



UTAH SYSTEM OF
HIGHER EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TAB E

June 18, 2021

Adoption of Policy R616, *Adult Learner Grant Program*

During the 2021 General Session, the Legislature passed [HB 328](#), which establishes the Adult Learners Grant to be administered by the Utah Board of Higher Education. The Adult Learners Grant provides an opportunity for adult learners seeking online education to receive financial assistance.

Commissioner's Recommendation

The Commissioner recommends the Student Affairs Committee advance the proposed Board Policy R616, *Adult Learner Grant Program* to the Committee of the Whole for further consideration.

Attachments

R616, Adult Learner Grant Program¹

R616-1 Purpose: To provide financial assistance for adult learners pursuing an online degree in a field of industry need.

R-616-2 References

- 2.1 Utah Code
- 2.2 Utah Admin. Code
- 2.3 Board Policy and Procedures R616

R616-3 Definitions

3.1 “Cost of attendance” means the estimated costs associated with taking an online course, as established by an eligible institution in accordance with Board policies.

3.1.1 “Cost of attendance” includes tuition, costs payable to the eligible institution, and other direct educational expenses related to taking an online course.

3.2 “Eligible Institution” means an institution that offers a postsecondary level course of instruction using digital technology.

3.3 “Eligible Student” means a student who meets the eligibility criteria established in section 4.

3.4 “Fiscal Year” means the fiscal year of the state.

3.5 “Institution” means an institution described in Section 53B-1-102 or a Utah private, nonprofit postsecondary institution that is accredited by a regional accrediting organization that the Board recognizes.

3.6 “Online course” means a postsecondary level course of instruction offered by an eligible institution using digital technology.

3.7 “Program” means

¹ Adopted 6/18/2021

3.7.1 a sequence of online courses that lead to a certificate or other recognized educational credential;

3.7.2 is made up of only online courses, meaning a student can complete the program through online course offerings; and

3.7.3 prepares students for employment in four-star or five-star jobs as defined by the Department of Workforce Services.

3.8 “Tuition” means tuition and fees at the rate charged for residents of the state.

R616-4 Grant Eligibility

4.1 To be eligible for a grant under this section, a student shall:

4.1.1 Be 26 years or older

4.1.2 Be enrolled in an online program at an eligible institution in a field designed to meet industry needs and leading to a certificate or other recognized educational credential

4.1.3 Be a Utah resident as determined by Board Policy R512

4.1.4 Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

4.1.5 Demonstrate financial need by being eligible for a Pell Grant

4.2 Grant funding will be prioritized for students who:

4.2.1 Are from rural areas of the state, as defined in U.A. C. R523-1-5 by the Department of Health, which includes all counties except Utah, Salt Lake, Davis & Weber

4.2.2 Are a member of a racial or ethnic minority

4.2.3 Are classified as low income

4.2.4 Are pursuing education in degree programs aligned to four- or five-star jobs as established by the Department of Workforce Services.

R616-5 Process for Allocating Grant Funding to Eligible Institutions

5.1 By April 15 of each year, participating eligible institutions shall submit the following to the Office of the Commissioner:

5.1.1 Total FTE enrollment for the prior academic year

5.1.2 Declared majors at fall end of term by eligible online programs

5.2 The Office of the Commissioner will allocate the funding based on the data provided in section 5.1 funding on or before July 1 of each year.

R616-6 Process for Awarding Grants to Eligible Students

6.1 Eligible institutions that receive grant funding are responsible for establishing a process to award grants along with other financial aid. When establishing a process for award grants, institutions shall:

6.1.1 Award grants on an annual basis and distribute grant money on a quarter or semester basis;

6.1.2 Except for provided in section 4.2, award grants without regard to an applicant's race, creed, color, religion, sex, or ancestry;

6.1.3 Ensure the total sum of program grant, and financial aid from any source, do not exceed the cost of attendance for an eligible student at an eligible institution for a fiscal year;

6.1.4 Determine award amounts within the minimum and maximum award range as established annually by the Board;

6.1.5 Ensure all funds received from the grant shall be applied towards the cost of attendance.

R616-7 Process for Allocating Grant Funding to Eligible Institutions

7.1 Institutions that receive grant funding shall report annually to the Commissioner's office the following:

7.1.1 Number of grant recipients

7.1.2 Average award of grant money provided per grant recipient

7.1.3 Benefits in fulfillment of the purposes for this program

7.1.4 Recommendations for program modification, including recommended funding

7.2 The Board shall annually report data and information collected under this section to the Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee.