

The Chickasaw Nation
Department of Education

Higher Education Student Handbook



Education Resources Division



The Chickasaw Nation
Bill Anoatubby, Governor

Higher Education Student Handbook

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Definitions:

For the purpose of this handbook, the terms have the definitions set out herein, unless otherwise specified.

1. *American College Test (ACT)* - A standardized test used for college admissions in the United States.
2. *General equivalency degree (GED)* - A system of standardized examinations which entitle those who pass them to receive a credential considered as equivalent to completion of high school.
3. *Grade point average (GPA)* - A numerical equivalent of a letter grade assessment designed to evaluate student's academic performance.
4. *Graduate Record Examinations (GRE)* - A standardized test that is an admissions requirement for many graduate schools.
5. *High school equivalency (HSE)* - Awarded to students who have not completed requirements toward high school graduation but through testing can demonstrate the same skills and knowledge as a high school graduate.
6. *Law School Admission Test (LSAT)* - A standardized test administered by the Law School Admissions Council for perspective law school candidate.
7. *Medical College Admission (MCAT)* - A computer-based standardized examination for perspective medical students.
8. *Oklahoma General Education Test (OGET)* - Used to ensure teacher candidates have the entry level knowledge and skills necessary to perform in the role of educator in Oklahoma public schools.
9. *Oklahoma Subject Area Test (OSAT)* - A battery of exams designed to measure a teacher's knowledge and ability to teach their respective field.
10. *Pharmacy College Admission Test (PCAT)* - A computer-based standardized test administered to a perspective pharmacy school students.
11. *Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)* - A test taken in the United States to measure students' abilities before they go to college.

Introduction:

The Chickasaw Nation Higher Education programs and services are available to undergraduate, master’s and doctorate college students (three to 11 credit hours/units for part-time or 12 or more credit hours/units for full-time undergraduates; three to eight credit hours/units for part-time or nine or more credit hours/units for full-time master’s/doctorate). Funding assistance is also available to full-time Chickasaw citizen employees attending college as part-time students (three to nine credit hours/units for undergraduates; three to eight credit hours/units for master’s/doctorate) (see MAN 10 ER 1001). Students must be Chickasaw citizens. The programs and services provided by postsecondary education services are intended to supplement the educational needs of all Chickasaw citizens pursuing a degree from an accredited institution of higher education. Higher education assistance does not provide funding for conferences, symposiums, workshops or application fees (ACT/SAT prep workshops are excluded). The field of study is not limited to any particular discipline. Comprehensive universities, regional universities, two-year and four-year colleges, private institutions and online universities within Oklahoma or outside of the state are acceptable as long as they are accredited. Postsecondary education services will assist Chickasaw citizens with only one associate, one bachelor’s, one master’s and one doctorate degree. Once a Chickasaw citizen has received funding for a particular type of degree (i.e., associate, bachelor’s, master’s or doctorate), they become ineligible for future funding for that same type of degree, upon graduation. Students working towards their bachelor’s degree will be funded up to 150 hours. For example, if postsecondary education services funds a Chickasaw citizen for a bachelor’s degree in nursing, upon returning to college, the Chickasaw citizen cannot obtain funding for a bachelor’s degree in business. In no instance will postsecondary education services fund a Chickasaw citizen for two associate degrees, two bachelor’s degrees, two master’s degrees or two doctorate degrees. Tribal awards may affect the student’s federal and other funding sources, which can result in an over-award. An over-award occurs when more funds are awarded to a student than financial aid rules allow. In no instance will a student be reimbursed for completed coursework. Students must follow the school’s financial aid award process for over-awards. Funding may change in award amounts from semester to semester.

Elaboration of Documentation:

- A. High school and college/university transcript(s):
 - High school - Students must provide a completed high school transcript that reflects their final grade point average (GPA) or a copy of their GED/HSE certificate.
 - College/university - An unofficial updated college/university transcript must be submitted each semester. Students may submit the transcript themselves. Scanned images of unofficial college/university transcripts can be submitted. However, if the image is not legible, the student will be required to mail in the unofficial copy. The education office will not accept

photos taken by phone or camera of an unofficial transcript or other required documentation.

