

RSA Scholarship Manual



Dear Prospective RSA Scholar:

You are about to make an important decision regarding your future career. I encourage you to consider the field of vocational rehabilitation within the profession of rehabilitation counseling. I also encourage you to apply to become a RSA Scholar, and to acquire the financial benefits associated with it.

Participation in the RSA Scholarship program offers wide opportunities for you. In addition to the financial benefits, you have the satisfaction of knowing that your work will contribute to our society. An RSA scholarship prepares you to work within the State-Federal system of vocational rehabilitation, a system with a long and proud history of serving people with disabilities. Ultimately, of course, scholars enrich the lives of people with disabilities through providing quality rehabilitation services that help them secure employment and participate fully in society.

There is an acute need for qualified personnel in the field of vocational rehabilitation. Specifically, state vocational rehabilitation agencies, and the programs with which the state rehabilitation agencies make agreements to provide vocational and supported employment, have critical personnel needs. To ensure that the RSA training program helps state agencies in filling these jobs, Congress added to the Rehabilitation Act a "payback" provision for RSA scholars. This manual explains the payback requirements, in addition to the other requirements for the scholarship. Please read it carefully to understand your responsibilities.

RSA SCHOLAR! I hope that you will accept that designation proudly and consider it a privilege and an honor to serve in this exciting field within the rehabilitation counseling profession.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth A. Boland, Ph.D., CRC
Professor and Academic Program Director
MA in Rehabilitation Counseling Program

**RSA SCHOLARSHIP GUIDELINES
AND APPLICATION**



MA in Rehabilitation Counseling Program

RSA SCHOLARSHIP GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION

The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) is committed to increasing the supply of trained rehabilitation counselors available for employment in public and related rehabilitation agencies and institutions involved in the vocational rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities. Therefore, RSA provides a limited number of scholarships to individuals seeking a Rehabilitation Counseling master's degree at selected universities, including Western Washington University.

At a minimum, the Rehabilitation Counseling Academic Program Director reviews scholarship applications annually to determine which students will receive a scholarship. Scholars must reapply each year they wish to be funded. In selecting recipients, the priorities of the Rehabilitation Counseling Program adhere to federal guidelines and additional priorities, which are indicated on the scholarship application form.

The Rehabilitation Counseling program, in keeping with the RSA personnel development intentions of the scholarship program, considers attendance in the program on a continuous, full-time basis as a high priority. This is partially due to the fact that federal support is provided on a continuous, 12-month basis. In addition to all other criteria for awarding of scholarships, students who demonstrate a commitment to consecutive terms of study, including a full-time internship are likely to receive higher consideration than those who do not. Individual, special, or extenuating circumstances are reviewed in each student's application. Nonetheless, a desire to complete the program in the most timely and expeditious manner is considered important and relevant.

A student's commitment to the profession of rehabilitation counseling and the field of vocational rehabilitation is vital. In order to maintain accreditation, and to obtain federal support for RSA scholarships, the Rehabilitation Counseling program must maintain an accurate list of students and graduates, which includes their places of employment. Therefore, all students, and particularly those who receive RSA scholarships, must agree to maintain contact with the Rehabilitation Counseling program after graduation or after cessation of enrollment in courses.

Federal Regulations

The following are excerpts from [34 CFR 386](#), which establishes the federal regulations regarding the RSA Long-Term Training Scholarships:

34 CFR 386.4 What definitions apply?

The following definitions apply to this program:

- (a) Definitions included in [34 CFR 385.4](#)
- In particular, the State vocational rehabilitation agency means the designated State agency as defined in [34 CFR 361.5\(c\)\(13\)](#).
- (b) Other definitions. The following definitions also apply to this part:
- Academic year means a full-time course of study—
 - (i) Taken for a period totaling at least nine months; or
 - (ii) Taken for the equivalent of at least two semesters, two trimesters, or three quarters.
 - Professional corporation or professional practice means—
 - (i) A professional service corporation or practice formed by one or more individuals duly authorized to render the same professional service, for the purpose of rendering that service; and
 - (ii) The corporation or practice and its members are subject to the same supervision by appropriate State regulatory agencies as individual practitioners.
 - Related agency means—
 - (i) An American Indian rehabilitation program; or
 - (ii) Any of the following agencies that provide services to individuals with disabilities under an agreement or other arrangement with a designated State agency in the area of specialty for which training is provided:
 - (A) A Federal, State, or local agency.
 - (B) A nonprofit organization.
 - (C) A professional corporation or professional practice group.
 - Scholar means an individual who is enrolled in a certificate or degree granting course of study in one of the areas listed in § 386.1(b) and who receives scholarship assistance under this part.
 - Scholarship means an award of financial assistance to a scholar for training and includes all disbursements or credits for student stipends, tuition and fees, books and supplies, and student travel in conjunction with training assignments.

