

Tribal Scholarship Program



Student Handbook

Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians
Tribal Scholarship Program
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Tribal Scholarship Staff

The Tribal Scholarship Program staff attempts to do everything possible to keep an effective line of communication open between students and staff members. Students are urged to contact staff members listed below for assistance concerning scholarship matters or other information needed in their college endeavors.

Scholarship OfficerTerry Ben (terry.ben@choctaw.org)
Scholarship AssistantMelanie Carson (melanie.carson@choctaw.org)
Scholarship AssistantSamuel York (samuel.york@choctaw.org)
SecretaryYolandra Hickman (yolandra.hickman@choctaw.org)
Data Entry Clerk/ReceptionistEva Sam (eva.sam@choctaw.org)
Receptionist.....Annie Isaac (annie.isaac@choctaw.org)

All staff members may be reached at 601-650-7409 or 800-446-5006.

Purpose

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians has consistently placed Education as a high priority and emphasized the importance of increasing the number of students entering and completing postsecondary educational programs. To this purpose, the Tribal Scholarship Program was established to provide scholarship funds to eligible tribal members who wish to further their education beyond the secondary level.

Since its inception, the Tribal Scholarship Program staff has endeavored to help students have a positive, meaningful college experience which leads to the successful completion of a degree. In an effort to accomplish this goal, guidelines are needed to enable students and staff to work together effectively.

The Tribal Scholarship Program will provide a copy of the Student Handbook to every Tribal Scholarship recipient in an effort to ensure that all students fully understand the policies, procedures, and operation of the Scholarship Program. This handbook is to be used in conjunction with the official Policies and Procedures adopted by the Tribal Council. The Policies and Procedures are the regulations under which the Scholarship Program is governed. The Handbook expands on those regulations and gives a more detailed explanation of what is expected of the student and what the student can expect from the Tribal Scholarship Program.

Deadline Dates

Fall Term

Full Time Students

Application Deadline	May 31 st
Supporting Documents Deadline	August 1 st

Part Time Students

Application Deadline	June 30 th
Supporting Documents Deadline	August 1 st

Winter/Spring Terms

Full Time Students

Application Deadline	October 31 st *
Supporting Documents Deadline	December 1 st

Part Time Students

Application Deadline	November 30 th *
Supporting Documents Deadline	December 1 st

Summer Term

Full Time Students

Application Deadline	March 15 th
Supporting Documents Deadline	May 1 st

Part Time Students

Application Deadline	April 15 th
Supporting Documents Deadline	May 1 st

* Deadlines for winter and spring term applications for students enrolled in institutions using the quarter/trimester system will vary depending on start date but will be approximately four weeks prior to the beginning of the term.

NO APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE DEADLINE

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Student Rights

Student Files

Tribal Scholarship students have the right to inspect and review information retained in their permanent Tribal Scholarship files. Students may submit a signed request for copies of documents in their files for themselves, other tribal programs, and/or other agencies.

Student Awards

Tribal Scholarship students have the right to be fully informed of the procedures used in computing Tribal Scholarship awards. Tribal Scholarship students have the right to possess a copy of any and all documents used in award calculation, and may submit a signed request for copies of their award calculation documents if needed for other tribal programs, and/or other agencies.

Confidentiality

Tribal Scholarship students have the right to expect confidentiality regarding financial information, academic information, personal information, grades, and other information obtained by the Tribal Scholarship Program staff.

Student Grade Point Average

Tribal Scholarship students have the right to inspect and review the grade point average calculation used in determining Satisfactory Academic Progress with the Tribal Scholarship Program.

Policies

Tribal Scholarship students have the right to possess a copy of the official Tribal Scholarship Program Policies and Procedures which have been approved by the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians Tribal Council.

Fairness

Tribal Scholarship students have the right to be treated with fairness and courtesy in all matters by the Tribal Scholarship staff.

Pre-College Counseling

Tribal Scholarship students have the right to expect Tribal Scholarship staff members to provide pre-college counseling, which includes but is not limited to, career counseling.

