



WE WAI KUM FIRST NATION

EDUCATION – OST

(Occupation Skills Training)

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

This is an ongoing process to achieve Wei Wai Kum First Nation's objectives. This document provides policies and guidance assisting employees and Council in fulfilling financial responsibilities and in creating higher accountability and transparency entitled to Members.

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PART 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 VISION STATEMENT

Our Occupation Skills Training Assistance (OST) Program is committed to enhance the employability of our community members by assisting eligible students with focus on skill development.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

Our goal is to encourage and sponsor students through the Skills Training Program to increase their employment opportunities.

PART 2. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are used in this policy.

Band Member: A Band Member is a registered status individual with Wei Wai Kum First Nation.

Dependents: Any child/children under the age of eighteen (18) who is a legal ward of a funded student, where the funded student is the primary care giver (i.e., living with the care giver at least 51% of the time). Under certain circumstances an adult with a disability that lives full-time with the student may also be determined as a dependent. Spouses or partners (caregivers) with no income can be claimed as dependents only if there are dependent children in the home under the age of five (5). NOTE: In the situation where there is a spouse in the home who is designated disabled and there are no children under the age of five (5) in the home, the spouse may be claimed as a dependent.

Full-Time Student: Student must be taking at least the minimum number of credits per semester considered to be full-time at the attending Occupation Skills Training institution (i.e., full-time as defined by the institution).

Part-Time Student: Student must be taking at least the minimum number of credits per semester considered to be part-time at the attending Occupation Skills Training institution (i.e., part-time as defined by the institution).

OST Application Approval: The Education Coordinator is responsible for reviewing and approving applications for support, maintaining the waitlist, and managing the Education funding budget.

OST Program: Occupation Skills Training Program.

OST Support: A term that generally describes the types of financial support available to students. Students may be eligible for the following support under the OST Program, subject to specific criteria outlined within this document:

- Tuition
- Textbooks
- Monthly Living Allowance
- Special clothing and equipment

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Probation: Specific period of time during which a student is under strict academic guidelines, usually because of absences and low or failing grades.

PSE Program: Post-Secondary Education Program

Wait List: A wait list of students will be created each year by WWKum. Students whose names appear on the wait list will be notified, as spaces become available. If students on the wait list do not receive OST support that year, they will be considered as the priority for the next fiscal year.

PART 3. APPLICATION PROCESS & CRITERIA

3.1 APPLICATION DEADLINES

Applications will be accepted at any time throughout the year.

3.2 APPLICATION PACKAGE

All persons who are interested in receiving educational assistance under the terms of this program are to contact the Education Coordinator to obtain an application package. In order for an application to be considered, the Education Coordinator will require:

1. Proof of the applicant's eligibility as a Registered Band Member.
2. A Release of Information signed by the applicant.
3. A copy of an **Official Transcript** from their most recent education.
4. The applicant will also be required to indicate the program of study, the courses in which they will register and the duration of their program.
5. Students are required to provide an Acceptance letter from the Institution that that student plans to attend, preferably with the application. The WWKum Nation will not move forward with releasing funding until the Acceptance letter is received.
6. **It is mandatory that the students requesting sponsorship through this program submit the Occupational Skills Training Research document. This document has information to fill out to indicate job growth, expected salary, etc. If you do not have a computer readily available, please visit NIEFS or the local library to complete the research.**
7. The WWKum Nation strongly suggests talking to potential employers and obtaining a letter of support.

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3.3 STUDENT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be eligible to receive assistance under the terms of the Occupational Skills Training Assistance Program, the applicant:

1. Must be a Registered Member of the Campbell River Indian Band and in good standing.
2. Has met the necessary entrance requirements and has been accepted to an Occupational Skills Training Program, etc.
3. The Program (and/ or applicant) must not qualify or fall under the Post Secondary Education (PSE) Program Funding.
4. Must submit a complete application package (refer to s3.2 above) to the Education Coordinator (incomplete packages will not be accepted).

We will be unable to process incomplete applications.

We strongly encourage students to seek alternate funding to help with the costs of Occupation Skills Training. The applicant shall have indicated to the Education Coordinator the amount of personal funds or funds from another agency, which the student can use to cover a portion of their educational costs.

3.4 PROVISION OF BENEFITS

After the application has been approved by the Education Coordinator, the student will receive a letter of approval and the Education Coordinator will clarify the appropriate payment schedule.

Disbursements will be made available to students in monthly EFT payments to the student on, or before the 28th day of each month that the student is eligible for assistance. It is the responsibility of the student to advise the Education Coordinator of their proper mailing address or any change of address.

Included with the student's Letter of Approval will be an Occupational Skills Training Policy and Procedures along with an **Occupational Skills Training Funding Contract** that has to be signed and returned to the Education Coordinator before funding will begin.

3.5 ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS AND PROGRAMS

Eligible programs include Occupational Skills Training institutions which provide a certificate upon completion/ graduation that is recognized by the industry.

The program must not exceed 12 months.

Trades that are considered one academic year in length may qualify for Post-Secondary Education Funding. Trades that do not meet the funding criteria for Post-Secondary Education may be considered for funding under the Occupation Skills Training Funding.

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Examples of Trades or programs that are less than one academic year that qualify for funding are as follows:

Eligible Trades Programs
Apprenticeships
Electrical Foundation
Electrical Level 1-3
Electrical Level 4
Carpentry Foundation
Plumbing Foundation
Plumbing Level 1-3
Plumbing Level 4
First Aid - OFA Level 1 (Basic)
First Aid - OFA Level 2 (Intermediate)
First Aid - OFA Level 3 (Advanced)
Aboriginal Environmental Technician
Mining

3.6 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY OTHER AGENCIES

Students are to accept all educational assistance made unconditionally available to them by other funding agencies (e.g., NVIATS, HRDC) to offset a portion or all of the financial assistance required from this program and disclose this information to the Education Coordinator. If a student fails to disclose other funding from another agency, then the student will be responsible for repaying the funding portion back to the WWKum Nation that they were overfunded.

Awards won by a student for outstanding scholarship, in competition with other scholars, are considered as incentive income and do not affect the computation of assistance benefits available to the student.

3.7 STUDENT ASSISTANCE LIMITS AND CONDITIONS

Students can only be funded within the same level of Education or Certification once. Meaning if you are taking one particular trade or skills training you may not switch to another. We have limited funding available therefore we have to comply with this policy.

The institution's definitions of "full-time" and "part-time" students shall be accepted for related calculations.

For programs with two or more certificates within the same industry (e.g., Beauty) a student may be eligible for support as multiple certificates can increase skill sets and employability. **Note:** support must not exceed a total of 12 months, and the separate tuition/ fees must not sum to an amount that exceeds the package total tuition for an established program with a group of certificates offered at a public institution within the same industry.

Funding limits are set out in the following order:

- i. Licenses
- ii. Certifications
- iii. Apprentices

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PART 4. STUDENT SELECTIONS/ PRIORITY

We have had to develop a priority system for eligibility of students for post-secondary education assistance because we have far more applicants than we do funding. As a result, we have to follow the selection process and priority as stated below:

1. Grade 12 Graduates

- Students graduating from Grade 12 with good academic standing.

2. Mature Students

- These applicants are students who have been out of school for one academic year or more. These applicants will be given second priority.
- Please note that all applicants will be selected based on past education performance. Therefore, students with a higher GPA will be selected first.

After the initial selection process is complete the Education Coordinator will notify the successful applicants.

A waitlist will be established with the remaining applicants and should further funding become available we will move forward with funding more students.

PART 5. APPROVAL PROCESS

5.1 AUTHORITY TO REVIEW

The Education Coordinator reviews all applications.

5.2 AUTHORITY TO APPROVE

The Education Coordinator has the authority to approve applications. For programs that are 10-12 months or higher cost programs, or for students that are re-applying after a suspension/ termination, the Education Coordinator may seek recommendations from the Education Committee with a final decision made by Chief and Council.

5.3 NOTIFICATION

All students who submit a complete OST application package (i.e., all documents are received) will be notified in writing, typically within two weeks after the review, as to whether their application is approved, and the amount of support that is approved. In the event that the application is referred to the Education Committee and Chief & Council, the timeline may be extended to 15 business days.

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PART 6.SUPPORT TYPES AND TERMS

6.1 TUITION ALLOWANCE

The maximum allocation of funding permitted for tuition is \$25,000 CDN per application.

All tuitions will be paid directly to the institution offering the Occupational Skills Training Program.

Tuitions to Private Colleges or Institutions will be funded based on the cost to obtain the same education at a public institution.

6.2 LIVING ALLOWANCE

Part-time students, as defined by the post-secondary institution being attended, are not eligible for living allowance. However, part-time students are eligible to receive funding for tuition and books.

To be eligible for a Living Allowance, a student will be required to take full-time studies. Full-time means you must be taking at least the minimum number of credits, courses and class-time hours considered to be full-time at the Occupation Skills Training institution (i.e., full-time as defined by the institution).

Living Allowances may be provided to eligible students to assist with living expenditures such as food, housing, local travel, etc. (Living Allowance eligibility and rates are outlined within the Post Secondary Education Policy & Procedure).

For students requiring upgrades in preparation for a Certificate program that are attending school full time and are unable to work, are eligible to receive a pro-rated living allowance for the time they are attending full time studies.