34 CFR 386.33 What are the requirements for grantees in disbursing scholarships?

Before disbursement of scholarship assistance to an individual, a grantee—

- (a)(1) Must obtain documentation that the individual is—
- (i) A U.S. citizen or national; or
 - (ii) A permanent resident of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, The United States Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands;
- (a)(2) Must confirm from documentation issued to the individual by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service that he or she—
- (i) Is a lawful permanent resident of the United States; or
 - (ii) Is in the United States for other than a temporary purpose with the intention of becoming a citizen or permanent resident; and
- (b) Must confirm that the applicant has expressed interest in a career in clinical practice, administration, supervision, teaching, or research in the vocational rehabilitation, supported employment, or independent living rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities, especially individuals with significant disabilities;
- (c) Must obtain documentation, as described in § 386.40(a)(7), that the individual expects to seek and maintain employment in a designated State agency or in a related agency as defined in § 386.4 where

- (1) The employment is in the field of study in which the training was received or
- (2) Where the job functions are directly relevant to the field of study in which the training was received.
- (d) Must ensure that the scholarship, when added to the amount of financial aid the scholar receives for the same academic year under title IV of the Higher Education Act, does not exceed the scholar's cost of attendance;
- (e) Must limit scholarship assistance to no more than four academic years, unless the grantee provides an extension consistent with the institution's accommodations under section 504 of the Act; and
- (f) Must obtain a Certification of Eligibility for Federal Assistance from each scholar as prescribed in 34 CFR 75.60, 75.61, and 75.62.

34 CFR 386.34 What assurances must be provided by a grantee that intends to provide scholarships?

A grantee under this part that intends to grant scholarships for any academic year must provide the following assurances before an award is made:

- (a) *Requirement for agreement.* No individual will be provided a scholarship without entering into a written agreement containing the terms and conditions required by this section. An individual will sign and date the agreement prior to the initial disbursement of scholarship funds to the individual for payment of the individual's expenses. An agreement must be executed between the grantee and scholar for each subsequent year that scholarship funds are disbursed and must contain the terms and conditions required by this section.
- (b) *Disclosure to applicants.* The terms and conditions of the agreement between the grantee and a scholar will be fully disclosed in the application for scholarship.
- (c) *Form and terms of agreement.* Prior to granting each year of a scholarship, the grantee will require each scholar to enter into a signed written agreement in which the scholar agrees to the terms and conditions set forth in § 386.40. This agreement must be in the form and contain any additional terms and conditions that the Secretary may require.
- (d) *Executed agreement.* The grantee will provide an original signed executed payback agreement upon request to the Secretary.
- (e) *Standards for satisfactory progress.* The grantee will establish, publish, and apply reasonable standards for measuring whether a scholar is maintaining satisfactory progress in the scholar's course of study. The Secretary considers an institution's standards to be reasonable if the standards—
 - (1) Conform with the standards of satisfactory progress of the nationally recognized accrediting agency that accredits the institution's program of study, if the institution's program of study is accredited by such an agency, and if the agency has those standards;
 - (2) For a scholar enrolled in an eligible program who is to receive assistance under the Rehabilitation Act, are the same as or stricter than the institution's standards for a student enrolled in the same academic program who is not receiving assistance under the Rehabilitation Act; and
 - (3) Include the following elements:
 - (i) Grades, work projects completed, or comparable factors that are measurable against a norm.
 - (ii) A maximum timeframe in which the scholar must complete the scholar's educational objective, degree, or certificate.

- (iii) Consistent application of standards to all scholars within categories of students; e.g., full-time, part-time, undergraduates, graduate students, and students attending programs established by the institution.
 - (iv) Specific policies defining the effect of course incompletes, withdrawals, repetitions, and noncredit remedial courses on satisfactory progress.
 - (v) Specific procedures for appeal of a determination that a scholar is not making satisfactory progress and for reinstatement of aid.
- (f) *Exit certification.*
- (1) At the time of exit from the program, the grantee will provide the following information to the scholar:
 - (i) The name of the institution and the number of the Federal grant that provided the scholarship.
 - (ii) The total amount of scholarship assistance received subject to § 386.40(a)(7).
 - (iii) The scholar's field of study and the obligation of the scholar to perform the service obligation with employment that meets the requirements in § 386.40(a)(7)(i).
 - (iv) The number of years the scholar needs to work to satisfy the work requirements in § 386.40(a)(7)(ii).
 - (v) The time period during which the scholar must satisfy the work requirements in § 386.40(a)(8).
 - (vi) As applicable, all other obligations of the scholar in § 386.40.
 - (2) Upon receipt of this information from the grantee, the scholar must provide written and signed certification to the grantee that the information is correct.
- (g) *Tracking system.* The grantee has established policies and procedures to determine compliance of the scholar with the terms of the signed payback agreement. In order to determine whether a scholar has met the terms and conditions set forth in § 386.40, the tracking system must include for each employment position maintained by the scholar—
- (1) Documentation of the employer's name, address, dates of the scholar's employment, name of supervisor, position title, a description of the duties the scholar performed, and whether the employment is full- or part-time;
 - (2) Documentation of how the employment meets the requirements in § 386.40(a)(7); and
 - (3) In the event a grantee is experiencing difficulty locating a scholar, documentation that the grantee has checked with existing tracking systems operated by alumni organizations.
- (h) *Reports.* The grantee will make annual reports to the Secretary, unless more frequent reporting is required by the Secretary, that are necessary to carry out the Secretary's functions under this part.
- (i) *Repayment status.* The grantee will immediately report to the Secretary whenever a scholar has entered repayment status under § 386.43(e) and provide all necessary documentation in support thereof.
- (j) *Records.* The grantee will maintain accurate and complete records as outlined in paragraphs (g) and (h) of this section for a period of time not less than one year beyond the date that all scholars provided financial assistance under the grant—
- (1) Have completed their service obligation or
 - (2) Have entered into repayment status pursuant to § 386.43(e).

