



NORTH SHORE MI'KMAQ TRIBAL COUNCIL

STUDENT HANDBOOK

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION
PROGRAM



NORTH SHORE
Mi'kmaq Tribal Council

STUDENT HANDBOOK

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

• The Student Handbook.....	1
• Program Responsibility.....	1
• Eligibility Criteria.....	2
• The Post-Secondary Domain	3
• Post-Secondary Education & Institutions Defined.....	3
• Levels of Post-Secondary Study.....	4
• Limits of Assistance.....	4
• Funding Priorities.....	5
• Types of Financial Assistance.....	6
• Tutorials.....	7
• Full-Time / Part-Time Studies.....	8
• Living Allowance Rates.....	9
• High-Rental Area Living Allowance Subsidy	10
• Academic Probation.....	10
• Academic Dismissal.....	11
• Voluntary Withdrawal.....	11
• Application Process.....	11
• Spring and Summer Studies.....	12
• Application Deadlines.....	13
• Transcripts.....	13
• Cash Flow: Tuition, Books & Supplies, Living Allowance, Seasonal Travel.....	14
• Application and Transcript Fees:	15
• Residence / Dorms.....	15
• Living Allowance Deposit Schedule.....	15
• Grievance Policy for Students.....	16
• Scholarships, Bursaries and Awards.....	17
• Other Aboriginal Scholarships, Bursaries, & Awards.....	18
• Awards Offered by Post-Secondary Institutions.....	19
• Annex 1.....	20

North Shore Mi'kmaq Tribal Council - Post-Secondary Education

The Student Handbook

The primary purpose for the development of the Student Handbook is to familiarize you, the student, with the Post-Secondary Education Program Local Guidelines of the North Shore Mi'kmaq Tribal Council's Post-Secondary Education Program. Any questions that you may have about the contents of this book may be addressed to the PSE Program Manager, Megan Wood, at the address, telephone number, fax number, or email address on the cover of this handbook.

Students who apply for post-secondary educational financial assistance are required to read the student handbook before they sign off on the Student Declaration of Understanding on page 3 of the PSE application form.

Program Responsibility

The program's objective is to improve the employability of First Nation aboriginal students by providing them with funding to access education and skills development opportunities at the post-secondary level. The program is expected to increase post-secondary enrollment and graduation rates among First Nation students. The post-secondary education program of the North Shore Mi'kmaq Tribal Council currently provides post-secondary educational support for members of the following communities.

TJIPOGTOTJG	Buctouche First Nation
NATOAGANEG	Eel Ground First Nation
UGPI'GANJIG	Eel River Bar First Nation
AMLAMGOG	Fort Folly First Nation
L'NUI MENIKUK	Indian Island First Nation
OINPEGITJOIG	Pabineau First Nation

Post-Secondary Education Program Policies and Guidelines

Eligibility Criteria for Post-Secondary Student Support

To be eligible to apply for financial assistance under the North Shore Mi'kmaq Tribal Council's Post-Secondary Education Program an applicant:

1. Must be a registered Status Indian and a member of one of the following member bands Tjipogtotjg (Buctouche), Amlamgog (Fort Folly), L'nui Menikuk (Indian Island), Ugpi'ganjig (Eel River Bar), Natoaganeg (Eel Ground), and Oinpegitjoig (Pabineau) First Nations. The applicant must show proof of status.
2. Must be enrolled or accepted for enrollment in an eligible post-secondary program of studies offered at an accredited post-secondary institution.
3. Student has to maintain satisfactory academic standing within that institution (as per the institution's definition of satisfactory academic standing).

Post-secondary student support will be provided to eligible post-secondary students within the limits of funds provided by Indigenous Services Canada. All applications will be reviewed based upon a funding "priority" system established by the North Shore Mi'kmaq Tribal Council (see "Funding Priorities", page 5). If the funding required to support eligible applicants exceeds the current post-secondary education operating budget, lower priority applications may be deferred and reassessed for sponsorship in the next operating year. **To be considered "deferred", a student must submit an acceptance letter along with their post-secondary education application for funding form.**

The “Post-Secondary” Domain: Limits of Support

A program is classified as “post-secondary” provided that it meets the following criteria:

1. The program is one academic year or more in duration.
2. The normal entrance requirements are high school completion.
3. The program leads to a certificate, diploma, or degree; and
4. The program is not classified as trade or vocational.

