



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

APPLICABILITY
PRISON
FACILITY/SPANISH MANUAL

REVISION DATE
1/13/22

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POLICY

TITLE
CORRESPONDENCE EDUCATION IN PRISONS

REVIEW/REVISION HISTORY:

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SUMMARY OF REVISION/REVIEW:

VII.A. - Added language for clarification

APPROVED:

Signature on file

CHERYL STRANGE, Secretary
 Department of Corrections

 1/5/22
 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 for Offenders; 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 Washington Student Achievement Council and the U.S. Department of Education.
- II. Basic academic skills, vocational training, and workforce education programs will be provided per DOC 500.000 Education and Vocational Programs in Prisons.

DIRECTIVE:

- I. Eligibility
 - A. Individuals must have a verified high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) certificate to be eligible to participate in a correspondence course.
 - B. Individual must apply for a correspondence program under the supervision of the assigned case manager, in cooperation with the facility Education Department.
- 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:
 1. Interview the individual and verify the individual has a high school diploma or GED.
 2. Determine if the correspondence program:
 - a. Relates to the Custody Facility Plan,

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- b. Will fit into time structure, and
 - c. Is not a security threat.
- C. If the case manager pre-approves the correspondence education request, the case manager will complete the applicable section of DOC 20-305 Correspondence Study Request and submit it to the facility Education Department.
- D. A designated education employee/contract staff will interview the individual to establish clear education goals and objectives, complete the applicable section of DOC 20-305 Correspondence Study Request, and return it to the case manager.
- E. The facility Education Director/Dean 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.

III. Payment

- A. Payment must be made in full to the accredited educational institution before the correspondence course begins. The payment options are as follows:
1. Individuals enrolling in correspondence courses may pay the accredited educational institution directly through their banking account per DOC 200.000 Trust Accounts for Incarcerated Individuals.
 2. A family member, or third party approved by the case manager, 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 grant) to cover program costs. These funds are not subject to the mandatory deductions for payment of fee-based education or vocational programs.

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- C. The case manager will review and complete the Case Manager Final Approval section of 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.
 - 1. All course required supplies (e.g., calculators, compasses, protractors) must meet the facility security requirements.

IV. Provider/Student Agreement

- 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. 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 before the correspondence course can begin.
- C. The case manager will notify the individual if the individual has been cleared to begin the correspondence education program and will make a referral in Offender Management Network of Information (OMNI) Programs.
- D. DOC 20-309 Correspondence Education College Provider/Student Agreement stipulates how contact will be made.
 - 1. The correspondence program faculty must be given information regarding proper procedures for corresponding with individuals.
 - 2. 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.
 - 3. 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.
 - a. Violation of these contact rules may result in termination of the correspondence program and the individual will be infracted.

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V. Security

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

VII. Tracking

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

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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

- 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