DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Policy Number:	**750.010**
Title:	**Post-Secondary Education Student Eligibility, Admissions, and Enrollment Processes**
Effective Date:	**01/02/25**

PURPOSE: To ensure equitable opportunities for all interested individuals for potential consideration and enrollment in one of the post-secondary education institutions' prison education program.

APPLICABILITY: All Minnesota correctional facilities, post-secondary institutions providing prison education programs, education partner employees, and incarcerated people/residents who have a secondary credential.

DEFINITIONS:
Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Application – the form a student needs to fill out to get aid from the federal government to help pay for college.

Post-Secondary education program – any education program beyond a secondary credential.

Secondary Credential – see DOC Policy 204.035, "Secondary Education."

PROCEDURES:

A. Eligibility Requirements for the Prison Education Program

1. To be eligible to apply for post-secondary education opportunities in department of corrections (DOC) facilities, the prospective student must meet both of the following minimum criteria:
   a) Possess a secondary credential; and

   b) Have enough time remaining in their sentence to complete at least one semester of college without releasing or transferring facilities. (This is important to ensure we do not have students leaving facilities mid-semester. Limited exceptions can be made to this criterion if institution staff members and community supervision agents commit to letting them finish their semester from where they are to be released.)

2. Additional factors that may influence eligibility/enrollment and will be further reviewed by Minnesota Department of Corrections (MnDOC) leadership, includes:
   a) Recent discipline violations;

   b) Court-ordered treatment mandates; and/or

   c) Incompatibility with classmates due to a known current or previous affiliation.

3. Prospective students deemed eligible for post-secondary education based on the above conditions, are invited to complete the admissions process of the post-secondary education partner to be considered for enrollment into an AA, BA, Master's, or industry degree

program. Note: Post-secondary education partners may have additional requirements for admission.

4. Documents of educational and vocational degrees and certificates are entered into ODocS.

B. On-Cycle Decision Process for Eligibility

1. All letters of interest (kites) are routed to one designated DOC post-secondary education staff person. The designated DOC post-secondary education staff person will add the interested student's information to the Post-Secondary Education Tracking Sheet as a "prospective applicant" and check to ensure the individual meets eligibility requirements (the designated DOC post-secondary education staff member will reach-out to case managers).

2. The designated DOC post-secondary education staff person will work with post-secondary education institution leadership to determine the best student/program fit. Additional factors that may influence the recommended order of students to post-secondary education partners, includes:
   a) The number of times a student has applied, been deemed eligible, and not been enrolled by the post-secondary education institution;

   b) Students who already have the same degree or certificate from a post-secondary education institution;

   c) Recent discipline violations;

   d) Other impending programming requirements for release; and/or

   e) Time left to serve in sentence.

C. Eligible Prospective Students

1. Once eligibility to apply is confirmed, the designated DOC post-secondary education staff person will schedule the interested student to attend an informational session for prospective students. These sessions will be held semi-annually.

2. Semi-annual information meetings will be held at each Minnesota correctional facility with post-secondary education programming using the following timeline:
   a) First week of August for Spring semester
   b) First week of April for Fall semester

3. For students eligible for financial aid (Free Application for Federal Student Aid or FAFSA), semi-annual application sessions will be held using the following timeline:
   a) First week of October for Spring semester
   b) Frist week of June for Fall semester

D. Off-Cycle Vetting Process for Eligibility

1. Letters of interest will be collected and entered into the Post-Secondary Education Tracking Sheet.

2. The designated DOC post-secondary education staff person will check to ensure eligibility requirements are met.

3. The designated DOC post-secondary education staff person responds to the prospective student informing them that they will be contacted to participate in the next scheduled semi-annual information session. Documentation of eligibility to participate is retained by the director of post-secondary education.

E. Not Eligible Individuals

The designated DOC post-secondary education staff person responds to individuals who are not eligible to apply for participation in post-secondary education, citing in the letter the reason the individual is not eligible to apply. Letters of ineligibility are retained by the director of post-secondary education.

