

2020-2021 COVID-19 State Financial Aid Guidance

Overview:

Under Article 2, Section 13 of [Minnesota Laws 2020 Regular Session, Chapter 71¹](#), the Minnesota legislature has granted temporary and limited authority to modify and waive portions of statutes and rules that affect our state financial aid programs. The authority under the section referenced above expires the later of December 31, 2020, or 60 days after the end of a peacetime public health emergency declared before December 31, 2020.

Maintain Residency

If the only way a student can meet a MN residency requirement is by graduating from a MN high school while residing in MN and the student now resides in another state, traditionally the student must physically attend a MN college or university. **COVID-19 Exception:** Due to the impacts of COVID-19, on ground courses at Minnesota schools that are converted to be offered via a distance education format will meet the requirement of physically attending. Please note this is different than a student who is enrolled in an online *program* that was offered as an online program prior to the pandemic and will be after; a student in this situation who does not reside in Minnesota is not a resident for state financial aid purposes.

Scope: From 3/13/2020 through terms started prior to 7/1/2020. **This provision has been extended to include terms that began after 7/1/2020 and will extend through the later of December 31, 2020, or 60 days after the end of a peacetime public health emergency declared before December 31, 2020.**

Tuition Reciprocity with Wisconsin

Students taking distance education from a college in a neighboring reciprocity state while remaining in their home state are not covered under the reciprocity agreement with Wisconsin. **COVID-19 Exception:** Due to the impacts of COVID-19, on ground courses at Minnesota and Wisconsin schools may be converted to be offered via a distance education format. This coursework will not be considered "distance learning" courses and will be covered under the Minnesota-Wisconsin Reciprocity Agreement.

Scope: From 3/13/2020 through terms started prior to 7/1/2020. **This provision has been extended to include the 2020-2021 academic year.**

¹ <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2020/0/Session+Law/Chapter/71/>

Unit Restoration

Students who withdraw from enrollment during the peacetime public health emergency known as COVID-19 may be eligible to have grant eligibility from the term of withdrawal reinstated for State Grant, Postsecondary Child Care Grant and Indian Scholarship programs. Similar to the full withdraw due to medical reasons while under the care of a physician that impacted a student's ability to complete the term, the documentation needs to be collected and reviewed by OHE in order for units to be restored.

Scope: For students who completely withdraw due to the impact of COVID-19 for terms that were in progress as of 3/13/2020 or for terms that began after 3/13/2020, but prior to 7/1/2020. **This provision has been extended to include terms that began after 7/1/2020 and will extend through the later of December 31, 2020, or 60 days after the end of a peacetime public health emergency declared before December 31, 2020.**

Aid Administrator Steps to Request COVID-19 Unit Restoration:

1. School determines if term of full withdraw was within the scope of the COVID-19 State Financial Aid Guidance. If yes, the school then collects a student statement explaining how the full withdrawal was connected to COVID-19 and disrupted the student's studies to the point of full withdrawal. Supplemental documentation from a third party may be included.
2. School sends student statement along with a transcript (school copy is fine) to OHE and indicates which program(s) the restoration is for (State Grant, Child Care Grant, MISP). OHE will review the transcript to ensure the withdrawal falls within the scope. It must be a full withdrawal and for terms that were in progress 3/13/2020 or began after 3/13/2020, but prior to 7/1/2020, **OR terms that began after 7/1/2020 through the later of December 31, 2020, or 60 days after the end of a peacetime public health emergency declared before December 31, 2020.**
3. OHE will review the student statement and transcript; the statement must state that the reason for withdrawal and how it was related to the global pandemic known as COVID-19.
4. If the statement and transcript warrant the unit restoration, OHE staff will remove units from our internal database(s); once this is complete, school administrators will see the resulting change via SG Student Web Access Screen.

Note: Due to the widespread impact of COVID-19, the reasons for withdrawal will be broad and are not limited to the student or a student's family member being ill from the virus. Reasons are not limited to: job loss, lay off, furlough or reduction of hours for student or parent(s), loss of childcare, needing to work additional hours to support self or family, inability to match class hours with work hours/childcare availability, illness of student or family member, homelessness or housing insecurity, transportation challenges because of COVID-19, etc.

Minnesota State Work Study

The State Work Study program does not have any restrictions regarding teleworking or remote working. OHE is supportive of schools that make adjustments for their student staff, as they have for permanent staff, where appropriate.

Administrative rule 4830.2400, Subpart 3, states in part, “not less than 25 percent of the amount earned by a student shall be paid by the employer”. Under the limited and temporary authority, the Office of Higher Education will suspend administrative rule 4830.2400, Subpart 3.

Scope: This means that the **employer match is not required for terms that begin on or after 7/1/2020 and will extend through the later of December 31, 2020, or 60 days after the end of a peacetime public health emergency declared before December 31, 2020.**