



High School Diploma

CEO: 12-04

To: Chief Executive Officers/Presidents of Institutions of Higher Education

From: Barbara Hochberg, Director of Grant and Scholarship Programs
New York State Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC)

Date: May 24, 2012

Subject: High School Diploma

The enacted 2011-12 New York State Budget amended the New York State Education Law to expand participation in the Tuition Assistance Program (“TAP”) to certain full-time resident undergraduate students not currently eligible for awards. As a result, previously ineligible students attending your institution may now be eligible for TAP awards.

This Memorandum provides guidance regarding satisfactory high school diplomas for students pursuing approved programs of study in accordance with 8 NYCRR §§2407.1(a)(7), 2408.18(c)(1), and 2408.18(c)(2). All terms herein shall have the same meaning as set forth in 8 NYCRR §2400.2.

In order for a student to be eligible for Tuition Assistance Program awards pursuant to sections 661(4)(b) and 661(4)(b-1) of the Education Law, he or she must have a high school certificate or diploma of graduation from a school providing secondary education within the United States satisfactory to the President of the Corporation, or the equivalent of such certificate or diploma as recognized by the United States Secretary of Education, or have received a passing score on a federally approved ability-to-benefit test.

To be satisfactory to the President, a certificate of graduation or high school diploma must be from a secondary school that is recognized, authorized or approved: (i) by the state educational entity having jurisdiction, or (ii) by an established national association of nonpublic schools, as approved by the Corporation, which has a school academic review process as part of its recognition protocol for member schools. Such recognition, authorization or approval must have been in effect or deemed to have been in effect as of the date the certificate of graduation or high school diploma was issued.

NEW YORK STATE HIGHER EDUCATION SERVICES CORPORATION

99 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12255 • T 518.474.5592 • Fax 518.474.5593 • www.HESC.ny.gov

Upon request, HESC may grant the student a TAP award subject to the satisfaction of the above requirements within a specified period of time not to exceed one year from the academic semester in which such student first applied for the TAP award. If such requirements are not satisfied within the prescribed time frame, any funds paid on behalf of such student must be refunded by the educational institution. A student shall not be held liable for any disallowed funds awarded on his or her behalf as a result of the educational institution's improper certification.

Note: The elimination of the federal ability-to-benefit (ATB) alternatives to a high school diploma, effective July 1, 2012, is for purposes of determining Federal student aid (Title IV) eligibility only. The change does not withdraw the existing federal approval of those tests nor does it eliminate federally approved ATB tests for the purposes of admissions. Consequently, there is no current impact on student eligibility for TAP. HESC will continue to update you as we receive further guidance from the U.S. Department of Education.