“Post-Secondary Education” ... Defined

“Post-secondary education” has been defined by Indigenous Services Canada as a program of studies offered by a post-secondary institution, for which completion of secondary school studies or equivalent is a prerequisite. **Refer to the student’s province or territory of residency Ministry of Education for information on student admissibility to a program of study, see Annex 1.**

“Post-Secondary Institutions” ...Defined.

“Post-secondary institutions” are defined as degree, diploma, or certificate-granting institutions, which are recognized by a province, including affiliated institutions or institutions delivering, accredited post-secondary programs by arrangement with a recognized post-secondary institution. We do not entertain funding for “Private” institutions because of their high cost of tuition. It is important to note that although some colleges and universities may provide programs at the trade and vocational level, these programs are not classified as post-secondary level education. You can find Recognized Institutions by going to www.canlearn.ca. The listings are done by province/territory.

Students wishing to enroll in Trade Programs can contact their Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program Officers (ISETP). Contact information is available at www.nsmtc.ca .

Levels of Post-Secondary Study

Post-secondary student support is provided for four levels of post-secondary study, which are as follows:

- Level I:** Community College and CEGEP certificate or diploma programs.
- Level II:** Undergraduate university degree programs (certificate, diploma, degree).
- Level III:** Advanced or professional degree programs, or master programs.
- Level IV:** Doctoral Degree programs.

Limits of Assistance for Community College and University Programs

- a) **Assistance for travel and living expenses may be provided to students to complete one program at each Level.** Also, students can complete another undergraduate degree of their choice provided the current operating budget has not been exceeded.
- b) The duration of assistance in (a) will accord with the official length of the program as defined by the post-secondary institution in which the student is enrolled, while the student is in good standing at the institution.
- c) **Students enrolled in Levels 1 and 2 may be assisted for up to one additional academic year per level if such an extension is approved in writing by the institution's dean or the head of the department.** *For example, a student enrolled in a 4-year undergraduate program and needs year 5 to complete their program of studies must submit an extension letter.* Students enrolled in Level 3 may be assisted for up to one additional academic year for medical or personal reasons.

- d) Students may be assisted in Level 1 studies after dropping out of Level 2 studies. If a student resumes Level 2 studies, the previous time spent at Level 2 will be counted for assistance purposes.
- e) Students who have completed a level 2, 3, or 4 program, **with or without assistance from this program**, are ineligible for program assistance for lower levels.
- f) Student support will not exceed the limits set out in (b) and (c). Where students change programs within one of the levels, the academic years used for each program within each level will be counted for assistance purposes. Students who become eligible for assistance and who have previously completed a portion of post-secondary studies **without assistance from the North Shore Mi'kmaq Tribal Council** may receive assistance for the balance of their program of studies but will not be reimbursed for previous expenses.

Funding Priorities

The North Shore Mi'kmaq Tribal Council reserves the right to make sponsorship decisions based upon the following priorities:

- i) Priority One:** Any eligible applicant who is presently enrolled in post-secondary studies, having successfully completed the previous term in post-secondary studies, and is continuing his/her studies. This includes the student who completes an undergraduate degree and continues on to post-graduate studies without a break in studies. This also includes the student who completes a community college, UCEPP, or CEGEP program and continues on to an undergraduate degree program without a break in studies. Students who cease to attend because of medical reasons, which can be documented by a valid medical certificate, will be considered "priority one" when they reapply.
- ii) Priority Two:** Any eligible applicant whose application for assistance has been "deferred," or refused due to a lack of program funding in the previous year and is reapplying for

support. *To be considered “deferred”, a student has to have submitted their letter of acceptance, along with their NSMTC PSE Application Form.*

- iii) **Priority Three:** Any eligible high school graduate or mature student wishing to enroll in college, university, or a UCEPP program for the first time.
- iv) **Priority Four:** Any eligible applicant who has previously completed an undergraduate degree, community college certificate, a CEGEP program and has taken a break in studies and wishes to return to post-secondary studies.

Types of Financial Assistance

- 1) **Tuition Support:** includes student fees for registration, tuition, and initial professional certification and examination fees. ***It does not include the Health and Dental fees.***
- 2) **Books and Supplies** includes the costs of books and supplies, which are listed as REQUIRED by the post-secondary institution. RECOMMENDED books are not covered by the NSMTC post-secondary program.
- 3) **Travel Support:** available once every semester, to students who are required to live away from their permanent place of residence to attend college or university. Travel support is equal to the cost of return transportation from the student’s place of residence to the nearest Canadian post-secondary institution, which offers the approved program of studies selected by the student. *Travel support does not include moving expenses such as the removal of household effects.*
- 4) **Living Allowance:** support for living expenses is provided to full-time students at a rate not exceeding those listed on Page 10. Living Allowance support is distributed to students on a monthly basis to cover such things as food, shelter, daily transportation, daycare, rental and miscellaneous expenses. Students studying on-line are ineligible for the monthly living allowance.

- 5) Tutorials:** financial assistance for individual or group tutoring is available to all NSMTC sponsored students. The following page outlines how this assistance may be accessed.

Tutorials

Financial assistance for individual or group tutoring is available to all North Shore Mi'kmaq Tribal Council sponsored students. To those students who find themselves struggling with some of the material covered in a given course, it is recommended that tutoring assistance be pursued.

The following three steps must be followed to access funding for tutorials:

1. Contact the Post-Secondary Education Manager to:
 - (a) discuss your request for tutoring assistance,
 - (b) locate an appropriate tutor, and
 - (c) be designated a specific number of tutoring hours for the course you are encountering difficulties with.
2. Proceed with your tutoring session(s).
3. Once your tutoring sessions are finished, have your tutor complete and submit a "Tutorial Invoice Form" to our Post-Secondary office for an approval for payment. A cheque will be forwarded to your tutor in payment of the invoice submitted. You can download the "Tutorial Invoice" form from our website at www.nsmtc.ca under DOWNLOADS. We also have "Tutorial Invoice Forms" at your disposal; if you require copies of this form, please contact our office and we will have them mailed to your local address or faxed to you.

Many students tend to wait until just before the mid-terms or final exams are upon them before deciding to seek help from a tutor. In many cases, these last-minute attempts to cram two to four months of work into a couple of study sessions are unproductive. Be sure to seek out a tutor as soon as the need arises. It can make a tremendous difference in your final grade. Remember, the earlier you seek help, the greater your chances of success will be.

Full-Time / Part-Time Studies

Students are classified as “full-time” provided they maintain a minimum course load of 12 credit hours per academic term (every four months), 24 credit hours for the academic year. **Some institutions will consider students taking 9 credit hours as full-time, but our office requires you to be enrolled in 12 credit hours per term.** The only exception to this rule will be for:

- (a) First-year mature students, who will be expected to maintain a minimum of 1 ½ credits (9 credit hours) per academic term; and,
- (b) Students who require less than 2 credits in a given term to graduate.

Full-time students are eligible to receive tuition, books and supplies, travel and living allowance support while they are enrolled in an approved program of post-secondary studies.

NOTE: Students who are employed on a full-time basis, or taking on-line courses while attending studies on a full-time basis are ineligible for living allowance support. Although they may carry a full-time course load, they will be sponsored for tuition and compulsory fees and required textbooks and supplies **only**.

Part-Time Studies:

Students are classified as “part-time” if they do not maintain the minimum course load required for “full-time” enrollment.

Part-time students are eligible to receive support for tuition and compulsory books and supplies **only**.

LIVING ALLOWANCE RATES

Monthly	Maximum	Maximum
	<u>Monthly Allowances</u>	<u>Allowances for High Rental Areas</u>
(a) Single Student living with employed parent	\$460.00	\$460.00
(b) Single Student	\$875.00	\$875.00
(c) Married student with Employed spouse Plus	\$ 675.00	\$ 675.00
-1 dependent	\$ 850.00	\$ 850.00
-2 dependents	\$1,030.00	\$1,030.00
-3 dependents	\$1,205.00	\$1,205.00
-\$50.00 per month more for each additional dependent		
(d) Married student with Dependent spouse Plus	\$ 895.00	\$ 895.00
-1 additional dependent	\$1,045.00	\$1,045.00
-2 additional dependents	\$1,205.00	\$1,305.00
-3 additional dependents	\$1,355.00	\$1,505.00
-\$50.00 per month more for each additional dependent		
(e) Single parent with		
-1 dependent	\$1,045.00	\$1,045.00
-2 dependents	\$1,205.00	\$1,305.00
-3 dependents	\$1,355.00	\$1,505.00
-\$50.00 per month more for each additional dependent		

High Rental Area Living Allowance Subsidy

The living allowance subsidy for high rental areas is available to two categories of students:

1. Married students with a dependent spouse and two or more dependents and
2. Single parent students with two or more dependents

High-rental areas are identified and revised annually based upon the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's rental survey. A fixed rental subsidy is universally applied to all areas identified as high-rental areas.

