

How WICHE's Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) Determines Which Applicants Will Receive Support

This document was developed to clarify how WICHE determines which applicants can be supported through its Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP).

Overview: PSEP provides students in 12 Western states with access to professional healthcare programs that otherwise might not be available to them because the fields of study are not offered at public institutions in their home states. PSEP students pay reduced levels of tuition – usually resident tuition in public institutions or reduced tuition at private schools. The home state pays a support fee to the admitting schools to help cover the cost of the student's education.

The following professional degree studies are supported through PSEP: Dentistry (DDS or DMD); allopathic medicine (MD); occupational therapy (MOT); optometry (OD); osteopathic medicine (DO); pharmacy (PharmD); physical therapy (DPT); physician assistant (master's); podiatry (DPM); and veterinary medicine (DVM).

Each participating state determines the fields and the number of students it will support. Typically, a state will support in a field of study if it is not offered by one or more of its public institutions. In addition, a state may offer support in a field only offered at a private institution located in the state.

Eligibility for support: To be considered for WICHE support, the individual applying to a professional healthcare school must become "certified" by his/her home state. *Certified* means that the applicant is a *bona fide resident* of his/her home state. A prospective student applies to his/her state certifying office to determine whether or not they meet the state's residency requirements; state residency requirements across the West vary. CERTIFICATION in itself does not guarantee support or even an admission offer. A certified applicant is *eligible to be considered* for support because he or she meets the state's residency requirements.

Deadline for certification: Applicants must apply for PSEP certification by October 15th of the year prior to enrollment. A few states accept late applications, but most do not. Where late applications are accepted, late certified applicants are considered for funding only AFTER all the other regular certified applicants are funded. Lists of WICHE certified applicants are emailed to cooperating schools from November through March of each academic year.

Why are rankings necessary? Given state fiscal pressures, the number of certified applicants with offers of admission typically exceeds the support available. To determine the most highly qualified applicants, the central WICHE office compiles rankings of all certified entering applicants (by field and by state) who hold one or more offers at the time of the ranking. Applicants are responsible for notifying their state certifying officer of all WICHE offers.

How are applicants ranked? Our cooperating schools rank all individuals who have applied to their school, using their regular admissions criteria. To be ranked, an applicant must hold one or more offers at the time of the ranking. Applicants in the same field are ranked among their home state peers. For example, all Arizona dental school applicants will be ranked only against other

certified Arizona dental school applicants with offers. If the list from one state contains 15 names, and all of the applicants applied to a school, the student "most qualified" will be ranked #1, the "next most qualified" will be ranked #2, etc. to the "least qualified," which would be ranked #15. No two applicants receive the same number ranking.

WICHE's central office then compiles all cooperating schools' rankings into one weighted ranking for all applicants (by state and by field). The top-ranked individuals are the first to be offered funding. The number of seats funded in each field is previously determined by each state's legislative appropriations.

Can an applicant find out his/her cumulative rank, or how a particular school ranked him/her? No. Rankings are confidential and *are not released to anyone*: applicants, parents, nor to other schools that may be competing for an applicant's enrollment. State certifying offices do not receive rankings and our schools are not permitted to release their ranking of a WICHE applicant. Rankings are kept confidential to protect the privacy of the applicants and our schools. Furthermore, lists of WICHE-funded students are always released to the state and to the schools in alphabetical order, never by rank.

Are rankings always necessary? If a state has sufficient funds to support all applicants with WICHE offers in a particular field, then no rankings are necessary.

Why does WICHE use rankings? WICHE states have been supporting students through PSEP for half a century. Both the central and state offices experimented with several different selection methods over the years, but they were all deemed problematic. While no selection process is perfect, WICHE's ranking process is the most equitable system that we've found over time. Furthermore, WICHE recognizes the sovereignty of its cooperating schools in the admissions process. State selection committees are not an option to determine admission; only our schools can determine which applicants are most qualified to succeed in their program. The WICHE process also values student choice; i.e., if an applicant receives an offer from more than one WICHE school, the applicant may choose which school he/she wishes to attend.

