

CONSENT ITEM (RESOLUTION 25-04-19)

April 10, 2025

Tab 4

Policy Manual Additions

Brief Description

Recent policy decisions provided by SBCTC Business Operations Division relating to several statutory changes necessitate updates to the State Board Policy Manual.

How does this item link to the State Board's Strategic Plan?

In June 2020, the State Board adopted its strategic plan, which focuses on three goals: achieve educational equity for students who are historically underrepresented in higher education; improve completion rates; and increase access and retention among populations who can benefit the most from college access. The three goals are supported by five strategies (and associated actions) to help the system achieve those goals. Updates to the State Board Policy Manual supports the strategic plan by providing policy guidance to the college system as they conduct their college decision-making efforts.

Background information and analysis

An accurate and up-to-date Policy Manual provides college and SBCTC staff with guidance for college operations, making fiscal decisions, and supporting student access and inclusion initiatives. A few recent statutory changes are included in the update to ensure our colleges remain in regulatory compliance, both at the state and federal level. Two additional sections need to be added for Waivers and Student Financial Responsibility Agreement policies. These items will be added to a significant number of college responsibilities and student rights as mandated by law over the past couple years. This update includes adding sections in the Policy Manual to Chapters 3 and 5 – attached.

Recommendation/preferred result

Adoption of the updated Policy Manual as proposed.

Policy Manual Change Yes No

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**STATE OF WASHINGTON
STATE BOARD FOR COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES
RESOLUTION 25-04-19**

A resolution relating to the revision and adoption of the State Board Policy Manual

WHEREAS, it is important for the State Board to provide the colleges with policy guidance for the operation of the colleges,

WHEREAS, two specific changes have occurred in the community and technical college system resulting in new and different ways of conducting state business,

WHEREAS, several statutory changes have resulted in new compliance requirements for the community and technical college system,

WHEREAS, it was a priority to review these changes with college system groups before taking action,

WHEREAS, it was a priority that policies be provided in an accessible electronic format, including links to pertinent information,

WHEREAS, it is important that the State Board Policy Manual reflects the changes and communicates policies clearly to the college system and external audiences,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges approve and adopt the attached Policy Manual changes on April 10, 2025.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges authorizes the Executive Director to make adjustments to this action, including any necessary changes to the State Board Policy Manual, as necessary, for actions taken by the Governor, Legislature, data corrections, externally imposed restrictions or guidelines, uniform accounting and reporting requirements, and unanticipated changes in state or federal law.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED on (04/10/2025)

Attest



Chris Bailey, interim secretary



Martin Valadez, chair

Policy Manual – Chapter 3.20.60

3.20.60 Student Financial Responsibility Agreement (SFRA)

Student financial responsibility agreements (SFRA) are mandatory agreements that inform students of the financial responsibilities associated with enrolling for classes at colleges and universities. SFRAs help ensure students understand their payment obligations, lessen the risk of default, and help institutions and their collection agency partners comply with laws and regulations.

For Washington’s community and technical college system, implementing a global SFRA for all colleges is essential to ensure compliance with state and federal laws, mitigate institutional financial risks, and provide an efficient and consistent framework across all 34 colleges.

Under its legislative and operational mandates, the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) must establish systemwide standards where statutory compliance is necessary. Considering the needs, risks and administrative efficiencies, it was determined that SBCTC will implement a policy and configure the SFRA globally within ctcLink to support compliance while simplifying administrative processes and eliminating redundancies across colleges.

Requirements of the Student Financial Responsibility Agreement

1. **Universal Student Agreement:** All students who are charged and may owe a balance will submit an SFRA.
 - Excluded populations are limited to students under 18 years of age and Department of Corrections (DOC) students
2. **Annual Agreement Submission:** Agreements should be obtained once per academic year for each active student.
3. **System Integration and Management:** Agreement data will be stored and managed using the delivered functionality within ctcLink, ensuring consistent tracking and availability across all colleges.
4. **College Staff Operations:** College staff will have the ability to accept signed paper form SFRA agreements and update ctcLink accordingly.
5. **Support and Communication:** ctcLink Support has provided a [Quick Reference Guide \(QRG\)](#) for college staff use. SBCTC has also developed a draft student communication that includes the SFRA template and sample text for college SFRA webpages, included in the QRG.
6. **Maintenance:** SBCTC will conduct an annual review of the SFRA structure and exclusion list to ensure alignment with evolving system changes, policies, and regulatory updates.

3.20.65 Legal and Policy Basis for SFRA

The ctcLink global SFRA agreement is designed to comply with the following state and federal laws:

- [RCW 28B.10.293](#): Collection of debts—Conditions and limitations on institutions of higher education.
 - Permitting educational institutions to impose reasonable financing and late charges, as well as debt collection charges, but only if so provided for in an agreement signed by the student debtor. See [SSHB 2513 \(2020\)](#)
- [RCW 43.17.240](#) Debts owed to the state—Interest rate.
 - Requiring state agencies and institutions to impose a financing charge of 1% a month on unpaid accounts starting on the date the unpaid account becomes past due.
- [RCW 19.16.500](#): Public bodies may retain collection agencies to collect public debts—Fees.
 - Authorizing state agencies and institutions to refer delinquent accounts to a collection agency and to require the debtor to pay reasonable collection agency fees and costs.