Student Responsibilities

Applications, Attendance, Contact Information and Miscellaneous Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of Tribal Scholarship students to submit a Tribal Scholarship application and supporting documents prior to established deadlines.

It is the responsibility of Tribal Scholarships to be familiar with Tribal Scholarship deadline dates.

It is the responsibility of Tribal Scholarship students to submit an application and all required documents to the educational institution they plan to attend. Tribal Scholarship Program staff members are available to assist the student in obtaining applications and necessary documents, but they will not complete applications for students.

It is the responsibility of Tribal Scholarship students to contact the Tribal Scholarship Program at least 3 weeks prior to the start of classes to obtain an update on the status of their scholarship if they have not been notified previously of a finalized award.

It is the responsibility of Tribal Scholarship students to provide their college telephone number, mailing address and email address to the Tribal Scholarship Program within 2 weeks after the start of classes, even if the information has not changed. The preferred method of submitting this is via email. Email addresses for staff members are listed in this handbook.

It is the responsibility of Tribal Scholarship students to attend classes regularly.

It is the responsibility of Tribal Scholarship students to notify the Tribal Scholarship Program when pre-registering for upcoming terms.

It is the responsibility of Tribal Scholarship students to notify a Tribal Scholarship Program staff member prior to withdrawing from a class or leaving school completely.

In the event that students must 'drop out' of classes or leave school completely, they are responsible for contacting the appropriate college official to properly withdraw, and submit a copy of the withdrawal documentation to the Tribal Scholarship Program. Failure to follow this procedure may jeopardize future funding.

It is the responsibility of Tribal Scholarship students who change their place of residence during a school term to notify the Tribal Scholarship Program of their new address. Additionally, such students are responsible for collecting mail from the previous address even though they have filed a change of address form with the postal service and notified the Tribal Scholarship Program.

It is the responsibility of Tribal Scholarship students to notify the Tribal Scholarship Program immediately of changes in their financial aid, e.g. Pell Grant or loans awarded after their Financial Aid Package Form is submitted to the Tribal Scholarship Program by the college. All students must understand that the Tribal Scholarship is supplemental funding. It only provides what other financial aid does not cover.

It is the responsibility of Tribal Scholarship students to thoroughly study, become familiar with, and abide by the official Tribal Scholarship Program Policies and Procedures and this Student Handbook.

Student Conduct

It is the responsibility of all Tribal Scholarship students to adhere to school policies and regulations, and to conduct themselves in a manner becoming of a member of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. Tribal Scholarship students are not only representatives of the Tribal Scholarship Program itself, they are also representatives of the Tribe and their peers.

Should a Tribal Scholarship Student be involved in any type trouble, on or off campus, the Tribal Scholarship Office will uphold the disciplinary procedures set forth by the college, university, or local policing agency. It is the students' responsibility to learn and understand the rules and laws of the school they are attending and the area in which they are living. Until more specific guidelines are established, disciplinary action within the Tribal Scholarship Program for such conduct will be handled on a case by case basis.

Counseling/Campus Visits

It is the responsibility of Tribal Scholarship students to make contact with a member of the Tribal Scholarship Staff on a regular basis. This will ensure that the staff is informed of each student's progress towards his/her degree, and enable staff members to better assist students with any problems that may arise during the school year.

Students who attend East Central Community College and Meridian Community College on a full time basis will have scheduled meeting times with a Scholarship staff member on a biweekly basis. The majority of these meetings will occur on the college campus. The purpose of the visit is **NOT** for students to simply pick up a check. The purpose of the visit **IS** to allow interaction between the staff member and the student, to give the student an opportunity to discuss his/her classes, grades, any problems the student is experiencing, other

concerns, achievements, etc., and to assist the staff member in monitoring the student's progress. The staff member is available to act as a liaison between the students, the parents, and the faculty/staff of the college.

Any ECCC or MCC student unable to meet with the Tribal Scholarship staff member on their assigned day must make other arrangements with the staff member. Those who attend other schools in Mississippi will need to make arrangements with a staff member as to a time and place to meet until arrangements are made for staff members to make regular campus visits.