- B. Proof of enrollment:
The student must provide a copy of their current class schedule. Enrollment must show the student's name, semester, name of college/university and total credit hours/units in which the student is enrolled.
- C. Funding:
Funding is intended to minimize or alleviate the financial responsibility of the student; however, seeking other financial support is encouraged.

Deadlines:

- A. Deadlines are stated on the application.
- B. Notification of a completed file will NOT be sent. Once the student's file has been determined to be complete, the next letter the student receives will be the awards summary listing all semester awards. Incomplete applications or applications received after the deadline will not be processed. Notification of incomplete files will continue to be handled primarily by email. If the student does not have an email address, documentation letters of incomplete files will be mailed to the student. All letters and emails detailing missing documents are sent to students as a courtesy as time allows. It is the ultimate responsibility of the student to ensure that applications and documentation are received or postmarked by the established deadlines on the application.
- C. Guidelines for deadlines are subject to change. If a deadline falls on a weekend or holiday, the deadline will roll over to the first business day of the following week. The student is responsible for reading this handbook from semester to semester for updates.
- D. The application and required documentation must be postmarked or hand-delivered to the department of education office before or on the established deadline. Incomplete or late applications will not be processed.
- E. Postsecondary education services is not responsible for sending or receiving documentation to or from the Chickasaw Foundation office.
- F. If the student plans to study abroad, please speak with an education advisor regarding an unofficial transcript and deadline.
- G. An academic term is a division of an academic year, the time during which a college/university holds classes. These divisions may be called terms. Deadlines are set on a semester system dividing the academic year into two terms of relatively equal lengths, fall and spring; however, some academic years may be set in quarter systems that divide the academic year into four terms of relatively equal lengths. For quarter system or online students, the deadline will be one month from the start date of the quarter.

Grants, Programs and Scholarships:

- A. Higher Education Grant
- B. Fee Assistance Grant
- C. General Scholarship
- D. Governor's, Lt. Governor's and Legislator's Scholarship

- E. Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes Johnson-O'Malley (JOM) Scholarship
- F. Concurrent enrollment (high school only)
- G. Textbook Grant
- H. ACT/SAT Services
- I. Advanced Placement (AP) Exams/College Level Examination Program (CLEP)
- J. Digital Learning Grant
- K. Chikasha Holitoplichí - Graduation Stole Program
- L. Degree Completion Incentive
- M. Graduation Assistance Program
- N. License and Certification Fee Assistance Program

Guidelines/Award Amounts:

Students applying for the above-mentioned grants, programs and scholarships must meet the guidelines described for each individual award. The student has the option to submit their application and required documentation online on the Student Self-Service site at www.Chickasaw.net/highered. For technical assistance with your application please contact the service desk at (580) 272-5801 or (866) 939-5552.

Homeschool graduates:

Homeschool students must submit their ACT scores with their completed application.

GED/HSE graduates:

Students completing a GED/HSE must submit their GED/HSE scores with their completed application.

Prerequisite for master's/doctorate:

Students requiring prerequisite classes for admission into a master's/doctorate program will be awarded according to the level of the courses for which they are enrolled (postsecondary education services will fund up to 12 credit hours/units of prerequisite courses). Students must submit verification from the college/university that the prerequisite classes are required. Only coursework requirements for admission into master's/doctorate programs will be awarded. Students attending a dual-degree program will be funded according to the level of the courses for which they are enrolled.

First-time applicants who are unable to provide a high school transcript, GED/HSE or ACT/SAT scores will only be eligible to apply for the Higher Education Grant.

Once a college/university GPA is established, the student's future funding will be based on their current unofficial college/university transcript. Students must submit an application and required documentation each semester/quarter/term for which assistance is needed.

The GPA requirements will be satisfied based on the cumulative or retention GPA type, whichever is higher. Once an award has been based on one GPA, that same GPA type will be used for hours earned.

