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Introduction

Freehorse Family Wellness Society (FFWS) is a non-profit organization that administers a post secondary funding program on behalf of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). This program is run in accordance with the Post Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) and University and College Entrance Preparation Program (UCEP) Policies of INAC.

The Post Secondary Funding Program assists students from various Alberta First Nations whose status is a result of Bill C-31. Alberta residents from Nunavut and the Northwest Territories with Indian Treaty Status or Inuit Status are also eligible under our Post Secondary Funding Program.

FFWS is committed to quality administration of a program that is equitable, considers the needs of individual students, and works within policy and budgetary restrictions.

About this Handbook

Our Student Handbook was developed:

1. To provide information regarding who we are, what we do, and for whom we provide services;
2. To assist eligible students with the application process;
3. To provide approved students with important information regarding sponsorship from FFWS.

This is the most current edition of the handbook and it is based on all previous editions. It is YOUR responsibility to read and understand the most current edition of the handbook. Please address any questions you may have to FFWS staff.

Any changes made to the program will be noted in newsletters throughout the year and mailed to students as necessary. It is important that students read and understand the newsletters, as the information provided may affect current procedures.

FFWS Office Hours:

Monday to Friday: 8:30 am to 4:30 pm

Closed: 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm for lunch

Closed on weekends and all statutory holidays

1. Eligibility

a. Personal Eligibility

FFWS is contracted to provide funding services to students who meet specific eligibility criteria. FFWS is not an alternative funding agency.

Students eligible to apply for funding are those who answer yes to ALL three of the following questions:

1. Have you been a resident of Canada for the last twelve consecutive months?
2. Do you have either Indian or Inuit Status?
3. Are you either a, b, c **or** d:
 - a. A status Indian affiliated with one of the following Alberta-based First Nations AND not eligible for funding from that First Nation due to having regained status as a result of Bill C-31:

Bearspaw	Frog Lake	Saddle Lake
Beaver	Goodfish Lake	Sawridge
Beaver Lake	Goodstoney (Wesley)	Sucker Creek
Blood Tribe	Kapowe' No	Swan River
Chiniki	Kehewin	Tall Cree
Cold Lake	Long Lake	Tsuu T'ina
Driftpile	Peigan	

What is Bill C-31?

In 1985, Bill C-31 amended the Indian Act. As a result of this amendment, people who had previously lost their Indian status under old registry regulations are/can be reinstated under the Bill C-31 (reinstated individuals are sometimes referred to as 'Bill C-31'). If you are registered as an Indian under the following sections of the Indian Act, your status is considered to be a result of Bill C-31:

6(1)(c) 6(1)(d) 6(1)(e) 6(1)(f) 6(2)
Status under sections 6(1)(a) and 6(1)(b) identify 'regular' status.

There are a few different ways to identify if your status is a result of the Bill C-31 amendment (you cannot tell by looking at your status card):

- You have a letter of reinstatement from DIAND/INAC.
- You have contacted your First Nation and they have informed you.
- You have contacted the Registries department at INAC and they have informed you.
- You have submitted an Authorization of Information Release form to FFWS.
- You were born after April 17, 1985.

b. Registered in affiliation with Heart Lake First Nation, Michel Band/Alberta General List, Smith’s Landing First Nation, or Lubicon Lake First Nation.

c. An Alberta resident (living in Alberta for 12 consecutive months prior to attending a post secondary program) with Inuit status and not eligible for funding from the Government of the Northwest Territories or Nunavut student financial assistance programs due to residency.

d. An Alberta resident (living in Alberta for 12 consecutive months prior to attending a post secondary program) with Indian status registered to a NWT-based First Nation and not eligible for funding from the Government of NWT Student Financial Assistance program due to residency.

b. Program Eligibility

FFWS only sponsors students who are enrolled in programs eligible for sponsorship under the PSSSP and UCEP policies. This means eligibility to apply to FFWS for funding is also based on program eligibility.

