

**RSM 2**  
**VR & IL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL**  
**SECTION 1500**

## **POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION**

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## 1501 DORS and Post-Secondary Education

Training in institutions of post-secondary education can make a significant difference for individuals with disabilities in achieving employment, independence, and economic self-sufficiency. Post-secondary education includes community/junior colleges, four-year colleges and universities, proprietary/private career schools and technical institutes, with online, onsite and hybrid programs. Policy and procedures in this section apply to:

- a. Post-secondary education training programs taken for credit toward a degree or a certificate.
- b. Non-credit programs taken to achieve a specific employment-related credential and, in the case of developmental classes, to qualify for credit-based post-secondary education.

**Note:** The Workforce & Technology Center (WTC) also provides post-secondary career training programs and should be considered when exploring options. See **RSM 2, Section 1200** and **WTC on InDORS**.

- a. **Preference for in-state, public institutions** – As a Maryland State agency with limited resources and a waiting list for services, DORS has a preference for provision of post-secondary education services in public institutions in Maryland. With justification and approval, students may be assisted with post-secondary education in private and/or out-of-state institutions.
- b. **Accreditation requirement** – DORS supports only post-secondary education programs that are accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency, industry-based or Department of Veterans Affairs accreditation (e.g., Microsoft), Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC), or the Maryland Department of Labor Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), and approved by DORS (see **RSM 3, Section 1007**). An exception may be considered for short-term training related to a specific job offer, and requires approval of the Office of Field Services (OFS) or Office for Blindness & Vision Services (OBVS) Director.

## 1502 Post-Secondary Education Terminology

### 1502.01 Educational Expenses

Educational expenses are costs related to post-secondary education which can be considered by DORS for funding. Determined on an individual basis consistent with DORS policy, they may include tuition and mandatory fees, books and supplies, room and board (on an exception basis only), the cost of commuting, and other related expenses. Educational expenses are enumerated on the **Determination of DORS Financial Assistance for Post-Secondary Education (RS-5b)** form.

### 1502.02 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

The **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** is the form required by the U.S. Department of Education, Student Financial Assistance Programs for students requesting financial aid from participating institutions. Eligible individuals requesting assistance from DORS to pay for post-secondary education are required to apply for financial aid (see **Section 1506.02**) each year. For more

information about the federal Student Financial Assistance Programs and the FAFSA, visit the FAFSA website.

### **1502.03 Student Aid Report (SAR)**

The **Student Aid Report (SAR)** is a report sent to the student verifying information from the **FAFSA** and indicating eligibility for certain grants and specifying the amount (the Expected Family Contribution) the student and family are required to contribute to higher education costs, according to the Higher Education Act, as amended.

### **1502.04 Grants and Scholarships**

Grants and scholarships are financial support for educational programs provided by sources other than DORS which does not need to be repaid and which can be applied to the school the individual will be attending.

### **1502.05 Work-Study and Loans**

Through the application for federal financial aid, students with demonstrated financial need may be offered the opportunity to work in exchange for money for college expenses. Likewise, students and their families may be offered low interest loans. While DORS does not require that individuals take out loans or work in work-study programs, students may choose to use these means to defray educational costs.

### **1502.06 Disability Support Services**

Community colleges and four-year colleges and universities have supports available to assist students with disabilities, and may facilitate provision of on-campus reasonable accommodations based on relevant documentation provided by the student.

### **1502.07 Developmental Courses**

Non-credit courses (usually below 100 level) which may be required by an institution in preparation for college level, credit courses.

### **1502.08 Placement Testing**

Testing used primarily by community colleges to determine whether prospective students require developmental courses or are prepared to begin credit courses. Nationally available placement tests may assist DORS counselors in determining to what degree a consumer is academically prepared for college level study. WTC is approved to administer the [ACCUPLACER®](#) test for DORS consumers:

**The ACCUPLACER® System** – [ACCUPLACER®](#) is a comprehensive battery of tests designed to provide information about students' English, reading, mathematics and computer skills. Tests within the [ACCUPLACER®](#) system are delivered over the Internet and are used extensively by high schools, community colleges, four-year colleges, and technical schools around the world. The primary function of the [ACCUPLACER®](#) assessments is to assist with determining if students are prepared for a college-level course or if they would benefit from a developmental course.