For those students who do not attend college in Mississippi, a Scholarship staff member can be easily contacted by telephone and/or email, with email being the preferred method. Those students are expected to contact the office on a regular basis, so that staff members are continually updated on their progress. As time allows, staff members will make campus visits to out-of-state colleges and universities. Therefore, students must ensure that their mailing address, email address and phone numbers are always current. This will enable the Scholarship Office to notify them of possible visits.

Release of Student Information

It is the responsibility of Tribal Scholarship students to complete the required Consent to Release Student Information Form. This form, which identifies the persons/agencies who may and may not have access to their Scholarship information, is for the protection of the students. The Scholarship Program staff will only release information to persons, programs, or agencies indicated by the students themselves.

Every student must also be aware that the Tribal Scholarship Program will use information from each student's records for the purpose of reports and program management. However, none of the data will be personally identifiable, e.g. names, addresses, social security numbers, etc. The data will be used to help document current and future needs of the program. Additionally, it will help the Tribal Scholarship Staff and the Tribal Government identify changes needed for the improvement of the retention and graduation rates of all Tribal Scholarship students.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

It is the responsibility of Tribal Scholarship students to submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for each academic year. Students will need to collect a number of documents in order to file the FAFSA. These documents may include: the previous year's tax returns, W-2 forms, Social Security income received, child support information and other financial documents. Even if students did not file taxes, but did work, they will need to have either a copy of their W-2 form or know the amount of income they earned to complete the application. Depending on a student's dependency status, a student may also need to have their parent(s) or spouse's financial information as well. Although the application can be

completed in paper form and mailed through the postal service, the Tribal Scholarship staff recommends submitting it online at www.fafsa.ed.gov.

The Financial Aid Office at the college/university will use the results from the FAFSA (the Student Aid Report) to determine the appropriate Cost of Attendance (budget) that will be assigned to each student and the amount of financial aid that the student will receive for the year. The Financial Aid Administrator will then issue an award letter to the student. The Student Aid Report and the award letter from the school are two of the documents that students must submit to the Tribal Scholarship Program as part of the application process.

Please Note The Financial Aid Office uses information from the FAFSA and the student's college financial aid award to complete the Tribal Scholarship Program Financial Aid Package Form. The Tribal Scholarship Program then uses that form to determine the amount of money the student can receive. Therefore, it is extremely important that each student submit the FAFSA as soon as possible after January 1 for the following academic year.

Every student should understand and explain to the parents and/or spouse that the FAFSA is a federal document. The Tribal Scholarship Program has no control over the information required or the results which are provided to the student and the school. However, if needed, the Tribal Scholarship Office will assist students who need help in submitting the FAFSA.

Some things to keep in mind when completing the FAFSA:

The answers to eight (8) questions on the FAFSA determine whether a student is considered dependent or independent. The Tribal Scholarship Program has no control over a student's dependency status. Concerns about dependency should be addressed to the college's Financial Aid Office.

Dependent students must use their parent's income. If a biological parent is married to someone other than the other biological parent, the student must use the stepparent's financial information as well as the parent's information.

Foster parents and legal guardians are not, for purposes of the FAFSA, considered parents; therefore, their income will not be required.

All male students between the ages of 18 and 25 must be registered for selective service in order to receive federal financial aid.

The FAFSA is a federal document. Providing false or misleading information on the FAFSA could result in fines or imprisonment, as well as the student being denied federal funds for college.

State Student Financial Aid

Every undergraduate Tribal Scholarship student that lives in Mississippi is also required to apply for the various scholarships available from the state. These scholarships are the Higher Education Legislative Plan for Needy Students (HELP), Mississippi Eminent Scholars Grant (MESG), Mississippi Law Enforcement Officers and Firemen Scholarship Program (LAWIFIRE), and the Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grant (MTAG). Applications can be found online at www.mississippiuniversities.com. Again, if needed, please contact the Tribal Scholarship Office for assistance in submitting the application.

