

## THE POST-GRADUATE SCHOLARS PROGRAM: GUIDANCE AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Post-graduate Scholars Program is a safety net for high school students who have earned a high school diploma, earned below a 2.5 GPA (and thus are not eligible for Oregon Promise), and are ineligible for the PELL Grant (or the grant does not cover one year of college tuition and fees).

### ***Which students are eligible to receive State School Funds (SSF) as a Post-graduate Scholar?***

Students who:

- a. have satisfied the requirements for a regular Oregon diploma as provided in ORS 329.451(2)
- b. have been in grades 9-12 for more than a total of four school years
- c. are enrolled in courses at the district's local community college or contract community college that are part of a course of study approved by the school district and that may lead to a certificate or diploma
- d. have completed and submitted the Free Application for Federal Student aid (FAFSA), if eligible to file a FAFSA
- e. are not eligible for an Oregon Promise grant as described in ORS 341.522 because of failure to earn the minimum cumulative grade point average, or submitted a complete application but did not qualify for a grant
- f. are not eligible for a federal aid grant or are eligible for a federal aid grant but it is less than the average cost of tuition, books, and fees at an Oregon community college
- g. retain residence within the boundaries of the school district that is offering the Post-graduate Scholars Program and through which the student satisfied the requirements for a high school diploma
- h. meet any additional local school district requirements for participation in the program

### ***What does a school district need to do to use money from the State School Fund for a Post-graduate Scholars Program?***

- 1) School districts must have a written agreement with the community college that has a service area or contract within which the school district is located.
- 2) School districts need a policy approved by the school district board that:
  - a. Describes the goals of the program, including target high school graduation rates for underserved students
  - b. Includes minimum requirements for grade point average, attendance, and participation in regular meetings with school staff
  - c. Contains an evaluation plan describing how the success of the program will be measured and monitored
  - d. Lists the courses of study that are approved by the school district for the Post-graduate Scholars Program
- 3) This program is intended as a supplement to other district programs, as a safety net for students who meet the above eligibility criteria. The majority of students from the

school district that are enrolled at a community college can not be post-graduate scholars, because most students will qualify for other types of programs.

- 4) In the unusual case that the majority of students from the school district that are enrolled at a community college are Post-graduate Scholars, they all must meet at least one of the following criteria:
- a. Has received a modified diploma, an extended diploma or a General Educational Development (GED) certificate
  - b. Is or will be a first-generation graduate of high school
  - c. Is, or has been, a child in a foster home
  - d. Is, or has been, placed in a facility or an education program by a court
  - e. Is homeless
  - f. Is a parent
  - g. Was identified as eligible for free or reduced price lunches within the preceding 12 months

***Is a student required to take other funding sources first instead of becoming a Post-graduate Scholar?***

- If the student qualifies for the Oregon Promise, the student may not be a Post-graduate Scholar
- If the student, after completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the Oregon Student Aid Application (ORSAA), is eligible for a federal or state grant that is less than the average cost of tuition and fees at an Oregon community college, the student may not be a Post-graduate Scholar.

School districts should counsel the students on the benefits or drawbacks of the program according to their individual plans after high school. If the student chooses to participate in the Post-graduate Scholar Program they will need to decline the federal financial aid for that academic year. The student may be eligible to use other private scholarship programs and should work with community college and high school staff to determine the best options.

***Are students eligible for the Post-graduate Scholars Program if they missed the Oregon Promise and/or FAFSA/ORSAA deadlines?***

No, missing deadlines is not a valid way to qualify for the Post-graduate Scholars Program. Students MUST complete the Oregon Promise application if they could meet the minimum qualification (2.5 GPA). Students who are close to earning a GPA of 2.5 should be encouraged to complete the Oregon Promise application. Students must complete and submit the FAFSA/ORSAA and not qualify for a grant that covers one year of tuition and books to be eligible for the Post-graduate Scholars Program.