How does the veterinary medicine selection process differ from the other PSEP fields? For all fields except veterinary medicine, WICHE certified applicants receive their school admissions offers *before* they know whether or not they will be supported through PSEP. In veterinary medicine however, the opposite is true. Our participating schools (Colorado State University, Oregon State University, and Washington State University) adopted a "cooperative admissions procedure." The cooperative admissions process first identifies certified applicants to receive WICHE support based on anticipated legislative appropriations, *and then these candidates receive WICHE-sponsored offers of admission* from the cooperating institutions.

The chart that follows outlines WICHE's PSEP selection process in detail. For further clarification, contact WICHE's student exchange coordinator at 303.541.0214. For more general information about WICHE's PSEP, visit <http://www.wiche.edu/sep/psep/>.

WICHE's PSEP Funding and Selection Process

For All PSEP Fields

- Applicant applies to home state office for certification (residency verification) prior to October 15th.
- Applicant applies to all WICHE schools where he/she would like to enroll.
- WICHE sends lists of certified PSEP applicants to all cooperating schools beginning in November.

For Veterinary Medicine

- Once the admissions committees from the cooperating schools (CSU, OSU and WSU) have convened and evaluated all WICHE certified applicants, schools rank applicants from each state using their regular admissions criteria. This typically happens in January.
- WICHE's central office then compiles the scores to create a cumulative, weighted ranking for each state, with the #1 student being the "most qualified" of all certified students from that state.
- Prior to offers being made, WICHE releases to the schools an alphabetical list of certified applicants who will be funded if accepted to a WICHE program. For example, if Montana expects to support five students, five names from Montana (in alphabetical order) are released to the schools. WICHE also releases a limited number of "alternate" names (in alphabetical order); these are certified applicants who are not WICHE funded, but are the next in line to receive funding, *if it becomes available*. If at a later time alternates are needed to fill vacant WICHE spots, name(s) are released in rank order, as needed.
- Veterinary schools then begin making WICHE-sponsored offers to as many applicants as they choose (among those designated to receive support). The first round of WICHE-sponsored applicants must respond to all offers by April 15th.
- After WICHE-sponsored offers have been made, schools may make "at large" (non-sponsored) offers to applicants who are NOT expected to receive WICHE funding. Non-sponsored students pay nonresident tuition.
- After April 15th, vacancies created by applicants who decline all WICHE-funded offers or elect to attend a school out-of-region will be filled. WICHE's central office will release the "next ranked" applicant for that state. Applicants have two weeks to respond to the offer(s).
- If an applicant accepts a non-sponsored offer at a WICHE school and then later is awarded WICHE support to fill a vacancy, the applicant has the prerogative to consider all new WICHE-sponsored offers from any of the cooperating schools.

NOTE: Though most WICHE-funded applicants receive one or more offers, offers are not guaranteed. A school's entering class may already be filled, or the school may deem that an applicant is not qualified for admission.

For All Other Healthcare Fields

- Applicants must notify their state office of all WICHE offers; WICHE schools also notify WICHE's central office of offers.
- WICHE monitors the number of applicants with offers in each state in conjunction with its state offices.
- When legislative support is secured and there is a sufficient number of applicants with offers, WICHE determines who will receive funding.
- If no rankings are necessary, applicants with admissions offers are supported.
- If state resources do not allow the state to fund all applicants with offers, WICHE conducts rankings. This usually occurs from March through June.
- Top-qualified applicants (as determined by the institutional rankings) are offered WICHE funding first. If an applicant declines WICHE support, then the next best qualified applicant is offered support, until the vacancies are filled.

More About WICHE's Veterinary Medicine Cooperative Admissions

- Schools cannot extend early offers in November or December to applicants who meet special GPA and GRE criteria.
 - No "targets" or "quotas" of WICHE-funded offers per school exist. Students are free to accept the school of their choice, subject to school interest.
 - Students are not permitted to defer enrollment should they decide to delay admission.