## **1503 Training Services in Institutions of Post-Secondary Education**

DORS supports individuals in post-secondary education in many ways, depending on the approved employment goal, disability factors and DORS policy. DORS may only provide financial assistance for training in institutions of post-secondary education training/education if the training/education is required for achievement of the employment goal on an approved **IPE**.

Such assistance may include provision of:

- a. Financial assistance for tuition, fees and books consistent with financial need.
- b. Auxiliary aids for the individual's use while in school (aside from in-class accommodations provided by the school), such as a note taker for use in completing assignments.
- c. Funding of accommodations to enable participation in educationally-related, out-of-class activities (e.g., participation in a study group or professional organization meeting).
- d. Guidance and counseling throughout the period of enrollment.
- e. Disability-related services (e.g., psychotherapy, to ensure the student is able to focus on academics).
- f. Assistance with maintenance and transportation costs.
- g. Personal assistance services.

Post-secondary educational institutions have the responsibility to assure that all of their programs are accessible to individuals with disabilities, including provision of in-class reasonable accommodations and access to course content required by students with disabilities (see **RSM 2, Section 706.03**).

## **1504 Training Service Requirements**

DORS may provide financial assistance for training services in institutions of post-secondary education consistent with the following requirements.

### **1504.01 Evaluating the Resources and Capabilities of the Individual**

Post-secondary training (two-year college degree or vocational certificate programs, four-year college/university, or career school on a credit or non-credit basis) must be consistent with the individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities and interests.

- a. Review of existing, relevant information, such as psychological evaluations, school records, college transcripts, SAT and/or ACT scores, and documentation of acceptance to a four-year college/university may contribute to decision making about post-secondary education.
- b. When there are complex factors and/or insufficient existing relevant information, consideration may be given to formal assessments and/or referral to WTC for a college assessment, which may include placement testing.

### **1504.02 Trial Semesters**

- a. **Trial Semester Supported by DORS** – If review of school achievement, academic background and/or placement testing indicates the consumer may have difficulty succeeding in college level courses (e.g., if placement testing indicates a need for one or two semesters of developmental courses), consideration may be given to DORS financial support for a trial semester/grading period. The DORS counselor will work with the individual and the academic advisor of the institution to identify appropriate courses to be taken during the trial semester/grading period. DORS financial assistance for a subsequent semester/grading period will depend on the grades achieved (see **Section 1512**).
- b. **Trial Semester at Consumer's Expense** – If review of school achievement, academic background and/or placement testing indicates post-secondary education is not a realistic goal

for the individual (e.g., more than two semesters of developmental courses needed), the counselor shall provide vocational guidance and counseling to assist in exploring:

1. Employment options that do not require post-secondary education.
2. Adult Basic Education resources in the community.

In the event the individual still wishes to pursue post-secondary education and demonstrate their ability to do so, the individual will be required to attend a trial semester/grading period at their own expense. The DORS counselor will work with the individual and the academic advisor of the institution to identify appropriate courses to be taken during the trial semester/grading period. DORS financial assistance for a subsequent semester/grading period will depend on the grades achieved (see **Section 1512**).

## 1505 Role of the DORS Counselor

Following are essential aspects of the DORS counselor's role related to post-secondary education:

- a. Provide career counseling to support the consumer's informed choice about the employment goal, services and providers. Assist the individual in thoroughly exploring pros and cons of employment options for consideration (see **RSM 2, Section 602**).
- b. Determine if AT is needed for the individual to have access to post-secondary education. While the post-secondary institution has the responsibility to provide in-class accommodations (see **h(1)** below), DORS may provide AT needed by the individual outside of the classroom setting. AT that DORS may provide to an individual for access is not included on the **Determination of DORS Financial Assistance for Post-Secondary Education (RS-5b)** form but is included on the **IPE** (see **Section 1510.01(f)**).

If consultation is needed with DORS Rehabilitation Technology Services (RTS) regarding AT for a student, be sure to contact RTS four months prior to the beginning of the semester.

