

## Checklist for applying to the Squaxin Island Education Commission for Higher Education Financial Aid:

- Read policies and procedures for the Squaxin Island Higher Education Program.
- Complete and sign Memorandum of Commitment.
- Complete and sign Education Information Sheet.
- Complete and sign Information Release Form.
- Please provide copy of acceptance letter from college or university. All colleges, universities or vocational school MUST be federally accredited.
- Please provide copy of class schedule from college or university stating individual classes and how many credits student is taking. Class schedule must show the student's name and college's name.
- Write a letter to Squaxin Island Higher Education Commission. In this letter, explain your educational plans and goals. This letter must be submitted yearly.
- Please provide a copy of your completed/submitted FAFSA form. The FAFSA form must be completed yearly on or before April 1.
- Submit a copy (non-official is fine) of your high school diploma, or GED certificate, and transcripts of any college courses you have previously taken.
- Please provide a copy of your signed Squaxin Island Tribal Enrollment Certificate. The phone number for the Enrollment Office is (360) 432-3888. Copies of ID cards are not accepted.
- Submit all appropriate documents to the Squaxin Island Education Office no later than: **August 1** for Fall quarter; **November 15** for Winter quarter; **March 16** for Spring quarter; **May 15** for summer quarter. If you missed the deadline for the quarter, please submit your application and you will be considered for the next available quarter.

Once all required information has been received by the Education Department the Squaxin Island Education Commission will review your application and make a funding determination. Please be aware that the Education Commission will not review your application until ALL required information is in your education file. If you need assistance or have questions, please contact Mandy Valley (360) 432-3882 or by e-mail at [mvalley@squaxin.us](mailto:mvalley@squaxin.us)



## **SQUAXIN ISLAND HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM**

### *Policies and Procedures*

It is the goal of the Squaxin Island Tribe's Higher Education Program to encourage all Squaxin Island Tribal Members to seek higher education or additional job training to further career opportunities and enhance employability. The Squaxin Island Tribal Council and the Tribal Community places higher education as a top priority for its members.

Applicants applying for financial aid from the Squaxin Island Tribe Education Commission are required to apply for ALL institution-sponsored (Federal, State, Private) financial aid programs and accept the entire Financial Aid Award offered by the college. College based aid and other sources of financial assistance would include, but not be limited to the following:

1. PELL GRANT
2. Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant
3. Tuition Waiver
4. State Need Grant
5. College Work Study
6. Perkins Loan
7. Guaranteed Student Loan
8. Veteran's and Social Security Benefits
9. Aid to Families with Dependent Children

Higher Education grants are awarded after the above aid is determined and reported by the student's college of choice to the Education Department on the "Student Needs Assessment" (SNA) form. The Squaxin Island Tribe's Higher Education Program award amount is based on the completed SNA form after all other sources of aid have been applied. All applications go through a review process by the Squaxin Island Tribe's Education Commission to determine eligibility for funding, however, the funding amount will not exceed the quarterly funding amount approved by the Education Commission for two and four year colleges or universities. In some cases the students funding may be less than the quarterly funding amount approved by the Education Commission for two and four year colleges. The college will invoice the Education Department for tuition, required class fees, and required books. The Finance Department will submit payment to the college for the amount of the invoice.

## **A. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

Applicants must meet the following requirements in order to be considered for assistance through the Squaxin Island Tribe's Higher Education Program.

1. Must be enrolled member of the Squaxin Island Tribe.
2. Must be in need of financial assistance after all other sources of funding have been pursued and exhausted.
3. Must meet all deadlines as outlined in the policy and procedures and yearly calendar.
4. Must submit all requested documents needed for student's educational file by the designated due dates.
5. Must be enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a federally accredited community college or university which offers a Bachelor's Degree or courses transferable to a Bachelor's Degree program.
6. Must have a High School Diploma or GED Certificate.