***Do districts need a staff person dedicated to providing support services to students in the Post-graduate Scholar Program?***

Yes, districts offering post-graduate scholars programs must assign at least one staff person to have a portion of their time dedicated to provide support services to students in this program, including regular in-person or synchronous online meetings to monitor progress, which must be held at least twice per month. Districts should use the "Position Comment" field in staff position to indicate which staff member in their district has this duty, by entering "Post-graduate Scholars" into the position comment field.

***What if a student is a transfer student and doesn't have a legal residence within the boundaries of the school district through which they received their diploma?***

If a student was a transfer student to the district during his/her senior year and graduated or earned enough credits, then the student may continue with the district as a post-graduate scholar. Students who have graduated or who have earned enough credits to graduate from one school district cannot transfer to another district for a Post-graduate Scholars Program.

***What about students at virtual or charter schools?***

Students attending outside of their original resident district, including those attending virtual charter schools, at the time that they satisfied the requirements for a high school diploma may participate in a post-graduate scholars program offered by the district in which they were resident for state school funding purposes (i.e. the charter school's sponsoring district, for virtual charter schools).

A charter school student may be able to participate in a school district's program through the use of inter-district transfer or open enrollment, but the existing requirements for those laws would apply to the student.

***Are students with a modified diploma eligible for Post-graduate scholar programs?***

No, because students who earn modified diplomas are eligible to continue their enrollment in a traditional K-12 program until they either earn a regular diploma or exceed age limits. They shouldn't need the Post-graduate scholars program, because they can attend other college coursework programs and receive full ADM funding.

***Can a student enroll in any Community College of choice?***

Students need to enroll in a community college that already has an association with their district. This can be through the district being in the service area for that community college, or the district having an existing dual credit partnership with the community college that provides the classes that the student will take as part of the post-graduate scholars program. See map: [Community College service area](#)

***What can the district pay for?***

Tuition, fees and books for one school year after a student has become eligible to participate in the Post-graduate Scholars Program.

***Does the participating district have to provide transportation for Post-graduate Scholars?***

No, but Post-graduate Scholars may use existing bus routes or transportation services provided by the school district. Any transportation costs incurred by a school district to add or extend existing bus routes or other transportation services are not considered approved transportation costs for the purposes of ORS 327.013. Best practice is for school staff to work out an individual transportation solution for all students participating in the Post-graduate Scholars Program.

***How long may students participate in the Post-graduate Scholars program?***

Students may participate for two consecutive semesters/three consecutive quarters after they have met the graduation requirements and exceeded their fourth year of high school enrollment, or for a total of 36 quarter credits of Post-graduate Scholars

enrollment, whichever limit comes first. Summer term enrollment may not be counted for Post-graduate Scholars ADM. Students may not extend their Post-graduate Scholars eligibility by delaying their entry into the program or by reducing the number of credits they attempt. Students may participate in other college coursework or expanded options prior to the end of the student's fourth year of high school without counting against the Post-graduate Scholars' time limit.

***Which ADM weights are Post-graduate Scholars eligible for?***

None. Post-graduate Scholars will be excluded from the calculation of English Learners, Special Education, Pregnant and Parenting, and Small/Remote schools calculations. Poverty, Foster Care, and Neglected and Delinquent weights, which are not calculated from student-level data, will not be adjusted.

***How will ADM be calculated for Post-graduate Scholars?***

Post-graduate Scholars will be reported based on the number of enrolled college quarter-credit-equivalent hours. One semester credit is equivalent to 1.5 quarter credits. Districts may not claim credit hours for courses from which the student has withdrawn prior to the tuition reimbursement date. Districts may not claim credit hours for courses that the student is repeating, for which the district has previously claimed ADM, if the student previously earned an "incomplete" or "withdrawn" for the course. Districts may claim up to 36 quarter credit hours per year, per student.