- c. Work cooperatively with the financial aid administrator, the coordinator of disability services, the individual student and, as appropriate, the individual's family or authorized representative to determine the amount of DORS financial participation, assessing progress in the educational program and assessing progress toward the employment goal.
- d. Be sure that supports are in place and are included on the **IPE** (e.g., continuation of therapy and/or medication) to address disability issues and assist the individual in maintaining stability so that they have the best chance for academic success.
- e. Clarify disability-related needs that can be anticipated in the post-secondary education setting:
  1. Discuss the role of the Disability Services Coordinator at the post-secondary education institution. Be sure that the individual understands that it is the responsibility of the Disability Services Coordinator to arrange required in-class reasonable accommodations/access to course content at the school based on federal law and regulation and the policies and procedures of the institution. Also, the individual should be advised that "in-class" accommodations appropriate in a college/university setting might be different than those provided during high school. Encourage the individual to contact the Disability Services Coordinator. Complete the **Reasonable Accommodation Information Exchange (RS-5c)** form as appropriate.
  2. Anticipate needs for out-of-class accommodations (e.g., a reader to assist with studying), discuss DORS' responsibility to provide such supports, and include them as appropriate in the **IPE**.

- f. Advise the individual of the required procedures and responsibilities related to DORS support for post-secondary education. The **Post-Secondary Education Fact Sheet (RS-6d)** shall be provided to augment discussion of this information. The AWARE™ **College General Information** letter should also be used when individuals request information about DORS support of participants in post-secondary education.
- g. Determine DORS financial assistance according to relevant policy and procedures.
- h. Meet with the individual prior to each semester to:
  - 1. Review grades and progress toward the agreed upon certificate/degree.
  - 2. Plan coursework and address any required prerequisites, remedial courses, repeated courses, withdrawals, and "incompletes," and assure that the student completes related requirements so as to not delay completion of the certificate/degree.
  - 3. Discuss disability issues and facilitate provision of supports and reasonable accommodations needed and/or continuation of those which are in place.
  - 4. Emphasize the employment outcome on the **IPE**.
  - 5. Offer support and encourage self-advocacy.
  - 6. Complete the **Determination of DORS Financial Assistance for Post-Secondary Education (RS-5b)** form for the next semester to determine DORS funding and the individual's contribution.

An AWARE™ **College Checklist** letter is available to assist in communicating with participants who are in post-secondary education programs.

- i. With the student, annually review the **IPE**, considering all relevant factors, including whether or not:
  - 1. The employment goal is still viable.
  - 2. Timeframes on the **IPE** are being met.
  - 3. Disability-related supports are in place and adequate.
  - 4. There is a need for an **IPE Amendment**.

All annual reviews for post-secondary education require supervisory review to be documented via an AWARE™ case note (see **Section 604.12**).

## **1506 Notification of Responsibilities of the Individual**

The DORS counselor shall inform individuals of the following responsibilities and shall advise them that failure to fulfill these responsibilities will result in denial or discontinuation of DORS funding.

### **1506.01 Related Policies and Procedures**

The DORS counselor will advise the individual of the policies and procedures relevant to the financial participation by the individual and DORS in the cost of training and related services in post-secondary education institutions.

## 1506.02 Requirements and Responsibilities of the Individual

The DORS counselor shall inform the individual of the following requirements and responsibilities, which are included on the **Post-Secondary Education Fact Sheet (RS-6d)** and are addressed in the AWARE™ **College General Information** letter:

- a. Apply annually for financial assistance through the post-secondary institution within established time frames in order to be considered for DORS financial assistance. (DORS financial assistance for an individual who has not met required deadlines for applying for financial aid requires supervisory approval.)
- b. When arranging to begin a program at a post-secondary institution, provide the DORS counselor with a Letter of Acceptance and proposed course of study **at least 60 days prior** to the beginning of the semester/grading period so that there is sufficient time to plan and determine whether and to what extent DORS can provide financial assistance.

While DORS staff will make every effort to assist individuals who request services less than 60 days prior to the beginning of the semester/grading period, **DORS financial assistance may be delayed until the next semester/grading period for last-minute requests.**

Individuals who require AT must contact the counselor **at least 120 days or four months prior** to the beginning of the semester/grading period so that there is sufficient time to acquire needed AT.

- c. Maintain satisfactory academic progress toward a degree or certificate program as stipulated in **Section 1512** and remain in "good standing" with the post-secondary institution. To confirm and document progress, provide the DORS counselor a copy of the grade report or transcript and proposed course of study upon the completion of each semester/grading period.
- d. Provide the DORS counselor with authorization, by signing the **Financial Aid Information Exchange (RS-5a)** form, to exchange information with the financial aid administrator related to enrollment status, completion of the annual FAFSA, credits to be taken, grants and scholarships, and whether a tuition waiver applies.
- e. Apply any financial assistance (other than loans) received toward training and related expenses.
- f. Participate in the cost of training and related services in institutions of post-secondary education, when educational expenses exceed financial assistance received from DORS (University of Maryland, College Park rates) and other sources.
- g. Prior to each semester/grading period, discuss the proposed course of study and its relationship to the employment goal, and progress toward the certificate/degree with the DORS counselor.
- h. Discuss with the DORS counselor any requested change in major or course of study, considering the impact on the employment goal, any required extension in the academic program, and whether the **IPE** would need to be amended.

