# RSM 2, Attachment 1700-1

# Managing Referrals for Students with Disabilities: Desk Reference

The procedures for processing DORS referrals for [students with disabilities](http://intranet.dors.hq/RS_Manuals/RSM2/RSM2_1700_Pre-ETS.htm#1701) and [pre-employment transition services](http://intranet.dors.hq/RS_Manuals/RSM5/RSM5_0400_Pre-ETS_Providers.doc) (Pre-ETS) are provided below.

## Pre-ETS Referral Procedures

The below procedures should be followed when processing a received Pre-ETS referral for a student with a disability:

1. **DORS staff will provide the student/parent or guardian with required DORS forms and request qualifying documentation for Pre-ETS.**

Within 15 working days of the receipt of a Pre-ETS referral DORS staff will:

* 1. Confirm student age (at least 14 but no more than 21 years of age ‒ has not yet reached 22nd birthday), and;
  2. Request qualifying documentation, i.e. documentation of disability and confirmation of enrollment in secondary or post-secondary education program, and;
  3. Provide the student and parent/guardian with the following required DORS forms:
* Pre-ETS Fact Sheet
* Pre-ETS Student Information Form
* CAP Brochure

If the student/parent has not received the above documents via the centralized referral process, the above forms may be provided in person (via an IEP or other meeting) or other methods, i.e. email or mail along with the appropriate cover letter. Document via AWARE™ referral letter or referral note the date this information was provided to the student.

1. **DORS receives a Student Information Form, signed by parent/guardian if the student is in secondary school or a minor, along with qualifying documentation and enters student information in the AWARE™ Participant Module as a Pre-ETS case type.**

**Select the appropriate AWARE™ Special Program Indicator: “STEP 1” or, if all qualifying documents received are adequate, “STEP 2.”**

If qualifying documentation is not received, DORS staff shall make every effort to gather disability related documentation by:

* Requesting documentation of disability from parent/guardian, or from school or health care provider with a signed consent form. Documentation should note disability. Examples of qualifying documentation may include, but are not limited to, a current IEP, 504 plan, or diagnosis from a healthcare provider.

1. **Counselor schedules a date to discuss services with the student.**

Within 30 calendar days of receiving the required qualifying documentation and the signed Student Information Form, DORS staff will make every effort to discuss Pre-ETS with the student and parent/guardian (as required).

1. **At the initial interview, the counselor discusses services with the student and a Pre-ETS Agreement is completed and given to the student for required signatures.**

The counselor will discuss service options with the student, in either an individual or group setting, at the school, the DORS office, a mutually agreed upon location in the community, phone conversation, or virtual meeting as appropriate. During the initial interview, the DORS counselor will:

* 1. Ensure that the Student Information Form and disability documentation is completed, signed, dated and received.
  2. Provide the student/family with her/his appropriate [Professional Disclosure Statement (RS-1m)](http://intranet.dors.hq/RS_Manuals/RSM4.htm#rs1m).
  3. Provide basic Job Exploration Counseling documented through a case note by checking the appropriate “Activities Provided Option” in Section 3 in AWARE™.
  4. Complete the **DORS Student with Disability Needs Interview** (available as an AWARE™ letter, Letter Group- DORS Forms) with the student.
  5. Discuss next steps, including identifying specific appropriate Pre-ETS programs and providers, consistent with the student’s informed choice and which may be completed before the student no longer qualifies for pre-employment transition services.
  6. Introduce VR Services (commonly referred to VR Employment Services by DORS school partners) during the initial discussion of services.
     1. If a student/parent/guardian is interested in additional VR services, and the student/family prefers to complete the Application immediately, then the DORS counselor will enter the referral information into the AWARE™ Referral Module and enter the Application and Health Status information into the Application Module.
     2. DORS staff will also mail any additional required documentation outlined in [RSM 2, Section 402.01, Referral Documentation](http://intranet.dors.hq/RS_Manuals/RSM2/RSM2_0400_Referral_Application.htm#40201) and [Section 406, Initial Interview](http://intranet.dors.hq/RS_Manuals/RSM2/RSM2_0400_Referral_Application.htm#406), such as:
  + [Client Assistance Program (CAP) brochure](https://dors.maryland.gov/Brochures/CAP.pdf)
  + [Informed Choice brochure](https://dors.maryland.gov/Brochures/Informed_Choice.pdf)
  + [Opening DORS to Employment brochure](https://dors.maryland.gov/Brochures/OpeningDORS.pdf)
  + [Professional Disclosure Statement (RS-1m)](http://intranet.dors.hq/RS_Manuals/RSM4.htm#rs1m)
  + [Notification Regarding PII (RS-2d)](http://intranet.dors.hq/RS_Manuals/RSM4.htm#rs2d)
    1. If the student/family prefers a future appointment date, the DORS staff will complete an online referral for additional VR services, which will initiate a VR application to be sent to the student AND schedule an Intake appointment 10-14 days in the future to discuss additional VR services.

