

ASSISTANCE WITH TERTIARY EDUCATION SCHEME GUIDELINES, ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND TERMS AND CONDITIONS

ASSISTANCE WITH TERTIARY EDUCATION SCHEME (ATES)

ATES is a competitively assessed scholarship program established by the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) to assist Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people to relocate from the Torres Strait Region (including the communities of Bamaga and Seisia) to study an undergraduate degree full-time on campus.

Applications for ATES scholarships are called for at the end of each year via newspaper advertisements, the TSRA website and Facebook page. The Scholarship is for one year and students must reapply for each year of study.

PURPOSE

The ATES Scholarship is targeted at supporting Torres Strait Islander or Aboriginal people (of any age) to move from the Torres Strait Region to undertake study for their first undergraduate qualification at a tertiary institution.

NUMBER OF ATES SCHOLARSHIPS OFFERED BY TSRA

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. The written statement should outline the applicant's motivation for undertaking their chosen course of study and their future aspirations as they relate to the development of the Torres Strait region.

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 in the previous year.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Specific eligibility requirement for the ATES Scholarship are outlined below:

a. Must be an Indigenous person living within the Torres Strait region

Applicants must provide evidence of their Torres Strait Islander or Aboriginal heritage. Examples of acceptable forms of evidence include:

- A confirmation of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent form, executed by a delegated officer from a Local Government Authority, or a registered Native Title Prescribed Body Corporate; or
- A letter signed and executed by the Chairperson of an incorporated Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander organisation, confirming that you are recognised as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Applicants must be residents of the Torres Strait Region, which includes the communities of Bamaga and Seisia in the Northern Peninsula Area.

Applicants must have been residents of the Torres Strait Region within the year prior to the commencement of study. Evidence of residence in the Torres Strait region (including the communities of Bamaga and Seisia) prior to undertaking study will be required.

b. Must be studying their first undergraduate degree

Applicants must be either commencing, or be part-way through, their first undergraduate degree. Students can apply for an ATES scholarship at any time while undertaking their first undergraduate qualification. Individuals who have previously commenced study for a different undergraduate qualification are not eligible to apply for an ATES Scholarship.

Applicants must:

- be studying for their undergraduate degree at a recognised tertiary institution; and
- not have previously undertaken study for a different degree.

c. Studying, or planning to study full-time on campus

Scholarships will only be allocated to applicants who are leaving the Torres Strait Region to undertake undergraduate studies as a full-time student and studying on campus.

Students studying their bachelor's degree externally or via mixed-mode (i.e. block release) do not meet the ATEs eligibility requirement of studying full-time on campus and do not qualify for support through this programme.

Applicants must remain enrolled in units giving a minimum of 18 credit points per semester (equivalent to 0.375 equivalent full-time Student Load (EFTSL)). Applicants enrolled in less than 18 credit points a semester will be considered as part-time students, except in special circumstances (as determined by the TSRA delegate).

A scholarship may be terminated if the applicant's enrolment status falls below a full-time threshold.

d. Motivated to undertake and be committed to the program of studies

This is assessed against the claims made in the applicant's written statement, outlining their motivation for their chosen course, their career aspirations, personal achievements and development. The selection panel may ask applicants to provide additional information on their written statement.

e. Returning to work in Torres Strait

Applicants must outline their commitment to returning to work in the Torres Strait in the future within their written statement. This criterion is assessed against the statements made by the applicant in their application.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

New ATEs Applicants:

1. Complete the Scholarship application form.
2. Your resume. This should include details of your secondary education, other qualifications or achievements and any work history (including volunteer work). The resume should also include contact details for two referees (teacher, employer, coach etc.).
3. Evidence of your Torres Strait Islander or Aboriginal heritage.
4. A written statement from one referee (i.e. Teacher, employer, or community organisation etc.) – this could be one of the referees listed in your resume but does not have to be.
5. Your written statement of up to 500 words outlining your motivation and aspirations for undertaking this course and return to work in the Torres Strait region in future.
6. Proof of enrolment as at your University census date.
7. Financial support documents (e.g. details of any other scholarships or letters of offer).

Ongoing ATEs Recipients:

1. Complete the Scholarship application form.
2. Your written statement of up to 500 words outlining your motivation and aspirations for undertaking this course.
3. Proof of enrolment as at your University census date
4. Your transcript of academic record from the previous year.

Applications and supporting documents must be received by:

Close of business, 31 January each year, or as advertised.

Applications must be sent to:

The Torres Strait Regional Authority Scholarships
Torres Strait Regional Authority
P.O. Box 261
THURSDAY ISLAND Qld 4875
Or by email on info@tsra.gov.au

Incomplete applications will not be considered.

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.

ACCEPTING AN ATEs SCHOLARSHIP

Successful applicants will receive a scholarship offer pack containing a letter of offer and the terms and conditions of the scholarship. Applicants will be advised how to accept or decline the scholarship in the letter of offer. If applicants do not complete the acceptance as instructed, the scholarship may be withdrawn.

ATES SCHOLARSHIP VALUE AND PAYMENTS

The value of each scholarship is \$6,000 per annum, paid on a pro-rata basis each semester, pending TSRA's receipt of satisfactory academic results from the prior semester.

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

Eligible continuing students may only 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.

PRIVACY

The TSRA is bound by the *Privacy Act 1988*. All information and documentation provided to the TSRA will be treated as confidential. Applicant's personal details and information will not be disclosed to any person outside those people who are involved in the scholarship selection process, which may include authorised officers at the relevant tertiary institution.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Applicants should read these terms and conditions carefully before the scholarship offer is accepted. 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.

The TSRA reserves the right to withhold or cancel the second semester where a student is unable to continue studying on a full-time basis due to the failure of pre-requisite subjects. The TSRA delegate may consider payment where special circumstances are deemed to apply and supporting information is presented.

The TSRA will consult with the university prior to making the decision to discontinue or defer an individual's scholarship payments.

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. 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.

Students will be advised in writing that scholarship payments may be discontinued if academic progress is found to be unsatisfactory.

Deferment 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.