## 1507 Special Circumstances: Post-Secondary Education

### 1507.01 Graduate School

Inclusion of graduate school on the IPE may be considered if the degree is needed for career advancement or if a graduate degree is the standard for entry into the field consistent with the employment goal.

Financial assistance for graduate-level programs requires Administrative Approval from the OFS or OBVS Director, as applicable, prior to drafting an IPE including an employment goal that requires graduate credentials. When graduate school is approved, the policies and procedures in this section apply.

### **1507.02 Previous Degree**

DORS support for a post-secondary degree is provided only for individuals who have not already earned a degree.

- a. This does not apply to an **IPE** including a bachelor's degree when the individual achieves an associate's degree as a step toward the bachelor's degree.
- b. In exceptional circumstances when the disability precludes achievement of an employment outcome with current credentials, consideration may be given to DORS financial assistance for another degree. Administrative approval is required for an additional degree beyond the first bachelor's.
- c. Selected courses provided to update skills and improve employment opportunities may be provided on an individual basis with the approval of the DORS counselor. Higher-level approval depends on other approval requirements (see **RSM 3, Section 1005**).

### **1507.03 Full-time/Part-time Attendance**

Ideally, the individual should be encouraged to attend a full-time basis (12 credits or more per semester) so that employment is achieved in a timely manner. Part-time attendance (less than 12 credits per semester) related to disability factors, employment, or other compelling reasons will be considered on an individual basis.

### **1507.04 Developmental Courses and Core Program Requirements**

- a. Developmental courses must be completed as soon as possible and within trial semesters (see **Section 1504.03**).
- b. DORS support for more than one semester/grading period of developmental/remedial courses requires administrative approval.
- c. Core requirements shall be completed as soon as possible within the planned course of study.

### **1507.05 Funding for Disability Support Programs**

Some post-secondary institutions offer, for an additional fee, programs which provide vocational/educational support to students with certain disabilities while they are enrolled in full-time, credit courses. These programs are over and above the usual services provided by Disability Support Services staff described in **Section 1502.06**.

Consideration may be given on an individual basis to providing financial assistance for up to two semesters. These programs are included on the **IPE**, but not on the **Determination of DORS Financial Assistance for Post-Secondary Education (RS-5b)** form (see **Section 1509.02**). Administrative Approval from the Regional Director is required.

### **1507.06 Non-degree Courses**

Selected courses that are not part of degree programs may be authorized when such courses are part of an assessment to determine rehabilitation needs or identified on the IPE and necessary for the attainment of the employment goal.

### **1507.07 Comprehensive Transition Program (CTP)**

Comprehensive Transition Programs (CTPs) are federally recognized inclusive post-secondary education programs specifically designed for students with intellectual disabilities.

- [National list of CTPs](#)

DORS may provide financial assistance to support students or adults attending a CTP while receiving VR services, if it is found to be a necessary service in support of the individual's employment goal. DORS financial assistance will be considered on an exceptional basis if the post-secondary education program is awaiting federal review in order to become a CTP. Administrative Approval at the regional level is required.

### **1507.08 Tutoring**

Tutoring may be provided to an individual enrolled in post-secondary education consistent with **Section 715.05**. DORS will not fund tutoring as a general academic support so that an individual can maintain an above average grade point average.

### **1507.09 Delay of Graduation/Completion**

A number of factors may contribute to a delay in graduation from the time frame established on the **IPE**. These include illness, change of major, patterns of withdrawal from classes, unavailability of courses and other factors. The DORS counselor and student will be able to minimize delays in completion of the program by carefully reviewing the course requirements and the individual's progress each semester, revisiting the employment goal, and assuring that disability supports are in place (see **Section 1505**).

### **1508 Requirement to Apply for Financial Assistance**

According to federal VR regulations, training and related services in institutions of post-secondary education (including universities, colleges, community/junior colleges, vocational schools, technical institutes and proprietary/private career schools) for eligible individuals under an **IPE** will be purchased only after the individual has completed the application process for financial aid through the institution's financial aid office and has applied for other grants and scholarships for which the individual might qualify. Application for financial assistance from other sources, including grants and scholarships, must be made annually.