34 CFR 386.40 What are the requirements for scholars?

- (a) A scholar must—
- (1) Be enrolled in a course of study leading to a certificate or degree in one of the fields designated in § 386.1(b);
 - (2) Receive the training at the educational institution or agency designated in the scholarship;
 - (3) Not accept payment of educational allowances from any other entity if that allowance conflicts with the scholar's obligation under section 302 of the Act and this part;
 - (4) Not receive concurrent scholarships for the same academic term from more than one project under this program;
 - (5) Enter into a signed written agreement with the grantee, prior to the receipt of scholarship funds, as required in § 386.34(c);
 - (6) Maintain satisfactory progress toward the certificate or degree as determined by the grantee;
 - (7) Upon exiting the training program under paragraph (a)(1) of this section, subsequently maintain employment on a full- or part-time basis subject to the provisions in paragraph (b) of this section—
 - (i) (A) In a State vocational rehabilitation agency or related agency as defined in § 386.4; and
(B) (1) In the field of study for which training was received, or
(2) Where the field of study is directly relevant to the job functions performed; and
 - (ii) For a period of at least the full-time equivalent of two years for every academic year for which assistance under this section was received subject to the provisions in paragraph (c) of this section for part-time coursework;
 - (8) Complete the service obligation within a period, beginning after the recipient exits the training program for which the scholarship was awarded, of not more than the sum of the number of years in the period described in paragraph (a)(7)(ii) of this section and two additional years;
 - (9) Repay all or part of any scholarship received, plus interest, if the individual does not fulfill the requirements of this section, except as provided for in § 386.41 for exceptions and deferrals; and
 - (10) Provide the grantee all requested information necessary for the grantee to meet the exit certification requirements in § 386.34(f) and, as necessary, thereafter for any changes necessary for the grantee to monitor the scholar's service obligation under this section.
- (b) (1) The period of qualifying employment that meets the requirements of paragraph (a)(7) of this section may begin—
- (i) For courses of study of at least one year, only subsequent to the completion of one academic year of the training for which the scholarship assistance was received.
 - (ii) For courses of study of less than one year, only upon completion of the training for which the scholarship assistance was received.
- (2) The work completed as part of an internship, practicum, or any other work-related requirement necessary to complete the educational program is not considered qualifying employment.
- (c) If the scholar is pursuing coursework on a part-time basis, the service obligation for these part-time courses is based on the equivalent total of actual academic years of training received.

- (d) If a scholar fails to provide the information in paragraph (a)(10) of this section or otherwise maintain contact with the grantee pursuant to the terms of the signed payback agreement and enters into repayment status pursuant to § 386.43, the scholar will be held responsible for any costs assessed in the collection process under that section even if that information is subsequently provided.

34 CFR 386.41 Under what circumstances does the Secretary grant a deferral or exception to performance or repayment under a scholarship agreement?

Based upon sufficient evidence to substantiate the grounds as detailed in § 386.42, a repayment exception to or deferral of the requirements of § 386.40(a)(7) may be granted, in whole or in part, by the Secretary as follows:

- (a) Repayment is not required if the scholar—
- (1) Is unable to continue the course of study or perform the work obligation because of a permanent disability that meets one of the following conditions:
 - (i) The disability had not been diagnosed at the time the scholar signed the agreement in § 386.34(c); or
 - (ii) The disability did not prevent the scholar from performing the requirements of the course of study or the work obligation at the time the scholar signed the agreement in § 386.34(c) but subsequently worsened; or
 - (2) Has died.
- (b) Repayment of a scholarship may be deferred during the time the scholar is—
- (1) Engaging in a full-time course of study in the field of rehabilitation at an institution of higher education;
 - (2) Serving on active duty as a member of the armed services of the United States for a period not in excess of four years;
 - (3) Serving as a volunteer under the Peace Corps Act;
 - (4) Serving as a full-time volunteer under title I of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973;
 - (5) Experiencing a temporary disability that affects the scholar's ability to continue the course of study or perform the work obligation, for a period not to exceed three years; or
- (c) Under limited circumstances as determined by the Secretary and based upon credible evidence submitted on behalf of the scholar, the Secretary may grant an exception to, or deferral of, the requirement to repay a scholarship in instances not specified in this section. These instances could include, but are not limited to, the care of a disabled spouse, partner, or child or the need to accompany a spouse or partner on active duty in the Armed Forces.

34 CFR 386.42 What must a scholar do to obtain a deferral or exception to performance or repayment under a scholarship agreement?

To obtain an exception or a deferral to performance or repayment under a scholarship agreement under § 386.41, a scholar must provide the following:

- (a) *Written application.* A written application must be made to the Secretary to request a deferral or an exception to performance or repayment of a scholarship.
- (b) *Documentation.* Sufficient documentation must be provided to substantiate the grounds for all deferrals or exceptions, including the following, as appropriate.
- (1) Documentation necessary to substantiate an exception under § 386.41(a)(1) or a deferral under § 386.41(b)(5) must include a letter from a qualified physician or other medical

professional, on official stationery, attesting how the disability affects the scholar in completing the course of study or performing the work obligation. The documentation must be less than three months old and include the scholar's diagnosis and prognosis and ability to complete the course of study or work with accommodations.

- (2) Documentation to substantiate an exception under § 386.41(a)(2) must include a death certificate or other evidence conclusive under State law.
- (3) Documentation necessary to substantiate a deferral or exception under 386.41(c) based upon the disability of a spouse, partner, or child must meet the criteria, as relevant, in paragraph (b)(1) of this section.

