.e. minimum of 9 credits.
 - Half (1/2) time is 6-8 credits, i.e. minimum of 6 credits.
 - Less than half (1/2) time is 1-5 credits. Must complete all credits attempted.
- D. Enrollment status for graduate students:

Student must provide documentation from their institution's Financial Aid Office for the definition of full-time, three quarters (3/4) time, half (1/2) time, and less than half-time for their course of study.
- E. GPA Requirement: The student must complete the semester/quarter with a "C" (2.00 GPA) average or higher for the undergraduate degrees and the requirements of the departments for the graduate level of study. See section 9, Probation, Disqualification, Reinstatement, for how funding may be reduced or suspended.
- F. Funding Priority: Those students who meet their GPA and credit hours requirements will receive top priority for future assistance.
- G. Vocational-Technical Certificates: The Nez Perce Tribe will grant assistance for vocational technical certificates or two-year degrees at business, technical or trade school.

4. FUNDING

Scholarships will be awarded to students who plan to attend accredited institutions of higher learning.

- A. Academic Degrees: Funding is only for a student's 1st Associates, 1st Bachelors, 1st Masters, and 1st Doctorate/Professional. Both Tribal and Higher Education Scholarship Funds support academic degrees (see section 2.B).
- B. Vocational Technical Degrees: Funding is only for a student's 1st Vocational Technical Degree from the Tribal Scholarship Fund. The Higher Education Scholarship Fund does not support vocational technical, but rather students are referred to the tribal Career Center (477 Program).
- C. Dual Credits: Funding for dual credits will be coordinated with the student's high school counselor, if there are *no other resources available*.
- D. Repeat Credits: Credits previously funded cannot be used to fulfill the enrollment status (full-time, $\frac{3}{4}$ time, $\frac{1}{2}$ time, less than $\frac{1}{2}$ time) for subsequent terms. This could affect the student's level of scholarship award in subsequent terms.
- E. Payments: Tribal Scholarship Fund payments will be made directly to the student. Higher Education Scholarship Fund payments will be made directly to the school's Financial Aid Office.
- F. After approval, scholarship checks will be issued with a fully completed application or submission of final grades and next term class schedules, as follows:
 - Fall Semester: Starting in July
 - Fall Quarter: Starting in August
 - Winter Quarter/Spring Semester: Starting in December
 - Spring Quarter: Starting in March
- G. Early Check Release: Special consideration will be given to students who will begin school at an earlier date. One must submit a memo to the Education Manager requesting early check release and outline one's circumstances.
- H. Funding levels:
 - Tribal Scholarship Fund (Academic and Vocational Technical)
 - Undergraduate
 - Full-time: \$2,000/semester, \$1,333/quarter
 - $\frac{3}{4}$ time: \$1,500/semester, \$1,000/quarter
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ time: \$1,000/semester, \$667/quarter
 - Less than $\frac{1}{2}$ time: \$167 per credit/semester, \$111 per credit/quarter
 - Graduate
 - Full-time: \$3,750/semester, \$2,500/quarter
 - $\frac{3}{4}$ time: \$2,813/semester, \$1,875/quarter
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ time: \$1,875/semester, \$1,250/quarter

Less than $\frac{1}{2}$ time: See 3D, Academic Requirements, Enrollment Status for graduate students. After full-time credit level is determined by the institution's Financial Aid office, this credit level will determine funding

amount per credit. For e.g. if 9 credits are full-time for a Graduate School, then a tribal scholarship recipient could get $\$3,750/9 = \417 per credit/semester, $\$2,500/9 = \278 per credit/quarter. Amount will vary based on determination of full-time status by each institution for their Graduate students.

- Higher Education Scholarship Fund (Academic Only)

Undergraduate

Full-time: \$2,262/semester, \$1,508 quarter

$\frac{3}{4}$ time: \$1,697/semester, \$1,131/quarter

$\frac{1}{2}$ time: \$1,131/semester, \$754/quarter

Less than $\frac{1}{2}$ time: \$189 per credit/semester, \$126 per credit/quarter

- Higher Education Scholarship Fund (Academic Only)

Graduate

The amount of aid will be determined on availability of funding after all undergraduate applications are funded. No guarantee of funding. If funds are available, the amount will be same as Undergraduates for full-time, $\frac{3}{4}$ time, and half-time.

Less than $\frac{1}{2}$ time: See 3D, Academic Requirements, Enrollment Status for graduate students. After full-time credit level is determined by the institution's Financial Aid office, this credit level will determine funding amount per credit. For e.g. if 9 credits is full-time for a Graduate School, then a tribal scholarship recipient could get $\$2,262/9 = \251 per credit/semester, $\$1,508/9 = \168 per credit/quarter. Amount will vary based on determination of full-time status by each institution for their Graduate students.

Dual Credit for High School Students (see 4.C)

\$189/credit/semester, \$126/credit/quarter

- I. Vocational-Technical Students can also apply to the Nez Perce Career Center (477 Program) for a scholarship if they meet the program's residency requirements.

5. APPLICATION

Key application guidelines are as follows:

- A. Tribal Enrollment: Each applicant must be an enrolled member of the Nez Perce Tribe and provide a copy of tribal ID or certificate of Indian Blood (CIB).
- B. References: Each applicant must confirm three (3) people, who are not related to them, to act as a reference on the student's character, personality, leadership, and scholastic qualities.

- C. Accredited Schools: Each applicant must be accepted for enrollment in a state or regionally accredited college or university (includes accredited online colleges or universities). Trade schools that offer certification are allowed.
- D. Verification of Other Financial Aid Resources: Students must provide information on other financial aid resources that they will use to fully fund the cost of attending their institution or vocational technical program. It is the student's responsibility to submit applications for federal, state, or institution aid in a timely manner to ensure funding by the start of the term.
- E. Submission: Applications will be submitted to the Nez Perce Higher Education Program.
- F. Deadlines:

	<u>Priority Deadline</u>	<u>Final Deadline</u>
Fall Quarter/Semester	June 1	September 15
Winter Quarter/Spring Semester	October 1	January 15
Spring Quarter	December 1	March 15

- G. Late Applications: Applications received after the final deadline will be given consideration based on the availability of funds. If funds are available, late applications may result in delayed receipt of funds by student and school.
- H. Complete Applications Requirement: Incomplete applications will not be accepted. Request assistance from tribal Education Department staff if one has challenges completing the application.
- I. Current Term Funding Only: The student must submit the required documents before the end of the semester/quarter they plan to attend at an institution of higher education (see 5.G, "Late"). Retroactive requests will not be accepted.
- J. Student Types: Active Scholarship Recipients or Continuing Students are ones who were funded in the previous term, are working on the same degree program, and attending the same college or university. New students are ones starting a new degree program or continuing a degree program after a break in study. Transfer students are ones who have started a degree program but are changing institution of study. Reference Section 3.A, Time limits.
- K. Electronic online application. The tribal Education Department provides a link to the online application on the tribal website and with flyers. The online application is completed once per school year starting June 1 unless one changes degrees or transfers to a new institution. Contact tribal Education staff if you need assistance.
- L. Required Documents attached with online application:
New and transfer student shall submit:
 - (1) High school transcripts, GED test scores, or latest institution transcripts (must submit transcript[s] for all previous institutions that one attended and received tribal or BIA Higher Education scholarship funds)
 - (2) Admission Letter from the institution

- (3) Class schedule for upcoming term
- (4) Copy of tribal ID card or CIB
- (5) Personal letter stating educational goals and future plans

Active Scholarship Recipients or Continuing Students shall submit:

- (1) Semester/quarter transcript, must include student name, institution name, semester/quarter, grades and credits completed and attempted
- (2) Class schedule for the next semester/quarter, must include student name, institution name, number of hours registered, schedule of classes

Items #1 and #2 are submitted after each term for continuing students. Degree audits are submitted after completing 4 semesters or 6 quarters.

6. SCHOLARSHIP REPAYMENT PLAN:

All students receiving tribal scholarships will be required to sign a certification that they will repay the Nez Perce Tribe (reimbursement tracked to the appropriate funding source) the full amount of the scholarship being requested if they do not complete the quarter/semester they are funded, i.e. not complete all credits ("dropout" or "full withdrawal"), or they knowingly provide false information to secure funding. Such certification will be binding and may be executed or canceled according to the academic requirements (section 3) and academic disqualifications (section 9). In cases of an "extreme emergency" that affects a student's ability to complete the semester/quarter, the student will request emergency leave of absence from one's school and contact the tribal Education Manager.