A. Higher Education Grant - For assistance with tuition cost.

Maintain a semester GPA of 2.0 or higher for undergraduates; master's or doctorate students must be in good standing. Students must be enrolled in at least three credit hours/units. Students who are funded will complete the

number of credit hours/units for which they were funded and meet minimum GPA requirements.

Undergraduate student funding:

Community	Regional	Research	Private
15 or more credit hours/units equals \$1,500 per semester	15 or more credit hours/units equals \$2,250 per semester	15 or more credit hours/units equals \$3,525 per semester	15 or more credit hours/units equals \$4,350 per semester
Three to 14 credit hours/units equals \$100 per credit/unit hour	Three to 14 credit hours/units equals \$150 per credit hour/unit	Three to 14 credit hours/units equals \$235 per credit hour/unit	Three to 14 credit hours/units equals \$290 per credit hour/unit

Master's student funding:

Regional	Research/Private
Nine or more credit hours/units equals \$2,400 per semester	Nine or more credit hours/units equals \$2,400 per semester
Three to eight credit hours/units equals \$200 per credit hour/unit	Three to eight credit hours/units equals \$250 per credit hour/unit

Doctorate student funding:

Research/Private
Nine or more credit hours/units equals \$3,000 per semester
Three to eight credit hours/units equals \$250 per credit hour/unit

B. Fee Assistance Grant - For assistance with fee cost.

Maintain a semester GPA of 2.0 or higher for undergraduates, master's or doctorate students. Students must be enrolled in at least three credit hours/units.

	Community	Regional	Research/Private
12 credit hours/units or more	\$300	\$600	\$800
Three to 11 credit hours/units	\$150	\$300	\$400

- C. **General Scholarship** - Students attending three credit hours/units or more while maintaining a GPA of 3.0 or higher each semester will be eligible for this scholarship.

Homeschool students applying for the first time must submit their ACT/SAT scores with their application. Scores of 20 or higher will be considered a B average and students with those scores may apply for the General Scholarship. GED/HSE scores of 2500 or higher will be considered a B average, enabling the student to apply for the General Scholarship. ACT/SAT and GED/HSE scores will only be used for the first semester of the student's freshman year of college/university. This will apply to the student's first semester of funding, after which the student must submit an unofficial college/university transcript showing their semester GPA. The following formula will be used in determining the amounts to be awarded for this scholarship. All students will be evaluated on a 4.0 GPA scale and awarded in accordance with the grade listed on the student's unofficial college/university transcript. In schools where grades are not given on a 4.0 scale, the grades given will be converted into a 4.0 scale for ease of comparison.

Students of all classifications who have earned a 3.0 GPA or higher for their previous semester, or high school students who have a GPA of 3.0 or higher, may apply for a scholarship through this program. Students must maintain the required 3.0 GPA each semester to continue eligibility.

Semester GPA	Students (undergraduate students three to 11 credit hours/units; master's and doctorate students three to eight credit hours/units)	Students (undergraduate students 12+ credit hours/units; master's and doctorate students nine or more credit hours/units)
3.0 to 3.49	\$250	\$350
3.5 to 4.0	\$400	\$500

- D. **Governor's, Lt. Governor's and Legislator's Scholarships** - Scholarship is awarded one time only to high school seniors who possess a GPA of 3.85 or higher (weighted GPAs may be taken into consideration).

1. Governor's Scholarship - GPA of 3.95 and up = \$500
2. Lt. Governor's Scholarship - GPA of 3.90 to 3.94 = \$400
3. Legislator's Scholarship - GPA of 3.85 to 3.89 = \$350

- E. **Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes JOM Scholarship** - Scholarship is awarded one time only to high school seniors who attend a public school with a JOM program within the Chickasaw Nation treaty territory.