Allowances paid to students vary according to the number of the student's dependents and whether it is necessary for the student to live away from home to attend university or college, etc.

Students who remain living at home with parents shall only receive a partial Living Allowance of 50% of the current Living Allowance.

Students who are employed on a full-time basis are not eligible to receive Living Allowance (students may be eligible for a pro-rated amount of living allowance if they are required to leave work and attend school full-time for a short duration (e.g., 1 week, 2 weeks)). Educational assistance to cover the cost of tuition and books may be made available if not provided by the employer.

6.3 BOOKS, SPECIAL CLOTHING, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

The cost of textbooks and supplies, which are officially listed as requirements by the Occupation Skills Training program, will be paid to a maximum of \$500 CDN. We strongly suggest students seek out purchasing used books or purchasing books off campus to reduce costs. **In the event the cost of textbooks and supplies are higher than the set amounts per semester, those costs are the responsibility of the student.**

If specified by the Occupational Skills Training Program as **necessary** for the student's program of studies, an allowance to cover the costs of rental or purchase of special equipment and/or clothing may be provided up to a maximum of \$250 CDN. Items such as special tools, microscopes, drafting equipment, or specialized clothing such as medical scrubs, raingear, and footwear are included in this category.

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6.4 DEPENDENTS OF STUDENTS

Refer to the Definitions section for the definition of Dependents.

Students may be requested by the Education Coordinator to provide documentation to validate dependent status.

6.5 CHILD SUPPORT

To be considered a dependent, the student must have at least 75% primary care allocation of the child.

6.6 ADDITIONAL DEPENDANTS

The addition of new dependents is not permitted, except for newborn children or adoptions that occur after the application submission deadline.

6.7 CHILDCARE

The cost of childcare is not available through the WWKum PSE Program.

Students may be assisted in applying to other agencies for childcare support. Information can be found on the BC Government website at: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/family-information>

6.8 STUDENT ADVANCES

Advances of any type of funding support are not permitted.

PART 7. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT

In signing the application for funding, the student is accepting all responsibilities as set out in the Occupational Skills Training Policy and Procedures.

Students are also responsible for fulfilling the funding agreement and work towards being a successful student as well as demonstrate accountability and responsibility in all aspects of Skills Training.

****Please ensure to fill out the application form in its entirety to avoid delays. All sections are relevant in determining your eligibility for education funding.**

****The Occupational Skills Training Program is strictly based on whether funding is available. Each year the amounts may vary depending on the funding available.**

7.1 GOOD DECISION MAKING

Students are expected to plan to the best of their ability, all aspects of their future education and training goals. This includes making informed and reasonable decisions with regards to program and class choices, place of residence, employment, and healthy living. **When needed, students are expected to seek out assistance and counseling to ensure success in their education endeavors.**

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7.2 REGULAR ATTENDANCE

Students are required to attend classes on a regular basis. Continual absence may result in failing grades and your funding will be suspended.

7.3 INSTITUTION EXTENDED MEDICAL/ DENTAL

There is a large majority of institutions that have made it mandatory to purchase Extended Medical and Dental coverage. This charge is automatically billed at the time of registration. As a Status Indian, this satisfies the alternate coverage requirement therefore you are able to “**Opt Out**” of this service. ***It is the responsibility of the student to formally “Opt Out” of this service.*** Confirm with student services on how to formally “**Opt Out**”. Failure to “**Opt Out**” will be the financial responsibility of the student and should you choose not to “**Opt Out**” as a personal choice the student will have to pay this expense.

7.4 MINIMUM ACEDMIC STANDARD

Students receiving Skills Training Assistance benefits under the terms of this program shall be responsible for satisfying the academic requirement. It is the students’ responsibility to maintain at least a “C” average. Note that specific programs or institutions may also have established minimum performance standards or grade points that are higher than required under this funding policy.

The student will make every effort to take the pertinent courses they require to complete their program of studies. There are Indigenous Education Advisors services available at each college for students. We encourage you to see an Advisor and seek their direction to get into the most appropriate courses and to complete those courses in the most time effective way possible.

7.5 PARKING PASSES/ BUS PASSES

Students are expected to provide their own bus and parking passes. In urban areas, the U-PASS or Transit passes are available through the post-secondary institution. For further information, please refer to the Translink website: <https://www.translink.ca/transit-fares/u-pass-bc>

7.6 REPORTING

Students are responsible for providing the Education Coordinator with an **Official Transcript** and/ or a copy of the **Certificate** obtained once their program is complete.

7.7 CONTACTING THE EDUCATION COORDINATOR

Students must inform the Education Coordinator of any class changes and or withdrawals of courses as this may change tuition and funding amounts.

