

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 participate in 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 students studying full-time on campus. Students studying full-time via mixed-mode or externally are eligible to receive a part scholarship valued at \$3,000 per year. Scholarship payments are made on a per-semester, pro-rata basis. An initial 50% payment 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. Full-time is defined as a minimum of 9 credit points per semester, or equivalent to 0.375 Equivalent Full-time Student Load (EFTSL), or at least three quarters of the standard full-time load for students as defined by their tertiary institution.

5. What if I am studying an accelerated program?

You will need to contact the TSRA on (07) 4069 0700 or at gnlteammbx@tsra.gov.au to discuss your scholarship and the timing of payments.

6. 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). For online and mixed-mode courses, you must be a current resident of the Torres Strait Region. For on-campus courses, you must have been a resident of the Torres Strait Region in the year prior to the commencement of study.
- You are studying your undergraduate qualification at a recognised tertiary institution and are studying full-time.
- 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.

7. How do I apply for the Scholarship?

ATES applications are called for at the end of each year 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.

8. 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.

9. 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.

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

No. If you continue to receive this scholarship you will only need to provide your evidence of semester results and proof of enrolment after the Census date.

This only applies when there is no break in Study e.g., if you defer your studies for any period of time you must reapply.

11. How are applications assessed?

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

Continuing students will receive preference to support them to complete their qualifications. However, their ranking may be impacted by the number of units completed in prior years, with preference given to those with the highest marks for the previous year.

12. 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).

13. When is the Scholarship paid?

Payments will be deposited directly into the scholarship recipient's nominated bank account immediately after you have provided evidence of enrolment in a full-time load following the census date for the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) for each semester.

Payments for semester 2 also require evidence of satisfactory academic results from the previous semester.

14. 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 or gnlteammbx@tsra.gov.au to discuss your scholarship and the timing of payments. Maximum scholarship payment amounts, however, do not change under any circumstances.

15. Will I be able to keep the scholarship if I change courses or accept a place at another university?

Yes, you can change the tertiary institution you are studying at, and you can also change courses and continue to receive the ATES scholarships. However, you must notify the TSRA of your intention to change tertiary institutions or courses beforehand.

16. Can I apply for the ATES scholarship mid-year if I am commencing my study in the second semester?

Mid-year applications will only be accepted if sufficient funding is available. If you would like to make a mid-year application, please contact the TSRA on (07) 4069 0700 or gnlteammbx@tsra.gov.au

However, to increase your chances of being awarded an ATES scholarship, we recommend you apply in the main application round by 31 January each year. You can advise of your mid-year commencement plans in that application. Payments would only be made once you have commenced full-time study.

17. I am not eligible, but I believe that exceptional circumstances apply to my situation. What should I do?

If you are not eligible but believe that exceptional circumstances apply to your situation, your application may still be considered by the TSRA delegate. Please contact the TSRA on (07) 4069 0700 or gnlteammbx@tsra.gov.au outlining your situation and seeking advice prior to making an application.

If you are advised by the TSRA that you can still make an application, your exceptional circumstances must be included in the written statement included with your application.

18. What are the conditions of the scholarship?

Successful applicants will receive a scholarship offer pack containing a letter of offer and the terms and conditions of the scholarship. A summary of the terms and conditions is below:

- (a) Continued payment of the scholarship is conditional upon satisfactory progress throughout the course of study. Academic results must be forwarded to the TSRA as soon as they are available each semester. Provided satisfactory progress is being made, the semester 2 payment will be released immediately after evidence of full-time enrolment is received following 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 becomes ineligible for any reason based on the eligibility criteria
 - a student is unable to continue studying on a full-time basis (see FAQ 4).
 - The student is not making satisfactory academic progress or has not completed their enrolled subjects
- (c) 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.
- (d) 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.
- (e) Scholarship payments may be discontinued if academic progress is found to be unsatisfactory.
- (f) 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.
- (g) The TSRA will consult with the university prior to making the decision to discontinue or defer an individual's scholarship payments.