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| Policy No. 306 | Subject: IVRS Post-Secondary Education Grant |
| Section: Services | Revised: 10/24/23 |
| | Version: FINAL |

1. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The guidance in this policy is for job candidates considering post-secondary training in programs that qualify for Federal Financial Aid. The IVRS Post-Secondary Education Grant incorporates tuition and mandatory fees. The funding is based on whether or not the program is a public institution or an in-state accredited trade program; a private in-state institution or an out-of-state program.

- a. For public institutions and in-state accredited trade programs, IVRS funds such costs utilizing the established percentile rate, which is decided on an annual basis. IVRS does not fund courses that do not count towards the program of study. For public institutions and in-state accredited trade programs, the IVRS Post-Secondary Education Grant Worksheet for Public/Accredited Trade Programs must be utilized to calculate the amount of IVRS Post-Secondary Education Grant offered.
- b. For private in-state institutions, the IVRS Post-Secondary Education Grant Worksheet for Private Institutions must be utilized to calculate the amount of IVRS Post-Secondary Education Grant offered. IVRS considers programs or institutions that are 100% virtual to be private in-state institutions.
- c. For public institutions, in-state accredited trade programs, and private in-state institutions, books and supplies are funded based on the established percentile rate.
- d. For out-of-state programs or institutions, the IVRS Post-Secondary Education Grant Worksheet for Private/Out-of-State Institutions must be utilized to calculate the amount of IVRS Post-Secondary Education Grant offered. IVRS does not assist with



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out-of-state fees (see item “e” under the Exceptions section regarding individuals on SSI/SSDI benefits).

For policy guidance on programs that do not qualify for Federal Financial Aid, refer to the [Other Training Policy](#).

2. DEFINITIONS

- a. Books: those books necessary for the coursework and listed on the course syllabus.
- b. Institutions:
 - Public Institution: a school in the State of Iowa funded primarily by State government.
 - Accredited Trade Program: a school in the State of Iowa designed to train students for a specific job in a skilled trade career.
 - Private Institution: an independent school in the State of Iowa that sets its own policies and goals and is privately funded.
 - Out-of-State Institution: a school not located in the State of Iowa.
- c. IVRS Post-Secondary Education Grant: a sum of money given by IVRS for the purpose of supporting the IPE goal of a job candidate enrolled in a program that qualifies for Federal Financial Aid.
- d. Mandatory Fees: those charges applied by post-secondary education institutions that all students must pay for attending the post-secondary program (this does not include additional costs such as application fees).
- e. Supplies: those items necessary for the coursework and listed on the course syllabus (does not include pens, pencils, paper, and other general supplies—these are the responsibility of the student). Supplies differ from tools in that supplies are used up whereas tools are equipment that are more permanent and could continue be used after the program. Refer to the [Miscellaneous](#) policy for more information on tools.

3. AGENCY EXPECTATIONS

There are several considerations staff must be aware of prior to providing an IVRS Post-Secondary Education Grant to a job candidate, to ensure these decisions are being made through [informed choice](#). These considerations are listed below and are required prior

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to any funds being expended. IVRS staff must summarize these discussions in the case notes.

Counseling and Guidance

All job candidates considering post-secondary training must be provided with counseling and guidance. Counseling and guidance includes a broad discussion on comparable services and benefits, financial literacy, and funding, as described below. This discussion also includes a review of the IPE goal and the available institutions that offer a program of study related to that goal. [Accreditation](#) of the post-secondary institution by the appropriate accrediting body is required.

If through counseling and guidance it is determined that a job candidate is interested in an institution that is not accredited or is not located within the state, additional discussions must occur to ensure the job candidate understands that the IVRS Post-Education Grant will not be applied to such institutions. Through these conversations, job candidates should be provided with alternative options that include accredited programs at in-state institutions. If the job candidate decides to attend an out-of-state institution, then the IVRS staff should provide information to the job candidate regarding VR services in the state where the institution is located.

