

Siletz Higher Education Manual

Higher Education Policy and Procedures (Revised August 2012)

Purpose

Siletz Tribal Members are encouraged to continue their education beyond high school to increase employment opportunities in the professional fields and to develop leadership.

Policy

Our policy is to encourage qualified Tribal Members to seek higher education. Funds are appropriated to assist students in financial need after all other sources of funding are applied. Tribal students are required to apply for federal, state, institution and privately sponsored financial aid programs. The Tribal Education Staff is responsible to assist students in seeking other avenues of financial aid. Tribal scholarships are considered in the total financial aid award.

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Eligibility

Eligibility for Higher Education Grant Assistance:

- An enrolled tribal member in the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians.
- Letter of acceptance for enrollment at an accredited college or university to a four or two year transferring degree program.
- Application made for Federal Financial Aid by January 31st and demonstrated financial need as determined by the college or university financial aid office through a Need Analysis.
- Completion of a Tribal Higher Education Grant application by June 30th.

The following documents and information are needed for a complete application.

- Tribal Higher Education grant application.
- Statement of Educational Goals and Plans after completing chosen field of study.
- Verification of Siletz Tribal enrollment.
- Letter of acceptance for admission.
- Complete high school transcripts, GED certificate or complete college transcript.
- Financial Award Letter from college or university.
- Results of placement test (if part of school's admission process).
- Degree evaluation for students with Junior status.

All applications must be completed and submitted to the tribal education program by June 30th. The deadline dates are posted in the tribal offices, periodically in the tribal newsletter and on the tribal website.

FAFSA applications must be completed by January 31st.

All applications are subject to review and recommendation of the designated Education staff. The Financial Aid Analysis System determines the financial need of the student. The financial need amount stated by the Financial Aid Analysis System cannot be over-funded; by law.

The authority for all approvals will be made according to established policies and procedures of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians.

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Determination of Services

Priorities

First Priority: Continuing students in good standing based on academic achievement and financial eligibility.

Second Priority: Graduating high school seniors, first time adult applicants and students who have been in college and had an interruption.

Graduate students

Graduate Students may be funded only if specific funds are designated for this purpose.

Summer School

Grants to cover summer school expenses may be awarded to students whose degree program requires summer coursework. The need of summer term funding must be requested at the time of application. A letter from an academic advisor is required. Students are encouraged to meet with an academic advisor at the beginning of each academic year.

Part-Time Students

Students attending schools of higher learning, meeting accreditation criteria and enrolled in less than 12 term/semester hours of coursework are funded for tuition, fees, books and supplies only.

Private College Attendance

Students are encouraged to attend State supported institutions offering the same or a similar degree program. Exceptions are warranted in cases where the field of study a student is pursuing is unavailable within State and the availability of funds. Students attending private schools will receive funding that is not to exceed the in-state base rate tuition for Oregon's University System.

Accreditation

The college or university a student chooses to attend must be accredited.

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Education Budget

1. The institution and Tribal Financial Aid report system will determine the applicant's budget, along with the financial aid budget and the resources available. The amount funded is based on information provided by the applicant on the Federal Financial Aid Application.
2. A student's Unmet Need is reported on the Financial Analysis Report form and is determined by the school's Financial Aid department/officer.
3. Determination of Allocation for the Unmet Need is made by the Education Staff based on the identified unmet need and availability of funding in the tribal Higher Education Program Budget.
4. Undergraduate students are eligible for awards for a maximum of fifteen (15) accumulative quarters or ten (10) accumulative semesters to complete a four (4) year degree program.

College Based Aid and Other Sources of Financial Assistance

To be eligible for tribal educational assistance, an applicant must apply for all available non-tribal aid for which they may be eligible. This includes all Federal, State and college based aid such as:

- Veteran's Benefits
- Social Security Benefits
- Pell Grants
- Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants (SEOG)
- Work Study (WS)
- National Direct Student Loans (NDSL)
- State Need or State Incentive Grants
- Tuition Waivers
- Nursing Student Loans
- Nursing Student Grants
- Indian Health Service Scholarships
- American Indian Graduate Center (Graduate Students Only)

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Three scholarships are available through the Siletz Tribe:

1. Arthur Bensell Memorial Scholarship
2. Siletz Scholarship
3. Pepsi-Craig Whitehead Scholarship

The Arthur Bensell Scholarship is specifically for students enrolled in a program leading to a degree in education.

The Pepsi-Craig Whitehead Scholarship is open to all students regardless of major.

The Programs Manager and Siletz Tribal Education Committee administer the scholarships. Applications are available in May of each year. All new and continuing Higher Education and Adult Vocational Training students are sent an application. Application for all financial aid is required of students. Tribal students are expected to apply for these scholarships.

Scholarships range from \$500 to \$1,000 for one academic year.

Scholarships are announced in July and awarded at the annual Nesika Illahee Pow Wow in August of each year.