34 CFR 386.43 What are the consequences of a scholar's failure to meet the terms and conditions of a scholarship agreement?

In the event of a failure to meet the terms and conditions of a scholarship agreement or to obtain a deferral or an exception as provided in § 386.41, the scholar must repay all or part of the scholarship as follows:

- (a) *Amount.* The amount of the scholarship to be repaid is proportional to the employment obligation not completed.
- (b) *Interest rate.* The Secretary charges the scholar interest on the unpaid balance owed in accordance with 31 U.S.C. 3717.
- (c) *Interest accrual.*
 - (1) Interest on the unpaid balance accrues from the date the scholar is determined to have entered repayment status under paragraph (e) of this section.
 - (2) Any accrued interest is capitalized at the time the scholar's repayment schedule is established.
 - (3) No interest is charged for the period of time during which repayment has been deferred under § 386.41.
- (d) *Collection costs.* Under the authority of 31 U.S.C. 3717, the Secretary may impose reasonable collection costs.
- (e) *Repayment status.* A scholar enters repayment status on the first day of the first calendar month after the earliest of the following dates, as applicable:
 - (1) The date the scholar informs the Secretary he or she does not plan to fulfill the employment obligation under the agreement.
 - (2) Any date when the scholar's failure to begin or maintain employment makes it impossible for that individual to complete the employment obligation within the number of years required in § 386.40(a)(8).
- (f) *Amounts and frequency of payment.* The scholar shall make payments to the Secretary that cover principal, interest, and collection costs according to a schedule established by the Secretary.

Additional RSA Requirements

The current RSA Long-Term Training Scholarships require that a scholar completes an internship at a designated State rehabilitation agency as a rehabilitation counselor or related professional. The designated state agencies in Washington State are the Washington Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the Washington Department of Services for the Blind (DSB). The WWU MA in Rehabilitation Counseling Program has defined an internship as a

minimum of 300 hours (can be completed during one quarter or over multiple quarters) at DVR or DSB.

Additional WWU Requirements

In addition to the requirements established by the RSA, the following guidelines have been established at Western Washington University.

1. Scholarship candidates should be fully admitted to graduate status to work toward the Master of Arts degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. In order to be considered for continuation of an RSA scholarship after the first year of funding, the student must complete and submit a new application for each subsequent year of funding.
2. Scholarship recipients must maintain at least a 3.0 GPA each quarter.
3. Any Incomplete (K) grades are evaluated on an individual basis.
4. Once the candidate is awarded an RSA scholarship, and based on the availability of federal funds, the scholarship will continue to be awarded each successive quarter, including summer, of that academic year provided that the student maintains satisfactory progress in the Master's degree program.
5. Scholarship funds will not be used to pay for courses that must be repeated due to low grades or dropping a class after the deadline for refunds.
6. Scholarship funds will not be used to pay for late fees or graduation fees.
7. Scholarship awards will be made for the Fall quarter of the academic year (or the previous Summer if funds are available) and continue through the following Summer quarter. If any additional federal funds become available during the year, applicants may be considered for funding beginning later in the year. Applications for mid-year funding must be received by the Rehabilitation Counseling Academic Program Director one month prior to the start of the quarter for which the student is requesting funding.



MA in Rehabilitation Counseling Program
APPLICATION FOR RSA SCHOLARSHIP

Based on the availability of funding awarded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration, the Rehabilitation Counseling program at Western Washington University is pleased to make competitive awards of scholarships to Rehabilitation Counseling graduate students who are selected each year by program faculty.

In order to compete for an RSA Scholarship for Fall 2022-Summer 2023, the student must complete the following application and return it to the Rehabilitation Counseling Program by **June 3rd**. Students who have previously received funding must also reapply by **June 3rd** if they wish to be funded for the next academic year. Applications should be emailed to RC.Everett@wwu.edu.

Name: _____ WWU #: _____

Address: _____ Phone #: _____

_____ Non-WWU email: _____

A complete application includes the following: (a) a one- to two-page response to the four selection criteria listed below, (b) a completed and signed Scholarship Agreement, (c) a signed Certification of Eligibility for Financial Assistance form, (d) **documentation of U.S. citizenship or legal permanent resident status** per 34 CFR 386.33 (a)(1) & (a)(2), and (e) contact information for someone who the RC Program can contact in the event that we are not able to contact you. The Rehabilitation Counseling faculty may ask to interview you in order to clarify or expand on your responses.

Prioritized selection criteria are:

1. Describe how your background and your personal beliefs and values demonstrate your commitment to a career in rehabilitation counseling and to serving individuals with disabilities.
2. Describe your plans for completing your practicum and internship (plans do not need to be finalized).
Reminder – a minimum of one quarter (or an equivalent of 300 hours over multiple quarters) of internship must be completed at a designated State rehabilitation agency (e.g., WA DVR or DSB).
3. Describe your plans for using the \$500 professional development monies that will be awarded during the first quarter of the scholarship (some examples are membership dues for professional associations, conference travel/participation, training events). **This does not apply to those students who are reapplying for additional years of funding.**
4. Provide a statement of financial need (either FAFSA report or narrative explanation).

If you need any assistance in understanding or completing this application, you are encouraged to request assistance from the Rehabilitation Counseling Program Coordinator, Ms. Monica Holmer.



