1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 NSCC’s Student Awards policy reflects and represents the College’s commitment to assisting students in the pursuit of learning by providing financial support to reduce barriers to education. Student awards exist to supplement, not replace, funds available to students through government aid, work, savings, assets, and other funding sources. This policy serves to provide equitable and transparent standards and processes in establishing awards and in determining who will receive them.

1.2 Stewardship and implementation of the Student Awards Policy is the responsibility of the Director, Student Awards & Experience in partnership with the NSCC Foundation, Campus Management, Student Services, and other senior leadership.

2.0 SCOPE

2.1 This policy applies to students of or applicants to the College.

2.2 This policy applies to all student awards that are funded through the NSCC Foundation. This policy does not extend to any external awards which may be promoted and administered by the NSCC Student Awards office.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

3.1 AWARD refers generically to any type of financial award that is given to students by the College.

3.2 AWARD POSTING is the publicly shared details of the award by the Student Awards office, either online or in print.

3.3 BURSARY is a student award given on the basis of demonstrated financial need.

3.4 CONDITIONAL refers to the state in which all awards are offered. All student awards are issued on a conditional basis until award requirements are fulfilled. These requirements may include transcripts, social insurance number, and donor recognition pieces.

3.5 ENTRANCE is a student award given according to criteria, including merit, demonstrated by the student prior to commencing a program at the College.

3.6 FINANCIAL NEED is the difference between the costs to attend College and the income or resources to support the cost.

3.7 GIFT AGREEMENTS are established between award donors and the NSCC Foundation that outline the intentions of the award including eligibility, assessment, and application criteria.

3.8 GOOD ACADEMIC STANDING means achieving a passing grade in every course taken.
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3.9 MERIT-BASED refers to any student award that is given based on academic or other merits which may include but is not limited to leadership, community involvement, and extra-curricular involvement.

3.10 NEEDS-BASED is a student award that prioritizes financial need.

3.11 NSCC FOUNDATION is a registered charity and the philanthropic arm of Nova Scotia Community College.

3.12 RENEWABLE AWARDS are awards contingent on maintaining good academic standing or a specified academic average. This award is distributed by term and may be renewable in subsequent year(s) of study.

3.13 SCHOLARSHIP is a student award given on the basis of academic merit.

3.14 STUDENT AWARDS OFFICE is the NSCC department that administers student awards and financial aid programs on behalf of the College.

4.0 POLICY

4.1 AWARD CREATION
   a. The College approves student awards that:
      i. are consistent with human rights legislation;
      ii. are consistent with College policies;
      iii. have assessment criteria that can be evaluated through an awards application and/or College records; and
      iv. are developed or endorsed by the NSCC Foundation.
   b. The Student Awards office, on behalf of the College, reserves the right to withhold student awards donated by individuals or organizations where the above criteria are not met.
   c. New gift agreements that contain assessment criteria that is not consistent with other awards should carry the signature of the Director, Student Awards & Experience on behalf of the College in addition to the other required signatures of the donor and a member of the NSCC Foundation.

4.2 AWARD APPLICATION
   a. Demonstrated financial need shall be determined using the NSCC financial needs assessment formula which considers resources and expenses.
   b. Unless otherwise specified, all student awards deadlines expire at 5:00pm on the date specified on the student award posting. The Student Awards office reserves the right to extend awards deadlines in consultation with NSCC Foundation.
   c. Once a student award deadline has passed, students can no longer report changes to their applications. This includes changes to individual circumstances including expenses and resources.
d. Students in receipt of student awards who defer studies to another year shall not be permitted to defer awards. Exceptions may only be made for official medical deferrals. These will be managed on a case-by-case basis and approval must be granted by the respective donor(s). Medical documentation is required.

e. Students must meet all stated eligibility criteria on the date the awards are selected. For most awards, students must have paid their tuition deposit for their program in order to be eligible. Waitlisted students may apply for awards, but will not be considered during the selection process unless their status has changed to confirmed.

f. Student awards are open to all students including international students and students who are studying online, unless otherwise stated in the award criteria.

g. The Student Awards office reserves the right to modify award applications to reflect any other funding, as indicated within the student’s PeopleSoft record, that has not already been disclosed in the financial needs assessment.

h. No student shall receive student awards in excess of the value of core tuition and mandatory College fees in any given academic year, with the exception of those students who meet requirements for awards with restrictive criteria or those students selected for other forms of financial aid offered at NSCC. This includes but is not limited to campus based awards and sponsor-a-student programs. The Student Awards office will make every effort, where possible, to avoid such occurrences to ensure that funds are broadly distributed to support the College’s commitment to access.

i. There is no appeal process for student awards. All decisions made during the selection process, including the choice of award recipient, are final. Students who apply for student awards and are not selected may contact the Student Awards office to seek feedback on their applications to better prepare for future awards applications.

j. References required to support student award applications must be submitted in the form of a questionnaire (community service or general) or reference letter. This will be stated in the award posting. References completed by family, friends, or peers will not be accepted. The Student Awards office reserves the right to contact references for validation and for more information when needed.