The institution's financial aid officer will confirm on the **Financial Aid Information Exchange (RS-5a)** whether or not the consumer has completed the FAFSA. See **Section 1513** for further guidance regarding exceptions to this requirement.

Students and families may choose to take out educational loans or participate in work-study programs to help defray educational costs.

Individuals are not required to complete the financial aid application process through the institution's financial aid office if:

- a. The individual is seeking admittance to an institution not participating in the federal student financial aid process (this requires DORS supervisory approval); or
- b. The individual is enrolling for non-degree courses (i.e., selected courses that are not part of a degree program) (see **Section 1507.06**).

### 1508.01 Tuition Waiver

Maryland law provides for tuition waivers at community colleges for individuals who qualify. The DORS counselor shall ensure consumers explore available tuition waivers prior to determining DORS financial assistance.

### 1508.02 Application Procedure for Financial Assistance

All individuals seeking DORS financial assistance for higher education are required to apply for financial aid. See **Post-Secondary Education Fact Sheet (RS-6d)** for consumer procedures and responsibilities.

### 1509 Determination of DORS Funding

- a. DORS funding for certificate programs or associate of arts (AA) programs shall be at the rate of the community college attended, as applicable (see **Attachment 1500-1** for tuition and fees for all Maryland Community Colleges). Exceptions to pay in excess of the cost of tuition and mandatory fees at Montgomery College are subject to supervisory review.
- b. DORS funding for four-year colleges shall be at the rate of the in-state public college/university attended, if applicable (see **Attachment 1500-1** for tuition and fees for all Maryland four-year public colleges and universities). Funding for private or out-of-state post-secondary institutions may not exceed the University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP) in-state rates. An exception to provide funding for tuition and fees in excess of the UMCP in-state rates for private or out-of-state institutions requires approval of the DORS Director or designee.
- c. The amount of DORS financial assistance to be provided to the individual shall be calculated using the **Determination of DORS Financial Assistance for Post-Secondary Education (RS-5b)** form along with the **Financial Aid Information Exchange (RS-5a)**. The DORS counselor will complete this determination each semester/grading period.

### 1509.01 Educational Expenses

**Educational Expenses** will be based on the specific costs of the following, as stated on the **Determination of DORS Financial Assistance for Post-Secondary Education (RS-5b)** form:

- a. Tuition and mandatory fees
- b. Room
- c. Board
- d. Other approved expenses – Administrative Approval at the regional level is required.
- e. Books and supplies
- f. Commuting costs
- g. Off-campus room and board – DORS may provide M&T payments to the individual for off-campus room and board.

### 1509.02 Educationally-Related Support Services Not Included as "Educational Expenses"

- a. **Other services** – Refer to **RSM 2, Section 700** for other rehabilitation services that may be needed to support the individual while attending postsecondary education. These services are not considered to be Educational Expenses. Administrative Approval may apply.
- b. **In-class reasonable accommodations** – Post-secondary education institutions are responsible for provision of in-class reasonable accommodations/access to course content. DORS will consider providing funding for educationally-related, in-class reasonable accommodations only:

1. If the institution makes it a matter of public record that provision of reasonable accommodations would be an "undue administrative or financial burden."
2. With the approval of the regional/program director or designee (see **RSM 3, Section 1005**).

Every effort shall be made to assure timely provision of required reasonable accommodations so as to avoid a delay in the consumer's individual training program.