MA in Rehabilitation Counseling Program

RSA SCHOLARSHIP AGREEMENT

I, _____ (*name of scholar*), agree to abide by the stipulations noted below as conditions of receipt of the scholarship for training in the Master of Arts in Rehabilitation Counseling Program at Western Washington University.

My receipt of these scholarship funds is predicated upon the expectation that I will complete a minimum of 300 hours of internship at a designated State rehabilitation agency (e.g., WA DVR or DSB). It is also predicated upon the expectation that I maintain or seek employment as a rehabilitation counselor in a State vocational rehabilitation agency or related agency as defined in 34 CFR 386.4 after I graduate or leave the program. Under the terms of the Long-Term Training Program, scholarship funds include all disbursements or credits for student stipends, tuition and fees, and student travel in conjunction with training assignments.

Therefore, as a designated Long-Term Training scholar, I agree to

1. complete a minimum of 300 hours of internship at a designated State rehabilitation agency (e.g., WA DVR or DSB) as a rehabilitation counselor or related professional

Yes No

Therefore, as a designated Long-Term Training scholar, upon graduating or otherwise leaving the program, I agree to

1. maintain employment as a rehabilitation counselor --

(a) in a State vocational rehabilitation agency or related agency as defined in 34 CFR 386.4;

(b) on a full- or part-time basis; and

(c) for a period of not less than the full-time equivalent of two years for each academic year for which scholarship assistance was received, within a period, beginning after I complete the training for which the scholarship was awarded, of not more than the sum of the number of years required in this paragraph and two additional years;

Yes No

2. repay all or part of any scholarship received, plus interest, if I do not fulfill the requirements of paragraph (1) of this agreement (immediately above), except as the Secretary of Education by regulations may provide for repayment exceptions and deferrals.

Yes No

I also understand that

3. The employment obligation as applied to a part-time scholar will be based on the equivalent total of actual academic years of training received.

Yes No

4. Until I have satisfied the employment obligation described above, I will inform the MA in Rehabilitation Counseling Program at WWU of any change of name, address, or employment status and will document employment satisfying the terms of the agreement.

Yes No

5. Subject to the provisions in 34 CFR 386.41 of the Federal regulations, regarding a deferral or exception, if I enter repayment status under 34 CFR 386.43(e), the amount of the scholarship that has not been retired through eligible employment will constitute a debt owed to the United States that --

(a) will be repaid by me, including interest and costs of collection as provided in 34 CFR 386.43; and

(b) may be collected by the Secretary of Education in accordance with 34 CFR Part 30, in the case of a failure to meet the obligation of 34 CFR 386.43.

Yes No

Signature of Scholar

Date

Social Security Number of Scholar

Signature of WWU Project Director

Date



Certification of Eligibility for Federal Assistance in Certain Programs

I understand that 34 CFR 75.60, 75.61, and 75.62 require that I make specific certifications of eligibility to the U.S. Department of Education (ED) as a condition of applying for Federal funds in certain programs and that these requirements are in addition to any other eligibility requirements that ED imposes under program regulations. Under 34 CFR 75.60 – 75.62:

I. I certify that:

A. I do not owe a debt, or I am current in repaying a debt, or I am not in default (as that term is used at 34 CFR Part 668) on a debt:

1. To the Federal Government under a nonprocurement transaction (e.g., a previous loan, scholarship, grant, or cooperative agreement); or
2. For a fellowship, scholarship, stipend, discretionary grant, or loan in any program of ED that is subject to 34 CFR 75.60, 75.61, and 75.62, including:
 - Federal Pell Grant Program (20 U.S.C. 1070a, et seq.);
 - Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG) Program (20 U.S.C. 1070(b), et seq.);
 - State Student Incentive Grant Program (SSIG) 20 U.S.C. 1070c, et seq.);
 - Federal Perkins Loan Program (20 U.S.C. 1087aa, et seq.);
 - Income Contingent Direct Loan Demonstration Project (20 U.S.C. 1087a, note);
 - Federal Stafford Loan Program, Federal Supplemental Loans for Students [SLS], Federal PLUS, or Federal Consolidation Loan Program (20 U.S.C. 1071, et seq.);
 - William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program (20 U.S.C. 1087a, et. seq.);
 - Cuban Student Loan Program (20 U.S.C. 2601, et seq.);
 - Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program (20 U.S.C. 1070d-31, et seq.);
 - Jacob K. Javits Fellows Program (20 U.S.C. 1134h-1134l);
 - Patricia Roberts Harris Fellowship Program (20 U.S.C. 1134d-1134g);
 - Christa McAuliffe Fellowship Program (20 U.S.C. 1105-1105i);
 - Bilingual Education Fellowship Program (20 U.S.C. 3221-3262);
 - Rehabilitation Long-Term Training Program (29 U.S.C. 774(b));
 - Paul Douglas Teacher Scholarship Program (20 U.S.C. 1104, et seq.);
 - Law Enforcement Education Program (42 U.S.C. 3775);
 - Indian Fellowship Program (29 U.S.C. 774(b));
 - Teacher Quality Enhancement Grants Program (20 U.S.C. 1021, et seq.);

OR

B. I have made arrangements satisfactory to ED to repay a debt as described in A.1. or A.2. (above) on which I had not been current in repaying or on which I was in default (as that term is used in 34 CFR Part 668).

II. I certify also that I have not been declared by a judge, as a condition of sentencing under section 5301 of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 (21 U.S.C. 862), ineligible to receive Federal assistance for the period of this requested funding.