   i. Questionnaire – is a standardized form that outlines who may complete the document on the student’s behalf. It contains specific questions that need to be answered on behalf of the student in support of their application.

   ii. Reference letter – must be completed by a specified party outlined on award postings.

k. All student award applicants must agree to the terms and conditions of the NSCC awards application in order to be considered for awards. The terms and conditions outline how the information they provide will be used, their responsibilities to ensure the application is successfully submitted, and the general award acceptance requirements, should they be selected.
4.3 AWARD SELECTION
   a. If the number of eligible applicants is less than the number of awards available for any
      given award, the Student Awards office reserves the right to one of the following actions,
      in communication with the NSCC Foundation:
      i. Extend the deadline in order to increase the applicant pool; and/or
      ii. Award to those who are eligible and repost the remaining awards in the following
          award offering or academic year; and/or
      iii. Recommend that the award criteria and/or application requirements be adjusted to
           widen the prospective applicant pool.

   b. The selection process for awards varies based on the respective award type:
      i. Academic merit - awards based 100% on academic assessment criteria are
         mathematical in nature and therefore, recipients are determined through the review
         and assessment of transcripts by the Student Awards office.

      ii. Mixed criteria - can include assessment criteria in the areas of leadership,
          community involvement, career dedication, financial need or any combination
          thereof. Due to the qualitative nature of these criteria, these awards are selected by
          committee. Selection volunteers assess applications independently and the results
          are collected and tallied by the Student Awards office to determine recipients based
          upon cumulative scores. All selection committee members must be current NSCC
          employees or donor appointed community representatives and must not have any
          existing relationships with the award applicants they are assigned to review. To avoid
          conflict of interest, donors are not permitted to participate in the selection of recipients
          for awards.

      iii. Financial need – awards based 100% financial need criteria are mathematical in
           nature and therefore, recipients are determined through a demonstration of unmet
           need as determined by the Student Awards office.

   c. Students selected as recipients for awards will be contacted directly by the Student Awards
      office by phone. The Student Awards office will then follow up with a confirmation e-mail
      advising the recipient of: the award/donor name, award value, the disbursement process,
      renewable conditions (if applicable), award requirements that must be fulfilled prior to the
      credit being issued, and the deadline to complete these requirements.

   d. If at any point an award recipient makes changes to their program or course load, they
      must advise the Student Awards office. Should the recipient no longer meet the eligibility
      requirements of the award, the Student Awards office reserves the right to revoke the
      award.

4.4 AWARD DISBURSEMENT
   a. Students selected as recipients of student awards are made aware that the awards are
      conditional until such time as they are matriculated into their program, final marks are
      verified (for awards with academic criteria), and they provide the following requirements:
i. Social Insurance Number for Canada Revenue Agency compliance;

ii. Donor recognition requirements which may include a thank you letter and photograph.

b. Student award recipients will be given one month from the date of award notification to complete their award requirements. After this period, the award may be revoked at the discretion of the Student Awards office.

c. All student awards shall be applied directly to the award recipient’s student account. Once the award credit is issued, it will be applied to tuition, fees and any other costs assessed and/or expenses collected by NSCC. This may include such items as co-operative education fees and textbooks. Awards given in spring that are in excess of $1000 will be disbursed in two equal installments, one in fall semester and one in winter semester.

d. Recipients who have paid their student accounts in full for the academic year and who are carrying an overpayment on their student accounts as the result of receiving an award, may choose one of the following payment options.

i. Recipients may retain the credit on their student account to be applied towards future studies;

ii. Recipients may request a refund from the campus business office. The refund will be issued in the form of a cheque written to the student and made available normally within ten business days of the date requested. To qualify, recipients must be in good academic standing as of the last academic term (no failed courses).

iii. For students receiving spring awards, refunds will not be processed before October 1st. For students receiving in-course awards from the fall semester and/or students in off-cycle programs, refunds will not be processed before February 1st.

e. Student awards are contingent upon the recipient continuing their studies and are payable only if the recipient is enrolled at NSCC. If a student award recipient withdraws before the College’s add/drop date, the student award remains with NSCC and is not eligible for refund to the recipient. Any student who has received award funding and withdraws after the add/drop date may be required to return any/all funding provided through the NSCC Foundation.

f. Recipients of renewable awards must continue to meet the conditions of the award in each term in order to retain the award. Failure to do so will result in the termination of the award.

g. Any awards administered by the Student Awards office on behalf of external donors shall be disbursed in accordance with the external donor’s respective guidelines. This will be communicated to the recipient at time of selection and to the campus business office.

h. Student awards can come in the form of a tuition fee waiver. These awards cannot be applied to any other mandatory fees associated with the program and have no cash value. No refunds will be issued for tuition fee waivers. Fee waivers in excess of $1000 will be applied to the student account in two equal installments, one in fall semester and one in winter semester.
5.0 POLICY SUPPORTS

RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES

28.02 Student Awards Procedures
28.03 Awards Application Terms and Conditions
28.04 NSCC Financial Needs Assessment
28.05 Student Awards Disbursement