- c. Educationally-related support services** – which are needed by the individual shall be included on the **IPE** but not on the **Determination of DORS Financial Assistance for Post-Secondary Education (RS-5b)** form. This applies to personal assistance services, disability-related auxiliary aids/AT (e.g., computer hardware or software required because of the disability), reader or interpreter services required for out-of-class activities, and provision of required text books and class materials needed in alternate formats, particularly for students with blindness/vision impairment who require Braille or electronic versions of text books and other materials.
1. **Personal Assistance Services** – DORS may assist with costs related to personal assistance services for individuals with significant disabilities who are attending post-secondary education programs, consistent with the following requirements, regardless of whether the individual lives on- or off-campus. The consumer must:
    - i. Apply for funding through the State's Personal Assistance/Attendant Care programs as possible comparable benefits.
    - ii. With the DORS counselor, complete the **Personal Assistance Services (PAS) Screening Tool**.
    - iii. Participate in PAS/Attendant Care assessment by a WTC Occupational Therapist.
  2. **Textbooks in Alternate Format as an Accommodation** – DORS counselors may order required text books well in advance of the semester for students (i.e., before semester grades may be available) as long as the student's schedule of classes for the upcoming semester is confirmed by the college/university and required textbooks have been designated. DORS may provide funding for textbooks in alternate format in addition to the allowance for textbooks.
  3. **Fee-for-Service Disability Support Services** – Some post-secondary education institutions offer, for an additional fee, programs which provide comprehensive disability support services to students with certain disabilities while they are enrolled in credit courses. These services are over and above the usual services provided by Disability Support Services staff described in **Section 1507.05**. These individualized services, which enable access to post-secondary education for some individuals with disabilities, are included on the IPE, but not on the **Determination of DORS Financial Assistance for Post-Secondary Education (RS-5b)** (see **Section 1509.02**). DORS funding may be provided on an individual basis; requires annual Regional Director Administrative Approval.
- d. Provision of Non-Adapted Computers for Post-Secondary Education** – Non-adapted computers may be purchased for students in post-secondary education consistent with **Section 708**. Such purchases are included on the **IPE** but not the **Determination of DORS Financial Assistance for Post-Secondary Education (RS-5b)** form.

### **1509.03 Financial Participation of the Individual**

The individual, or if appropriate the individual's family, will pay for all post-secondary education expenses not funded by DORS or grants and scholarships, as specified on the **Determination of DORS Financial Assistance for Post-Secondary Education (RS-5b)** which is completed and signed by the student and DORS counselor each semester. A copy of the **Determination of DORS Financial Assistance for Post-Secondary Education (RS-5b)** will be given to the student each semester.

The individual's **IPE** will include detailed information regarding estimated funding and the responsibilities of the consumer and DORS.

### **1510 Attendance at Private or Out-of-State Colleges and Universities**

Students who prefer to attend private or out-of-state institutions of post-secondary education are responsible for the extra costs of attendance, including but not limited to transportation costs over and above what DORS would provide if the individual were to attend a local college/university.

DORS may provide financial assistance, as follows:

- a. **Tuition and Fees** – Up to the in-state rate of the University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) for tuition and fees for a private or out-of-state institution attended by the individual. An exception to provide DORS funding in excess of the UMCP in-state rates requires approval of the DORS Director or designee. If out-of-state rates are approved by the DORS Director or designee, consideration may be given to transportation assistance (see **RSM 2, Section 717.04**).
- b. **Room and Board** – DORS support for room and board at a private or out-of-state institution shall not exceed University of Maryland, College Park in-state rates. An exception to provide DORS funding for room and board in excess of the UMCP in-state rates requires prior approval of the DORS Director or designee.

### **1511 DORS Funding for Proprietary/Private Career Schools**

The policies and procedures in this section apply to individuals attending proprietary schools and private career schools. DORS supports attendance at proprietary/private career schools when the course of study is not available at a public institution (community college) or when scheduling of classes makes it more efficient and timely for the student to attend the private career school. DORS supports attendance only at proprietary/private career schools included on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), or approved by the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) or a similar commission of another state. Exceptions require approval of the OFS or OBVS Director.

The DORS counselor shall complete the **Proprietary School Documentation/Justification (RS-6t)** form after providing guidance and counseling to explore training options and funding (see **Section 1505**).

- a. The rate paid by DORS for training services in vocational and proprietary schools will not exceed the provider's customary charge.
- b. Consideration of proprietary/private career school with total costs exceeding \$2,500 requires consultation with OFS Technical Assistance or OBVS Director or designee who will determine the amount DORS will pay, based on current Montgomery College rates and availability of similar programs.

## **1512 Continuation, Discontinuation and Resumption of DORS Funding**

### **1512.01 Requirements for Continuation of DORS Funding**

To be considered for the continuation of funding by DORS at a post-secondary education institution, an individual shall:

- a. Earn credit on a minimum of 75% of all credits for which the individual registered each semester/grading period.
- b. Maintain a minimum average grade of "C" or its equivalent on all credits completed each semester/grading period.
- c. Meet the requirements and responsibilities identified in **Section 1506**.

Failure to meet the above criteria will result in the discontinuation of DORS funding.

