CHAPTER 25. STUDENT FINANCIAL AID AND SCHOLARSHIPS

SUBCHAPTER 41. INSPIRED TO TEACH PROGRAM

610:25-41-2. Definitions

The following words and terms, when used in this Subchapter, shall have the following meaning, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

"Full-time student" means:

(A) an undergraduate student enrolled in 12 or more semester credits toward teacher education degree requirements;

(B) an undergraduate student who is a teacher education major who is enrolled in or has completed an internship or student teaching credit hours in order to complete their degree program prior to certification and who has been approved by the institution to take less than twelve credit hours due to degree-completion requirements or the institution's approved sequencing of the degree program; or

(C) an undergraduate student who is a teacher education major with an approved reasonable accommodation from Student Accessibility Services at the institution due to a documented disability and who has been approved to take less than twelve credit hours.

"Internship" or **"Student teaching"** means: A minimum of 12 weeks or 360 hours of full-time student teaching or its equivalent completed by all initial candidates prior to teacher education program completion. The student teaching internship must be completed in an accredited Oklahoma PK-12 school to fulfill the mandatory requirement for a teacher education degree at an accredited Oklahoma institution.

"OSRHE" means the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

"SAP" means satisfactory academic progress according to the standards of the Oklahoma educational institution in which the student is enrolled.

610:25-41-4. Application procedure

(a) ~~OSRHE will distribute Inspired to Teach Participation Agreement forms to postsecondary institutions in Oklahoma that are eligible to participate in state and federal financial aid programs and have an approved program of professional teacher preparation or an approved articulation agreement on file with a state institution that has a professional teacher preparation program.~~ The OSRHE will make applications for the Inspired to Teach program available through the agency's scholarship database system on the OSRHE Inspired to Teach program website. Postsecondary institutions in Oklahoma that are eligible to participate in state and federal financial aid programs and that have either an approved program of professional teacher preparation or an approved articulation agreement on file with a state institution that has a professional teacher preparation program will be provided administrative access to the agency's scholarship database system and shall use the system only to verify participant eligibility and enter participant data.

~~(b) Participation Agreement forms may be obtained from the Inspired to Teach coordinator at each postsecondary institution or from OSRHE.~~

~~(c)~~(b) ~~A Participation Agreement~~ The application must be ~~signed~~ submitted through the agency's database system by the student while enrolled in a major course of study in teacher education at the undergraduate level.

~~(d)~~(c) The completed ~~Participation Agreement~~ application ~~must be submitted to~~ will be evaluated by the Inspired to Teach coordinator upon declaring teacher education as a major or, at the latest, before beginning the final semester prior to graduation.~~;~~ ~~however, a~~ A student who has declared teacher education as a major at least one semester before the final semester will be allowed to submit a completed ~~Participation Agreement~~ application through the agency's datatbase system and be considered for the Inspired to Teach Program the final semester.

~~(e)~~(d) Inspired to Teach coordinators at postsecondary institutions will ~~submit copies of the Participation Agreements to OSRHE~~ evaluate students for program eligibility within ~~10 days~~ two weeks of submission by the student.

~~(f)~~(e) ~~OSRHE will notify each~~Each applicant ~~of the receipt~~ may check the status of ~~his/her~~ their application to the Inspired to Teach program~~, the requirements for ongoing eligibility, and the disbursement benefits under Inspired to Teach,~~ as well as their disbursement benefits, through their personal portal within the agency's scholarship database system.

610:25-41-5. Certifications of compliance

(a) Participants must apply for entry into the Inspired to Teach program during their matriculation as an undergraduate student using the~~ Participation Agreement Form which can be obtained from the eligible Oklahoma higher education institution in which they are enrolled or the OSRHE website~~ agency's scholarship database system.

(b) OSRHE will be responsible for determining participant eligibility at each stage following Inspired to Teach program entry.

(c) Institutions will supply OSRHE with verification and certification of student eligibility each semester for the Inspired to Teach Program scholarship.

(d) After graduation, as participants transition to their teaching assignments in Oklahoma public schools, Inspired to Teach Program participants will provide compliance documentation to OSRHE as set forth in 610:25-41-9 and 610:25-41-11.

610:25-41-7. Participant eligibility for scholarship payments

(a) To the extent legislatively appropriated funding is available, the following scholarships will be awarded to eligible participants in the Inspired to Teach program:

(1) One thousand dollars ($1,000) per academic year for up to three (3) academic years for full-time students who have earned less than 90 credit hours; and

(2) Two thousand five hundred dollars ($2,500) for the final academic year for full-time students who have earned 90 or more credit hours.