## **B. STUDENT CIRCUMSTANCES**

1. **Married Students:** Higher Education Program funding will be awarded to married students for college-related expenses only. The Tribe will not be expected to bear the full cost of maintaining a family.
2. **Summer Quarter Students:** Depending on the availability of funds, current students may be funded for summer quarter upon receipt of written request and summer quarter class schedule. Requests for summer quarter funding must be received by the Education Department on or before May 15 of the current school year.
3. **Full-Time Undergraduate Students:** Students may be funded for a total of up to five years (15 quarters or 10 semesters) to complete a Bachelor's degree.
4. **Vocational Students:** Students interested in a certified vocational program may be funded through the Tribe's Higher Education Program as if the student were receiving a two year degree, upon Education Commission approval. Vocational Education students will receive up to the quarterly funding amount approved by the Education Commission for a two year college. The Vocational School must be federally accredited.
5. **On-Line Programs:** Students interested in an on-line program may be funded through the Tribe's Higher Education Program for a two or four year degree, upon Education Commission approval. On-Line Education students will receive up to the quarterly funding amount approved by the Education Commission for a two or four year college. The on-line school must be federally accredited.
6. **Out of State Colleges:** Applications from students electing to attend an out of state college will be evaluated on the basis of the anticipated financial support from within the college. Out of State Education students will receive up to the quarterly funding amount approved by the Education Commission for a two or four year college, whether attending an in or out of state college.
7. **Private Colleges:** Applications from students electing to attend a private college will be considered. Private College Education students will receive

up to the quarterly funding amount approved by the Education Commission for a two or four year college, whether attending a private or public college.

### **C. FUNDING PRIORITY**

Each year the Education Commission establishes a budget limitation for all Higher Education Programs based on available funding. The following is the program priority in providing financial assistance to students who are:

- a. Continuing full-time undergraduate students;
- b. New full-time undergraduate students;
- c. Part-time students;
- d. Continuing or new students who have failed to meet all required tribal and college deadlines.

Eligibility conditions are as follows:

- a. Meet the dates and the criteria set in the guidelines.
- b. Show a willingness to work towards a goal;
- c. And maintain a GPA of 2.0

### **D. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

Applicants will be required to submit the following information to the Tribe's Education Department prior to being considered for financial assistance through the Tribe's Higher Education Program:

1. Higher Education Program Application: This application must be filled out completely, signed, and dated by the deadline date listed on the calendar.
2. Financial Aid Form (FAFSA): The Education Department must receive a copy of the completed, signed, and electronically submitted Financial Aid Form (FAFSA). Applicant is responsible for sending a copy of the FAFSA to the Tribe's Education Department by April 1, for fall quarter funding.
3. College Financial Aid Application: Students must complete and apply for all available college-based aid. The Tribe's financial assistance contribution will be awarded based upon the recommendation of the financial aid officer at the applicable college and through a review by the Education Commission. The college's financial aid officer cannot recommend an award until a completed FAFSA application is on file in the college financial aid office.
4. Completed and signed Student Needs Assessment from the College Financial Aid office. This form is faxed to the College by the Education Department. The College completes the SNA form and returns the form to the Education Department.
5. Transcripts: A high school diploma or GED certificate must be included with your Higher Education application. If college was attended previously, submission of previous college transcripts is required.
6. Proof of Tribal Enrollment: Applicant must request from the Tribe's Enrollment Clerk (432-3888), a copy of the students enrollment certificate.

7. Letter of Intent: A letter addressed to the Education Commission explaining the applicant's educational plans and goals.
8. Completed and signed Memorandum of Agreement Form.
9. Completed and signed Education Information Sheet.
10. Completed and signed Information Release Form.
11. Acceptance letter from the college or university student will be attending.
12. Class schedule showing which quarter, individual classes, and credits that student is enrolled in. Class schedule must show the college and student name.

\*\*The students funding award will not be released to the college until all above required paperwork is in the students higher education file. It is the sole responsibility of the student to provide the Education Department with all required information outlined in the Higher Education Application.

#### **E. RENEWAL APPLICATION PROCESS FOR CONTINUING STUDENTS**

Applications from continuing students will be given funding priority. Those individuals desiring to continue with their college or vocational education the following year will be required to follow the procedures outlined below:

1. Renewal of Higher Education Grant application: In order for the Higher Education Commission to be aware of the intention to continue in school, students must complete a renewal application by August 1, of each calendar year.
2. Financial Aid Form (FAFSA): Each year the continuing student must also complete and submit to the Higher Education Coordinator a FAFSA by April 1. This form must be on file in the Education office before an award will be considered and determined.
3. College Financial Aid Applications: Continuing students must complete and apply for all available college-based aid each year. The Tribe may continue providing financial assistance based on the recommendation by the financial aid officer at the college of attendance. The financial aid officer is not able to make this recommendation to the Tribe until a completed financial aid application and the FAFSA results are in the students financial aid file in the college office.
4. Transcripts/Grades: The Tribe's Education office must receive a current college transcript/grades prior to a student being considered for a renewal grant. The transcript/grades must be included with the renewal application. There may be an exception to this if all quarterly grade reports are present in the Education Office.
5. Submit Completed Applications To:  
Squaxin Island Tribe  
SE 70 Squaxin Lane  
Shelton, WA 98584  
ATTN: Mandy Valley

