

R628, WICHE Professional Student Exchange Program¹

R628-1 The following policy has been codified² as Utah Administrative Code R765-628.

R628-2 References

- 2.1 Utah Code § 53B-4-101, WICHE Compact
- 2.2 Board Policy R512, Determination of Resident Status

R765. Higher Education (Utah Board of), Administration.

R765-628. WICHE Professional Student Exchange Program.

R765-628-1. Purpose.

This rule outlines the application requirements and funding procedures for the WICHE Professional Student Exchange Program.

R765-628-2. Authority.

This rule is authorized by Section 53B-4-101.

R765-628-3. Definitions.

- (1) “WICHE” means the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education.
- (2) “PSEP” means the WICHE Professional Student Exchange Program, a regional exchange program for students pursuing certain professional healthcare degrees at participating universities in other WICHE states and territories. Students pay reduced tuition because their home state pays a fee to the enrolling institution(s) to reduce tuition costs.
- (3) “Domicile” shall be defined consistent with general Utah law defining domicile, and, for purposes of determining resident student status, shall be determined by the student’s: (a) bodily presence, and (b) concurrent intent to reside permanently in that location. All persons have a domicile somewhere. A person can have only one domicile. A domicile of choice is a domicile chosen by a person to replace their former domicile. To acquire a domicile of choice in a place, a person must intend to make that place their home for the time at least. A domicile, once established, continues until it is superseded by a new domicile. Also, once established, a domicile is not lost by an absence from it for months or even years, for the purpose of business or the like, if during such absence there exists an intent to resume residence in the place of domicile following the completion of the purpose of the absence.
- (4) “Certifying officer” means the designated Commissioner’s Office employee who promotes PSEP opportunities to Utah residents, processes certification applications for prospective students seeking to enroll through eligible PSEP programs, and serves as the office liaison with WICHE staff for the purposes of processing funds for students and tracking their academic progress through graduation.
- (5) “Support fee” means the agreed upon award amount set for each eligible program and academic year. The support fee is negotiated between WICHE and the cooperating programs and is approved biennially (in even years) by the WICHE Commission.

R765-628-4. Application.

- (1) New applicants shall submit the following to the certifying officer by October 15th of the year prior to admission to an eligible professional program:
 - (a) A completed WICHE PSEP application for the State of Utah as published by the Utah Board of Higher Education;
 - (b) A signed consent and waiver form;

¹ Adopted XXX.

² This administrative rule is still going through the codification process and minor, non-substantive edits to conform with the Administrative Code may need to be made.

- (c) Undergraduate college transcripts; and
- (d) Additional documentation to verify domicile, as requested.
- (2) Applicants who are certified as meeting the residency requirement in Subsection R765-628-4(4) will be given one of the following certification statuses:
 - (a) Certified/Incoming (application received by October 15th, will be enrolling as a first-year student)
 - (b) Alternate Certified/Enrolled (application received by October 15th, enrolled in 2nd year or beyond of professional program).
 - (c) Alternate Late Certified/Incoming (application received after October 15, will be enrolling as a first-year student).
 - (d) Alternate Late Certified/Enrolled (application received after October 15th, enrolled in 2nd year or beyond of professional program).
- (3) Applicants must notify the certifying officer of all admission offers to cooperating programs. WICHE schools also notify WICHE's central office of offers. WICHE and the certifying officer monitor the number of certified applicants and their admission offers.
- (4) Residency Requirement. To be eligible for certification, a student must have established domicile in the State of Utah for five full consecutive years prior to the time of application.
- (5) If a student does not receive funding and wishes to recertify for the following year, the student must reapply and submit all required documentation for Utah certification.

R765-628-5. Funding Applicants.

- (1) The number of new students funded in each approved field is determined by available funding. All returning PSEP students who were awarded in prior academic years and who have remained in good academic standing will receive priority for funding before new applicants are considered. The student is responsible for determining how they define good academic standing. WICHE tracks academic progress and reports concerns to the certifying officer.
- (2)(a) If insufficient funding exists to award all new applicants with admission offers, the certifying officer shall rank new applicants, as follows: Certified/Incoming students are given first consideration followed by Alternate Certified/enrolled students, then alternate late certified/incoming, and lastly alternate late certified/enrolled students.
 - (b) If further ranking is required within the groups above, students will be ranked by the following categories until all available funding is awarded:
 - (i) Student institutional rankings for Utah applicants, provided to WICHE confidentially;
 - (ii) Application submission date;
 - (iii) Cumulative undergraduate GPA; and
 - (iv) Length of Utah residency.
- (3)(a) If offered funding, a student must return the following documents no later than the deadline set by the certifying officer:
 - (i) A signed contract accepting the funding, agreeing to the terms of funding, and acknowledging intent to return to Utah to practice their profession upon completion of the program; and
 - (ii) A copy of their final acceptance letter to an approved optometry/podiatry program.
- (b) If the required documentation is not submitted by the established deadline, the student may forfeit their PSEP eligibility.
- (4) Students receiving military, federal, or private scholarships or full fellowships that cover tuition are ineligible to receive WICHE support. Cases in which tuition is partially covered are considered on an individual basis.

R765-628-6. Continued Eligibility.

- (1) After a student is certified and awarded, the state agrees to continue to provide a support fee for that student through the normal duration of the program, as defined by WICHE, subject to appropriation of necessary funds, and provided that the student remains in good academic standing, as defined by the attending institution. Standard programs in optometry and podiatry are four years in duration. WICHE monitors academic progress annually until all degree requirements have been met and communicates any changes in status (leave of absence, academic probation, etc.) with the certifying officer. The Commissioner's Office will not support students for duplicative coursework.
- (2) Leaves of absence may be considered for unexpected or sudden circumstances that arise after a student enrolls in an eligible program. Students must obtain an approved leave of absence from their

enrolling program. Once institutional approval is obtained, leaves for purposes of PSEP may be approved by the certifying officer for no more than one year at a time. WICHE must also be notified by the certifying officer and/or the enrolling program. Funding provided for incomplete or failed coursework may result in reduced funding upon return to enrollment. Leaves of absence for more than one year may require a student to reapply for PSEP funding to be considered for funding upon return.

(3) The certifying officer may request documentation to verify continued enrollment, Utah residency, intent to return to Utah post-graduation, or other pertinent information to remain eligible for funding.

R765-628-7. Funding for WICHE Meetings.

Funding from the legislative appropriation may be used for WICHE Commission membership dues and travel for staff to attend related annual WICHE meetings.