

## ASSISTANCE WITH TERTIARY EDUCATION SCHEME (ATES)

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### 1. What is the Assistance with Tertiary Education Scheme (ATES)?

ATES is a competitively assessed university scholarship program established by the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA). It is designed to assist Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people from the Torres Strait Region (including the communities of Bamaga and Seisia) to relocate from the region to undertaking undergraduate tertiary education.

#### 2. What is the purpose of the scholarship?

The ATES Scholarship assists Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people from the Torres Strait Region (of any age) to undertake study for their first undergraduate qualification at a tertiary institution, by providing financial assistance towards relocation, rent, living and study-related expenses.

#### 3. What is the value of the Scholarship?

The value of an ATES scholarship is \$6,000 per calendar year for full-time students. Scholarship payments are made on a per-semester, pro-rata basis. An initial payment of \$3,000 is paid to successful applicants during semester 1 to assist with living and study related expenses. The remainder of the scholarship is paid in semester 2 following receipt of satisfactory semester 1 results.

#### 4. Do I have to study full time to receive the scholarship?

Yes. You must be enrolled on a full-time basis (e.g. a minimum of 18 credit points per semester, or equivalent to 0.375 Equivalent Full-time Student Load (EFTSL)).

#### 5. What if I am studying an accelerated program?

You will need to contact the TSRA on (07) 4069 0700 to discuss your scholarship and the timing of payments.

#### 6. Do I have to study on university campus to receive the scholarship, or can I study via distance education?

To be eligible to receive an ATES scholarship, you must study full-time on university campus. The ATES scholarship is intended to support students that have relocated from the region to complete their first undergraduate degree.

#### 7. Who is eligible for the scholarship?

You can apply for the ATES scholarship if you meet **all** the following eligibility requirements:

- You are a Torres Strait Islander or Aboriginal person, living within the Torres Strait region (including the communities of Bamaga and Seisia).
- You are studying your first undergraduate degree, full-time, on campus
- You are motivated to undertake and be committed to the program of studies
- You are committed to returning to work in the Torres Strait in the future.

#### 8. How do I apply for the Scholarship?

ATES applications are called for at the end of each via newspaper advertisements, the TSRA website and Facebook Page.

Applications and supporting documents are available on the TSRA website <http://www.tsra.gov.au/opportunities/leadership-capacity-building-opportunities#ATES>. Applications must be received by the close of business, 31 January each year, or as advertised by the TSRA. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

**9. Can I submit my application after the due date?**

Late applications will not be accepted unless exceptional circumstances exist. A request to submit a late application may be considered by the TSRA delegate if it is made prior to the application closing date.

**10. Will my application be treated confidentially?**

Yes. All information and documentation you provide is on a confidential basis. The TSRA will not disclose any information to persons outside of the scholarship application process.

**11. I have received an ATEs scholarship in the past, do I need to apply for the scholarship again?**

Yes. The number of ATEs Scholarships offered by the TSRA may vary from year to year and applications are ranked against the eligibility criteria and the written statement provided by applicants. You will not be required to provide supporting documentation with your application if it was provided with your initial scholarship application.

**12. How are applications assessed?**

Applications are ranked by the assessment panel and scholarships will be offered by order of their ranking against other applicants.

While continuing students will receive preference, their ranking will depend upon the number of units completed in prior years, with preference given to those with the highest marks for the previous year.

**13. When will I know the outcome of my application?**

The TSRA will advise applicants of the outcome of their application in writing prior to the census date for the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS).

**14. When is the Scholarship paid?**

Payments will be deposited directly into the scholarship recipient's nominated bank account immediately after the census date for the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) for each semester.

Payments after semester 1 in the first year of the degree are paid upon receipt of satisfactory academic results from the previous semester.

Where mid-year applications to the ATEs Scholarship Program are sought by the TSRA, successful applicants will only receive payments following receipt of satisfactory academic results from the prior semester and will not be eligible to receive Scholarship payments for study undertaken previously in that year. A successful 'mid-year' applicant will be regarded as an ongoing student for the purposes of re-applying for the scholarship in the following calendar year.

**15. My university uses a trimester system, will this affect the value and timing of my scholarship payment?**

You will need to contact the TSRA on (07) 4069 0700 to discuss your scholarship and the timing of payments.

## 16. Will I be able to keep the scholarship if I accept a place at another university?

Yes. ATEs scholarships are course specific, not university specific. The scholarship can be transferred to another university; however, you must notify the TSRA of your intention to change universities before you accept a place at another university.

## 17. What are the conditions of the scholarship?

- (a) Continued payment of the scholarship is conditional upon satisfactory progress throughout the course of study. Semester 1 results must be forwarded to the TSRA as soon as they are available. Provided satisfactory progress is being made, the semester 2 payment will be released immediately after the census date for the higher education contribution scheme (HECS) for each semester.
- (b) The TSRA reserves the right to withhold or cancel the ATEs Scholarship payments where:
  - a student is unable to continue studying on a full-time basis (see FAQ 4).
  - Where a student is no longer living outside the Torres Strait region to undertake their study.

The TSRA delegate may consider payment where special circumstances are deemed to apply and supporting information is presented.

- (c) Eligible continuing students only may be awarded the ATEs scholarship for the normal duration of their first undergraduate degree, undertaken on a full-time basis. Applications from continuing students beyond the period allocated for completion of the course as a full-time student, may be considered by the TSRA delegate where exceptional circumstances apply.
- (d) Students experiencing difficulties with studies or contemplating withdrawing or deferring must consult with the TSRA in a timely manner and in advance of making a final decision regarding withdrawal or deferral.
- (e) If a student receives an ATEs scholarship payment and withdraws before the commencement of their studies, they will be required to return the scholarship amount that has been paid for that study period.
- (f) Students will be advised in writing that scholarship payments may be discontinued if academic progress is found to be unsatisfactory.
- (g) Deferral of a scholarship for a period of one year will only be considered by the TSRA delegate where for reasons of personal or family illness or bereavement, or other exceptional circumstances.
- (h) The TSRA will consult with the university prior to making the decision to discontinue or defer an individual's scholarship payments.