GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT ON DISABILITY SERVICES

POLICY	
Department on Disability Services	Subject: Postsecondary Education and Training Policy
Responsible Program or Office: Rehabilitation Services Administration	Policy Number: 2015-POSTSEC-POL01
Date of Approval by the Director: June 1, 2015	Number of Pages: 5
Effective Date: *Must be equal to or later than the Date of Approval by the Director*	Expiration Date, if Any:
Supersedes Policies Dated: Section VI DCRSA Policy Manual (2010) – Policy on Postsecondary Education and Training, Policy on Colleges and Universities DCRSA Memorandum on Summer School dated May 14, 2012	
Cross References, Related Policies and Procedures, and Related Documents: Postsecondary Education and Training Procedure (2015)	

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Department on Disability Services, Rehabilitation Services Administration ("DCRSA" or "Agency") provides services leading to successful employment outcomes for everyone the Agency supports who require postsecondary education or training.

2. APPLICABILITY

This policy shall apply to people being served by DCRSA who require postsecondary education or training to achieve an employment goal in the Individualized Plan for Employment ("IPE"); DCRSA staff; and any contractors, providers, or vendors authorized to assess, provide service, and/or assist people served by the Agency.

3. AUTHORITY

The authority for this policy is established in the Department on Disability Services as set forth in D.C. Law 16-264, the "Department on Disability Services Establishment Act of 2006," effective March 14, 2007 (D.C. Official Code § 7-761.01, *et seq.)*; the federal regulations governing the scope of vocational rehabilitation services, located at 34 CFR § 361.48; and the subchapter of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations entitled "Postsecondary Education and Training," located at 29 DCMR § 122.

4. POLICY

DCRSA shall pay for postsecondary tuition costs in accordance with 29 DCMR §§ 122.4, 122.5 and 122.6 only if the academic program is required for the achievement of an employment goal on an approved IPE.

It is the policy of DCRSA to provide individualized training services needed to achieve employment. Individualized services reflect the unique strengths, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, career interests and informed choice of each eligible person.

DCRSA shall have a preference for provision of postsecondary education services in public institutions within the Washington DC Metropolitan Area as defined by 29 DCMR §199.1.

DCRSA may pay for summer school in certain circumstances. Supervisory review of the course of study and approval of summer courses is required.

DCRSA may consider financial support for developmental/remedial courses for up to two semesters if a review of school achievement, academic background and/or placement testing indicates that the person may have difficulty succeeding in college level courses AND only after consideration of other resources such as adult basic education programs, remediation programs offered by the school or special training or tutorial programs or other comparable benefits. When funded, the Vocational Rehabilitation ("VR") Specialist shall work with the person and the academic adviser to identify appropriate courses to be taken during the trial semester. DCRSA financial assistance for a second semester shall depend on the person's progress toward becoming eligible to take courses for credit. A requirement for more than two semesters of developmental/remedial courses may indicate that postsecondary education is not a realistic goal for the person.

5. RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibility for this policy is vested in the Deputy Director, DC Rehabilitation Services Administration. Implementation of this policy is vested in the Client Services Division.

6. STANDARDS

A. Criteria for college-readiness

Pursuant to 29 DCMR § 122.2(b), getting students "college ready" refers to preparing them for success in ***credit-bearing*** postsecondary education, whether at a two- or four-year college or in a technical program and shall be evidenced by –

1. A determination by the VR Specialist that a person can reasonably perform the required work activities of the targeted employment goal indicated in the ONET based on his or her reported functional limitations;
2. An exploration of possible accommodations and the determination by the VR Specialist that these accommodations can mitigate the person's functional limitations that will allow him or her to perform the required work activities;
3. The person's employment goal is consistent with the recommendations of a qualified professional based on a vocational or career assessment;
4. The person's interest profile based on the results of a vocational or career assessment is congruent with the employment goal's interest code as published in the ONET. Congruency for this purpose is defined as having two similar interest codes out of the three codes that apply to the employment goal.
5. The targeted employment goal requires a postsecondary education based on current labor market information and a review of the person's past academic performance (GPA, SAT or ACT scores) and current assessments (other available measures) suggest that the person has capability to succeed in college level coursework and/ or identification of developmental courses (up to two semesters) to help prepare for postsecondary education;
6. The person is accepted in the program of study consistent with the employment goal chosen by the person that is consistent with his or her unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice as determined by the VR Specialist;
7. The person has no criminal history that will preclude him/ her from achieving the expressed employment goal that requires postsecondary education;
8. The person has no current concerns (i.e. childcare or health maintenance) that might interfere with attendance in a college or university;
9. If the training is an associates or college degree program, the person has a high school diploma or a GED that is required for admission to a college or a university; and
10. To the maximum extent possible, the college or university should be preferably in an integrated setting to help the student prepare for a competitive integrated employment and if not, is subject to supervisory approval.