All three scholarships require the following:

- Completed application form.
- Documentation of acceptance at an accredited vocational training or
- Higher education institution/ 2 year, 4 year or graduate school.
- Up to a 1,000 word essay on a specific theme.
- One letter of recommendation.

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The Education Committee selects scholarship recipients on a competitive basis. Factors considered during the evaluation process include:

- Applicant's academic achievements.
- Strength of the letter/s of recommendation.
- Quality of applicant's essay.

Determining Tribal Grant Awards

If the applicant is a full-time student and is eligible for a tribal grant award, the Education Specialist determines the amount of the award. When combined with other resources, the award amount shall not exceed the applicant's educational budget as determined by the Financial Aid Officer at the university. The budget is composed of the following expense categories:

- Tuition and Fees
- Books and Supplies
- Lodging
- Transportation
- Personal Needs
- Day Care Costs

If the applicant is a part-time student and is eligible for a tribal grant award, the education staff can only consider the costs for:

- Tuition and Fees
- Books and Supplies

Notification

Tribal Education Staff shall notify each applicant and the Financial Aid Officer of the determination of action taken on the applicant. This notification shall be in writing and identify the term, budget, non-tribal resources and amounts and tribal award.

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When an application is not approved, the Education Staff will notify the applicant and Financial Aid Officer in writing of the determination. This notification will explain the reason for the decision. It will also contain an appeal process.

A grant application can be disapproved for any of the following reasons:

- Not completing the required number of credits per term with the required grade point average.
- Depleted grant funds.
- Incomplete Higher Education Grant Application.
- Failure to turn in application(s) for federal and institutional aid.
- Failure to meet deadline dates.
- Not accepted by college or university.
- Over the limit of 15 accumulative quarters or 10 semesters.
- Pursuing a vocational-technical program.
- Unrecognized tribal affiliation.
- Taking courses that are non-degree courses.

Payment of Grant Award

Approved grant awards are paid by check to the recipient in care of the Financial Aid Officer at the institution in which the student is enrolled. Awards will be made on a term basis and only after confirmation of satisfactory progress.

Financial Aid Officers will disburse grant awards to the recipient according to the disbursement policy of that institution.

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Refund of Grant Awards

When the recipient of a grant does not enroll or withdraws from an institution, refund of unused grant award will be made to the tribal funding source awarding the grant.

Educational Requirements

Students are contacted at a minimum of once per quarter to monitor student's progress. Contact may be made by telephone, letter, or an onsite visit. All contacts are documented by the Area Education Specialist and maintained in the student's file.

Requirements of Students:

- To be enrolled as full-time students with a minimum of twelve (12) credit hours per term/semester for undergraduate programs and nine (9) hours for graduate programs if tribal funding has been approved.
- To make satisfactory progress while attending school by maintaining a minimum of a 2.0 grade point average (GPA).
- To give evidence of progress by providing grade reports at the end of each term/semester.
- Meet all financial requirements. Students are required to complete a Federal Financial Aid application for each academic year they plan on attending school.

If a student withdraws from or drops out of school, the Tribal Education Program requires all or a portion of the tribal award returned.

Withdrawal from Classes

Types of withdrawal:

- Voluntary
- Involuntary

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Voluntary Withdrawal

1. Reasons must be clearly defined and expressed by the student. University staff and Education Specialist may recommend withdrawal if requested by the student for personal or social reasons.
2. Medical reasons may also be considered as voluntary withdrawal from classes but must be supported in writing by a physician or other medical practitioner.

Reinstatement for Voluntary Withdrawal

- The student may be reinstated to their academic program if they made contact prior to withdrawal and made official arrangements for continuing their education with the school.
- The length of interrupted status will be determined through consultation with the institution staff, student, Education Specialist and medical staff if needed.
- Students must meet all application deadlines established by the Tribal Education Program, the institution they plan to attend and by the Federal Financial Aid program.
- Grant recipients are eligible for continued funding if grade reports are submitted on time and they maintain a 2.0 GPA for twelve or more credit hours.

Involuntary Withdrawal

1. When a student fails to meet minimum academic requirements.
2. When a student unofficially drops from school.

Reinstatement for Involuntary Withdrawal

- Students who involuntarily withdraw are suspended and/or terminated from the Tribal Education Program.
- Reinstatement is possible if the student follows the “Reinstatement Terms after Suspension or Termination” guidelines.

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Probation, Disciplinary Actions and Appeals

Reasons for Probationary Status:

- Student is not enrolled for a minimum of twelve (12) credit hours for undergraduate programs or nine (9) credit hours for a graduate program.
- Student does not maintain a 2.0 GPA.
- Student does not submit grade reports when required.

A student who fails to provide a grade report may be terminated from the Tribal Higher Education Program.

Notification of Probationary Action

The Education Specialist provides initial verbal notification to the student regarding the pending probationary action and possible suspension or termination of assistance.

Written notification of Probationary Status will be sent out to the student after receipt of grade reports.