I understand that providing a false certification to any of the statements above makes me liable for repayment to ED for funds received on the basis of this certification, for civil penalties, and for criminal prosecution under 18 U.S.C. 1001.

(Signature)

(Date)

(Typed or Printed Name)

Name or number of ED program under which this certification is being made: 84.129B
ED 80-0016 (Revised 2/01)



MA in Rehabilitation Counseling Program

RSA SCHOLAR CONTACT

Please provide the following information for someone who the WWU RC Program can contact in the event that we are not able to contact you. It needs to be someone who is at least 21 years old and can include a parent, relative, spouse, partner, or sibling. RSA requires programs to collect this information. The information provided below will be kept confidential unless requested by RSA.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone #: _____

Cell Phone #: _____

Work Phone #: _____

Email: _____

Relationship to You: _____

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

REGARDING THE RSA

SCHOLARSHIP

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

From the *Rehabilitation Long-Term Training Program: Scholarship Manual*
(written by the Rehabilitation Services Administration, updated 12/28/16)

1. At what point in the scholarship award process must the scholar sign the payback agreement?

An IHE receiving a RLTT grant from RSA must ensure that any student receiving scholarship assistance from the grant signs and dates a "payback" agreement **prior to the initial disbursement of any scholarship funds** on his/her behalf, including the payment or crediting of tuition. **The IHE must fully disclose to the RSA scholar the terms and conditions of the payback requirement in the application for an RSA scholarship.** The written agreement must contain the terms and conditions required by the regulations (34 CFR 386.40).

2. What financial assistance is included in the payback requirement?

The payback requirement applies to all RSA financial assistance to a scholar pursuing a RLTT program leading to a certificate or degree. Regardless of the amount of the financial assistance, the scholar must pay back each year of assistance with two years of service. The financial assistance covers payments for tuition and fees, stipends, books and supplies, and travel in conjunction with training assignments (34 CFR 386.32). The amount of scholarship made to scholars will vary depending on the amount of the grant awarded to the IHE and the cost of attendance at the IHE. Grantees are required to spend 65% of the grant award on scholarships.

3. How is an academic year defined for purposes of the payback requirement?

An academic year means a full-time course of study: (1) taken for a period totaling at least 9 months; or (2) taken for the equivalent of at least 2 semesters, 2 trimesters, or 3 quarters. If a scholar attends school from September to June, this equates to one academic year and two full years for the payback obligation. (34 CFR 386.4(b); 386.40(a) (7); 386.40(c))

4. How is the employment obligation of a part-time scholar determined?

The employment obligation for a part-time scholar is based upon the equivalent total of actual academic years of training received (34 CFR 386.40(c)). For instance, for every year a half-time scholar receives assistance, that scholar would have to repay one year of service.

5. What is the relationship between the amount of time that a student receives a scholarship and the length of time that he/she must maintain employment to meet payback requirements? Also, how much time is the student given to meet the payback requirements?

In accordance with 34 CFR 386.40(a) (7) and (8), the student must satisfy the following employment obligation:

- (a) The student must work in a State VR agency or a related agency, including a professional practice group, where the agency has a service arrangement with the State VR agency;
- (b) The student must maintain employment in the field of study in which training was received or where the field of study is directly relevant to the job functions performed;
- (c) The length of the employment obligation is the full-time equivalent of 2 years for each year of scholarship assistance provided;
- (d) The period of time that the student has in order to satisfy the employment

obligation begins immediately upon the completion of the training and lasts for the duration of the employment obligation plus a grace period of two more years.

6. When a full-time scholar receives partial funding, what are the payback requirements?

The amount of financial assistance disbursed to a full-time scholar, whether partial or full, does not affect the obligation of the scholar to meet an employment commitment. The scholar must repay every year of financial assistance with two years of service (34 CFR 386.40(a) (7)).

7. What happens when the scholar receives support from more than one RLTT grant?

Scholars who may have received scholarship assistance from more than one RLTT grant have a separate payback requirement for each grant. These scholars are encouraged to work closely with the respective Project Director or designee at the sponsoring agency and/or RSA Project Officer in accurately recording the payback obligation. Any service obligation completed by a scholar must first be applied to the older grant.

8. If a scholar is dismissed or drops out of a program for academic or non-academic reasons, to what degree will he/she be responsible for payback?

The scholar is responsible for repayment of the costs received whether he/she is dismissed or voluntarily leaves the program for academic or non-academic reasons. The scholar is in a repayment status on the first day of the next month after leaving the program. If the program is less than one year, and the scholar drops out prior to completing the program, the scholar must repay the assistance through financial repayment. If the program is more than one year in length and the scholar drop out after completing at least one year, the scholar may pay back the obligation through service or through financial repayment. (34 CFR 386.40(b) (1)).