At this time, the following cities have been classified as high-rental areas:

Halifax, Barrie, Oshawa, Ottawa, Peterborough, Thunder Bay, Metropolitan Toronto, Windsor, Calgary and Vancouver.

Academic Probation / Dismissal / Withdrawal Policy

Academic Probation:

Any student, whether full-time or part-time, whose grade point average has fallen below a 2.0 in any given year of study, will be placed on "Academic Probation."

Terms of Probation:

A student placed on academic probation will be expected to do the following:

1. Contact the NSMTC's Post-Secondary Program Manager to:
 - a) Discuss plans of improving their GPA
 - b) Provide detailed information (i.e., course syllabi, term papers, exam marks, etc.), when requested to do so, to determine academic problem areas to ensure that counseling may proceed as required.

2. Maintain regular contact with NSMTC.'s Post-Secondary Program Manager until they have successfully managed to achieve a grade point average of 2.0 or higher.
3. Enroll in a study skills program if offered at the respective college or university where the student is attending, if asked to do so.

All students placed on academic probation will be expected to improve their academic standing with their college or university to a 2.0 average in order to maintain continued sponsorship. If at the end of a given term a full-time student has not made the required improvement, they will be required to withdraw from their program of studies (academic dismissal) for a period of not less than 12 months and sponsorship will be discontinued. Students can continue independently provided the institution considers them enrolled.

Academic Dismissal:

Should an individual be required to withdraw from studies, an individual will be required to wait a minimum of 12 months before a new application for sponsorship through the North Shore Mi'kmaq Tribal Council will be considered.

Voluntary Withdrawal:

Students who voluntarily withdraw from their program of studies or drop from "full-time" to "part-time" studies, whether permanently or temporarily, must contact our office immediately. ***Students will be required to reimburse all financial assistance paid out to them if they quit, fail, or are terminated from their program of studies.*** Students will also be required to wait a minimum of 12 months before a new application for sponsorship through the North Shore Mi'kmaq Tribal Council will be considered.

Post-Secondary Sponsorship **The Annual Application Process**

All applicants must submit both a fully completed "Application for Post-Secondary Educational Financial Assistance" form and an official "confirmation of acceptance" letter at a recognized post-secondary institution in order to be

considered for sponsorship. You may download the NSMTC PSE Financial Assistance application form from our website at www.nsmtc.ca. If you are a continuing student, you will be required to submit an official transcript of final marks from your previous term of studies. If you are re-enrolling after being away from your studies for a semester or more, you will be required to include with your application and transcript of marks an official confirmation of acceptance/re-enrollment from the institution you plan to attend. Please note that any monies owed to NSMTC PSE Program per your last Agreement will have to be repaid in full before your application is considered.

A separate application must be submitted for:

- a) Fall and/or Winter (one application)
- b) Intersession (one application)
- c) Summer Session (one application)

Spring and Summer Studies

Some university and college campuses offer credit courses during the spring and summer months. While most take the summer off, every year we have a small number of students enrolled in spring and/or summer studies. **However, sponsorship is dependent upon the NSMTC's Post-Secondary Education Program budget for any given year.**

There are a few simple rules that must be taken into account before one considers enrolling in spring and/or summer courses. To be sponsored to attend spring and/or summer session a student:

- a) Must have obtained a GPA (grade point average) of 3.0 or above throughout the previous fall and winter terms (and previous spring and summer, if applicable),
- b) Must enroll in coursework that contributes toward the certificate, diploma, or degree sought,
- c) Cannot repeat a course failed in the previous fall and/or winter term(s) and,
- d) Must enroll in a minimum of one (1) full-credit or two half-credit courses for every two months of study to be considered a "full-time"

student. **Students who elect to engage in a less demanding workload will be classified as part-time students.**

Application Deadlines

The following application deadlines apply to all students. Please be advised that funding may only be provided for applicants who have met these deadlines.

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. | Fall and Winter Sessions | June 15 th |
| 2. | Intersession (May & June) | April 15 th |
| 3. | Summer Session (July & August) | June 15 th |

Applications received after their respective deadlines will be considered only after all others are processed and the availability of funds is secured. It is recommended that all applicants do not withhold their applications pending receipt of the required supporting documentation (i.e., transcripts, letters of acceptance, etc.). Applications may be submitted without these documents; however, all supporting documentation must be submitted before final approval is granted.