(b) To the extent legislatively appropriated funding is available, the following scholarships will be awarded to eligible full-time students participating in Inspired to Teach according to the following tiers based on enrolled credit hours towards degree requirements if the student is entering the first year of undergraduate study, or earned credit hours towards degree requirements for all other students:

(1) Tier 1, requiring a minimum of 12 hours enrolled: $1,000

(2) Tier 2, requiring a minimum of 24 and a maximum of 47 hours earned: $1,000

(3) Tier 3, requiring a minimum of 48 and a maximum of 89 hours earned: $1,000

(4) Tier 4, requiring a minimum of 90 hours earned: $2,500

(c) Participants can receive a maximum of Five Thousand Five Hundred Dollars ($5,500) in total scholarship awards. Students will not be eligible for multiple awards in an academic year. If a participant will become eligible for a Tier 3 award and a Tier 4 award in the same academic year, which is also the participant's final academic year, and the participant has yet to receive an award from either tier, then the participant may choose which award to receive. In the event that a participant completes an approved accelerated degree program and graduates upon completion of ninety (90) credit hours, the participant will only be eligible for the first three tiers, as the Tier 4 award requires a remaining final academic year of undergraduate study after the participant has earned ninety (90) or more credit hours. Scholarship award disbursements will only be made for fall and spring semesters of the academic year. There will be no summer semester scholarship disbursements.

(d) Participants who have earned less than ninety (90) credit hours towards degree requirements, but have received Three Thousand Dollars ($3,000) in scholarship funding, will not be eligible for the final scholarship allotment of Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars ($2,500) until their final academic year of study.

(e) Participants who have earned 90 or more credit hours towards degree requirements but still have more than one academic year remaining to complete the teacher education degree requirements, may receive the Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollar ($2,500) award in the final academic year during a semester (fall and/or spring disbursement) designated by, and at the discretion of, the institution. Participants, upon receiving the Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollar ($2,500) award, will not be eligible for any of the scholarship awards granted to participants who have earned less than 90 credit hours towards degree requirements.

(f) Participants may utilize no more than one of the following provisions to become re-eligible for the Inspired to Teach program:

(1) Participants whose GPA falls below a 2.5, or who fail to maintain SAP, will have one academic semester (fall or spring) to re-establish a 2.5 GPA (or above) and SAP in order to have the scholarship benefit reinstated. Failure to meet the GPA and/or SAP requirements will result in the participant's withdrawal from the Inspired to Teach program.

(2) Participants who change majors to an ineligible area of study, fail to meet GPA and/or SAP requirements for two semesters, fail to maintain enrollment as a full-time student for one semester or completely withdraw from enrollment, will be allowed to reapply within one year of that occurrence as long as the participant does not graduate the same semester in which the participant reapplies.

(3) Participants who fail to meet the GPA or SAP requirement during the 2nd to last semester of their final year of matriculation, will not receive the scholarship benefit in the final semester; however, under the provisions of (1) of this subsection, if the participant re-establishes a 2.5 GPA (or above) and SAP within the final academic semester (before graduation), upon graduation, the participant's eligibility will be reinstated for employment incentive payments.

(4) Participants may obtain from the institution in which they are enrolled, an official letter reflecting a leave of absence or withdrawal when a serious illness, pregnancy, or other natural cause prevents the participant from continuing the coursework requirements or from fulfilling the provisions outlined under the eligibility requirements.

(A) College/ university withdrawals or leaves of absence may not exceed more than one academic year but will not be counted against the participant for the purposes of scholarship eligibility as long as the following criteria are met:

(B) Participants must present official college/university documentation to OSRHE at the time the withdrawal or leave of absence was granted which meets the requirements of this rule. Reapplication into the Inspired to Teach program must be received thirty (30) days prior to the participant resuming classes full-time or the participant may be withdrawn from the program.

(g) Participants who have been disqualified from the Inspired to Teach program but later become re-eligible pursuant to 610:25-41-7(f) shall be considered to have maintained program eligibility throughout matriculation for the purposes of 610:25-41-8(a)(1) if, following re-eligibility, the participant maintains Inspired to Teach program eligibility through graduation.