Cash repayment will be accepted with a receipt to student and proof of deposit to tribal Finance in student's file. Another method for scholarship repayment will be to deduct one term from the student's degree timeline.

7. STUDENT TRAVEL

Travel assistance is available for students who are attending school 1,000 miles from their permanent residence. Students must inform the Education Manager at the time of their application for scholarship that they would like consideration for travel assistance. Travel Assistance will not be disbursed until the student's scholarship application has been approved for funding. Travel assistance will be as follows:

Beginning of school year (~August)	\$250 (one-way)
Christmas break	\$500 (round-trip; full amount contingent on return to school documented by next term class schedule)
End of school year (~May)	\$250 (one-way)

8. SUMMER SCHOOL:

Summer school funding will be based on funding availability and proof of need to graduate and complete one's degree. Required summer school documents will include a Degree Audit and Correspondence from one's Academic Advisor to certify summer courses needed to graduate in next school year or to complete one's degree. Funding will be based on the same formula as quarter funding.

9. PROBATION, DISQUALIFICATION, AND REINSTATEMENT:

Students must be aware that they are expected to meet the requirements of "Satisfactory Academic Progress" once they receive tribal funding.

A. Good Standing: Student must meet the following minimum standards:

- Completion of minimum credits to maintain enrollment status per term, e.g. for full-time status, one must complete a minimum of 12 credits.
- Maintain a minimum of a "C" (2.00 GPA)

B. Restrictions: If a student fails to remain in Good Standing, the following restrictions will be made:

GPA

- The first time a student's grade point average (GPA) falls below requirements, the student will be placed on ACADEMIC PROBATION.
- The student will be funded for the next term with a letter of Academic Warning sent to the student and placed in the student file.

Credit minimum

- If the student makes the minimum GPA but is below the credit minimum for their enrollment status, they will be placed on ACADEMIC PROBATION and allowed one (1) semester/quarter to complete the credit(s) that dropped them below their enrollment status.
- Credits previously funded cannot be used to fulfill the enrollment status (full-time, $\frac{3}{4}$ time, $\frac{1}{2}$ time, less than $\frac{1}{2}$ time) for subsequent terms. This could affect the student's level of scholarship award in subsequent terms.
- Section 6, Scholarship Repayment Plan, will only be in effect if student fails to complete ALL credits at the end of the term.

C. Disqualification:

- Students who have been on ACADEMIC PROBATION (for credits or GPA) and fail to meet the minimum requirements the following term will forfeit all Tribal Higher Education scholarship funding and will be on SUSPENSION.
- This requirement is consistent with most higher education institutions.
- An exception for GPA disqualification will be given to those individuals who are in "continuing student" status as of 7/1/10. These students will be allowed to follow the Academic Probation guidelines from the previous

tribal scholarship Plan of Operation. This allowed two (2) terms of academic probation.

D. Reinstatement:

- The student will be reconsidered only after they have achieved the minimum qualifications:

Removal from Academic Probation

- (1) Complete the credits they have been paid to complete for enrollment status (full-time, $\frac{3}{4}$ time, $\frac{1}{2}$ time, and less than $\frac{1}{2}$ time).
- (2) Maintain a minimum of a 2.0 GPA term following disqualification.

Removal from Suspension

- (1) A student may have to pay for a semester/quarter with his or her own resources in order to complete credits and reach minimum 2.0 GPA.
- (2) Provide proof of official reinstatement from the college for admission and financial aid.

10. APPEAL PROCESS AND COMPLAINTS

A. Non-appeal issues: NPTEC has determined that the following issues cannot be appealed (all have been in the tribal scholarship policy since 1998):

- Exceeding funding Time Limits (see 3A). Reason: Limited resources for tribal students who have not exceeded time limit.
- Probation or Suspension of funding due to academic standing, i.e. GPA or credit probation (section 9). Reason: This is a requirement of the student's school.
- Funding for a 2nd Associates, 2nd Bachelors, 2nd Masters, 2nd Doctorate/Professional, and 2nd Vocational Technical degree (see 4A). Reason: Limited financial resources needed to support 1st degree students.
- Attendance at a non-accredited school (see 5C). Reason: Need to ensure students are eligible for federal financial aid and that their credits will transfer. Trade schools covered in 5C.
- Retroactive requests (see 5I). Reason: Limited financial resources and application is required before or during the term one is requesting funding (Late application see 5G).
- Credits previously funded (section 9). Reason: Limited financial resources to fund a student to take same class more than once.