- a. **Comparable Services and Benefits:** IVRS staff must determine whether comparable services or benefits are available to the individual, following the guidelines of the [Comparable Services and Benefits](#) policy. If such services or benefits exist and are available at the time of post-secondary planning, IVRS must use those services or benefits to meet, in whole or in part, the costs for the post-secondary program. If an entity other than IVRS is obligated to provide assistance with tuition, mandatory fees, books and supplies, then that entity would be expected to assist as IVRS cannot supplant the requirements of another entity. IVRS does not consider merit-based scholarships as a comparable benefit. If the student will be receiving a non-merit award (i.e. Pell Grant) that can be used towards other expenses (i.e. room and board, transportation, etc.) then a conversation should occur with the student and documented in case notes regarding what expenses the funding will be used



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towards. The total amount of these other expenses will be added to the calculation worksheet and factored into determining the unmet need.

IVRS expects all individuals seeking IVRS Post-Secondary Education Grant to complete the FAFSA as part of the comparable services and benefits search. No funds for training, in whole or in part, can be expended without a search for [comparable services and benefits](#), based on that policy's guidelines. If an individual applies for FAFSA and is ineligible, conversation needs to occur to identify how the individual will fund the portion of training costs that IVRS is not assisting with.

- b. **Financial Literacy:** This discussion assures the job candidate understands the post-secondary programs available to them and the differences in proximity and costs of such programs. It includes the costs associated with attending a post-secondary program and a discussion of how the job candidate plans on covering those costs that IVRS will not be assisting with. For individuals who receive Social Security benefits, this would include benefits planning.

Job candidates must be aware that while it is their choice to attend any post-secondary education program of their choice, IVRS must abide by the State and Federal laws and regulations, as well as program policies. This includes ensuring job candidates are aware that some programs and institutions have higher costs which may lead the job candidate to accrue additional post-secondary costs that are not the responsibility of IVRS.

No IVRS Post-Secondary Education Grant should be authorized to job candidates in default on a student loan. The student must provide documentation that they have worked out a satisfactory repayment agreement prior to IVRS staff authorizing the IVRS Post-Secondary Education Grant. An exception is required for these instances. IVRS does not authorize IVRS Post-Secondary Education Grant for job candidates currently on financial aid suspension due to failure to make reasonable progress, as defined by the school.

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The [Financial Literacy Questions](#) can assist staff in leading this discussion with job candidates.

- c. **Funding:** IVRS aligns the funding of the IVRS Post-Secondary Education Grant with FAFSA and twenty percent completion of the term of the program. As a result, no prorating is allowed and the grant will be authorized for the start of the next term.

Authorizations for the IVRS Post-Secondary Education Grant should occur based on the way the program is arranged (i.e. semester, trimester) and must follow the guidance listed in [3.18 Authorizations and Billings](#). At the end of each term, IVRS staff must discuss with the job candidate their progress in the program, including maintenance of the appropriate cumulative program GPA requirement. This includes updating [performance measures](#) within IRSS. Changes in financial aid must also be discussed. The following documentation must be received prior to IVRS staff completing Section 3 of the calculation worksheet in order to continue to receive the IVRS Post-Secondary Education Grant:

- i. Grades from prior term;
- ii. Course schedule for next term;
- iii. Section 2 of the Calculation Worksheet with date of FAFSA application (if no date is indicated, then a copy of the Financial Aid Award Letter must be obtained); and
- iv. Current [release of information](#) for the post-secondary institution.

For students that must audit or retake course(s), the maximum number of hours that IVRS can fund is 12 credit hours across a program of study.

For students that require remedial coursework to pursue their program of study, IVRS would consider these courses as part of the program of study and, as such, would be included within the IVRS Post-Secondary Education Grant.

Funding for Comprehensive Employment Education Programs (CEEP) (i.e. BUILD, NEXT) is not included within the scope of the IVRS Post-Secondary Education Grant. Rates for CEEP funding can be found [here](#).

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For students who are receiving SSA benefits based on their own disabling conditions, IVRS will assist with up to the unmet need. For those students who are receiving SSA benefits based on their own disabling conditions and make an informed choice to attend a private institution, the supervisor will review, approve and sign the calculation worksheet if the amount of unmet need exceeds the cost for an equivalent program at a public in-state institution. Merit awards that are only to be used for tuition and mandatory fees will be considered when determining unmet need.