Students applying for sponsorship under the PSSSP (for post secondary programs) may only be eligible for sponsorship if the program meets ALL THREE of the following criteria:

1. You will be attending a degree, diploma, or certificate granting institution recognized/accredited by a province as a post secondary institution. This includes institutions affiliated with or delivering accredited post secondary programs by arrangement with a recognized post secondary institution. **Eligible institutions must be on the INAC approved post secondary institutions list.**
2. Your program of studies is offered by a recognized post secondary institution and has completion of Grade 12 as a mandatory entrance/admission requirement.
3. Your program of studies is at least one academic year (eight months) in length and leads to a certificate, diploma, or degree.

UCEP Eligibility

UCEP stands for University and College Entrance Preparation program. These upgrading programs are offered by post secondary institutions to enable students to gain the academic level required for entrance to degree and diploma programs. FFWS recognizes that some programs are not specifically referred to as UCEP when they provide the same results. Academic upgrading-type programs may also fall under the UCEP category.

To be eligible to receive support for a UCEP program:

1. Students must qualify for admission to the UCEP/upgrading program under the mature student admission requirements of the post secondary institution.
2. Students must be able to achieve, through the UCEP/upgrading program, the academic level required for entrance to a post secondary program (Grade 12 equivalency) within one academic year. This will need to be confirmed, in writing, by a program advisor at the selected institution.

3. Students may not receive funding for an UCEP/upgrading program if they have previously or are currently enrolled in a post secondary program of studies.

2. Sponsorship

a. Levels of Sponsorship

University and College Preparation Program (UCEP):

Eligible sponsorship months: 10 months maximum

Eligible books and supplies allowance: \$500 per year

Level 1 - Certificate or Diploma:

Eligible sponsorship months: 24 months maximum

Eligible books and supplies allowance: \$600 per year

Note: If a student was enrolled in a Level 1 diploma program and transfers into a Level 2 degree program, their Level 1 diploma months will be transferred to Level 2 degree months if these courses are now being applied to the degree.

Level CE - Continuing Education Certificate:

Eligible for part time funding (tuition, books and supplies)

Eligible books and supplies allowance: program dependant

Note: Not eligible to students who have enrolled in a Level 2 program. Students are only eligible to complete one continuing education certificate with FFWS. FFWS will only provide funding for mandatory courses required for the certificate program. If a student is funded for a continuing education certificate and does not follow through with the program (does not complete the courses or does not complete the program), the student will be placed in an overpayment for the tuition paid by FFWS.

Level 2 - Undergraduate Degree:

Eligible sponsorship months: 40 months maximum
Eligible books and supplies allowance: \$800 per year

Note: Students registered in a 3 year degree program will only be eligible for a maximum 32 months of full time sponsorship at Level 2.

Level P - Prerequisite Courses for Level 2AD or Level 3:

Eligible for part time funding (tuition, books and supplies)
Eligible books and supplies allowance: program dependant
Maximum tuition support: 5 mandatory courses

Note: FFWS will only provide funding for mandatory courses required for admission to a specific Level 2AD or Level 3 program. If a student is funded for the prerequisite courses for this specific program and does not follow through with the program (does not complete the courses or does not apply to the desired program), the student may be placed in an overpayment for the tuition paid by FFWS.

Level 2AD - After Degree:

Eligible after degrees: Bachelor of Education, Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Bachelor of Laws
Eligible sponsorship months: official length of the program
Eligible books and supplies allowance: program dependant

Note: Students must have completed an undergraduate degree (Level 2 program) prior to applying for sponsorship for a Level 2AD program. For funding purposes, the official length of the program will be defined as the minimum number of months required to complete the program.

Level 3:

Professional Degree (i.e. MD)

Eligible sponsorship months: official length of the program

Eligible books and supplies allowance: \$700 per year

Note: For funding purposes, the official length of the program will be defined as the minimum number of months required to complete the program.