**F. APPLICATION REVIEW (Yearly & Quarterly Procedures)**

<b>Documents Required</b>	<b>First Time Applicant</b>	<b>Renewal Applicant</b>	<b>Quarterly</b>
Memorandum of Commitment	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Education Information Sheet	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
Information Release Form	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
Financial Aid Form (FAFSA)	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
Student Needs Assessment	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
College Financial Aid Applications	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
High School Diploma/GED	<b>X</b>		
Proof of Tribal Enrollment	<b>X</b>		
Letter of Acceptance for Admission	<b>X</b>	<b>If transferring</b>	
Class Schedule	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
College Transcripts/Grades	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Letter of Intent to Ed. Commission	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
Tuition & Book Receipts	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>

**G. FILING DATE**

Applications must be received by the Education Commission by the deadline dates listed on the yearly calendar for each quarter. Application must state which quarters the student will be attending classes.

**H. DETERMINATION OF GRANT AWARD AND PAYMENT SCHEDULE**

The amount of the award is based upon demonstrated financial need (Student Needs Assessment Form) and the recommendation of the financial aid officer from the appropriate college. The Tribe’s Education Department will compile all relevant student information to present to the Squaxin Island Education Commission. The Commission will meet quarterly, by phone poll, or through email to review student application files and awards.

Upon finding that the applicant is a full time student and is eligible for financial assistance through the Tribe’s Higher Education Program, the Education Commission shall grant quarterly funding amount approved at the beginning of the school year, which when combined with other resources, shall not exceed the applicant’s educational budget as determined by the College Financial Aid Officer (Student Needs Assessment Form). The budget is composed of the following categories of expenses, however, at this time the Higher Education grant can only be used for tuition, required class fees, and required books:

1. Tuition and books;
2. Required class fees and supplies;
3. Room and board;
4. Allowable educational expenses.

Upon finding the applicant is a part time student (less than 12 credits) and is eligible for financial assistance through the Tribe's Higher Education Program, the Education Commission can only consider the costs of tuition, required fees, required books and supplies in determining the amount to be awarded to the student. Students will be funded for a total of up to five (5) years to complete their educational goals. **(15 quarters or 10 semesters)**

Students determined to be eligible for financial assistance will receive a copy of their Award Notification at the mailing address indicated on the application form. The award notification will be sent out at the beginning of the year. The funding amount will remain the same unless you are notified in writing or the amount of credits the student is enrolled in drops below 12 credits.

Awards will be determined annually but are issued at the beginning of each quarter through the college Financial Aid Office. After the Education Commission has made a funding determination for the student, an agreement letter will be faxed to the college cashier, financial aid office, and book store if applicable. The college will invoice the Education Department for tuition, required class fees, and required books. The Education Department will process the payment through the Tribe's Finance Department. The Finance Department will pay what the college or university has billed for that quarter. In some instances that amount may be less than the quarterly funding amount approved by the Education Commission. The payment will not exceed the quarterly funding amount approved by the Education commission for a two or four year college. The check will be mailed directly to the college. The college will post payment to your student account for tuition, required class fees, and required books, any amount that may be left over will be returned to the Squaxin Island Tribe.

\*In the event that an institution has stated or implied that allocated state or federal funds will be revoked upon receipt of tribal aid, a check may be issued directly to the student with the following provisions:

- 1) The student will be required to sign a compliance form with the Squaxin Island Education Department before the funds can be released.
- 2) The student must submit all receipts (tuition, required class fees, required books) to the Education Department within in three days of purchase.
- 3) Funds may be used for tuition, required class fees and required book expenses only.

Should the student not comply with the above provisions, the student will refund the tribe in full before being considered for future Higher Education funding from the Education Commission.

\*Please note that if the student's address changes, the Education Department must be notified in writing immediately by the student. The Education Department sends out notices to Higher Education student quarterly, it is imperative that up to date address and contact information be in the student's educational file at all times.

\*Awards are made based on the availability of funds and review of student funding priority, student unmet need as determined by the school and Student Needs Assessment form and student/family contribution to their education. Higher Education students will receive up to the quarterly funding amount approved by the Education Commission for a two or four year college.

### **I. SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARDS**

In recognition of a student receiving their AA, BA, or MA degree, a student may receive a monetary award, as determined by the Squaxin Island Tribal Council. This is at the discretion of Tribal Council the monetary awards will be given out one time per year at the annual Sgwi-gwi celebration in June. Please be aware that proof of degree must be sent to the Education Department on or before June 1 to be considered for the award. If the student receives their degree after the June 1 deadline the student will receive their award in June at the next Sgwi-gwi celebration.