### **1512.02 Discontinuation of DORS Funding**

DORS financial support of post-secondary education will be discontinued if the individual fails to meet the criteria outlined in **Section 1512.01** above.

### **1512.03 Resumption of DORS Funding**

Individuals requesting DORS funding of post-secondary education following discontinuation of such funding must meet the requirements stated in **Section 1512.01** for a minimum of six credits or the equivalent at an institution of higher education at their own expense before being reconsidered for financial assistance for post-secondary education by DORS. The six credits should include any courses that need to be repeated due to failure. The DORS counselor and individual shall reassess the feasibility of the employment goal on the **IPE**, assure that sufficient disability-related supports are in place, and amend the **IPE** if needed.

## **1513 Ineligibility for Federal Student Aid (Default; Drug Convictions; Certain Non-Citizens)**

Individuals may be ineligible for Federal student financial aid if they have previously defaulted on a student loan or if they have certain criminal drug convictions on their record.

### **1513.01 Defaulting on Student Loans**

An individual requesting DORS financial assistance for post-secondary expenses who has defaulted on a student loan or loans and has therefore become ineligible to receive financial aid through the institution will be required to pursue deferment of the defaulted loan or loans through appropriate channels. In such situations, the DORS counselor will explore the individual's default status, particularly its relationship to their disability, and will consider efforts the individual has made to resolve the default, the effect of default on release of previously earned credits, and resources which the individual may have to apply to repayment of the loan or loans. DORS will not repay a defaulted loan.

If the individual is able to resolve the default and regains eligibility for financial aid, the policies and procedures in this section apply.

If the individual is unable to resolve the default status, DORS financial support will be considered only when the individual has demonstrated good cause for failure to repay the loan or loans and has made good faith efforts to defer repayment or otherwise resolve the issue.

## 1513.02 Drug Convictions

Drug convictions may result in ineligibility for Federal student aid, depending on the time of the occurrence and severity of the conviction. The counselor shall assure that the individual is involved with appropriate treatment and/or recovery activities, which shall be included on the **IPE**.

## 1513.03 Certain Non-Citizens

Some non-citizens may be eligible for federal student aid, and some may not, depending on the specific circumstances and the form of documentation the individual has. All non-citizens should complete the FAFSA; even if the individual does not qualify for federal student aid, they may qualify for State or institution-based aid. In the event the non-citizen is not eligible for aid, Administrative Approval will be required for DORS to provide funding for post-secondary education as indicated in **Section 1513.04**.

## 1513.04 Approval of Payment for Post-Secondary Education for Individuals Ineligible for Federal Student Aid

DORS payment for higher education expenses for an individual ineligible for Federal student aid because of default or drug convictions requires the approval of the regional/program director. In such situations, the procedures in this section apply and the individual must apply for financial aid via the FAFSA each year.

## 1514 Required Approvals

If higher-level approval is needed, pertinent information and supporting documentation shall be forwarded through supervisory channels.

### 1514.01 Supervisory Approval

Supervisory approval is required for:

- a. All proposed IPEs and all Annual Reviews that include post-secondary training programs.
- b. Exception to discontinuation of DORS financial assistance because of disability issues.

### 1514.02 Administrative Approval

Administrative Approval (regional/program director or designee) is required as stated in **RSM 3, Section 1005**. Specific approval requirements related to post-secondary education include:

- a. Students ineligible for Federal student aid because of default status, drug convictions or certain non-citizens.
- b. Attendance at a school not participating in the federal Student Financial Assistance Program.
- c. Developmental or compensatory classes for a second and subsequent semester.
- d. Post-secondary degree or certificate for individuals already possessing a degree or certificate.
- e. "Other" costs included as "Educational Expenses" on the **Determination of DORS Financial Assistance for Post-Secondary Education (RS-5b)** form.
- f. Funding of comprehensive Disability and/or Vocational/Educational Support Programs, per **Section 1509.02**.
- g. Attendance at a Comprehensive Transition Program (CTP) (see **Section 1507.07**).

- h. Off-campus room and board in excess of UMCP rates.

#### **1514.03 Central Office Approval**

Approval by the OFS or OBVS Director or designee is required for:

- a. Graduate school.
- b. Short-term training not accredited by MHEC or a comparable agency in another state.

#### **1514.04 DORS Director Approval**

Approval by the DORS Director or designee is required for payment of rates for post-secondary education expenses for private or out-of-state institutions that exceed University of Maryland, College Park in-state rates.