OR

Masters Degree

Eligible sponsorship months: 16 months maximum

Eligible books and supplies allowance: \$700 per year

PhD Degree

Eligible sponsorship months: 16 months maximum

Eligible books and supplies allowance: \$700 per year

Note: 8 additional months of support are available at either the Masters Degree or PhD level for a combined maximum of 40 months.

b. Important Information about Sponsorship

- Students are only eligible to complete one program at each level, whether funded as a full time or a part time student, subject to utilization of months. This also applies to students who have previously completed a program of studies with or without sponsorship from FFWS.
- Students who are being sponsored for a Level 1, 2 or 3 program may be eligible to take an upgrading course, if necessary for their program. However, credits from upgrading will not be counted toward the student's full time status.

- Students who have completed a Level 2 program, with or without support from FFWS, are ineligible for Level 1 or Level CE program support.
- Students who have completed a Level 3 program, with or without support from FFWS, are ineligible for Level 1, Level CE, Level 2, Level P and Level 2AD program support.
- Part time students are eligible to receive support for tuition, books and supplies only.
- Students who have not completed their program and have utilized the maximum number of full time sponsorship months may be eligible to receive part time sponsorship (tuition, books and supplies only) for the remainder of their program.
- Students must reapply for sponsorship each academic year.
- All students receiving full time sponsorship must be attending **in class** courses. Exceptions may be students registered in a full time practicum or graduate students working on their thesis.
- Courses taken by distance or via the internet may not be eligible for full time funding. These courses may not be counted toward a full time course load.
- FFWS does not pay for repeated courses previously paid for by FFWS.
- FFWS does not pay for audited courses. These courses may not be counted toward a full time course load.
- Students who withdraw from a course(s) must ensure they maintain a full time course load for the entire designated sponsorship period to continue receiving a living allowance.

- Students who choose to withdraw from their program of studies, or who have been withdrawn from their program of studies by their faculty or institution will be required to sit out for one year with FFWS. When the student reapplies they will return as Priority 6. If and when a Priority 6 student is being considered for sponsorship, the student may be required to meet with a review panel to discuss their application for funding. The review panel will consist of the funding officer handling the application, the program supervisor, and possibly a FFWS board member.
- Students will not be reimbursed for costs incurred while not receiving sponsorship from FFWS (i.e. previous years of education). FFWS does not provide retroactive funding.
- Due to finance deadlines, students whose applications are approved late may not receive monthly living allowance deposits for months prior to approval.

3. Application Process

a. Deadlines

Sponsorship application forms must be submitted to FFWS by midnight (Mountain Standard Time) of the application deadline dates. Be aware that providing incomplete information on the application form will result in the application being sent back to the student to be completed and resubmitted by the deadline.

The deadlines for applications are as follows:

Fall/Winter Term (September - April/June): **JUNE 15th**

Winter Term (January - April/June): **OCTOBER 15th**

Spring/Summer Intersession (May - August): **MARCH 15th**

Printable application forms are available on our website

b. Priority Structure

This is the number assigned to your application based on the transcripts you provide:

Priority 1 Continuing Students: Students who are directly out of high school and are applying for a post secondary program of studies, or are continuing current post secondary studies (i.e. second year of a two-year program).

Priority 2 Deferred Students: Students who applied for sponsorship for a post secondary program of studies for the previous academic year, but were denied due to lack of funds. Only students whose applications for sponsorship were completed on time and eligible for the most recent June 15th deadline may be deferred. Students are to attach their “deferred” letter to the application. Intersession applications cannot be deferred if the student re-applies for the Fall term.

Priority 3 Returning Students: Post secondary students who have received previous sponsorship from FFWS and have interrupted their post secondary studies for more than one academic term and are returning to their studies.

Priority 4 New Students: Students applying for a post secondary program of studies whose last period of studies was high school, and more than one term has passed. These students have never received sponsorship from FFWS.

Priority 5 UCEP/Upgrading Students: Students applying for a UCEP program or upgrading at a grade 12 level and who will be continuing on to an eligible post secondary program.

Priority 6 a) Probationary Students: Students who have withdrawn on their own from their program of studies or students who have been withdrawn from their program of studies by their faculty or institution, have sat out for one year with FFWS, and are now re-applying to go back to school.