### **J. DISAPPROVAL OF GRANT AWARDS**

A grant application can be disapproved or reduced for any of the following reasons (however not limited to):

1. Failure to meet Education Commission deadline dates;
2. Incomplete or missing Higher Education grant forms (Memorandum of Commitment, Information Release, Education Information);
3. Insufficient grand funds;
4. Failure to make application for college based financial aid;
5. Failure to complete a yearly FAFSA form by the required date;
6. Not accepted by college;
7. Maximum period of eligibility for grant is reached;
8. No financial need is demonstrated;
9. Failure to complete the required number of credits per term with the required grade point average.
10. Failure to provide verification of information when requested (i.e. household income, parent and/or student tax information, etc.).
11. Failure to turn in receipts for tuition, class fees, and books, if purchased by the Education Commission.
12. Purchasing equipment, books, and supplies that are not required by the college the student is attending.

### **K. REFUND OF GRANT AWARDS**

When a recipient of a grant award from the Education Commission does not enroll, withdraws, drops, or is suspended from an institution, a full refund of the grant will be made to the Tribe. Failure to reimburse the full grant award will result in denial of future funding requests until full grant reimbursement has been made. The student may make a request in writing to the Education Commission and Finance Department for a repayment plan. The student may also pay for a quarter of school and books on their own, the amount must be the same amount as the grant the student was funded. Students must bring in a copy of receipts for tuition, books, and grades to be placed in the student's education file as proof of reimbursement.



At this time Higher Education Grant funds can only be used for direct education expenses such as college tuition, required class fees, and required books.

#### **L. ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANT CONTINUATION**

Grant recipients will remain eligible for continued awards for the approved school year, providing funds exist, and the student;

1. Submit term grade reports **within 30 days of the end of each quarter.**
2. Submit tuition and book receipts **within 30 days of the end of each quarter.**
3. Complete a minimum of 12 credits each term, which are degree, related. Credits taken over the minimum of 12 are the choice of the student.
4. Maintain a 2.0 grade point average;
5. Must meet all required Education Commission deadlines set forth in the Policy and Procedures as well as the Higher Education Calendar, which is attached to all Higher Education Application Forms.

#### **M. GRANT PROBATION AND SUSPENSION**

All grant recipients will continue to be eligible for financial assistance through the Squaxin Island Tribe for as long as funds exist and academic and other requirements identified for this program are met.

A grant recipient who does not meet the minimum academic and other requirements under this program will, upon recommendation from the Education Commission, be placed on financial probation for the following term. The student will then have one quarter to meet the minimum academic requirements (12 transfer, degree related credit hours with a 2.0 GPA) before being placed on grant suspension. This probation notice will be in written form signed by the student and the Education Department with a copy forwarded to the Financial Aid Officer at the college or university.

A grant recipient on financial probation who fails to meet the minimum academic requirements set forth in the signed Student Probation Form will be suspended from the Tribe's Higher Education Program and will no longer be eligible for financial assistance for the remainder of the academic school year. The student may apply for funding again at the beginning of the following school year, which is fall quarter. If the student has maintained a 2.0 GPA but has not earned 12 credits, the Education Commission will reduce the funding level. The student will be notified of the Education Commission's decision in writing. This notification will clearly identify the reasons for the decision and explain the process through which the student may appeal the decision. A copy of the grant suspension notification will also be forwarded to the Financial Aid Office of the student's college or university.

## **N. MAXIMUM PERIOD OF ELIGIBILITY FOR GRANTS**

Undergraduate grant recipients will be eligible to grant awards for a maximum of 5 years or 15 quarters or 10 semesters to complete up to one Bachelor's Degree. This includes all Higher Education students. At this time the Squaxin Island Education Commission is not able to fund more that (1) one Bachelor Degree. The Education Department staff will not have the authority or discretion to waiver from the policies of the program.

### **Part-Time Student Eligibility Clause:**

Additional funding may be available for required classes on a case by case basis. Students will need to submit a letter to the Education Commission outlining how classes will fit into their degree. Each case will be reviewed by the Education Commission.

## **O. APPEALS**

An applicant who has completed a grant application and is denied funding may within 5 days of receiving notice of denial, appeal the Education Commission's decision. The appeal will be in writing, addressed to the Education Commission, and will set forth the reason(s) why the applicant is appealing the decision.

Within 5 days of receipt of an appeal, the Education Commission will set a date to review the case. This Education Commission hearing must occur within 30 days of receipt of the written appeal. At or before the hearing, the student will be allowed to present justification for reconsideration.

## **P. PETITION**

Student may petition the Education Commission in writing for reconsideration of grant funding during the school year.