***How are the school districts getting reimbursed?***

Districts will be reimbursed through the State School Fund. A weight was created specifically for Post-graduate scholars, ADM = .75. This funding level assumes the student is enrolled full-time, at least 12 credits per quarter for three quarters. Students taking less than a full-load will see their funding prorated.

***How will post-graduate scholars be counted for the purpose of graduation and dropout reporting?***

Post-graduate Scholars will be counted as graduates, as of the date on which their diploma is awarded. Post-graduate Scholars are not dropouts.

***How should post-graduate scholars be reported in ADM?***

Districts should use a new ADM End Date Code, 4G (Completed Diploma-Track Program, Met Requirements for HS Diploma, and is Participating in Post-graduate Scholars program) to indicate that the student has been awarded their diploma but is expected to return for the Post-graduate Scholars Program. All enrollments occurring after the student meets the qualifications as a post-graduate scholar should be reported using new ADM Program Type Code 16 (Post-graduate Scholars).

***Are students who qualify for the Post-graduate Scholar Program able to use financial aid for things besides tuition, books, and fees (i.e. transportation, housing?)***

No, however, a student can apply for privately funded scholarships or grants to address living and other expenses.

***Are undocumented students eligible to participate in the Post-graduate scholars program?***



Yes, if they meet the requirements outlined above and any additional school district requirements they are eligible.

***May students or districts delay the award of a diploma in order to delay the student's Post-graduate Scholars eligibility?***

No. Students who complete high school prior to the end of their fourth year in grades 9-12 may delay the award of their diploma to the end of their fourth year, but no further. Districts must not counsel students to delay further.

***Should a district award a diploma to Post-graduate Scholars?***

Yes, districts must award diplomas to students who complete diploma requirements and have been in school for four or more years.

***Can a post-graduate scholar have a break in school enrollment between getting their diploma and attending CC as a post-graduate scholar? For example, after graduating in June, can they take a break from school until winter term to start the program?***

Maybe, it depends on the student. A student must meet all the eligibility requirements for a post-graduate scholar program. Ultimately, from the time they meet graduation requirements they are eligible to participate in the program for one year from that date.

***What are the timelines for declaring the intention of participating in a Post-graduate Scholar Program?***

The Department does not need to collect data on post-graduate scholar participation until the fall of the academic year in which the post-graduate scholar is enrolled. As a district it is useful to have an enrollment process in the spring before the students will participate in the program. Districts should plan to allow for some flexibility in the timing of admitting students to their post-graduate scholar program because of these uncertainties.

***Are students who graduate in less than four years eligible for a Post-graduate Scholar Program?***

No, the students must have been in grades 9-12 for more than a total of four years. There is nothing requiring a district to graduate a student early. Students would be eligible to complete their full four years of high school and participate in any expanded options programs, dual credit, or other courses offered by the school district. Students who meet diploma requirements early but remain enrolled to pursue courses offered by their school district should be reported with ADM End Date Code 4F.

***What about programs that are designed to take five years, with one or more graduation requirements placed in year five? Does that program need to be redesigned in order to qualify?***

Yes. Students need to have the opportunity and guidance on how to finish their diploma within four years for a program to be eligible to use State School Funds to offer a Post-graduate Scholars Program.

Districts wishing to use state school funds for a five year program that delays graduation until year five would need to redesign their program so that students would have the opportunity to finish their high school requirements in four years, if they want to also offer a Post-graduate Scholar Program.



***What does “retain legal residence” mean?***

Legal residence for students is defined under ORS 339.133. Typically this is where a student resides. A student who has been admitted to a district under open enrollment (HB3681) retains residency at their admitted district for purposes of the post-graduate scholar program even though they have graduated. Under interdistrict transfer, if the receiving district extends the transfer agreement to allow for an additional year after the student meets the graduation requirements, they are a legal resident of the school district they attend.

***Will students participating in a Post-graduate Scholar Program be eligible for an Oregon Promise grant when they finish?***

No, the Oregon Promise program requires participation within 6 months of graduation.