

R616, Adult Learner Grant Program¹

R616-1 The following policy has been codified² as Utah Administrative Code R765-616.

R616-2 References

2.1 Utah Code Title 53B, Chapter 13c, Adult Learner Grant Program

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

R765-616. Adult Learner Grant Program.

R765-616-1. Purpose.

To provide financial assistance for adult learners pursuing an online degree in a field of industry need.

R765-616-2. Authority.

Subsection 53B-13c-102(2) authorizes this rule.

R765-616-3. Definitions.

(1) "Board" means the Utah Board of Higher Education.

(2)(a) "Cost of attendance" means the estimated costs associated with taking an online course, as established by an eligible institution in accordance with board policies.

¹Adopted July 16, 2021; amended May 18, 2023; March 1, 2024; and June 6, 2024.

² This administrative rule must also be approved by the Utah Office of Administrative Rules and minor, non-substantive edits to conform with the Utah Administrative Code style guide may be made.

(b) "Cost of attendance" includes tuition, costs payable to the eligible institution, and other direct educational expenses related to taking an online course.

(3) "Eligible institution" means an institution that offers a postsecondary level course of instruction using digital technology.

(4) "Eligible Student" means a student who meets the eligibility criteria established in Section R765-616-4.

(5) "Fiscal year" means the fiscal year of the state.

(6) "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.

(7) "OCHE" means the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education.

(8) "Online course" means a postsecondary level course of instruction offered by an eligible institution using digital technology.

(9) "Program" means a sequence of online courses that lead to a certificate or other recognized educational credential that;

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

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

(10) "Tuition" means tuition and fees at the rate charged for residents of the state.

R765-616-4. Grant Eligibility.

(1) To be eligible for a grant under this section, each student shall:

(a) be 26 years or older;

(b) 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;

(c) be a Utah resident as determined by the board's Policy R512;

(d) complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid; and

(e) demonstrate financial need, in accordance with Subsection R765-616-6(2)(f).

(2) The board shall prioritize grant funding for each student who is:

(a) from a rural area of the state, as defined by the Utah Department of Health and Human Services, which includes all counties except Utah, Salt Lake, Davis & Weber;

(b) classified as low income; or

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

R765-616-5. Process for Allocating Grant Funding to Eligible Institutions.

The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education shall allocate the funding based on the proportional number of graduates from eligible programs at participating institutions in the most recent year for which data is available on or before July 1 of each year.

R765-616-6. Process for Awarding Grants to Eligible Students.

(1) An eligible institution that receives grant funding shall be responsible for establishing a process to award grants along with other financial aid.

(2) When establishing a process for award grants, the institution shall:

(a) award grants on an annual basis and distribute grant money on a quarter or semester basis;

(b) award grants without regard to an applicant's race, creed, color, religion, sex, or ancestry;

(c) 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;

(d) determine award amounts within the minimum and maximum award range as established annually by the board;

(e) ensure all funds received from the grant are applied toward the cost of attendance; and

(f) prioritize grants based on financial need using an eligible recipient's eligibility index from the FAFSA, which may include a maximum eligibility index number set by the institution.

R765-616-7. Process for Allocating Grant Funding to Eligible Institutions Reporting.

(1) As specified by OCHE, each institution shall provide, as part of an annual institutional financial aid file submission by February 28 of each year, data pertaining to applications, awards, program enrollments, utilization, funding, and other scholarship information for the most recently completed fiscal year.

(2) For institutions that do not participate in the annual institutional financial aid file submission, data shall be submitted directly no later than June 30 each year.

(3) OCHE may, at any time, request additional documentation or data related to the scholarship program and may review or formally audit an institution's documentation and compliance with this rule.

(4) The board shall annually report data and information collected under this section to the Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee.