

Information on 2018 Regional Student Program Policies

Two key policy revisions are reflected in the 2018 Regional Student Program Policies:

1. Revised Eligibility Policy (Policy #3B2a):

Participating institutions may choose to offer through the RSP any program of study – certificate, diploma and/or degree programs.

What the revision achieves: Allows flexibility for four-year public institutions (in addition to community colleges) to voluntarily offer any program with capacity to residents of the other five states through the RSP.

2. Revised Tuition Policy (Policy #9)

The following text was eliminated from the policy: All RSP students enrolled at the same degree level (undergraduate, graduate) at an institution will be charged the same RSP tuition rate.

The New England Board of Higher Education sets the RSP tuition rate. Participating public institutions and/or systems may adopt an RSP rate equal to or lower than the RSP rate set by NEBHE. Institutions must provide written notice to NEBHE during the annual RSP review of their intent to implement new rate(s) in the following academic year.

What the revision achieves: Allows additional flexibility for participating institutions to charge varying tuition rates by program that are equal to or below the RSP rate set by NEBHE.

Background

The NEBHE Board of Delegates approved the two policy changes at its March 26, 2018 meeting, after receiving recommendations by the Regional Student Program Advisory Committee and the NEBHE Executive Committee.

Additionally, over the last two years, NEBHE initiated a strategic assessment of the RSP in light of the region's changing higher education enrollment and tuition pricing landscape. During this process, NEBHE evaluated multiple developments and factors including:

- Declining numbers of high school graduates, projected through 2032
- Colleges and states utilizing new incentives and discounting strategies to attract enrollments, including upfront tuition discounting to out-of-state students, and “free tuition” for in-state students
- Restructuring of programs and/or institutions, underway or under consideration in multiple states (Maine, Vermont, Connecticut)
- Regional tuition programs operated by the three other higher education Compacts—Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC), and Southern Regional Education Board (SREB)
- Feedback through surveys and interviews from participating institutions regarding their interest in more flexibility through the RSP

Rationale

The Regional Student Program policy revisions are intended to:

- Enhance and sustain the RSP's role and relevance for both institutions and students
- Enable the RSP to be the region's primary platform for public college out-of-state discounting
- Provide students and families with easily accessible, centralized information about a wide array of degree programs and tuition savings at multiple out-of-state public institutions within the region
- Provide institutions with greater flexibility to help meet enrollment goals during an extended period of diminishing numbers of high school graduates;
- Expand public college options in the region
- Help retain students and future workers in New England

The revised policies provide additional flexibility to RSP-participating institutions. They enable participating RSP institutions to (1) expand their program offerings through the RSP and (2) vary the amount of tuition savings by program that they provide to RSP students.

Regional Student Program Policies Q & A:

When do the policy revisions take effect?

The policy changes were approved by the NEBHE Board of Delegates at its March 26, 2018 meeting and will be implemented during the 2018 Annual Review of RSP programs. The Review starts in April. The 2018 Annual Review, which includes all the RSP participating institutions, will determine offerings for the 2019-20 academic year. The final 2019-20 list of RSP programs and new policies will be announced to the public in early September 2018.

Is it mandatory for institutions to adopt the alternatives available through the revised policies?

No. The RSP allows institutions flexibility regarding the extent to which they participate in the policies. However, policies pertaining to program withdrawals that grandfather eligibility for current students remain mandatory.

What types of eligibility are permitted through the RSP?

The types of eligibility are as follows:

1. **Specialized programs:** Option for all colleges to offer programs to students whose home-state public colleges do not offer the programs, as determined through an annual peer review administered by NEBHE
2. **Proximity:** Option for all colleges to allow eligibility for residents of neighboring state(s) whose home is closer than to an in-state college offering the same program
3. **Any certificate, diploma or degree program:** Option for all colleges, approval of home-state public colleges not required. (*Note: Prior to the policy change, eligibility for any degree program was an option for community colleges only and about 40% of community colleges allowed this eligibility.*)

NEBHE engages the participating institutions in an annual review to determine program eligibility.

Eligibility is explained online at: <http://www.nebhe.org/tuitionbreak> under the Eligibility/FAQs tab.

How many degree programs are offered through the RSP?

For the 2018-19 academic year, more than 1,700 undergraduate and graduate degree programs are offered through the RSP. The programs are listed online at: www.nebhe.org/tuition-break/find-a-program.

Number of RSP programs by degree

Associate:	681
Bachelor's:	444
Master's:	360
Doctoral & First Professional:	206
Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study & Education Specialist:	36

What is the RSP tuition rate?

In 2006, the NEBHE Board of Delegates set the RSP tuition rate ceiling at 175% of an institution's in-state rate. Institutions may charge RSP tuition rates ranging from 100% to 175% of their in-state tuition. The majority of institutions charge 150% or less. The revised tuition rate policy (#9) allows additional flexibility for participating institutions to charge varying tuition rates by program, that are equal to or below the RSP rate set by NEBHE.