Transcripts

Upon completion of each term (fall, winter, intersession, and summer session) a transcript of your final marks must be forwarded to our office for review. Marks are online usually within a short time at the end of each term.

The deadlines for submission of transcripts are as follows:

Fall Studies (September to December)	Dec 20 th
Winter Studies (January to April)	May 15 th
Intersession (May and June)	July 15 th
Summer Session (July and August)	Aug 25 th

To ensure that there is no suspension of sponsorship, it is recommended that each student meet the above deadlines for every term wherein studies are undertaken.

Cash Flow: Tuition, Books & Supplies, Living Allowance, and Seasonal Travel

Tuition:

The North Shore Mi'kmaq Tribal Council pays tuition for sponsored students directly to the Universities and Colleges where students attend. A "Letter of Sponsorship" is sent to those institutions attended by our students and an account is established between the Post-Secondary Education Program and the institution and payments for tuition and compulsory fees are issued as required.

The North Shore Mi'kmaq Tribal Council is not responsible to pay for the Health and Dental Insurance and it is your responsibility to "opt-out" by contacting the institution's student services and/or the business office. Students who do not opt-out will be responsible to pay these charges.

Book and Supplies:

Funding for compulsory books and required supplies is issued at the beginning of each semester, at the end of August for the fall semester, and at the end of December for winter semester. Students that have textbook expenses exceeding the allotted amount per semester are eligible for reimbursement. To claim reimbursement, students must keep all receipts and submit them along with the corresponding syllabi that clearly states the textbooks are required to the PSE Program Manager.

Living Allowance:

Support for living expenses is provided to "full-time" students at a monthly rate not exceeding the currently established maximum levels (page 9). Those full-time students who are eligible to receive a regular monthly living allowance will be required to establish a bank account for computerized monthly transfers.

Seasonal Travel:

Seasonal travel funding is issued to eligible students before each semester begins; at the end of August for the fall semester and at the end of December for the winter semester.

Application and Transcript Fees

Application fees will be reimbursed for the institute that you have chosen for your studies, and official transcript fees will be reimbursed at the end of each school year. Official transcripts are not required after first term studies, but students have to submit an "official" transcript of marks at the end of the school year.

Residence / Dorms

Students may choose to stay in residence/dorms with meal plan included. ***If the cost of the fees for Residence/Dorms/Meal Plan exceeds the student's allowance rates, the student is responsible to pay the balance.*** For example, a single student is entitled \$875.00 per month x 4 (September/December) which equals \$3,500.00 and that is the amount that will be paid to the institute for the first semester. Another \$3,500.00 will be paid in the second semester (January/April) for a total of \$7,000.00.

Living Allowance Deposit Schedule

For any given month, living allowances are deposited into eligible students' accounts on the last Wednesday of the previous month. Thus, one's September allowance is deposited on the last Wednesday of August, one's October allowance is deposited on the last Wednesday of September, and so forth.

North Shore Mi'kmaq Tribal Council **Grievance Policy for Students**

The Grievance policy is designed to provide an orderly and effective process for the consideration and resolutions of student grievances. A student should discuss their complaint with the NSMTC PSE Program Manager in order to give the Program Manager an opportunity to address the student's concerns and perhaps resolve the issue before a grievance is presented.

1.0 Should a student have a grievance, he/she may file a grievance with the General Manager. Such a grievance shall:

1.01 Be filed within 14 days being informed of the relevant decision, discipline or action,

1.02 Be submitted by the student on his/her own behalf,

1.03 Be submitted in writing clearly stating the action or decision of concern together with the student's grounds for the grievance.

2.0 Upon receipt of such a grievance the General Manager shall:

2.01 Provide the Grievor with receipt of his/her grievance,

2.02 Investigate the complaint with the Manager of Post-Secondary Education and/ or other individuals as warranted,

2.03 Provide the Grievor with his/ her findings and conclusions, in writing, within fifteen working days of receipt of the grievance,

2.04 Provide the Manager of Post-Secondary Education with a copy of the same,

2.05 If requested, provide copies of all relevant material to the CEO for any further action.

Note: Notwithstanding the right to grieve, as noted above, it should be understood that such a process does not carry the authority to change the federal government's post-secondary funding policies and guidelines. Lack of funds does not constitute grounds for grievance.