Priority 6 b) Students with Overpayment exceeding \$1500: A student previously funded by FFWS, who has incurred an overpayment exceeding \$1500, and does not have an active repayment plan in effect.

c. Late Applications

- FFWS may accept applications for Fall/Winter after the deadline, however these applications are considered late. Late applications are immediately waitlisted and may be reviewed only if funds become available. Students may not submit an appeal if their application is late and is not approved for funding.
- Late applications for the Fall session will not be transferred to either the Winter or Spring/Summer Intersession terms. Students must apply for each intended session they wish to attend.
- Students planning to attend the Winter term should apply for the June 15th deadline. Do not wait for the Winter deadline. Applications submitted for the Winter term will only be reviewed if funds are available.

d. Intersession (Spring/Summer) Applications

Students interested in taking courses during the Intersession 2010 term (May 2010 to August 2010) may apply to FFWS for sponsorship. Students must meet all personal eligibility requirements and programs must meet all program eligibility requirements outlined in this handbook. Full or Part time status for Intersession funding will be determined by FFWS Intersession funding criteria.

Applications must be received by the March 15, 2010 deadline, as late applications may not be considered. The traditional priority structure will not apply and applications will be processed in order of completeness, however sponsorship will still be budget dependent.

Students may apply for full time or part time sponsorship. Any sponsorship months used during the Intersession 2010 term will be counted towards the total utilized months.

e. Application Package

A complete application package contains the following:

- a. Post Secondary Student Support Program Application for Sponsorship
- b. 14th Edition FFWS Post Secondary Funding Program Student Handbook
- c. Authorization of Information Release Form. Complete this form only if your Indian status is considered to be a result of Bill C-31.

4. Required Documentation

Students may be asked to submit the following documents:

Banking Information: Void cheque or deposit slip for direct deposit purposes. This is not optional.

Photocopy of your Indian registry status card: (front and back must be legible). If you are of Inuit status, you must provide proof (Certificate of Enrolment).

Photocopy of Health Care Card(s): Provide a photocopy of your health care card. If you have dependants and/or a dependant spouse, submit copies of their health care cards.

Completed Authorization of Information Release Form: Fill out this form if your Indian status is considered to be a result of Bill C-31.

A course registration with your name and/or identification number printed on it from your institution: A photocopy is acceptable.

Most recent transcripts: These must be official transcripts.

Tuition fee assessment: This must be for the academic year you are applying for. You can either provide a copy of your registration detailing the actual costs, a program brochure, or a photocopied page of the school calendar that identifies the fees.

If you are from NWT or Nunavut: A letter from the Government of the NWT or Nunavut student financial assistance programs indicating you are ineligible for funding due to residency.

Other: You may be required to provide additional information as requested by your funding officer. Any requests for documents will be made in writing.

Student Authorization of Information Release Form (blue): This form allows FFWS to obtain information from your institution regarding your registration status and attendance. This form will be provided to you once your application has been received by FFWS.

**FFWS DOES NOT ACCEPT DOCUMENTS BY FAX OR
EMAIL**

**ORIGINALS OR PHOTOCOPIES MUST BE SUBMITTED BY
MAIL OR IN PERSON**

5. Application Review

The application review begins one week after the deadline. Applications are reviewed in order of priority number and their order of completeness.

It takes 4 to 6 weeks to complete the application process. Students will be notified of their application status by mail only. Information will NOT be provided over the phone or by email.

Sponsorship is never guaranteed. Students are encouraged to seek alternative funding in addition to applying to FFWS for sponsorship. Students should not wait until receiving a decision from FFWS to seek alternative funding. FFWS will make every effort to notify students if their application is ineligible as soon as possible.

Here are some suggestions for alternative funding:

Student Finance (Student Loan)

Scholarships and Bursaries

Human Resources and Social Development Canada

For more resources and suggestions, students should inquire at the student services or counselling centre of the institution they plan to attend.