**Select AWARE™ Special Program Indicator “STEP 3” (deselect “STEP 2”).**

1. **Counselor fills out a Pre-ETS Agreement.**

The Pre-ETS Agreement is available in AWARE™ under “Letters” and is completed based on the initial interview and the Pre-ETS Interview document completed with the student. To appropriately fill out a Pre-ETS Agreement, the DORS counselor will:

* 1. Provide informed choice and Community Service Providers information to the student in order for the student to participate in Pre-ETS; and
  2. Document specific agreed-upon Pre-ETS programming (reference: [Pre-ETS Fees](http://intranet.dors.hq/RS_Manuals/RSM5/RSM5_0400_Pre-ETS_Providers.doc)).

1. **Counselor receives signed Pre-ETS Agreement.**

The [Pre-Employment Transition Services Agreement](http://intranet.dors.hq/RS_Manuals/RSM4.htm#rs10c), signed by student and parent/ legal guardian (if student is a minor or in high school), must be received and signed by a DORS representative before future services (beyond the initial job exploration counseling documented through an “actual service” in AWARE™) are authorized. Once all required signatures have been obtained, a copy of the Agreement shall be provided to the student and scanned into AWARE™, and services will be provided in accordance with the Agreement.

**Upon signatures of the Pre-ETS Agreement, select Special Program Indicator “Step 4” (deselect “Step 3”).**

**Note: A. through F. above may be completed at the same time if DORS staff have documentation that the individual qualifies for Pre-ETS.**

1. **Counselor coordinates services provided by DORS and partners.**

Once the Pre-ETS Agreement has been completed and signed by the student (and parent/guardian if the student is a minor or is enrolled in secondary education), DORS staff will coordinate all services listed in the agreement by referring students to agreed-upon programs by sending Pre-ETS partners the following:

* 1. Pre-ETS Referral Form (a CRP Pre-ETS referral form may be used in lieu of DORS Pre-ETS referral form); and
  2. Documentation of prior approval for DORS funding via a Vendor Authorization or Actual Service Record to indicate Prior Approval of Funding for Pre-ETS Activity (completed by regional staff for MOU documented Pre-ETS in which a vendor authorization is not required).
  3. As long as the student qualifies to receive Pre-Employment Transition Services, the Agreement will remain in effect. New Agreements may be written, as additional services are identified through ongoing coordination activities with the education providers and other interested parties.
  4. If a student applies for additional Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Services after Pre-ETS have been provided and is placed in a closed order of selection category, the student may continue to receive Pre-ETS services on the Pre-ETS Agreement and the Pre-ETS case shall remain open.

1. **Counselor indicates case as “Inactive” if the student meets either of the descriptions below:**
   1. Does not have an open VR case type, has completed all services listed on their service agreement form, and has not identified any future pre-employment transition services to participate in.
   2. Has failed to maintain contact with their DORS counselor, yet continues to meet the definition of a “student with a disability.”

**Select “Step 5” in Special Programs - deselect “Step 4”**

1. Counselor closes Pre-ETS case if the student:
2. No longer qualifies for Pre-Employment Transition Services.
3. Has an IPE under a VR Services case.

## Caseload Layouts

AWARE™ has two layouts in the Participant Module available specifically for use with Pre-ETS caseloads.