- [Washington State Constitution Article 8, Section 5](#): Credit to not be loaned.
 - Which prohibits the state from extending credit or financial aid to individuals, associations, companies, or corporations.
- [U.S. Bankruptcy code, 523\(a\)\(8\)](#): Student educational debts are generally non-dischargeable in bankruptcy without a court order based on undue hardship, but many garden-variety student debts (bookstore purchases, for example) remain forgivable in bankruptcy unless the student signs a promissory note or other agreement to pay the debt.

Policy Manual – Chapter 5.90

5.90 - Waiver Policy

Waivers fall into three main categories; those required by law, those required by the State Board and those that colleges are allowed, but not required, to offer (optional waivers). In addition, some waivers are subject to a limitation on the total amount that can be waived by the community and technical college system.

Residency definitions are listed in statute. Some students, who would otherwise be considered non-residents, may be eligible for resident tuition rates. If a student meets applicable eligibility requirements, they would be classified as residents, for tuition and fee purposes, rather than as non-residents receiving a non-resident differential waiver.

The [ctcLink Accounting Manual 5.30 Student Financial Processes](#) should be utilized for ensuring alignment to Accounting standards and ctcLink system protocols.

Note: In 2015, the state Legislature added technical colleges to many of the waivers shown below.

5.90.10 Waiver Program and Residency Classification

- Residency classifications are not discretionary.
- Waivers listed include all waiver programs available for use by the colleges.
- Colleges have no authority to adopt waiver programs not described here.
- Colleges have discretion in whether to participate in optional waiver programs and how much to waive.
- Optional waiver programs offered by a college must be offered equally to students meeting the eligibility criteria as established by the waiver. This requirement does not limit a college's ability when adopting optional waivers to limit the total number of enrollments in a particular waiver. Colleges may also establish preferential enrollment status to distinct classes of students within these waivers.
- Upper division enrollments: Tuition waivers applicable for lower-division students are also applicable to upper-division (applied bachelor) students at community and technical colleges. For example, colleges that waive the out-of-state tuition differential for lower-division students must also waive the differential for upper-division students.
- Due to Washington state accounting rules, tuition and fee waivers are processed separately using different Item Types. See [CLAM 50.30.10](#) for a definition of tuition.

5.90.20 Residency Classifications

- [Active-Duty Military; Washington National Guard; Uniformed Service Members; and their Spouse/Partner/Dependents](#)
- [American Indian](#)
- [Border County](#)

- [High School Graduates Seeking Permanent United States Residency](#)
- [In-State High School Graduates](#)
- [Foreign Nationals with an E-3, H-1 or L Visa and Family Member](#)

5.90.30 Statutory Mandatory Waivers

- [Children and Spouse of Totally Disabled or POW/MIA or Deceased Eligible Veterans or National Guard Members](#)
- [Children and Spouses of Deceased or Disabled Law Enforcement Officers or Firefighters](#)
- [Wrongfully Convicted Person](#)

5.90.40 SBCTC Mandatory Waivers

- [Adult Basic Education, English as a Second Language, and GED® Preparation](#)
- [Apprenticeship](#)

5.90.50 Running Start

The Running Start program is available for eligible 11th and 12th grade students.

Eleventh and 12th grade students or students who have not yet received the credits required for a high school diploma and are eligible to be in the eleventh or twelfth grades may apply and enroll in courses or programs. No tuition or S&A fee is charged to the student, up to 21 credits. Running Start students are required to pay other mandatory fees assessed by the college.

[Running Start Fee Waiver](#)

5.90.55 Statute Authority – Running Start Fees & Waivers

[RCW 28A.600.310 \(7\)-\(8\)](#) – Running start program – enrollment in institutions of higher education – student fees – fee waivers – transmittal of funds – report on program financial support.

5.90.60 Fee Waivers

RCW [28b.15.100](#) gives colleges authority to adjust certain fees:

Per Attorney General Opinion issued in 2012 colleges have statutory authority to establish and increase fees: “The governing boards of the state universities, the regional universities, The Evergreen State College, and the community colleges shall charge to and collect from each of the students registering at the particular institution for any quarter or semester such tuition fees and services and activities fees, and other fees as such board shall in its discretion determine....”

Colleges must maintain detailed official authorization for any fee waivers or adjustments ensuring fee adjustments are applied equitably, uniformly and consistently (i.e. not based on an employee’s discretion).

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Fee waivers apply to both mandatory (dedicated) and miscellaneous student fees.

5.90.70 Optional Waiver and Additional Waiver Guidance

[Tuition Waivers and Residency Classifications](#)