Students who attend college in other states must also apply for similar scholarships in their individual states. The college's Financial Aid Office should have the necessary information.

Grades/Transcripts

It is the responsibility of each Tribal Scholarship student to ensure that his/her grade report is submitted to the Tribal Scholarship Program at the end of every semester/quarter/term enrolled, with the exception of the Spring Term, when an official transcript is required.

Full-time Tribal Scholarship students will also be required to submit mid-term grades every term that they are enrolled. If the school does not issue midterm grades, the student will be required to provide the Scholarship Program with verification of full-time enrollment, e.g., a current class schedule or letter from the school.

Failure to do any of the above may result in a delay or forfeiture of any Tribal Scholarship award. This includes, but is not limited to, living expenses and payment of student accounts.

Student Accounts

It is the responsibility of all Tribal Scholarship students to ensure that their accounts are cleared at the end of every semester. There are a variety of reasons that students may have a balance on the account at the end of the term. Occasionally the school fails to send an invoice to the Tribal Scholarship Program for an enrolled Tribal Scholarship recipient, charges may go on the students account after the invoice has been paid, or the student's federal financial aid may be revoked creating an outstanding balance.

Many times students are not aware that they owe additional funds. However, most schools now provide a web account for their students, and it is **extremely easy** for students to check their account. If the school does not provide a web account, or if students cannot access their web account, they must then contact the school's Student Accounts Office to obtain the status of their account.

The Tribal Scholarship Office will no longer pay any accounts that are more than 2 semesters in arrears. Should an account be older than 2 semesters, it will become the student's responsibility to pay the bill. There will be no exceptions to this policy.

Final Transcript

It is the responsibility of Tribal Scholarship students to provide a final transcript to the Tribal Scholarship Program for each degree received. The student **MUST** request that the college/university forward to the Tribal Scholarship Program an official transcript documenting the degree received, the student's major and the date the degree was received.

Verification of Receipt of Student Handbook

It is the responsibility of Tribal Scholarship students to sign, date and return to the Tribal Scholarship Office the last page of this Student Handbook, thereby providing documentation that they have received the Student Handbook.

Other Student Responsibilities

The list of Student Responsibilities identified in this handbook is not all inclusive. There are other responsibilities that you will find in your copy of the official Policies and Procedures.

Things You Need to Know

Award Calculation

After the student submits the FAFSA, the Financial Aid Office at the college/university will use the Student Aid Report to determine the appropriate Cost of Attendance (budget) that will be assigned to each student and the amount of financial aid that the student will receive for the year. The Financial Aid Administrator will then issue an award letter to the student.

Using the above information, the Financial Aid Office will complete the Tribal Scholarship Program's Financial Aid Package Form that the student has submitted to the school (some schools use the term Financial Needs Analysis or FNA for the form). The form documents the student's Cost of Attendance, resources and financial aid.

The Tribal Scholarship Program will use the Financial Aid Package Form to determine the amount of money the student can receive. In most cases, the student's award will be the difference between the Cost of Attendance and the student's financial aid, with the exception of students who are awarded at 80% of the off-campus amount for living expenses.

Student Loans

ALL Tribal Scholarship recipients who accept student loans must notify the Scholarship Program that they have loans, especially students who are awarded student loans after the Scholarship Program receives the Financial Aid Package Form.

Prior to the implementation of the Tribal Scholarship Program's revised Policies and Procedures, the Tribal Scholarship Program instructed all full-time students who do not work full-time to refuse all student loans, because the Program could replace loans in full. The amount of any student loan had to be included in the amount of Financial Aid the student received. The same policy is currently in place with the exception of students who are awarded at 80% of the off-campus room and board amount. Those students may qualify through the Financial Aid Office for the other 20% in student loans.

Full-time students who do not work full-time and have 'On-Campus' and 'With-Parents' budgets documented on the Financial Aid Package Form should **NOT** accept student loans, as the amount of the loan is considered financial aid and will reduce the amount of money that the Tribal Scholarship Program can provide.