1. Awards one male and one female student.
2. \$300 award per student.
3. Must submit a letter of recommendation.

4. Must submit a 500-word typed essay (size 12 pt. font) regarding future goals and tribal and community involvement.
- F. **Concurrent Enrollment** - High school juniors or seniors who are eligible for concurrent enrollment and enrolled at an accredited college/university in no less than three credit hours/units. If the student's state of residence pays concurrent tuition, higher education will pay costs for fees and textbooks. Concurrent enrollment amounts are not to exceed grant and scholarship award amounts. Students must follow all of the guidelines of the Higher Education Grant and submit the following:
1. Completed application.
 2. High school transcript.
 3. Concurrent college/university class schedule showing credit hours/units enrolled.
 4. If seeking textbook reimbursement, a receipt for textbooks with the vendor's name and contact information that shows the amount paid is required.
 5. Detailed billing statement showing the cost of fees and tuition.
- G. **Textbook Grant** - Available to students each semester to allow for the purchase of textbooks, required software related to the academic field of study, productivity and learning application subscriptions for writing tools, note-taking, research, organization, flashcards or tutoring (Grammarly, ProWritingAid, etc.) Other required material related to courses will be considered on a case-by-case basis (postsecondary education services will be contacted for approval before the student makes the purchase). The grant will be given in the form of a pre-paid VISA gift card or on a reimbursement basis to each qualifying student attending a college/university.

Acceptable Textbook Grant purchases:

1. Textbooks in all forms.
2. Productivity and learning application subscriptions for writing tools, note-taking, research, organization, flashcards or tutoring (Grammarly, ProWritingAid, etc.) Generative AI tools, software, websites, subscriptions and other tools that are used beyond optional aids and supplemental learning will not be approved and should be used ethically, responsibly and in accordance with the school's academic integrity policies. It remains the student's responsibility to engage with credible, valid sources and adhere to their school's policies.
3. Software related to the academic field of study.

Unacceptable Textbook Grant purchases include but are not limited to:

1. Laptop, tablet, desktop, e-readers, monitors, calculators
2. Mobile hot spots for reliable Internet
3. Noise-canceling headphones, digital audio recorders
4. External hard drives, flash drives or cloud storage
5. Portable chargers, power strips, surge protectors, ethernet cables
6. Printers or all-in-one devices as well as ink
7. Smart home devices

8. Bluetooth speakers
9. Docking stations
10. Gaming systems
11. Alcohol
12. Personal hygiene products (shampoo, lotion, perfume, make-up)
13. Jewelry
14. Personal bills
15. Music/videos
16. Gas
17. Groceries (fast food)
18. Tobacco products
19. Clothing (of any kind)
20. Backpacks and basic office supplies (pens, pencils, paper, Scantrons)
21. Vehicle expenses
22. Transportation expenses

- H. **ACT/SAT Services** - Eligible freshman and sophomore students may request reimbursement for the ACT/SAT only once per year. Eligible junior and senior students may request reimbursement multiple times for the ACT/SAT per year. The original receipt for payment for the ACT/SAT and their application must be received by the department of education office before reimbursement can be issued. The request for reimbursement must be made within six months after receipt of payment.
- I. **AP Exams/CLEP** - Eligible students must provide receipt and completed application. The request for reimbursement must be made within six months after receipt of payment. The award amount is not to exceed the amount of payment paid per exam.
1. AP Exams - Eligible students may request reimbursement once per AP exam subject, however if the exam is not completed with a satisfactory score, funding will not be awarded for a second exam in the subject area. The award amount is not to exceed the amount of payment paid per exam.
 2. CLEP - Proof of learning satisfactory scores on the CLEP subject examination must be received before reimbursement can be issued. The award amount is not to exceed the funding amount per credit hour/unit through the Higher Education Grant.
- J. **Digital Learning Grant** - This grant is limited to undergraduate students attending at least 12 credit hours/units per semester and part-time master's and doctorate students currently enrolled at an accredited college/university for higher education with a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher. Eligibility is limited to one grant throughout the student's college/university career not to exceed \$800. This program is not available if the student is on probation or suspension with postsecondary education services. The grant will be given in the form of a pre-paid VISA gift card, reimbursement or laptop to be shipped directly to the student's address.