F. Admissions and Degree Requirements

1. Degree-seeking Students

a) Admission Requirements

The prospective and eligible student must provide documentation of the following:

(1) High school diploma or a secondary credential;
(2) Minimum of one full year of incarceration remaining; and
(3) Complete application.

b) AA/AAS Degree Requirements

The eligible student must:

(1) Complete the general education requirements as defined by the post-secondary education institution in which the student is enrolled.
(2) Complete the academic program specific courses as defined by the post-secondary education institution in which the student is enrolled.

c) BA/BS Degree Requirements

The eligible student must:

(1) Have completed their AA/AAS degree prior to being enrolled in a BA/BS program.
(2) Complete the requirements of the post-secondary education institution in which the student is enrolled.

d) Master's Degree Requirements

The eligible student must:

(1) Have completed their BA/BS degree prior to being enrolled in a Master's program.
(2) Complete the requirements of the post-secondary education institution in which the student is enrolled.

2. Industry AAS Degree or Certificate-seeking Students

a) Admission Requirements

The prospective and eligible student must provide documentation of the following:

(1) High school diploma or a secondary credential;
(2) Minimum of one full year of incarceration remaining; and
(3) Complete application

b) Industry Recognized Degree or Certification

(1) AA/AAS Degree Requirements

The eligible student must:

(a) Complete the general education requirements as defined by the post-secondary education institution in which the student is enrolled.

(b) Complete the academic program specific courses as defined by the post-secondary education institution in which the student is enrolled.

(2) Industry Certification Requirements

The eligible student must complete the program/certification specific courses expected by the post-secondary education institution or industry program.

G. Financial Aid Eligibility Application and Determination

1. The individual must meet the eligibility criteria for receiving federal financial aid, including Pell grants. This may include factors such as demonstrating financial need, being a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen, and having a high school diploma or equivalent.

2. Program Selection

The student selects a post-secondary education program offered by an institution that participates in the federal student aid programs and is approved to offer educational opportunities to incarcerated students.

3. Application Submission

The student completes the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to apply for federal financial aid, including Pell grants. The FAFSA collects information about the student's financial situation to determine their eligibility for aid.

4. Verification Process

The institution's financial aid office verifies the information provided on the FAFSA, which may involve submitting additional documentation or clarifications.

5. Award Notification

Once the student's eligibility for Pell grants is confirmed, they receive an award notification outlining the amount of Pell grant funding they are eligible to receive for the academic year.

H. Enrollment

The student enrolls in the chosen education program and begins attending classes. Institution staff may assist with course registration, academic advising, and other enrollment-related processes. Enrollment records are retained by the director of post-secondary education and the director of education at each facility.

I. Disbursement of Funds:

Pell grant funds are typically disbursed directly to the institution to cover tuition, fees, and other education-related expenses. Any remaining funds after these expenses are paid may be provided to the student for additional educational costs, such as books and supplies.

J. Academic Progress

The student is expected to maintain satisfactory academic progress according to the institution's policies to remain eligible for federal financial aid, including Pell grants.

K. Post-secondary Education Institution Process
The specific enrollment process may vary slightly depending on the institution and any additional requirements or considerations for incarcerated students. Additionally, institutions may offer support services tailored specifically to incarcerated students' needs.

L. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
If students need ADA accommodations, refer to Policy 740.020, "Post-Secondary Education Standards for Student Accessibility/Accommodations."

INTERNAL CONTROLS:

A. Documentation of existing and earned educational credentials and certificates are retained in ODocS.

B. The director of post-secondary education and the education director at each facility retain documentation of student eligibility, letters of ineligibility, and enrollment records.

REFERENCES: Policy 204.035, "Secondary Education"
Policy 740.020, "Post-Secondary Education Standards for Student Accessibility/Accommodations"

REPLACES: All facility policies, memos, or other communications whether verbal, written, or transmitted by electronic means regarding this topic.

ATTACHMENTS: None

APPROVALS:
Commissioner of Corrections