

Post-Secondary Financial Aid Policy

I. POLICY STATEMENT

The purpose of the Post-Secondary Financial Assistance Program (PSFA) is to provide financial assistance to Quinault tribal members who wish to complete an undergraduate degree.

II. AUTHORITY

In accordance with the Quinault Indian Nation Constitution, Article I Section-2 General Welfare, which states:

It shall be the goal of the Quinault Nation to provide for the general safety and welfare of all persons acting by the right of membership in the Quinault Nation or acting or residing within the jurisdiction of the Quinault Nation

the Quinault Business Committee hereby establishes the Post-Secondary Financial Assistance Program (PFSA) and authorizes the administration of funds, in accordance with this policy, for the cost associated with post-secondary education. Furthermore, the Quinault Business Committee establishes the PSFA Scholarship Committee to execute the PFSA appeals.

III. DEFINITIONS

Academic Plan	An individualized course of study in which the student, in conjunction with the degree granting institution of post-secondary education, outlines the required courses for the desired degree in a specified field of study.
Academic Year	A period of time which a student is expected to complete the equivalent of at least two semesters, two trimesters, or three quarters, at institutions that measure academic progress in credit, unit, or clock hours.
Accredited/Accreditation	The certification of an institution of post-secondary education by a sanctioned national or regional accrediting agency of association(s) recognized by the Secretary of Education <i>or</i> sanctioned by the State in which the institution is located.

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Advisor/Counselor	An individual appointed by the educational institution who assists students with reviewing the services and policies of the institution, discussing educational and career plans, and making appropriate course selections.
Appeal	A written request by a student for correction of action or a request that an exception to the Post-Secondary Financial Aid Policies be made on their behalf.
Applicant	An individual applying for assistance or services from the PSFA Program.
Application	The form and process through which a request is made for assistance or services.
Continuing Student	A student who does not interrupt their education process while receiving financial assistance from the PSFA Program.
Financial Aid Package	The institution's document(s) that identifies (identify) the amount(s) and types of financial aid awarded by the institution and the amount of unmet need.
First Time Applicant	A student who has never received financial assistance from the PSFA Program or a student who is beginning a new degree.
FSA/FAFSA/Financial Aid	The Federal Financial Aid Programs (i.e. Pell Grants, Supplemental Educational Opportunities Grants (SEOG), College Work Study (CWS), Student Loans, etc.) and State Financial Aid Programs (i.e. State Need, Incentive Scholarships, College Work Study (CWS), etc.) that is administered by the Financial Aid Office located at the institution of attendance.
Good Standing	A student with a 2.0 GPA or above and no dropped classes.
Higher Education	An educational pursuit beyond secondary education level that is provided by a

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	college or university to earn an Associates' Degree, Baccalaureate Degree, Professional Certificate and/or Graduate Degree.
Needs Analysis/Needs Assessment	A form that demonstrates the student's cost of education and financial aid resources.
Part-Time Student	A student who is carrying a part-time academic workload (other than by correspondence) as determined by the eligible institution.
QIN Service Area	For the purpose of this policy, the QIN Service Area is Grays Harbor County, plus that portion of Jefferson County within the boundaries of the Quinault Reservation, including the village of Queets.
Release of Information	A written request authorizing the Post-Secondary Financial Assistance Program (PSFA) to receive students' information from the institution by verbal, written, or electronic means of communication.
Returning Student	A student who has stopped or interrupted their degree program, while receiving financial assistance from the PSFA Program, who would like to return to school.
Scholarship Committee	A group of individuals responsible for reviewing, and approving or disapproving PSFA Appeals.
Student	A Quinault Tribal Member who is receiving PSFA funds, and meets all the requirements of eligibility. Also referred to as applicant, recipient, awardee and/or grantee.
Tribal Member	An enrolled member of the Quinault Indian Nation.
Transferring	Changing institution of attendance.

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IV. POLICY

It is the policy of the Quinault Indian Nation to encourage all tribal members to pursue post-secondary education, which will enhance their individual lives and quality of their lives.

All applicants must be accepted to a degree program and registered for classes at an accredited, college or university prior to applying for a PSFA grant. Applicants are required to complete all institutional sponsored financial aid programs in addition to applying for this grant funding. No request for funding will be considered by this policy unless a signed financial aid package from an accredited college or university Financial Aid Officer is on file with the Quinault Indian Nation Education Department. Furthermore, all funding is for future tuition, expenses, etc. Reimbursing students for books, fees, etc. is not a standard procedure. However, if there is extenuating circumstances the Education Manager can approve reimbursements directly to students, as long as pre-approval was received.

Funding shall be limited to no more than six years (the equivalent to 18 full-time quarters or 12 full-time semesters) for any student enrolled in an associates or bachelor's undergraduate degree program. An exception to this limitation can be made for students who are near to completing their degree but need more time. A request for an extension must be made in writing to the PSFA Scholarship Committee. If a student has received their associate's degree, they must be working towards a bachelor's degree in order to be eligible for funding.

College/University Students

Applicants who are accepted and enrolled in a two-year degree program are eligible to receive, as an annual award distributed equally per term, up to the following, based upon the needs analysis:

Graduates of the school within the QIN service area:

Full-time (minimum of 12 credits) \$6,600.00

Part-time (11 credits or less) \$3,300.00

Graduates of a school outside the QIN service area:

Full-time (minimum of 12 credits) \$3,300.00

Part-time (11 credits or less) \$1,600.00

Applicants accepted and enrolled in a four-year degree program are eligible to receive, as an annual award, distributed equally per term, up to the following, based upon the needs analysis:

Graduates of the school within the QIN service area:

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Full-time (minimum of 12 credits)	\$13,200.00
Part-time (11 credits or less)	\$6,600.00

Graduates of a school outside the QIN service area:

Full-time (minimum of 12 credits)	\$6,600.00
Part-time (11 credits or less)	\$3,300.00

Grant Award Renewals

Applicants for PSFA grants will be awarded for an academic year and funds issued in accordance with the educational institution's term length as long as all eligibility requirements are maintained. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure all required documentation is submitted and received in order to receive continued funding.

Payment of Grant Awards

This policy will authorize payments, on behalf of the grant recipient, directly to the educational institution. The educational institution must agree, in writing, to apply the grant to the recipient's expenses first and then to issue any unused portion of the grant directly to the recipient. In specific instances, with justification provided and concurred upon by the COO, the Quinault Nation Scholarship Committee may issue payment directly to the recipient. Direct disbursement of a grant award must be authorized for each individual occurrence on a case-by-case basis. Funding will be provided for each quarter, semester, or trimester, depending upon the educational institution. Tuition for summer quarter is dependent upon the availability of funds.

The QIN Education Department practices and reserves the right to only release information directly to the student (no family members).

Notice of Denial/Discontinuance of Grant Award

A grant may be denied or discontinued for the any of the following reasons:

- Failure to meet minimum GPA requirements.
- Failure to submit the required documentation within the established time period (i.e. application, grade report, class schedule).
- Financial aid suspension or expulsion from the educational institution.
Being placed on academic probation or suspension more than once during an academic year.

A grant recipient who is issued a Notice of Denial or Discontinuance of Grant Award will not be eligible to reapply for PSFA funding until the applicant has successfully

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completed a minimum of ten (10) credits using their own financial resources as well as maintain all other eligibility criteria.

Notice of Reduction of Grant

A grant may be reduced for any of the following reasons:

- Funding Availability
- Dropping or failing the same class more than twice (i.e. the PSFA policy will only pay for a student to take a class twice, the third time the student is financially responsible for that class). Students must submit an official letter from the university/college stating the tuition cost for that course/class, funds will be reduced by that amount of money.

V. ELIGIBILITY

All applicants who wish to utilize this grant opportunity must meet all of the following eligibility criteria:

- Must be an enrolled Quinault tribal member, if applicant became enrolled after the age of 18, they must wait no less than five years to be eligible for funding.
- Must possess a high school diploma or GED certificate.
- Must be accepted to an accredited college or university. Proof of acceptance must be submitted with the grant application.
- Proof of having applied for Federal Student Aid (FSA, also known as FAFSA) must be submitted with the grant application.
- Must submit an academic plan, prepared by an Advisor, with the grant application.
- Must maintain a minimum postsecondary GPA of 2.0.
- As a full-time student, must maintain a minimum credit load of 12 credits. As a part-time student, must maintain original credit load from the beginning of the quarter/semester.
- Students are required to submit grades and next academic quarter/semester course schedule within two weeks of the end of each term in order to be eligible to receive the next round of funding within the same academic year.
- Recipients who are placed on warning or probation status by FAFSA or their institution are required to disclose that information to the QIN Education Department and must provide a mid-term grade report in order

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to demonstrate GPA improvement is being made.