1. Pre-paid VISA gift card: If a student selects the pre-paid VISA gift card, they will have one year from the date of the load to use all monies. If a balance remains after one year, the balance will be removed and deposited back into the Chickasaw Nation account and the student will forfeit that amount.
 - a. Misuse or attempted misuse of the pre-paid VISA gift card will result in the immediate suspension of the remaining funds available.
 - b. Students have one year from the load date to use all money on the pre-paid VISA gift card.
 - c. Pre-paid VISA gift card balances may be checked at: <https://www2.consumercardaccess.com/main/ChickasawNation/Home>
2. Reimbursement: Reimbursement checks will be issued at the face value of the submitted receipts, not to exceed \$800. The request for reimbursement must be made within six months after receipt of payment and within one year of the original award date.
3. Laptop: A laptop up to \$800 value will be shipped directly to the student's address. Laptops are a basic model; the postsecondary education office can provide current model information. The Chickasaw Nation and postsecondary education are not responsible for any expenses incurred for warranty work, technical issues or upgrades to computers. Postsecondary education will not replace lost or stolen laptops.

Acceptable Digital Learning Grant purchases:

1. Laptop, tablet, desktop, e-readers, monitors, calculators
2. Mobile hot spots for reliable internet
3. Noise-canceling headphones, digital audio recorders
4. External hard drives, flash drives or cloud storage
5. Portable charges, power strips, surge protectors, ethernet cables
6. Printers or all-in-one devices as well as ink

Unacceptable Digital Learning Grant purchases include but are not limited to:

1. Smart home devices
2. Bluetooth speakers
3. Docking stations
4. Gaming systems
5. Alcohol
6. Personal hygiene products (shampoo, lotion, perfume, make-up)
7. Jewelry
8. Personal bills
9. Music/videos
10. Gas
11. Groceries (fast food)
12. Tobacco products
13. Clothing (of any kind)
14. Backpacks and basic office supplies (pens, pencils, paper, Scantrons)
15. Vehicle expenses
16. Transportation expenses

- K. **Chikasha Holitoplich - Graduation Stole Program** - This program is limited to students who will successfully earn an associate degree or higher at an accredited institution of higher education. Eligibility is limited to one award per student per degree. The student is responsible for obtaining permission from their accredited institution to wear the stole during commencement. Application for the graduation stole must be made at the beginning of the final semester on their application.
- L. **Degree Completion Incentive** - Students completing a bachelor's degree or higher are eligible for the \$1,000 graduation incentive. Students must provide a completed application along with a final unofficial college/university transcript showing the degree awarded. Application for the Degree Completion Incentive must be made within six months after graduation. Misuse or non-completion of hours funded during the last semester of college will incur a reduction in the Degree Completion Incentive. Full-time employees of the Chickasaw Nation are ineligible to receive the Degree Completion Incentive through postsecondary education services.
- M. **Graduation Assistance Program** - Students are eligible to apply for reimbursement for graduation expenses once per degree up to \$150. This includes, but is not limited to: photos, rings, caps and gowns, invitations, thank you cards and graduation fees. Application for the Graduation Assistance Program must include the original receipt and be made within six months of graduation.
- N. **License and Certification Fee Assistance Program** - This program assists with licensing and certification test/exam fees including, but not limited to the GRE, LSAT, MCAT, PCAT, OSAT and OGET. Students are limited to license and certification fee assistance once per student per certification. Students are eligible for test/exam fees up to \$500 per test/exam on a reimbursement basis. Application for the license and certification reimbursement must be made within six months of the student's original receipt of payment.

Probation and Suspension:

(Higher Education Grant, General Scholarship, Textbook Grant and Digital Learning Grant only)

Students who do not maintain the GPA requirements and complete the number of credit hours/units for which they were funded will be placed on probation and possibly suspended from funding. A student on probation or suspended from the Higher Education Grant will not be eligible for the General Scholarship, Textbook Grant or Digital Learning Grant for that same semester.

