

WHAT IS WICHE?

Over five decades ago, the governors and legislators of the 15 western states created WICHE, the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, to help them provide high-quality, cost-effective education in their states. Toward this end, WICHE enables states to share cooperatively their higher education programs and facilities for training new professionals, conducting research, and sponsoring continuing education to sharpen the skills of current professionals.

WICHE's goals are to increase the availability of higher education in the West, to assist states to have the professionally and technically trained persons they require, and to help states increase the effectiveness and efficiency of their higher education programs. Member states include Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington and Wyoming. The governors of the 15 states each appoint three Commissioners to direct this nonprofit public organization.

THE PROFESSIONAL STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM (PSEP)

This program, sponsored by WICHE and administered by the Arizona Board of Regents, enables a limited number of Arizona students to enroll in one of six professional programs in other states, or at in-state private institutions, since these programs are not available at Arizona's public universities. Through the exchange, the student receives preference in admission and pays only the resident tuition fee at a public institution, or the difference between the WICHE support fee and standard tuition at a private school. The student also pays for books, supplies, meals, lodging and other personal expenses.

The State of Arizona pays a support fee to the school receiving the student to help cover the cost of education. This arrangement provides Arizona students with increased access to professional programs at reduced tuition rates, while saving the State millions of dollars by avoiding duplication of costly programs already available in the West.

FIELDS OF STUDY AND PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS

Arizona, through the WICHE PSEP, provides opportunities for a limited number of qualified legal residents to obtain training and education in six fields of professional studies.

Dentistry

Arizona School of Dentistry and Oral Health
Loma Linda University
Oregon Health Sciences University
University of California, Los Angeles
University of California, San Francisco
University of Colorado Health Sciences Center
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
University of the Pacific
University of Southern California
University of Washington

Occupational Therapy

Arizona School of Health Sciences, A.T. Still University
Eastern Washington University
Idaho State University
Loma Linda University
Midwestern University - Glendale, AZ
Pacific University
Samuel Merritt College - Oakland, CA
University of New Mexico
University of North Dakota
University of Puget Sound - Tacoma
University of South Dakota
University of Southern California
University of Utah
University of Washington

Optometry

Pacific University
Southern California College of Optometry

Osteopathy

Arizona College of Osteopathic Medicine
Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine*
Touro University, Henderson NV
Touro University, Vallejo, CA
Western University of Health Sciences

Physician Assistant

Arizona School of Health Sciences, A.T. Still University
Idaho State University
Loma Linda
Midwestern University, Glendale, AZ
Oregon Health Sciences University
Pacific University
Samuel Merritt College - Oakland, CA
University of Colorado Health Sciences Center
University of Southern California
University of Utah
University of Washington
Western University of Health Sciences

Veterinary Medicine

Colorado State University
University of California, Davis
Oregon State University
Washington State University

*Under a separate bilateral contract. Missouri campus only.

The number of students supported in each field is dependent on the funds appropriated annually by the Arizona Legislature. Due to limited State funds, not all certified applicants can be supported.

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY AND PRIORITY

Arizona law requires that an applicant must: (1) be a United States citizen and provide verification of U.S. citizenship, (2) have been a legal resident of Arizona for a minimum of five years prior to the commencement of training, and (3) must have maintained at least average (2.5) grades to be eligible for support under the WICHE program. Each year the Board of Regents requests a specific amount of funds to support continuing students and a specific amount of funds to support new students. As a general policy, funds requested from the Legislature for continuing students will not be used to support new students, and vice versa. The Arizona Board of Regents has adopted the following priorities for funding students who have been certified as eligible for participation:

- a. Continuing students, who were supported during the preceding year, and are making satisfactory progress in their academic programs.
- b. New students who applied for certification prior to October 15, who have been certified, and have been admitted to a participating institution.
- c. New students who applied for certification after October 15, who have been certified, and have been admitted to a participating institution.
- d. Continuing students beyond their first year of professional studies who were eligible for support for an earlier year but were not supported due to a lack of funds.
- e. Continuing students beyond their first year of professional studies, who have not previously applied for support.
- f. Continuing students who previously dropped WICHE support but who continued in their professional studies.
- g. Continuing students who have completed their basic professional training and take additional graduate or specialized training involving formal class and laboratory work.

APPLICATION AND AWARD PROCEDURES

Admissions Application - Students should apply directly to one or more of the participating schools listed above. Information about admissions requirements and procedures must be obtained from the institution. The WICHE Office does not provide that information.

Certification Application - *Students should apply for certification of eligibility between March 15 and October 15 of the year before they plan to begin their professional training. Students who are U.S. citizens, and who have been legal residents of Arizona for at least the past five years may obtain application forms by writing to:*

**WICHE-Professional Student Exchange Program
ARIZONA BOARD OF REGENTS
2020 North Central, Suite 230
Phoenix, AZ 85004
Phone: 602-229-2500**

Also, applicants may access an application, and check on receipt of application, on the web at: azregents.edu. Click on Special Programs, click on WICHE, and click on Professional Student Exchange.

The application deadline is October 15 of the year prior to the commencement of training. Applicants who do not apply until after October 15 will be designated as alternates and will be considered for funding only after all eligible students who applied before October 15 have been funded.

Award Procedure - Students will receive notification regarding their certification as an eligible Arizona candidate after action on their applications in November. No decision will be made about certification prior to that time.

Applicants who are certified by the Arizona WICHE Office and are admitted to a participating institution will be eligible for consideration for support. The amount of funds appropriated by the Legislature to support new students varies each year; therefore, **in an average year funds are not available to support all of the Arizona applicants who are certified and admitted.** Following final action by the Legislature, usually in late Spring, all students will be notified of their funded or non-funded status based on academic rankings provided by the receiving WICHE schools.

Students who are certified, admitted to a participating institution, and supported with Arizona WICHE funds can expect to continue to receive WICHE support as long as they make satisfactory progress in their academic program and the Legislature appropriates adequate funds.

OBLIGATIONS TO ARIZONA AFTER GRADUATION`

Arizona statutes require that students supported by the WICHE program return to the State and spend one year in the practice of their profession for each year they were supported in the program. Students in 3-year accelerated programs must practice in the State for four years since the State spends the same total amount in support of students in 3-year programs as for those in 4-year programs.

Students who practice in an underserved Arizona community, so designated by the appropriate licensing board, will receive one year of state service credit for each six months of practice.

Students who do not discharge their obligations by Arizona practice are required by State law to repay 50% of the funds expended by the State in their support, plus interest. The interest rate for a student's contract is the rate in effect for the fiscal year during which the student begins the approved course of professional study. The Board shall establish the interest rate by November 1 of the current year for the following fiscal year. The Board shall establish a rate equal to the average interest rate of auctioned ninety-one day United States Treasury Bills over the 24-month period ending September 30 of the current year, except that the Board will round the rate to the nearest one-half percent. Accrual of interest charges provided by the contract begins on the first day of the first complete month following graduation of the student or, for students who fail to complete their required course of study, the first day of the first complete month following the date when the student was no longer enrolled. The Board may permit repayments to be extended over a 15-year time period. The obligation may also be fulfilled by a combination of state practice and cash payment.

Involuntary induction into military service or other cause beyond the control of the student that prevents establishment of practice in the State, as determined by the Board of Regents, may postpone the student's obligation until such cause is terminated.

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This document is available in an alternative format, upon request.

Arizona Board of Regents, 602-229-2500

ARIZONA PROFESSIONAL STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM



and the

**WESTERN INTERSTATE
COMMISSION FOR
HIGHER EDUCATION
(WICHE)**

www.azregents.edu