9. Must scholars work on a full-time basis in a qualifying agency?

No. A scholar may work on a full- or part-time basis for either the State VR agency or a related agency. If a scholar works part-time, he/she still has an obligation to work the full-time equivalent of two years for each year for which assistance was provided within a period of not more than the sum of the number of years owed and two additional years. Therefore, depending on the length of the service obligation, it may not be possible for a scholar to meet all of his/her service obligation while working part-time. (34 CFR 386.40(a) (7))

10. What is meant by qualifying employment?

State-Federal programs of VR, supported employment, and independent living are the programs intended to benefit from the payback provision. The employment obligation may also be met by obtaining and maintaining employment in a related agency providing services under a formal or informal agreement with the State VR agency. (34 CFR 386.40(g))

11. What is meant by a "related agency?"

Congress also recognized that State VR agencies often accomplish their mission through formal or informal agreements with other programs. Thus, the employment obligation may be met by obtaining and maintaining employment in the field in which the scholar was trained in a related agency providing services under an agreement with a State VR agency. A related agency may include a Federal or State agency, a nonprofit organization, or a for-profit professional

corporation or professional practice group, so long as there is an informal or formal agreement with the State VR agency. (34 CFR 386.4)

12. What is considered acceptable qualifying employment for scholars who successfully complete a doctoral program?

Scholars may complete a doctoral program in one of two ways: 1) as an RSA scholar through the 84.129 RLTT program, or 2) through a doctoral program not funded by RSA but following completion of an undergraduate or Master's Program funded by RSA and for which the payback has been deferred.

In terms of acceptable qualifying employment, qualifying employment in a "related agency" may include educators whose college or university employer meets the definition of a related agency by providing services to individuals with disabilities under an agreement with a State VR agency and who are employed in the area of specialty for which Federal support for their training was provided. Examples of suitable work activities at an IHE may include but are not limited to the following tasks: 1) supervising students in training; 2) serving as an advisor or consultant to a State agency; 3) providing direct services to students, including the instruction of individuals with disabilities; 4) conducting research in the VR field as a Post-Doctoral Fellow or Research Assistant, provided that the activity is in the area of specialty for which training was provided.

Scholars who are hired full or part-time at an IHE only for the purposes of working to obtain grant funds or in conducting administrative activities do not meet the requirement for acceptable qualifying employment.

13. Does volunteer work count towards the payback requirement?

No. Volunteer work does not count towards the payback work requirement.

14. Does Graduate Assistant work count towards the payback requirement?

No. A scholar performing the duties of a Graduate Assistant cannot use this experience towards the payback work requirement.

15. Must scholars serve State VR clients exclusively in full- or part-time employment in a related agency?

If a scholar works for a related agency, he/she is not required to serve only rehabilitation clients of the State-Federal programs of VR, supported employment, or independent living in his/her job. Rather, the requirement can be met if he/she is employed on a full- or part-time basis by the qualifying organization, and the work is as a consultant or practitioner serving rehabilitation clients under an agreement with a State VR agency. (34 CFR 386.4; 34 CFR 386.40)

16. If a scholar engages in employment for a State VR agency or related agency while in training, will that count toward payback?

No. Rehabilitation employment while in training for which the scholarship was awarded does not meet the work requirement. The regulations clearly state that the scholar will maintain employment in a qualifying agency "beginning after the recipient completes the training for which the scholarship was awarded." (34 CFR 386.40).

17. Does RSA specify the geographical location in which the work requirement must be satisfied?

Regulations implementing the payback requirement **do not** specify the geographical location in which the work requirement must be satisfied. An RSA scholar may select where he/she wishes to seek and maintain employment, provided that within the required period of time following the completion of his or her training, the employment obligation is fulfilled with a State VR agency or related agency. (34 CFR 386.40). RSA scholars should be aware that in light of recent economic conditions, it is not uncommon for scholars to relocate in order to secure qualifying employment.

18. What is the "exit certification" that the grantee must provide in writing when a scholar completes his/her program?

According to 34 CFR 386.34(f), the granting institution is required to maintain the following information on file for each scholarship:

- (a) The scholar's name and the number of the federal grant that provided the scholarship;
- (b) The scholar's field of study and the obligation of the scholar to perform the service obligation with employment that meets the requirements in 34 CFR 386.40(a)(7)(i);
- (c) The total amount of scholarship assistance received subject to 34 CFR 386.40(a)(7);
- (d) The number of years the scholar needs to work to satisfy the work requirements in 34 CFR 386.40(a) (7).
- (e) The time period during which the scholar must satisfy the work requirements in 34 CFR 386.40(a) (7).
- (f) As applicable, all other obligations of the scholar in 34 CFR 386.40, such as the need to inform the IHE of any change of name, address, employment status, and information documenting how he/she has satisfied the terms of his/her scholarship agreement.

The exit certification must include written verification from the scholar acknowledging that the information in his/her file is accurate and that he/she is aware of his/her work-or-repay obligation.

19. Under what circumstances may a scholar receive an exception (i.e., waiver) to the payback requirements?

Before disbursement of a scholarship, grantees are required not only to verify proof of U.S. citizenship or legal permanent resident status, but they must also obtain documentation that the individual has an expressed interest in a career in the provision of rehabilitation services and that the individual expects to and appears able to seek and maintain employment in an approved agency following completion of his/her program of study. (34 CFR 386.33)

Scholars may request a waiver of repayment if they are unable to continue their course of study or complete their employment due to a permanent disability. (34 CFR 386.41(a)) To formally request a waiver of repayment for permanent disability, the scholar should submit a written request along with supporting medical documentation to the assigned RSA Program Officer. The medical documentation must be current (within the past three months), prepared on official stationery, signed by a qualified physician or other medical professional, and contain the scholar's diagnosis, prognosis, and ability to work in any capacity in the field of rehabilitation. The documentation must include a statement that a reasonable work accommodation cannot be

made to complete the employment obligation -- such as part-time work, teleworking, or utilizing assistive technology to support the necessary job functions. The submission of Social Security documentation or other disability determinations solely is insufficient and will result in denial of the request. The Project Director or designee and scholar should work closely together in transmitting the waiver request to RSA for review and consideration. All requests should be addressed to the attention of the RSA Commissioner, but transmitted to the assigned RSA Program Officer.