Because the Tribal Scholarship Program covers only tuition, fees and books for part-time students and for **full-time students who work full-time**, the Tribal Scholarship Program cannot restrict those students from accepting student loans. However, the Program **highly recommends that those students, especially part-time students do NOT accept student loans.**

All students should keep in mind that **they** will have to repay student loans once they are no longer enroll in school.

Graduation

One of the major goals of the Tribal Scholarship Program is to help students successfully complete their degree(s). The Scholarship Office will pay for graduation fees which are required by the school, provided the student submits adequate documentation to the Scholarship Office. Each potential graduate must notify the Scholarship Office in a timely manner of his/her impending graduation and the total amount of required fees. The Program does NOT pay for other graduation expenses, e.g. graduation invitations and rings.

Living Expenses

Full-time students who do not work full time may qualify for living expense money each semester. The amount, if any, is determined by the award process described in the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid** and **Award Calculation** sections.

The Cost of Attendance that every school establishes will include tuition, fees, books, room and board, travel, and miscellaneous expenses. The Tribal Scholarship Program tries to ensure that all students receive the total Cost of Attendance, whether the funds come totally from financial aid, the Tribal Scholarship Program, or a combination of both. For on-campus students, the portion of the Cost of Attendance that is not used for direct charges, such as tuition, fees, dorm, meals, and book charges, will be given to the student. Depending on the school the student attends, and the sources of the funds, the funds may be given to the student by the school.

Students who receive living expense funds are allowed to work part-time. However, if students start working full-time during a semester/term, they need to let the Tribal Scholarship Office know as soon as possible. Additionally, to continue to receive living expense money, students must be enrolled full-time throughout the semester.

If a student who receives living expenses from the Scholarship Program becomes employed full-time or drops below full-time enrollment status, the living expense money will stop. Additionally, if the Program is not notified of the student's true status and the student continues to accept living expense money, future awards will be decreased, or stopped, until the over-awarded amount is recovered in full by the Tribal Scholarship Office.

The Tribal Scholarship Program will never award an amount greater than the student's Cost of Attendance because (1) there is a very definite process for determining scholarship awards, and (2) because regulations that govern federal student financial assistance

programs require that the amount of assistance the student receives from all sources does not exceed the Cost of Attendance as defined by the school's Financial Aid office.

Should a student receive money from other sources (such as loans, grants, or other scholarships) that cause them to have aid in excess of the Cost Attendance without notifying the Scholarship Office, they will then be considered over-awarded. When this happens, the student may have to pay their account to the school on their own, return funds to the scholarship program for the amount that they were over-awarded, or have the over-award amount deducted from future awards.

Frequently Asked Questions

What services will the Tribal Scholarship Program provide for me?

Although most applicants contact the Tribal Scholarship Program seeking money for college, the program also provides numerous other services. In addition to scholarship funds, you can expect the staff to provide: career counseling; assistance in completing applications for admission, housing and financial aid; visits from staff members if you attend school in Mississippi; assistance in contacting family members if you have an emergency; encouragement to earn good grades and complete your degree; and a friendly ear if you just need someone to listen.

How often do I need to apply for the Tribal Scholarship?

Full-time students must complete an application for each academic year and a separate one for the Summer Term.

Part-time students are required to submit an application every term.

What are the deadline dates for Tribal Scholarship applications?

Deadline dates are listed on Page 3 of this Handbook.

What happens if I turn in my Tribal Scholarship application after the deadline?

Applicants who turn in Tribal Scholarship applications after the deadline will not qualify for a scholarship, but will be encouraged to apply at that time for the next semester/quarter/term.

How often do I need to submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)?

Students are required to submit a FAFSA for each academic year.

Why do I need to submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid?

When students submit a FAFSA, they are applying for all types of need-based financial aid, plus the FAFSA is required for many other types of financial aid. The Tribal Scholarship is supplemental funding. It covers the portion of the Cost of Attendance not

covered by other financial aid for full-time students who do not work full-time. For part-time students and full-time students who work full-time, the Tribal Scholarship covers the portion of tuition, fees and course-related book charges not covered by other financial aid. Thus, students must apply for financial aid by submitting the FAFSA.