B. Academic Probation, Disqualification, and Reinstatement must first go through the process outlined in section 9. See guidelines for scholarship repayment (section 6) and late applications (5G).

C. The following line of authority is established to adequately address funding denial appeals if reason not listed in 10A, Non-Appeal Issues:

A. Funding denial

- 1st Step: Write a letter to the Education Department Manager detailing justification to reconsider denial and change to approval. If denial due to an incomplete application, the student may provide item(s) needed by last day of term (no retroactive funding).
- 2nd Step: Education Manager will respond in five (5) business days to set up a personal meeting or phone call to discuss letter and gather more information.
- 3rd Step: Education Manager will issue a written determination on appeal within five (5) days of meeting or phone call.
- 4th Step: If the denial stands and the student wants to continue the appeal process, the tribal Government Executive Director can review. S/he will respond in five (5) business days to set up a phone call or meeting. The Education Manager will provide all documentation to the tribal Government Executive Director, including the student's file, appeal letter, meeting or phone call notes, and written determination letter. The student can provide any additional documentation as needed.
- 5th Step: The tribal Executive Director will issue a written determination on appeal within five (5) days of meeting or phone call with student.
- 6th Step: Only NPTEC can waive this Plan of Operation. The Education Manager will arrange a time for the student to talk with Administrative Consultation Team to present his or her justification for an exception due to any undue hardship. Upon receipt of all evidence provided by the Education Manager, the Administrative Consultation Team will make a final decision.

B. Complaints

- 1st step: Contact the tribal Education Manager in person, by phone, or in writing (email, letter). The tribal Education Manager will work with the student to address the complaint.
- 2nd step: Complaints needing further review or action will be referred by the Education Manager to the tribal Government Executive Director.

11. Optional Tribal Student Support Services

Beyond providing scholarship funding, the Nez Perce Tribe acknowledges that some tribal students may be interested in receiving additional student support services to prepare to meet the demands of higher education.

To meet these needs, the Nez Perce Education Department offers the following "Optional Student Support Services" (participation is voluntary):

- A. Academic Advising: The Nez Perce Career Center staff has an extensive background in counseling students in the following areas:
- College Readiness
 - Admission and Transcript Fees
 - Financial Aid (e.g. federal, college, tribal, time limits, etc.)
 - Admissions
 - Academic Planning
 - Campus Student Support Services
 - Reinstatement from probation and suspension
 - Computer stations for students for approved academic and vocational technical purposes

Participation in Academic Advising will require submission of additional student information and release of information forms. The Career Center will provide a checklist of requirements.

- B. High School Outreach: Education Department staff will coordinate a high school outreach program to visit tribal students who live on or near the Nez Perce reservation. An outreach strategy for out-of-area students will be developed on a case-by-case basis. The focus will be to coordinate dual credit funding with school counselors, prepare high school juniors and seniors to complete scholarships, and network to expand other college readiness activities (e.g. college site visits, entrance exam preparation). The Education staff will also learn more about higher education preparation offered by the school by meeting with the school's Academic Counselor and/or Indian Education Coordinator.
- C. Release of Information to Potential Employers. In the online application, students are asked if they want their background on higher education degrees released to potential employers within the Nez Perce tribal government, enterprises, affiliates, or partners. The tribal Education Department occasionally receives requests for information on possible candidates for certain jobs who are working toward certain degrees, or majors. No information will be shared unless the student gave consent in their application.

12. Degree Incentives:

Incentives for the completion of a degree will be given to each student who has completed their degree programs. The ONLY form of verification acceptable to receive these incentives will be a copy of a certified diploma.

Associates/Vo-Tech:	\$50
Undergraduate:	Pendleton Blanket
Master's Level:	\$250.00
Ph.D. Level:	\$500.00

Degree incentives must be requested within 5-years of one's graduation date.

13. Supersedes

This Nez Perce Tribal Higher Education Program "Plan of Operation" supersedes any previous policies and resolutions related to Nez Perce Tribal or BIA Higher Education scholarship administration.

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