

ITEM 152-128-R0911

Revision of Board of Regents Policy 940.1, Residency

THAT

The Board of Regents of Higher Education hereby adopts revisions to Policy 940.1, Residency, in accordance with this Item.

EXPLANATION

Montana provides significant tuition subsidies to resident students who attend out-of-state graduate professional schools under the WICHE, WWAMI, or Minnesota Dental Programs. The state has an interest in ensuring the limited slots in these programs go to bona fide Montana residents given that the intent is to encourage these students to return to our state to practice. Between 1986 and 1994, the Board of Regents required students seeking to qualify as in-state students for professional schools to demonstrate 36 months of domicile in this state. The 36-month requirement was discontinued after other residency policy changes tightened up the residency requirements and the 36-month period of domicile was no longer considered necessary.

Over the past 5-10 years, we have been under increasing pressure to grant resident status for professional schools to students who have been in Montana only the minimal amount of time or who seek to be considered residents immediately upon a spouse's taking full-time employment in the state under one of our established policy exceptions. In 2009, the regents revised the policy to provide that students applying for Montana's subsidized professional exchange programs must meet the residency requirements on their own, i.e., they would no longer be considered residents immediately upon a spouse's taking full-time employment in the state.

Other states also are trying to ensure that those who are certified as state residents for these costly programs are truly committed to the state and will have an interest in returning to the sponsoring state to practice medicine. Five of the twelve WICHE states, for example, require more than one year of domicile before certifying residency for professional school purposes. The investment of funds in these students' education and the need to attract these students back to the state upon completion of their studies warrant ensuring that the certified students have strong ties to the sponsoring state.

After careful review of this issue, the commissioner's office is recommending that the period of domicile for non-resident students, who have never before been Montana residents and who are seeking access to Montana's subsidized professional school programs, be extended from one year to two years. This will help to ensure state dollars are spent on students who are most likely to return to this state to work in their professional fields.

ATTACHMENTS

Redlined copy of Policy 940.1, Residency.