610:25-41-8. Participant eligibility for employment incentive payments

(a) In order to qualify to receive the employment incentive disbursement benefits under the Inspired to Teach program, program participants who are employed as traditionally prepared and certified teachers in Oklahoma public prekindergarten through 12th grade schools must:

(1) After being accepted into the Inspired to Teach program, maintain program eligibility pursuant to 610:25-41-3 throughout matriculation and receive at least one scholarship award;
(2) Graduate from an accredited Oklahoma teacher preparation degree program;
(3) Obtain a traditional teacher certification and provide eligible full-time teaching service under a regular teaching contract at an Oklahoma public school in the area of certification or qualified subject area; and
(4) Begin the first year of eligible full-time teaching service, as described above, within ~~thirteen (13)~~ fifteen (15) months from the date of graduation from ~~a four-year institution in Oklahoma~~ an accredited Oklahoma teacher preparation degree program. Student teaching or other teaching experience during matriculation through the teacher education degree program does not count towards the five-year service requirement.

(b) Employment incentive payments may be awarded following each consecutive year of satisfactory service as documented by the employing school district for up to five (5) years of service to Inspired to Teach program scholarship recipients upon graduation from an accredited Oklahoma teacher preparation degree program and traditional certification to teach in Oklahoma.
(c) The maximum amount of employment incentive payments for any qualified participant shall be Four Thousand Dollars ($4,000) per year for up to five (5) years, not to exceed a total of Twenty Thousand Dollars ($20,000) per participant.
(d) If sufficient funds are not available for employment incentive payment to qualified participants during any fiscal year, the Chancellor may make reductions in the payments made to qualified participants.
(e) Participants may apply to the employing school for a leave of absence when a serious illness, pregnancy, or other natural cause prevents the participant from providing consecutive full-time teaching service. Participants must present official school documentation to OSRHE that a leave of absence was granted which meets the requirements of this rule. Official notification must be given within one year that the teacher has resumed the teaching duties or participant may be withdrawn from the Inspired to Teach program.
(f) Leaves of absence may not exceed more than one academic year. Leaves of absence will not be included for the purpose of calculating the required consecutive five (5) years of teaching service.
(g) A Reduction in Force will not disqualify a participant based on the consecutive five-year obligation if the following requirements are met:

(1) Participant must provide to OSRHE official documentation of the Reduction in Force; and
(2) Participant must resume teaching at an Oklahoma public school within eighteen (18) months after the Reduction in Force.

610:25-41-9. Incentive benefits to be disbursed under the program

(a) Under the provisions of the Inspired to Teach program, OSRHE is authorized to make the employment incentive payments each year, up to five consecutive years for full-time teaching service, to Oklahoma public school districts for participants eligible pursuant to 610:25-41-8.
(b) Prior to the initial disbursement of employment incentive benefits, participants must submit a final official college transcript and an official copy of their teaching certificate.
~~(b)~~(c) Additionally, ~~A~~an Employment Compliance Form, available on the OSRHE Inspired to Teach program website, must be submitted to OSRHE upon completion of each year of eligible teaching service. An authorized school official must complete the form.
~~(c)~~(d) Each year, if all program requirements are satisfied, and contingent upon the availability of funds, OSRHE will issue disbursements of Inspired to Teach program benefits to school districts employing the qualifying participants for payment to participants.
~~(d)~~(e) The total annual amount of employment incentive payments for any qualified participant shall not exceed Four Thousand Dollars ($4,000).
~~(e)~~(f) If OSRHE determines that any Inspired to Teach program disbursement was authorized based on misleading or incorrect information supplied by the participant, the participant must reimburse such payment to OSRHE.

610:25-41-11. Verification and notification requirements

(a) Verification requirements which must be satisfied prior to disbursement of Inspired to Teach program benefits include:

(1) A copy of the participant's traditional teaching certificate from the Oklahoma State Department of Education submitted to OSRHE. Additionally, a new copy of the traditional teaching certificate must be submitted for all new subsequent certification competencies or credentials;
(2) A copy of the participant's official college or university transcript reflecting GPA, coursework, and graduation confirmation submitted to OSRHE; and
(3) An Employment Compliance Form submitted to OSRHE after each year of eligible teaching service. An authorized school district official must complete the form including the participant's signature. This form must be notarized prior to submission to OSRHE.

(b) The participant is responsible for ensuring that all documentation requested for verification requirements is provided within the time indicated.
(c) Until all mutual obligations ~~of the Participation Agreement~~ under the Inspired to Teach program are satisfied, the participant must respond to all communications and requests from OSRHE within the time indicated.

(d) Until all mutual obligations ~~of the Participation Agreement~~ under the Inspired to Teach program are satisfied, the participant must provide written notification by submitting a Contract Update form, available on the OSRHE Inspired to Teach program website, to OSRHE of any change in legal name or address and of any change in status, which affects Inspired to Teach program eligibility.