Students have the option of reimbursing the Chickasaw Nation for previously funded but not completed hours. It is the student's responsibility to contact their education specialist for the amount owed and to arrange reimbursement before the semester deadline. Reimbursements can only be made in the form of a cashier's check or money order made payable to the Chickasaw Nation. Postsecondary education services will not accept personal checks for reimbursement payment.

The reimbursement calculation will include all programs awarded.

- A. Probation will occur if:
1. The student's GPA falls below the required 2.0 GPA for the semester.
 2. The student does not pass and complete the number of credit hours/units for which they were funded. An adjustment in the student's award amount will be based on the number of credit hours/units completed. For instance, if a student completes five of 12 credit hours/units, the future award will be based on the five credit hours/units completed with a semester GPA of 2.0 or higher.
- B. End of probation:
1. Probation will end the next semester attended once a student completes the credit hours/units for which they were funded while on probation with a semester GPA of 2.0 or higher.
 2. Students who do not maintain the GPA requirements and complete the number of credit hours/units for which they were funded will be placed on probation and possibly suspended from funding. A student on probation or suspension will not be eligible for the General Scholarship, Textbook Grant or Digital Learning Grant for that same semester.
 3. Students have the option of reimbursing the Chickasaw Nation for previously funded but not completed hours. It is the student's responsibility to contact their education advisor for the amount owed and to arrange reimbursement before the semester deadline. Reimbursement can only be made in the form of a cashier's check or money order made payable to the Chickasaw Nation. Postsecondary education services will not accept personal checks for reimbursement payment.
- C. Suspension will occur if:
1. The student fails to meet the semester GPA of 2.0 and completion of the credit hours/units awarded while on probation.
 2. The student withdraws or fails all previous hours awarded.
- D. End of suspension:
1. The suspension will end the next semester attended once the student completes the credit hours/units for which they were funded while on suspension with a semester GPA of 2.0 or higher, or the student can pay back the number of hours owed.
 2. A student on probation or suspended from the Higher Education Grant will not be eligible for the Textbook Grant or Digital Learning Grant for that same semester.

Hardships:

A hardship is defined by this handbook as "an event, whether medical or emotional, that keeps a student from completing the credit hours/units in the semester for which they have been awarded." Examples of hardships may include but are not limited to, prolonged illness, surgery, pregnancy, car accidents or death of a close friend (i.e., known for several years or close family friend) or family member. These hardships may be excused and a student may become eligible provided they submit documentation that verifies the circumstances. The student

must provide the following to be considered for hardships:

A. For class withdrawals or failing grades:

1. If for medical reasons:
 - a. A medical statement from a physician as to why the student withdrew or could not complete classes successfully; and
 - b. A letter from the student asking for a hardship award. The letter must explain the hardship circumstances.
- OR
2. Other reasons:
 - a. A letter from the student asking for a hardship award. The letter must explain the hardship circumstances.
3. Those students with withdraws or failing grades will be funded according to the last semester completed successfully. Once the student completes their probationary semester, they must present their unofficial transcripts verifying that they have completed the exact number of credit hours/units awarded previously with a semester GPA of 2.0 or higher to be removed from probation.

B. For incomplete (I) grades:

1. If for medical reasons:
 - a. A medical statement from a physician as to why the student could not complete classes successfully; and
 - b. A letter from the student asking for a hardship award and a future date of when the course in which they received an (I) grade would be completed.
- OR
2. Other reasons:
 - a. A letter from the student asking for a hardship award and a future date of when the course in which they received an (I) grade would be completed.
3. A student with one or more (I) grades on their transcript will be awarded an amount prorated to the number of credit hours/units they completed during that semester.
4. Once an (I) grade has been changed to a satisfactory letter grade, the remaining funds will be awarded. The later transcript must be submitted by the end of the next semester (e.g., an (I) grade in the fall semester must be completed by the end of the following spring semester). If the later transcript is not provided by the end of the next semester, the funding will stand as originally awarded.