The student is responsible for informing the Education Coordinator if they have a change in enrollment status and withdraw completely from the program. Failure to inform the Education Coordinator will result in the student being billed directly for tuition and any other costs incurred by the student with the Nation.

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7.8 FRAUD

Should a student receive funding for tuition and or books and the student fails to use the funding accordingly, the WWKum will consider this fraudulent behavior, and the student will be required to repay the amount funded to the student.

If the student withdraws from their OST institution and fails to notify the Education Coordinator and continues to receive Living Allowance, WWKum will also consider this to be fraud, and the student will be required to repay the total amount of funding that the student was not entitled to receive.

Should a student withdraw from classes and fail to meet the minimum requirement to be considered full-time and continue to receive Living Allowance, this too will be considered fraud, and the student will be required to repay the funding for which they were not entitled. Failure to do so may impact future eligibility for funding.

PART 8. PROBATION & SUSPENSION OF SUPPORT

8.1 ACADEMIC PROBATION

Students failing to meet the minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) will be put on a 4-month **Academic Probationary** period, equal to one semester. Students will be required to raise their average grade to meet the minimum standard during this time period and provide a report from the institution or transcripts to indicate that this has been met to the Education Coordinator.

Students who do not comply with this policy will have their funding suspended.

If the personal circumstances of the student are such that the student's counselors recommend further consideration, a conditional extension of Educational Assistance Benefits may be approved.

8.2 SUSPENSIONS

Students are expected to maintain good behavior at school and to avoid being disciplined, particularly suspension. Students who are suspended will have their support terminated and will be required to provide their own funding for, and successfully complete, one semester of school before being eligible for further Post-Secondary Education assistance.

8.3 TERMINATION OF FUNDING

The Education Coordinator may terminate educational assistance to a student who has demonstrated a lack of ability or willingness to meet the academic or financial management responsibilities, which the student has accepted.

Funding will be terminated if the student shows continued absence from their program.

Should a student drop out of their program their funding will be terminated.

If the student completely drops out of institution/ program and fails to notify the Education Coordinator but continues to receive the monthly living allowance EFT and it is discovered that they weren't entitled to those funds, then the student must pay back the tuition, cost of books and the monthly living allowance to which they were not entitled.

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8.4 REAPPLYING FOR FUNDING

Students whose funding has been terminated are prohibited from receiving any funding for a period of one academic year.

Students whose funding has been **suspended** or **terminated** in the past may reapply for funding. However, they will be required to provide additional information to support that they will be committed to completing their studies. Each case will be reviewed by the Education Coordinator and the Education Committee who will provide a recommendation to Chief and Council, who will make the determination on sponsorship eligibility.

PART 9. GENERAL FUNCTIONS OF THE EDUCATION COORDINATOR

The Education Coordinator is responsible for the following:

- Ensuring that potential applicants are aware of the availability of “Occupational Skills Training Program” and the benefits that are available to them.
- Ensuring that the Occupational Skills Training Program is carried out according to the Policy and Procedures.
- Ensuring the student completes the application for the Occupational Skills Training Program. This will include notifying students if they have not submitted all the required documents.
- Assisting the student in required procedures to obtain acceptance for registration in the selected institution. This will include sponsorship letters, verification letters, etc.
- Assisting the student to obtain full information about the program of studies from the Post-Secondary Institutions.

PART 10. APPEAL PROCESS

Should any student be convinced that the Occupation Skills Training Policy and Procedures have not been fairly applied to their situation, the student may appeal in the following manner:

1. The student must contact the Education Coordinator to discuss the issue in an attempt to resolve their concerns before proceeding with further steps.
2. If after Step 1, the student is not satisfied with the results, they may submit a formal Appeal in writing to the Education Coordinator.
3. The Education Coordinator will schedule a review of the Appeal with the Education Committee who will review the Appeal and provide recommendations. The review will occur within 15 business days of the date of receipt of the Appeal.

4. The Education Committee will forward their recommendations to Chief and Council for a final decision. Chief and Council will discuss the matter at the next scheduled Council meeting, which the student may be required to attend to respond to any questions Chief and Council may have. Students living long distances away from the Administrative offices may participate remotely through phone or online meeting.
5. Chief and Council will submit a report on the appeal to the student within 15 business days.
6. The decision by Chief and Council will be final.

PART 11. POLICY APPROVAL AND AMENDMENTS

WWKum Chief and Council will review the Occupation Skills Training Education Policy and Procedures once every five years (or sooner if necessary), to assess for potential revisions.

The Education Coordinator and/ or Chief and Council may bring forward any proposed revisions or recommendations at any time.

Any changes to the OST Policy and Procedures must be passed by a Motion of Council at a duly convened Council meeting and the new version date/ approved date added into the document footer. Archive all previous and obsolete versions.

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