- In order to be eligible for funding, students cannot be receiving funding from QIN Vocational and Technical Degree Scholarships or QIN Employee Education Funds.
- Students who have received funding from Vocational and Technical Degree Scholarship will be limited to PSFA funding based on the following grid:

Amount received from VTDS	Amount eligible to receive from PSFA
Full funding \$20,000	Up to 6 full-time quarters/4 full-time semesters
Up to \$10,000	Up to 9 full-time quarters/6 full-time semesters
Up to \$5,000	Up to 12 full-time quarters/8 full-time semesters
No vocational and technical funding	Up to 18 full-time quarters/12 full-time semesters

*Full-time recipients who are required to complete/maintain professional certification (i.e. Teacher Certification) will be eligible for funding for an additional 16 quarters or 4 semesters, dependent upon the availability of funds.

PSFA Financial Probation and Suspension

Financial Probation is a warning. Students will be placed on probation for the following reasons:

- Falling below a 2.0 GPA.
- As a full-time student dropping below 12 credits.
- As a part-time student dropping below original credit load from the beginning of the quarter/semester.

For a student to be in good standing again they must complete the next quarter/semester (minimum of 10 credits) of school with a 2.0 GPA and no dropped classes. If the student does not fulfill these requirements, they will be placed on Financial Suspension.

If a student is placed on financial suspension, they are responsible for the following quarter/semester of school (minimum of 10 credits) without financial assistance from QIN PSFA. Reasons for financial suspension:

- More than two class withdrawals or dropped classes in any academic year.
- Failure to complete probation requirements.

Once they have submitted proof of one quarter/semester on their own, they will be eligible for funding again.

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VI. APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants are required to apply for funding on an annual basis and must supply the required documentation throughout the school term in order to remain eligible for the next round of funding.

Completed applications must be submitted to and received by the QIN Education Department a minimum of 30 days prior to the beginning of your educational institution's term AND in accordance with the deadlines listed on the application.

Incomplete or partially complete applications will not be considered.

A. First-Time Applicant, Transferring, Returning and New Academic Year

A complete PSFA application for a first time applicant includes submission of:

- A complete Quinault PSFA Grant Application Form.
- A Personal Statement of Education Goals and Plans.
- A Certification of Enrollment in the Quinault Indian Nation.
- A signed Authorization of Release of Information Form.
- A Letter of Acceptance for Admission to an accredited institution.
- A complete High School Transcript or GED Scoresheet, and/or most recent College transcript.
- An Academic Plan prepared in cooperation with your educational institution's assigned Advisor.
- A Financial Need Analysis certified by the Institution's Financial Aid Officer for a specific academic year indicating student completed their financial aid process to determine an award.
- Proof of having completed the FSA (also known as FAFSA) application process.

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B. Continuing Students (within the same academic year)

In order to be eligible for continued funding throughout the academic year, students must submit the following within two weeks of the end of the current term:

- A complete College transcript showing a minimum of a 2.0 grade point average (GPA).
- A copy of the class schedule for the next term.

VII. APPEALS

An applicant who has completed the application process for financial assistance and has been denied funding may appeal the denial decision so long as the reason for denial is not based on the applicant being in default status on a federal student loan. Late and incomplete applications will also not be considered for appeal unless the applicant can prove extenuating circumstance outside of the applicant's control. Reasons for appeals may include, but are not limited to:

- Dropping a class
- Falling below the 2.0 GPA requirement
- Hardship

The appellant must submit a PSFA Appeal Form and Letter of Appeal to the QIN Education Department within ten (10) business days of the date the denial letter was issued. The appellant should delineate why they feel the denial is in error and provide any documentation, proof, or other materials that may assist the PSFA Scholarship Committee in making a determination regarding the appeal.

Within ten (10) business days of receipt of an appeal, the PSFA Scholarship Committee will review the PSFA Appeal Form and Letter of Appeal and all PSFA relevant document provided by Education Department. The PSFA Scholarship Committee may issue a determination based on the materials received or may choose to hold a meeting with the appellant. Only the student in question filing the appeal shall appear before the Quinault Tribal Scholarship Committee.

The PSFA Scholarship Committee shall issue a decision in writing within ten (10) days of receipt of a PSFA Appeal Form and Letter of Appeal or within ten (10) days of an appeal meeting. The decision of the PSFA Scholarship Committee will be final. Should an appellant fail to attend the scheduled appeal meeting, the original decision of denial will be upheld and shall be final.