6. Approved Students

Students will be notified of their approval by mail. It is important for students to review all documents sent to ensure all the information is correct. Any changes to an approved application must be reported to FFWS immediately, as changes in financial commitments may not be possible later in the year.

If at any point circumstances change, students are responsible for notifying FFWS immediately. FFWS will not assume responsibility if a student does not receive correspondence due to incorrect or outdated contact information.

Examples of possible changes, which students must report to FFWS in the form of a written and signed notification, include but are not limited to:

- address/phone number
- email address
- program/institution
- number of dependents
- start/end date
- attendance status
- marital status
- addition/deletion of courses
- banking information

Students must report any other funding they receive during the sponsorship period to FFWS. Students should also notify other

funding agencies (federal or provincial) of the details of their FFWS sponsorship.

Documents Due

FFWS requires certain documents to be submitted throughout the sponsorship period of an approved student. These documents will be requested on the approval letter or by subsequent letter and will be due by a specific deadline. If a required document is not submitted by the deadline, the student's sponsorship will be placed on hold. This means that the student will not receive their next monthly deposit and their tuition will not be paid until the document is received. Sponsorship will be cancelled if the document is not received by one month after the initial deadline.

Course Registrations

Winter course registrations are due by December 15th of each academic year. Photocopies and faxes will be accepted in order to accommodate this deadline only.

Transcripts

Fall transcripts are due by January 20th of each academic year. Photocopies and faxes will be accepted in order to accommodate this deadline only.

Sponsorship Letters

Letters regarding an approved student's sponsorship with FFWS may be written following submission of a signed request by the student. Letters will take 2-3 days to process.

Tax Receipts

For the 2009 tax year, FFWS will not be required to issue T4-A tax receipts to post secondary student receiving grants. Be advised, you must not claim your tuition on your taxes, even if you receive a T2202 tax receipt from your school, as your tuition was paid by FFWS. Direct any other tax questions you may have to a tax professional. FFWS will notify you if any changes occur as per direction from Revenue Canada and/or INAC.

a. Monthly Living Allowance

The monthly living allowance is intended to supplement the costs of daily living, including transportation, food, shelter, utilities and daycare. The high rental allowance is budget dependent and may not be given if the budget does not allow for it. Living allowance rates are determined by the following chart:

Allowance Category	Monthly Allowance	High Rental Areas
S1 Single student living with employed parent	\$350	N/A
S2 Single student	\$900	N/A
M1 Married student	\$750	N/A
+ 1 dependent	\$950	N/A
+ 2 dependents	\$1130	N/A
+ 3 dependents	\$1355	N/A
+ each additional dependent	+\$75	N/A
M2 Married student with dependant spouse	\$995	N/A
+ 1 dependent	\$1095	N/A
+ 2 dependents	\$1305	\$1405
+ 3 dependents	\$1505	\$1655
+ each additional dependent	+\$75	+\$75
S3 Single parent		
+ 1 dependent	\$1195	N/A
+ 2 dependents	\$1405	\$1505
+ 3 dependents	\$1605	\$1755
+ each additional dependent	+\$75	+\$75

Only married students with a dependent spouse and two or more dependents and single parents with two or more dependents, whose place of study is located in high rental areas, are eligible for the monthly living allowance for high rental areas. The high rental areas will be identified and revised annually by the department using the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's rental survey. Regions that do not have a city in the survey will compare community rents to the nearest city in the survey. For example, in 1989, Saskatchewan communities will be compared to Calgary and Yukon communities will be compared to Vancouver.

Note: To claim your spouse as a dependent, your spouse's previous year total income, as stated on their tax return, must be less than \$10,320.00.

Deposits

Monthly living allowances will be deposited directly into student bank accounts on or around the 1st of each month. No advances will be given for monthly living allowances. FFWS does not issue cheques. Electronic Funds Transfers (EFT) are released into student accounts once a month. All students are responsible for submitting accurate banking information to FFWS. Requests for changes to allowance categories must be made by the 15th of the month in order for the change to be reflected in the next month's deposit. Any receipts must be submitted by the 15th of each month in order to receive reimbursements with the next month's deposit.