**The Financial Aid Office notified me that I was selected for verification.
What does that mean? Why was I selected?**

The Federal Government randomly selects applications to verify that the information submitted is correct. Your Financial Aid Office will notify you that you need to contact them and/or send you additional forms to complete.

What happens if my Student Aid Report says that I am selected for verification?

The college will instruct you to complete a Verification Worksheet and submit a copy of your tax return, a copy of your parents' tax return if you are a dependent student, and possibly other documents to verify that the information you submitted on your FAFSA is correct.

Why does the Cost of Attendance set by the school's Financial Aid Office determine the amount of scholarship funds I can receive?

Because the Tribal Scholarship is defined as supplemental funding, students are required to apply for all available financial aid, including federal financial aid. Regulations that govern federal student financial assistance programs require that the amount of assistance the student receives from all sources does not exceed the Cost of Attendance as defined by the school's Financial Aid office.

Additionally, the Cost of Attendance which is set by each school is intended to be, and is a good indication of, the amount that a student should need to attend that school, pay direct charges and have enough additional funds to survive. .

Can I enroll as a full-time student, work full-time and receive living expense funds from the Tribal Scholarship Program?

No, the Tribal Scholarship will cover only tuition, fees and course-related book charges for full-time students who work full-time.

If I enroll as a full-time student and don't work full-time, how much 'stipend' will I receive?

The Tribal Scholarship Program does not provide a ‘stipend’. It does, however, provide the difference between the students’s Cost of Attendance (COA) and the student’s financial aid. Any portion of that amount, which is not paid to the school for direct charges, will be disbursed to the student for ‘living expenses’. (One exception to this method of computing the student’s living expenses award is for the student who has an Off-Campus COA. For that student, the Program will use the On-Campus COA or 80% of the Off-Campus COA, whichever is larger.)

Every school that administers federal aid has a set Cost of Attendance for identified categories of students (e.g. On-Campus, Off-Campus, etc.). The Cost of Attendance generally includes, in addition to tuition, fees and books, a set amount for items that are considered necessary for ‘living expenses’ such as room, board, travel, and miscellaneous expenses. The Tribal Scholarship Program uses the Cost of Attendance figures supplied by the student’s chosen school.

Because every school sets their own Costs of Attendance and determines the amounts and types of financial aid that a student receives, it is impossible for the Tribal Scholarship Program to give the student an estimate of the amount of living expenses he/she will receive until the application process is completed and the Financial Aid Package Form is received.

It should be noted that financial aid at any school, as well as the Tribal Scholarship, should never be looked at as a ‘pay check’. Tribal Scholarship funds are available to assist students in obtaining an education.

How is my Tribal Scholarship award determined?

Part-time Students

The Tribal Scholarship Program will cover the portion of tuition, fees, and course-related book charges not covered by other financial aid for part-time students.

Full-time Students Who Work Full-time

The Tribal Scholarship Program will cover the portion of tuition, fees, and course-related book charges not covered by other financial aid for full-time students who work full-time.

Full-time students Who Do Not Work Full-time

The Financial Aid Office at the college/university will use the results from the FAFSA (the Student Aid Report), to determine the appropriate Cost of Attendance (budget) that will be assigned to each student, the amount of financial aid that the student will receive

for the year, and the student's unmet need, after which a Financial Aid Award is prepared.

The Financial Aid Office must have the above information to complete the Tribal Scholarship Program Financial Aid Package Form (some schools use the term Financial Needs Analysis or FNA for the form), which the Tribal Scholarship Program uses to determine the amount of money the school will allow the student to receive from the Tribal Scholarship Program without reducing the other aid.

When do I need to have the college/university send an official transcript to the Tribal Scholarship Office?

First-time Tribal Scholarship applicants are required to submit, with their initial application, an official transcript from each college/university they have attended.