Scholarships, Bursaries, and Awards

- 1. Academic Achievement Award:**

May be awarded to continuing or graduating full-time students enrolled in Level 1 or Level 2 programs who have successfully completed a full year of study, having achieved a sessional grade point average of 3.0 or above. Sponsored students may submit an application for an Academic Achievement Award at the end of every school year. **The AAA scholarship is dependent upon the NSMTC's Post-Secondary Education Program budget for any given year.**
- 2. Incentives for students enrolled in Level 3 Programs:**

Students enrolled as full-time students in a Level 3 degree may receive an incentive, subject to a **maximum of \$1,500.00**. This incentive will only be provided once. Students will be eligible for this incentive upon commencement of the second year of the degree, or upon successful completion of the degree. Again, students must have achieved a grade point average of 3.0 to be considered for this award.
- 3. Strategic Studies Scholarships in Level 3 Programs:**

To encourage students to engage in studies that directly contribute to achieving a self-government and economic self-reliance, the NSMTC may award a strategic studies scholarship to students who are enrolled full-time in a program of studies in the areas of commerce, public or business administration, physical science, mathematics and computer sciences, forestry and engineering. The amount of the scholarship awarded may be up to a **maximum of \$3,500.00 annually**.
- 4. Graduation Award:**

May be awarded to all Level 1, 2, and 3 students who successfully complete their entire program of studies. The amount of this award will depend on the length of the program of studies. Thus, a student who completes a four-year program will most likely receive a sum greater than one that completes a one-year program. Applicants may receive a **maximum of \$500.00**.

Award Distribution Strategy:

A number of considerations are taken into account in determining the actual sum of each “Academic Achievement”, “Strategic Studies Scholarship” and “Graduate Studies” award granted (i.e., one’s cumulative grade point average, sessional grade point average, year of study, individual course marks, number of courses taken in a given year, etc.,). **In addition to these academic variables, fluctuations in program revenue/expenditures and the number of eligible applicants from year to year must be considered.** Please note that the awards are for full-time students enrolled in a full academic year. The application deadline for the above four awards is June 30th of each year. The applicant must include an “official” copy of their transcript of marks.

Other Scholarships, Bursaries, and Awards available to First Nations Students

- 1. Aboriginal Bursaries Search Tool Link -**
<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1351687337141>. The Aboriginal Bursaries Search tool is a searchable list of more than 750 bursaries, scholarships and incentives across Canada, offered by governments, universities and colleges, private and public companies, individual Canadians, organizations and others. The majority of bursaries on this list target Aboriginal students but could vary by group such as First Nation, Metis or Inuit. Also, some bursaries are specific to a region, place of residence, a school, or field of study.
- 2. Heroes of Our Time Scholarships** - Their website is www.afn.ca. The application deadline is June 1st.
- 3. Indspire.** Their website is www.indspire.ca. Application deadlines are August 1st, November 1st, and February 1st of each year.

- 4. Foundation for the Advancement of Aboriginal Youth** - For further information, or if you have any questions, please phone or email them at: Application deadline is October 15th of each year.

Phone: 1-866-566-3229 Fax: 416-961-3995
Website: www.ccab.com Email: faayinfo@ccab.com

- 5. RBC Aboriginal Student Awards Program** - Apply on-line at http://www.rbc.com/careers/aboriginal_student_awards.html . The application deadline is January 31st of each year.

Awards offered by Post-Secondary Institutions

Many scholarships, bursaries, medals, and prizes are awarded to the general population of most post-secondary institutions throughout Canada. These awards are often advertised in the school calendars. Additional information regarding these awards can often be obtained from the campus registrar or your faculty advisor.

Annex 1

List of Provincial/Territorial Ministries of Education Web links

Atlantic

New Brunswick Department of Education, Training and Labour

Newfoundland Department of Advanced Education, skills and Labour

Nova Scotia Department of Labor and Advanced Education

Prince Edward Island Education and Lifelong Learning

Québec

Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur, Recherche, Science et Technologie du Québec *web site not available in English*

Ontario

Ministry of Colleges and Universities

Manitoba

Post-Secondary Education in Manitoba

Saskatchewan

Ministry of Advanced Education

Alberta

Ministry of Advanced Education

British Columbia

Indigenous Post-Secondary Education and Training

Yukon

Education and schools

Northwest Territories

Education, Culture and Employment

Nunavut

Department of Family Services / Government of Nunavut

Homepage / Government of Nunavut