If your monthly deposit seems unusual, contact FFWS immediately. Students may be held responsible for repaying any accidental over-deposits.

b. Books and Supplies

The amount that appears on the approval letter is the amount approved for the whole year. Half of this amount may be deposited at the beginning of each term.

A basic amount for each level will be resourced as follows:

UCEP	\$500 per year
LEVEL I	\$600 per year
LEVEL II	\$800 per year
LEVEL III	\$700 per year

Part time students will receive books and supplies support relative to their course load - \$100.00 per course (books) & \$25.00 per term (supplies). For students whose institutions provide the books to them, such as Yellowhead Tribal College, Blue Quills First Nations College, or Athabasca University, their supplies rate will be \$50 per term for full time students and \$25 per term for part time students.

FFWS does not pay for lockers, parking passes, backpacks, uniforms, day planners, or bus passes (unless a mandatory fee). FFWS will not cover the cost of computers, software, Internet connections or other equipment.

Additional funds may be available for mandatory books subject to submission of **a written request for reimbursement, along with all original receipts and required books lists** to FFWS by the respective deadlines:

- Fall term: November 15
- Winter term: March 15
- Spring term: May 15
- Summer term: July 15

Additional funds may also be available for supplies. Each request for a supplies reimbursement will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Original supplies receipts must be submitted together with mandatory books receipts and required books lists by the above deadlines. Reimbursed supplies may not include any technological equipment or expensive brand name items.

Additional funds for books/supplies are not available to students in Level 3 Masters and PhD programs or to students who choose to attend foreign institutions.

Any books/supplies reimbursement is subject to budget availability.

c. Tuition Support

Arrangements are made between FFWS and the institution to pay tuition directly to the school. Students will be informed if other arrangements have to be made.

Students are responsible for opting out of **Health and Dental plans**. At most institutions these are non-mandatory fees. **Students must opt out at the beginning of each academic term/year at most institutions**. Contact your institution for more details. FFWS will not cover these costs, as all students funded by FFWS have either Indian or Inuit status and are covered through INAC-First Nations and Inuit Health Services. This means that students who fail to opt out of Health and Dental plans will be directly responsible to their institution for the payment of these fees.

Application and registration fees may be eligible for reimbursement. Receipts must be submitted to FFWS by the above-mentioned deadlines.

Re-registration fees or late fees will not be paid by FFWS. In addition, students are responsible for advising FFWS of any changes to their financial record or outstanding fees with their institution, particularly after the initial invoice has been paid to avoid any academic or financial penalties. Students will be held responsible for any penalties incurred.

Tuition/registration/confirmation deposits must be paid by the student to the institution. The deposit may be reimbursed to the student by their institution or by FFWS but not by both. Many institutions automatically reimburse funded students their tuition deposits. FFWS will not reimburse a tuition deposit unless the institution's invoice indicates that this deposit has been applied directly to the tuition balance.

Private Institution Tuition Fees

Students who choose to register in a program offered by a private institution are only eligible to receive tuition fees equivalent to those charged by the Canadian public institution nearest to the student's place of residence at the time of application that offers a comparable program.

Foreign Institution Tuition Fees

Students registered in programs outside of Canada and who have lived in Canada for 12 months prior to applying to FFWS, will be funded as follows:

Level 1: maximum \$2500 CDN /per semester

Level 2: maximum \$3500 CDN /per semester

Level 3: maximum \$3500 CDN /per semester

If the student lived outside of Canada solely for the purpose of education the student will be deemed to be a resident of Canada. If eligible, travel support may be provided only to the Canadian border.

Students attending foreign institutions are not eligible to receive reimbursements for additional expenses for books and supplies. In addition, students attending foreign institutions are not eligible to receive support for any administrative costs associated with studying in a foreign country (i.e. student visas).

Other Tuition Costs

Correspondence and Internet courses are eligible for tuition, books and supplies support only. No living allowance will be provided regardless of course load.

Articling or Work Terms that are required to become licensed or certified are not eligible for full time sponsorship.

Practicums required for the completion of a degree, diploma, or certificate may be eligible for full time sponsorship if the institution considers the practicum as full time credit and the practicum is unpaid.

Co-op students will not receive a living allowance during their paid work term, however they will be considered full time students during course-work terms and their files will be kept active during the work term.

Students may be eligible to apply for costs of **tutorials, initial professional certification** (i.e. teaching license), and **entrance exam** fees (i.e. LSAT). Contact FFWS for more information.

Non-mandatory conferences are not eligible for sponsorship.

Mandatory conferences or workshops need to be included with the initial application. Students must provide documentation stating that the conference or workshop is mandatory as well as a breakdown of costs associated with the event. If mandatory conferences are held outside of Canada, travel support may be provided only to the Canadian border. Funding for mandatory conferences and workshops is budget dependant. Contact FFWS for more information.

d. Special Contingency

This is limited money that may be available for emergency situations. Emergency situations are defined as unplanned, unavoidable situations (such as a death in a student's immediate family) that arise during the school year and require additional funds. This money does not have to be repaid. Students should contact FFWS if they think they are eligible for special contingency funding and official documents may be requested. Students will be notified in writing if they are eligible.

7. Overpayments

A student may be placed in an overpayment with FFWS for a number of reasons that include but are not limited to:

- change in student status from full time to part time;
- withdrawal from program of studies;
- tuition payment for unauthorized repeated courses;
- errors or omissions made by FFWS;
- providing false information to FFWS.

It is in a student's best interest to notify FFWS of any changes or errors pertaining to their sponsorship immediately.

Students should attempt to pay back their overpayment in a timely manner as failure to do so may affect their ability to receive future sponsorship from FFWS.

8. Appeal Process

Students should attempt to solve problems with their funding officer. If a solution cannot be reached, the student may request to speak with the program supervisor. Although students are not discouraged from appealing, it should be a last resort after going through the established chain of command. Students may not appeal decisions made by FFWS to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

There is an appeal process in place if a student feels a procedural decision was unfair and does not reflect the policy and its objectives.

- The policy itself may not be appealed.
- Decisions based on lack of funds may not be appealed.
- Deadlines may not be appealed; they are absolutely firm. This is to ensure all applications can be assessed as quickly and as fairly as possible.

A written request to appeal must be submitted to FFWS detailing the situation. Once this letter is received, an Appeal Request form will be sent to the student with further instructions. Requests must be received within 60 days of when the decision in question was made.

The student will be informed of the date of their Appeal Hearing, at which time they will be given the opportunity to present their case to an Appeal Board. The Appeal Board will consist of a member of the FFWS Board of Directors and an impartial third party. The student's funding officer or the program supervisor may be present in an information-providing capacity only. The student may choose to have representation at the hearing, however the hearing will be of an informal nature in terms of conduct (no legal jargon). The decisions of the Appeal Board may not be appealed and may set a precedent for similar situations in the future.

9. Privacy Statement

FFWS is committed to providing our students and potential students with privacy regarding their personal and financial information. Any personal information provided to FFWS is managed according to the *Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. This means that, at the point of collection, you will be informed that your personal information is being collected, the purpose for which it is being collected, and that you have a right of access to the collected information. This privacy is extended to all schooling and financial matters if approved for sponsorship.

As part of the FFWS post secondary approval process, students must read, complete, and sign the *Student Consent to Release/Obtain Personal Information Form*. This form is used for the collection of personal information and for the purpose of managing the consent for disclosure of personal information. It allows FFWS access to information from and/or to release student information to post-secondary institutions, banks, government funding agencies, First Nations, or any other relevant organization.

No personal information will be released to anyone other than the sponsored student or one of the aforementioned organizations without specific signed consent by the student. This includes family members. Consent must be given with each sponsorship period.

Any questions regarding privacy or the handling of personal and financial information should be directed towards a funding officer of FFWS.