All Tribal Scholarship recipients are required to submit a current, official transcript at the end of each academic year (traditionally at the end of Spring Term). Grade reports are required at the end of all other terms.

Former Tribal Scholarship students, who have taken classes without Tribal Scholarship assistance since leaving the program, must also submit a current, official transcript when re-applying, even though the Tribal Scholarship Program did not pay for those classes. The reason for this is that a current, cumulative grade point average must be on file to verify that the student has the minimum grade point average required by the Program.

Can I have someone pick up my living expense check for me?

No one other than the student can receive a student's living expense check without written authorization from the student. Forms for this are available in the Tribal Scholarship Office. A letter from the student will be accepted provided it contains the student's signature, the current date and the person's name who will receive the check.

Can I have my scholarship funds sent to me and/or the college/university via electronic transfer?

The Tribal Finance Office currently has no provision for electronic transfer of funds for students.

Why do I have to send an official transcript to the Tribal Scholarship Office?

Students must send current, official transcripts to the Tribal Scholarship Office to

document progress and to verify that they are maintaining the required minimum grade point average.

Can I call the Tribal Scholarship staff after I arrive on campus if I have questions about how to register for classes, how to obtain my books, how to find my academic advisor, how many classes I should take, etc.?

Yes, students can call the Tribal Scholarship staff for assistance. The telephone numbers are 601-650-7409 and 800-446-5006. The staff is familiar with local college/universities, and will attempt to assist students at other institutions. However, most colleges/universities publish and distribute this information at orientation, and also have staff members available to assist new students.

When I register, can I just tell the school that the Tribal Scholarship Program will pay for my tuition and then assume that my charges will be paid?

During registration, many schools require immediate payment, verification of financial aid, or some type of Third-Party billing authorization from the agency that will sponsor the student. Other schools will allow the student to register without any type of payment or verification that someone will sponsor the student, and later send an invoice to the student.

PLEASE BE AWARE that if you don't have other financial aid and you register for classes without completing the application process for the Tribal Scholarship (or making arrangements with the Tribal Scholarship staff to send a billing authorization) by the time payment is due, **YOU** will have to pay for the classes. "Completing the application process" means that you have submitted an application and all required supporting documents.

The Tribal Scholarship Program will not, under any circumstances, actually send scholarship funds to the school for students who have not submitted the required transcript and/or grades. Staff members are aware that grades are not always available prior to the date students can register for classes for the next term. If students are in good standing with the Program, and if they have a history of providing grades in a timely manner, a billing authorization may be sent to the school prior to the receipt of grades. However, a billing authorization will not be provided for students who do not typically submit grades as requested, or for students who are on probation with the Program.

I'm a full-time student, I don't work full-time, and I receive living expenses from the Tribal Scholarship Program. If I don't have enough other financial aid to cover my charges at the school, will the Scholarship Program pay my account balance?

Yes, provided you have not already received your full scholarship award.

I'm a full-time student, I don't work full-time, and I receive living expenses from the Tribal Scholarship Program. When will the Tribal Scholarship Program pay my account charges at the school?

There are a variety of ways that the Tribal Scholarship Program disburses scholarship funds. Generally, the Program sends a billing authorization to the school's Student Accounts Office or the Financial Aid Office stating that the Program will cover the portion of the student's charges not covered by other financial aid. If the student does not have enough financial aid to cover all direct charges, the Student Accounts Office sends an invoice sometime during the semester to the Tribal Scholarship Program. The Program processes a purchase order and forwards a check to the school.

If the student has enough other financial aid to cover all direct charges, the Program may disburse the full scholarship award directly to the student. In this case, the Scholarship Program will notify the Financial Aid Office that an award has been made and disbursed to the student.

I'm a part-time student. If I don't have enough other financial aid to cover my charges at the school, will the Scholarship Program pay my account balance?

Yes, provided you are cleared for a scholarship with the Tribal Scholarship Program.

I'm a part-time student, I have completed the application process, I'm in good standing with the Tribal Scholarship Program and I have been awarded a Pell Grant. Does the school keep my Pell Grant to pay for my classes and my books, or will the Tribal Scholarship Program pay for my charges and thereby allow the school to refund the full amount of my Pell Grant to me?