The validation and cross-verification of information to determine the prospective student's college readiness shall be documented utilizing the Postsecondary Consultation Worksheet.

B. Criteria for selecting a postsecondary institution

The Criteria for selecting an appropriate institution and for forming the basis for approval for DCRSA sponsorship may include but are not limited to:

1. The person's employment factors (employment goal consistent with his or her unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice);

2. The capability of the institution to provide the needed training program;
3. The availability of required support services;
4. The proximity of the person's residence; and
5. The overall program cost/ affordability for the person.

C. Determination of Service Guidance

DCRSA shall first determine if the service is necessary and then identify the most appropriate option when determining vocational services and goods that shall be provided. DCRSA staff shall procure the service/good at the least possible cost once necessity and appropriateness of a service or good have been determined.

1. Necessary VR Services and Goods
   All of the services and goods provided by DCRSA shall have been determined by the DCRSA VR Specialist and his or her supervisor to be essential to assess a person's eligibility and severity of disability, to establish his/her vocational rehabilitation needs, to overcome or circumvent vocational impediments and to attain the individual's chosen employment outcome.

2. Appropriate VR Services and Goods
   Each necessary vocational rehabilitation service and good shall be suitable and of sufficient quality to fully meet the person's particular needs and circumstances. To be considered appropriate, the access to or use of a service or good shall not require sacrifices or adjustments that would not be reasonably expected of a person who does not have a disability.

3. Least Possible Cost for Services and Goods
   All services and goods that have been determined to be necessary and appropriate shall be procured at the least possible cost to DCRSA insofar as they are adequate to meet the needs of person. Services and goods shall be planned and authorized according to DCRSA policies regarding financial participation and use of comparable benefits and resources; consistent with DCRSA contracts, provider standards and agreements and, in compliance with the DCRSA fee schedule and the purchasing rules and regulations of the District of Columbia.
   Use of comparable benefits and resources may be exempted if determination of availability would interrupt or delay –
   a. The progress of the person toward achieving the employment outcome identified in the individualized plan for employment;
   b. An immediate job placement; or
   c. The provision of vocational rehabilitation services to any individual who is determined to be at extreme medical risk, based on medical evidence provided by an appropriate qualified medical professional.

4. Exceeding Least Possible Cost to Meet VR Needs
   All services and goods provided to an applicant or eligible person shall meet the vocational rehabilitation needs of the person and be at the least possible cost to DCRSA. When a person chooses a more expensive service or good from among

alternatives that all fully meet the person's vocational rehabilitation needs, DCRSA shall not be responsible for those costs in excess of the least costly alternative.

D. Criteria for Approving Summer Classes

DCRSA's financial assistance for summer school shall be provided only when the courses to be taken:

1. Are not available during the fall or spring semesters or other standard grading period; or
2. Will enable the person to graduate earlier; or
3. Are part of a year-round school program, requiring summer coursework to complete the program within two or four years, as applicable; or
4. Are intended to accommodate a person's disability by easing the load for the regular semester and as supported or recommended by a disability documentation and/or vocational assessment.

E. Criteria for approving advanced studies or training in science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM) , medicine (MD), law(JD) and business (MBA)

Support for advanced training in a field of science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (including computer science), medicine, law or business, may be provided after a person eligible to receive postsecondary education and training services demonstrates –

1. Previous completion of a bachelor's degree program at an institution of higher education or scheduled completion of such a degree program prior to matriculating in the program for which the person proposes to use the support; and
2. Acceptance by a program at an institution of higher education in the US that confers a master's degree in a field of science, technology, engineering or mathematics (including computer science), a juris doctor degree, a MBA degree, or a MD degree, except that no training services provided at an institution of higher education may be paid for with vocational rehabilitation funds unless maximum efforts have been made by the person to secure grant assistance in whole or in part from other sources to pay for this training.

Laura L. Nuss, Director
Department on Disability Services

6/01/2015
Approval Date

Andrew P. Reese, Deputy Director
Rehabilitation Services Administration

6/8/2015
Approval Date