- d. **Calculation Worksheets:** IVRS utilizes two worksheets to establish the amount of IVRS Post-Secondary Education Grant available. The worksheet staff must utilize is based upon the type of program:
 - i. **IVRS Post-Secondary Education Grant Worksheet for Public/Accredited Trade Programs:** This worksheet must be completed any time IVRS staff are considering providing an IVRS Post-Secondary Education Grant towards public or accredited trade programs within the State of Iowa. The worksheet must be updated if any of the information changes, including credit hours.
 - ii. **IVRS Post-Secondary Education Grant Worksheet for Private or Out-of-State Institutions:** This worksheet must be completed any time IVRS staff are considering providing an IVRS Post-Secondary Education Grant towards private in-state institutions or out-of-state institutions. The worksheet must be updated if any of the information changes, including credit hours.

Services in Support of Post-Secondary Education

As a result of attending post-secondary education, additional services may be identified that are disability-related and necessary to achieve the goal listed on the IPE. Funding for these services is based on the specific policies and is considered separate from the IVRS Post-Secondary Education Grant. Staff should refer to the appropriate policy when considering funding these services for a job candidate



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attending post-secondary education. IVRS does not pay for services that are another program's legal responsibility.

The following are some examples of these services, but it is not an all-inclusive list:

- a. [Tools and Equipment](#)
- b. [Computer Purchases](#)
- c. [Certifications and Occupational Exams \(including CLEP Testing\)](#)
- d. [Transportation](#)
- e. [Housing](#)
- f. [Personal Assistance Services](#)
- g. [Internet \(Utilities\)](#)

4. EXCEPTIONS

- a. Exceeding the 12 hours of retaken or audited courses.
- b. Authorizing above the amount on the Calculation Worksheet. To authorize above this amount, the student's Expected Family Contribution (EFC) must first be subtracted from any remaining costs.
- c. Authorizing for IVRS Post-Secondary Education Grant when there is no unmet need.
- d. Authorizing at the established percentile rate for private or out-of-state programs or institutions.
- e. For individuals on SSI/SSDI benefits, an exception should be requested for IVRS to fund out-of-state fees based on unmet need.
- f. Authorizing for summer school when it has been determined that summer funding is not available.
- g. Authorizing for IVRS Post-Secondary Education Grant when a student has not met their cumulative program GPA requirement.
- h. Requesting funding for a job candidate that has defaulted on a student loan.
- i. Requesting funding for a job candidate that is on Financial Aid suspension.
- j. Not transferring a student's case file to the IVRS office where the institution or program is located that the job candidate is attending requires an exception. An exception is not needed if the JC is only taking one course.

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- k. Not transferring a case file from the IVRS college staff to the IVRS staff in the region in which the job candidate resides when the job candidate has not found employment immediately after graduation.
- l. Authorizing beyond any of the provisions set forth in this policy.

5. APPLICABLE FORMS/DOCUMENTS

- a. [Accreditation](#)
- b. [Computer Request Policy](#)
- c. [Financial Literacy Questions](#)
- d. [Informed Choice Policy](#)
- e. [IVRS Post-Secondary Training Grant rates](#)
- f. [IVRS Post-Secondary Training Staff Site](#)
- g. [2022-23 Public/Accredited Trade Programs IVRS Post-Secondary Education Grant Worksheet](#)
- h. [2022-23 Private/Out-of-State Institutions IVRS Post-Secondary Education Grant Worksheet](#)
- i. [2023-2024 Public/Accredited Trade Programs IVRS Post-Secondary Education Grant Worksheet](#)
- j. [2023-2024 Private/Out-of-State Institutions IVRS Post-Secondary Education Grant Worksheet](#)
- k. [Maintenance Policy](#)
- l. [Miscellaneous Policy](#)
- m. [Optional Email to Post-Secondary Institution for Calculation Worksheets](#)
- n. [Other Training Policy](#)
- o. [Release of Information \(R-407\)](#)
- p. [Request for Exception to Policy](#)
- q. [Status 18- : Training Policy](#)
- r. [Transportation Policy](#)