The **Pre-Employment Transition Services Caseload** layout displays only Pre-ETS cases and shows the student’s current **STEP** in the Special Program Indicator column.

The **Pre-Employment Transition Services Caseload Grouped by Step** layout organizes the student cases based on the most current **STEP** completed.

## VR Referral Procedures

The below procedure should be followed when processing a received VR referral for a student with a disability:

1. **DORS staff will follow referral and intake procedures specified in** [**Section 400**](http://intranet.dors.hq/RS_Manuals/RSM2/RSM2_0400_Referral_Application.htm) **when working with students with disabilities referred for VR Services (regardless if there is a Pre-ETS only case open for the referred student). The following referral procedures and information are specific to students with disabilities:**
   1. If an existing Pre-ETS case is open for the student, coordinate with the assigned counselor to facilitate the VR application.
   2. When a student is referred for DORS services by sources other than the school, the vocational rehabilitation counselor will notify the appropriate school personnel of the referral, contingent upon the appropriate authorization for release of information (see [Section 200](http://intranet.dors.hq/RS_Manuals/RSM2/RSM2_0200_Confidentiality.htm)).
   3. The DORS counselor will arrange a meeting with the student and the student’s parents/guardian(s).
   4. At the initial meeting with the student and parent/legal guardian, the DORS counselor will begin to develop a guidance and counseling relationship, in accordance with [Section 400](http://intranet.dors.hq/RS_Manuals/RSM2/RSM2_0400_Referral_Application.htm), and:
      1. Provide Pre-ETS Job Exploration Counseling and document this via an [Actual Service Record](http://intranet.dors.hq/RS_Manuals/RSM2/RSM2_0300-4.doc). **Note: \*The Actual Service Record must be documented prior to eligibility determination.**
      2. Complete the [Initial Interview/Application Checklist (RS-1r)](http://intranet.dors.hq/RS_Manuals/RSM4.htm#rs1r).
      3. Complete the **DORS Student with Disability Needs Interview** (available as an AWARE letter, Letter Group- DORS Forms) to gather information and to plan for Pre-ETS activities.
   5. The DORS counselor will explain the goals of vocational rehabilitation employment services and the concept of informed choice and how they will support the student’s transition and career plans. Discussions will also include the role of related community service providers which might be of assistance to the student.
2. **The assigned DORS Counselor shall determine Eligibility for VR Services, as indicated in** [**Section 500**](http://intranet.dors.hq/RS_Manuals/RSM2/RSM2_0500_Eligibility_Severity_Priority.htm)**.**

In addition, the determination of severity of disability and Order of Selection category assignment shall be made concurrently with or prior to the eligibility determination (see [Section 500](http://intranet.dors.hq/RS_Manuals/RSM2/RSM2_0500_Eligibility_Severity_Priority.htm)).

**If the individual is not eligible for VR Services or is eligible and placed on a closed order of selection (Delayed status), the DORS counselor will:**

* 1. Complete an online referral for DORS Pre-ETS.
  2. Assist the student/parent/guardian with filling out the required Pre-ETS Student Information Form.
  3. Proceed with step “A” under procedures for processing Pre-ETS referrals.

**If the individual is eligible for VR Services and is placed on an open order of selection (Eligible status), the DORS counselor will:**

* Proceed to step “C” below.

1. **The assigned DORS counselor will initiate the development of an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).**

Policies and procedures in [Section 600](http://intranet.dors.hq/RS_Manuals/RSM2/RSM2_0600_Plan.htm) and [Section 700](http://intranet.dors.hq/RS_Manuals/RSM2/RSM2_0700_Rehab_Services.htm) apply to students who have been determined eligible for services and can be served under the order of selection in the development of the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

In addition, the following procedures apply to the development of the IPE for students, as indicated:

* 1. If an employment goal is yet to be identified and the IPE is solely providing Pre-ETS, the following employment goal may be used: “Projected Post-High School Goal in Custom Field--Only Pre-ETS Services Provided”
  2. Pre-ETS may continue to be provided under an IPE as long as the individual continues to meet the definition of a student with a disability.

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