A disability in and of itself is not sufficient to serve as the basis of the waiver. An individual's disability must have worsened since entry into the program of study or the individual must have acquired additional disabilities in order for a waiver to be granted.

A waiver of repayment is also available in cases where a scholar has died. Documentation to substantiate this waiver must include a death certificate or other evidence conclusive under State law.

20. Under what circumstances may repayment of a scholarship be deferred?

Repayment of a scholarship may be deferred during the time the scholar is:

- (a) engaging in a full-time course of study in the field of rehabilitation at an IHE;
- (b) serving, not in excess of four years, on active duty as a member of the armed services of the United States;
- (c) serving as a volunteer under the Peace Corps Act;
- (d) serving as a full-time volunteer under Title I of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973; or
- (e) temporarily totally disabled, for a period not to exceed three years. (386.41(b))

Scholars wishing to make a request for deferment should submit the completed Deferral request form to the assigned RSA Program Officer along with the appropriate supporting documentation to include the PR/Award number that provided the scholarship funds and the signed payback agreement form. If the basis for requesting a deferral is due to full-time enrollment in a course of study, the scholar must include official proof of enrollment, i.e., documentation from the Office of the Registrar, along with the scholar's expected date of graduation or program completion.

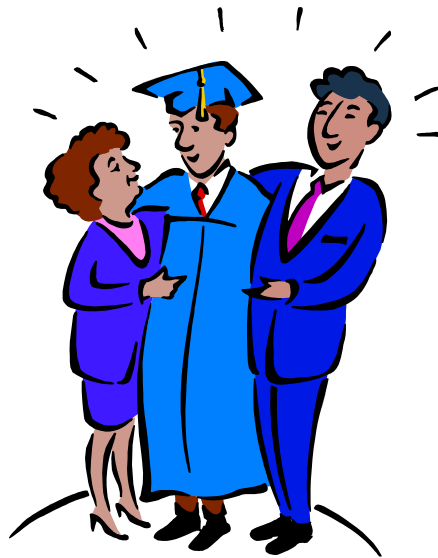
If the basis of the deferral is for any other circumstance, the appropriate documentation must be submitted to support the request. Medical documentation must be within the past three months.

Deferrals are not automatic; rather they must be officially approved by RSA.

Under limited circumstances as determined by RSA and based upon credible evidence submitted on behalf of the scholar, an exception to, or deferral of, the requirement to repay a scholarship may be granted in instances not specified in 386.41(a) and 386.41(b). These instances could include, but are not limited to, the care of a disabled spouse, partner, or child or the need to accompany a spouse or partner on active duty in the Armed Forces. (386.41(c))

21. What information in addition to this manual will help an RSA scholar and the granting institution to understand their responsibilities in complying with the payback requirements?

Scholars and IHEs must become familiar with the final regulations at 34 CFR Part 386, published in the FEDERAL REGISTER on August 19, 2016 (81 FR 55619). As a condition of receiving this grant, scholars and IHEs are required to comply with the rules. The regulations spell out the payback provisions and the scholar's requirements to comply with them. IHEs should also identify additional rehabilitation information, such as names and addresses of qualifying employers, for use in assisting scholars.



Sample Exit Certificate

On the next page is an example of an Exit Certificate Form, which will be provided to you when you graduate or otherwise leave the program. It is provided here to further clarify the conditions under which RSA Scholarship Funds are awarded.



RSA SCHOLAR EXIT CERTIFICATION FORM

Instructions for Grantees/RSA Scholars: This form is to be completed and signed by the Long-Term Training scholar and RSA Project Director or other appropriate grantee official at the time the scholar exits the training program, regardless of whether a degree is obtained or all coursework has been completed.

As a training scholarship recipient, I, **Sally Counselor**, Social Security #**555-55-5555**, acknowledge the following information as being true and accurate:

(1) I received scholarship funds from Western Washington University under U.S. Department of Education Grant # **H129B140050** for training received in the vocational rehabilitation counseling field.

(2) I understand that I must work **24 months** as a rehabilitation counselor in order to satisfy the work requirements of the Scholarship Agreement.

(3) The total amount of scholarship assistance received from this institution, under the Grant # above, which is subject to the work-or-repay provisions of Federal statutes and regulations is **\$16,632**.

(4) The work requirements must be satisfied within **48 months** after completion of the training or after exiting the program, whichever comes first. In order to meet the full work obligation, appropriate employment must be obtained no later than **September 1, 2022** and completed no later than **August 31, 2024**.

(5) I understand that I must inform the institution that awarded the scholarship of any change in my name, address, and employment status and that I am responsible for documenting how I have satisfied the terms of my scholarship agreement until such time as the work obligation has been satisfied. My employment information will be supplied to the institution that provided the training upon request.

(6) I also acknowledge that I have received a copy of my signed Scholarship Agreement and this Exit Certification Form, both of which outline the work-or-repay requirements stipulated in Federal regulations, and I understand my obligations as a scholarship recipient. Additional information on the work-or-repay provisions may be found in Part 386 of Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations and in the Long-Term Training Scholarship Manual, both of which have been made available to me at the time of application by the institution that provided the training.

Sally Scholar
(Signature of Scholar)

August 17, 2020
(Date)

Elizabeth Boland
Elizabeth A. Boland, PhD., CRC
Project Director

August 17, 2020
(Date)