The Tribal Scholarship is supplemental funding. Therefore, the Pell Grant will always be applied to the student's account. If the Pell Grant, plus any other financial aid that the student has, does not cover all of the student's charges, the Tribal Scholarship Program will pay the balance. If the Pell Grant is more than the student's charges, the difference between the amount of the Pell Grant and the student's charges will be refunded to the student by the school.

I'm a part-time student. Will the Tribal Scholarship Program provide travel funds for me?

No. The Tribal Scholarship Program will pay only tuition, fees, and course-related book charges for part-time students.

I'm a part-time student. Will I be allowed to charge supplies in the Bookstore when I get my books?

A student who has enough Pell Grant or other financial aid to cover the cost of tuition, fees, books and supplies will generally be allowed by the school to charge supplies in the Bookstore unless the Bookstore is not run by the school.

The Tribal Scholarship Program will not pay for supplies for part-time students. As stated earlier, the Tribal Scholarship Program will pay only tuition, fees, and course-related book charges for part-time students.

I'm a full-time commuting student. Can I get a meal ticket?

If the student has enough financial aid to cover a meal ticket plus all other direct charges, he/she should contact the appropriate school official to make arrangements for the meal ticket.

A full-time commuting student who does not have enough financial aid to cover a meal ticket plus all other direct charges, and does not work full-time, should contact the Tribal Scholarship Program staff to find out if a meal ticket can be provided. Schools vary in their policies concerning commuter meal tickets. If the school allows the student to charge a meal ticket that is not covered by other financial aid, and if the Tribal Scholarship Program agrees to pay for it, the amount of the meal ticket will be deducted from the student's living expenses. If the student has already received his/her full scholarship award, a meal ticket may not be charged to Tribal Scholarship Program.

A full-time commuting student who does not have enough financial aid to cover a meal ticket plus all other direct charges, and does work full-time will not be provided a meal ticket by the Tribal Scholarship Program.

I'm a part-time student taking day classes. Can I get a meal ticket?

The Tribal Scholarship Program will not pay for a meal ticket for a part-time student. However, if the student has enough other financial aid (e.g. Pell Grant) to cover all charges plus a meal ticket, he/she should contact the appropriate college official to arrange for a meal ticket.

I was told that I need to submit a Degree Plan. What is a Degree Plan?

A Degree Plan lists all the requirements for your degree, the requirements that you have met, and the requirements that you lack. Your school may use a different term, e.g. Graduation Worksheet, Degree Progress Report, Degree Audit or Degree Worksheet. Your advisor at the school can assist you with this form.

How many degrees can I get and receive living expenses?

One at each level.

If I choose to enroll in a technical program of study at a community college, will my classes transfer to a university?

Most universities will not accept technical courses. You should be very careful in selecting classes if you plan to transfer to a university. Always check with your advisor, or contact the university to find out if they will accept classes in which you are interested. All of the academic classes (e.g. English Composition, Psychology, American History) required for a technical degree should transfer without any problem.

How can I get additional information about the Tribal Scholarship Program? Who can answer questions if I don't understand something in this handbook or if I don't know what I am supposed to do?

You can always contact the Tribal Scholarship Program staff at (601) 650-7409, or you can contact the staff by email. Email addresses are listed on page 1 of the Student Handbook in the document section.

Notes

MISSISSIPPI BAND OF CHOCTAW INDIANS TRIBAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Student Handbook

My signature below verifies that I, _____, have received
(Please Print Name)

the Tribal Scholarship Program Student Handbook. I understand that it is my responsibility to become familiar with the handbook, and I agree to abide by its contents. I understand that it is my responsibility to contact the Tribal Scholarship Program staff if I need clarification of any portion therein. I further understand that failure to sign, date and return this form to the Scholarship Office may result in delay or forfeiture of scholarship funding.

Student Signature

Parent Signature (If student is under age 18)

Date

Date