Specific Terms for Disciplinary Actions

A student on academic probation will sign a receipt acknowledging their Probation and their obligations for the upcoming term/semester. The receipt of acknowledging is to be returned to the Education Staff within one week of receiving written notice. Failure to comply will result in suspension from the program.

Obtaining Reinstatement Status

After being placed on probation, the student has the next term/semester to earn a 2.0 GPA and maintain a minimum of 12 credit hours to be reinstated to the tribal higher education program. The student's grade report must be submitted to the Education Specialist as soon as grades are issued. Failure to earn a 2.0 GPA with a minimum of twelve (12) credits will result in suspension from the program.

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Suspension or Termination from Program

Student may be suspended or terminated from the Higher Education Program if:

- Student does not meet the minimum requirement of a 2.0 GPA for twelve (12) credit hours for undergraduate students or nine (9) for graduate programs following probation from the tribal education program.
- Student does not sign and return receipt acknowledging their probationary status.
- Student does not provide evidence of progress by providing grade reports or progress evaluations from their school.
- Student does not maintain a reasonable standard of conduct as specified by the institution.

Notification of Suspension or Termination Action

The Education Specialist will provide a formal written Notification of Suspension or Termination to the student. Reasons for suspension or termination will be outline in the letter.

Reinstatement Terms after Suspension or Termination

Students on a suspended or terminated status will not be automatically reinstated. The students must also understand that there is no automatic entitlement to repeat services. Students may be reinstated if they provide the following:

1. Student is required to attend school for one term or semester at their own expenses and provide verification of such attendance.
2. Student must meet minimum requirements of maintaining a 2.00 GPS for twelve (12) credit hours for undergraduate or nine (9) credit hours for graduate students, during the term or semester of suspension and provide verification with a grade report or progress evaluation.
3. Student must file for reinstatement with Financial Aid at their institution and provide verification of filing.
4. Student must meet the annual Higher Education application and FAFSA deadlines.

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Recovery of Funds

Students that do not enroll, withdraw or drop from the educational institution without official notification to the Education Specialist will reimburse funds awarded by the Tribal Education Program to the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. No additional assistance may be received until all monies are recovered.

Students will be notified of monies owed and recovery efforts will be made to recover funds from the educational institution when applicable and the student when applicable. All recovered funds, unused grants and reimbursements will be returned to the Higher Education Program.

Appeal Process

An applicant who has completed a Higher Education grant application and is denied funding may appeal the decision within five (5) days of receiving a notice of denial. Students suspended or terminated from the Higher Education Program may also appeal within five (5) days of receiving the written notification.

A decision to deny, suspend or terminate assistance may be appealed in writing to:

Programs Manager-Education

Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians

P.O. Box 549

Siletz, Oregon 97380

Applicants or students who disagree with the decision of the Programs Manager may appeal the decision to the Tribal Education Committee by writing a request to:

Siletz Tribal Education Committee

P.O. Box 549

Siletz, Oregon 97380

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The Tribal Education Committee is a committee established under Siletz Tribal Standing Committee Ordinance and is granted authority pursuant to the Siletz Tribal Court Rules and Procedures Code to make a final decision. For purposes of this Ordinance, the Standing Committee serves as a Lower Court. The Education Committee shall provide an opportunity to present evidence, confront witness and be heard. The committee is obligated under this Ordinance to inform a party of their right to appeal. That party has ten (10) days to appeal the Committee decision to the Chief Judge of the Siletz Tribal Court.

Further appeal rights are addressed in the Siletz Tribal Rule and Procedures Code, 3.63 Appeals from Standing Committees and Tribal Officials, (b) Right to Appeal.

Student Records

Student records are kept at the area offices in Portland, Salem and Eugene for students attending schools in those areas. Copies of tribal award letter and school FAR will be kept at the tribal office in Siletz Oregon.

The student records contain the following:

- Application and Documentation
- Financial Aid
- School Information, Grades, and Schedules
- Correspondence
- Documentation of Contact
- Student Maintenance

Student files are maintained according to Siletz Tribal Policies and Procedures and applicable federal requirements.

Student records are accessible by the Education Staff, Programs Manager and General Manager or designee.

Records are only accessible with a Statement of Release provided by the student. The statement will provide specific authority and identify who has access.

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Financial Records

Higher Education grant funds undergo required tracking procedures for accounting purposes by the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians Accounting Department.

The Program Manager and the Tribal Accounting Department provide a breakdown of student grants quarterly and annually, or monthly, if requested. The process is in accordance with the fiscal reporting requirements and procedures.

Final authority for distribution of funds to students is by the Tribal General Manager.

The Education Specialists and Programs Manager maintain individual records or cuff accounts.

These records are accessible to the Education Staff, Programs Manager and Accounting Department as well as the General Manager.

Tracking procedures for accounting requirements are maintained in student records through check requests, signed receipts of checks and Financial Aid Analysis Forms.

Records are only accessible with a Statement of Release provided by the student. The statement will provide specific authority and identify who has access.