



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

APPLICABILITY
PRISON
FACILITY/SPANISH MANUAL

REVISION DATE
10/2/24

PAGE NUMBER
1 of 6

NUMBER
DOC 500.100

POLICY

TITLE
CORRESPONDENCE EDUCATION IN PRISONS

REVIEW/REVISION HISTORY:

Effective: 2/28/00
 Revised: 6/6/05
 Revised: 9/13/07
 Revised: 3/4/09
 Revised: 9/26/11
 Revised: 1/19/15
 Revised: 12/4/20
 Revised: 1/13/22
 Revised: 10/2/24

SUMMARY OF REVISION/REVIEW:

Policy Statement I. & II., Directive I.B., II.B., II.D., III.B. & C., IV.C., IV.F., and VII.A.1. -
 Adjusted language for clarification
 Removed II.C. and IV.D. as repetitive of form requirements
 III.A.2. - Added clarifying language
 Added III.B.1. that correspondence education programs are not eligible for federal or state
 financial aid funding
 Added IV.F. that individuals will not be reimbursed if terminated from a program
 VI.B.4., and VII.A. - Removed unnecessary language


APPROVED:

Signature on file

CHERYL STRANGE, Secretary
 Department of Corrections

9/26/24

 Date Signed

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REFERENCES:


DOC 100.100 is hereby incorporated into this policy; [RCW 72.09.460](#); [RCW 72.09.480](#); DOC 200.000 Trust Accounts for Incarcerated Individuals; DOC 350.100 Earned Release Time; DOC 440.000 Personal Property in Prisons; DOC 450.100 Mail for Individuals in Prison; DOC 500.000 Education and Vocational Programs in Prisons; [Council for Higher Education Accreditation Recognized Accrediting Organizations](#); [U.S. Department of Education Database of Accredited Postsecondary Institutions and Programs](#)

POLICY:

- I. The Department has a process for individuals to participate in self-paid post-secondary academic, vocational, and theology programs through correspondence education involving an educational course or series of classes necessary to obtain or achieve a proficiency standard. Courses will be completed through the mail with an accredited educational institution recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.
- II. Adult basic academic skills, pre-apprenticeship, vocational, and postsecondary education programs will be provided per DOC 500.000 Education and Vocational Programs in Prisons.

DIRECTIVE:


- I. Eligibility
 - A. Individuals must:
 1. Have a verified high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) certificate to be eligible to participate in a correspondence course.
 2. Apply for a correspondence program under the supervision of the assigned case manager, in cooperation with the Education Services Administrator/designee.
- II. Approval Process
 - A. The individual will complete page one of DOC 20-305 Correspondence Study Request and submit the form to the assigned case manager.
 - B. The case manager will interview the individual, document whether the individual is pre-approved on the study request, and submit it to the Education Services Administrator/designee.

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- C. The Education Services Administrator/designee will verify the educational institution is accredited by an approved association listed by the U.S. Department of Education or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, and complete the applicable section of the correspondence study request.

III. Payment

- A. Individuals enrolling in correspondence courses may pay the accredited educational institution:
1. Directly through their banking account per DOC 200.000 Trust Accounts for Incarcerated Individuals, or
 2. Through a family member, or third party approved by the case manager, who may make payment:
 - a. By depositing the money into the individual's education subaccount, or
 - b. Directly to the accredited educational institution, in which case:
 - 1) The case manager will verify the status of the individual's account and review and approve all requests for a family member or approved third party to pay for tuition and books to ensure payment is voluntary and not coerced.
 - 2) Proof of payment, by whom, and for whom must be submitted to the case manager before the course begins.
- B. Individuals may receive funds from outside sources (e.g., family, education scholarship) to cover program costs. These funds are not subject to the mandatory deductions for payment of fee-based education or vocational programs.
1. Correspondence education programs are not eligible for federal or state financial aid funding.
- C. The case manager will document final approval on DOC 20-305 Correspondence Study Request.
- D. Individuals are responsible for purchasing all books, materials, and supplies associated with the correspondence program, and for the mailing costs of returning homework and other correspondence to the accredited educational institution.

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1. All course-required supplies (e.g., calculators, compasses, protractors) must meet facility security requirements.

IV. Approved Correspondence Education

- A. The case manager will review DOC 20-309 Correspondence Education College Provider/Student Agreement with the individual, ensure the individual signs it, and send a copy to the correspondence education college provider.
 1. Correspondence program faculty are not allowed to accept collect calls from the individual, but calls can be made by the case manager or designated education employee/contract staff on the individual's behalf, if deemed appropriate.
 2. The case manager will notify the Property Sergeant and mailroom that the individual may receive textbooks and other authorized instructional materials.
- B. The case manager must receive confirmation from the correspondence program faculty and payment must be made in full to the accredited educational institution before the correspondence course begins.
- C. The case manager will notify the individual if/when the individual has been cleared to begin the correspondence education program and will make a referral in the Programs section of the electronic file.
- D. Exams will be sent to the facility Education Department to be monitored. Once completed, an education employee/contract staff will send the completed exam to the correspondence education provider.
- E. Any violation of the rules acknowledged in DOC 20-309 Correspondence Education College Provider/Student Agreement may result in termination of the correspondence program and the individual will be infraacted.
 1. Individuals will not be reimbursed if participation is terminated.

V. Security

- A. Property obtained as a result of enrolling in a correspondence program will be managed per DOC 440.000 Personal Property in Prisons.
 1. Used books will be allowed if they are sent directly from the approved accredited educational institution's bookstore.

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- B. All correspondence education property will be thoroughly inspected before it is given to the individual per DOC 450.100 Mail for Individuals in Prison.

VI. Program Changes

- A. Before completion of a fee-based education or vocational program, the individual may apply by letter to the Superintendent/designee for permission to change the individual's program.
- B. The Superintendent/designee may approve the request to change programs of study based solely on the following criteria:
 - 1. The individual has been transferred to another facility for reasons unrelated to disciplinary issues or a higher custody level, and the individual's current program cannot be supported at the new facility.
 - 2. The individual entered the program with an undeclared major and wishes to declare a major.
 - a. Individuals may not apply for more than one change to the declared major and receive the exemption from mandatory deductions.
 - 3. The individual is able to access a similar program through a different accredited education provider at a reduced cost.
 - 4. The educational institution is terminating the individual's current program.

VII. Tracking

- A. The case manager will coordinate with the facility Programs Coordinator to:
 - 1. Document the assignment in the Programs section of the electronic file using the title "Correspondence Education" and "In-Unit Study" as the location once the individual is enrolled.
 - 2. Maintain detailed chronological notes of the correspondence program in the electronic file.

VIII. Earned Time

- A. Individuals who participate in approved correspondence programs may be eligible for earned time per DOC 350.100 Earned Release Time.

IX. Facility Resources



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- A. The Superintendent/designee, in consultation with the facility Education Director, will determine the availability and/or use of facility resources for educational purposes (e.g., computers, study labs, college-owned equipment, employee/contract staff serving as test proctors).
- B. The Superintendent/designee will determine what library resources will be available.

DEFINITIONS:

Words/terms appearing in this policy may be defined in the glossary section of the Policy Manual.

ATTACHMENTS:

None

DOC FORMS:

- DOC 20-305 Correspondence Study Request
- DOC 20-309 Correspondence Education College Provider/Student Agreement