

Regional Student Program Tuition Break Policies

1. Program Authorization

The New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) was established by the New England Higher Education Compact, a formal interstate agreement among the six states authorized by the United States Congress in 1954. NEBHE established the Regional Student Program (RSP) in 1957 to fulfill the purposes of the Compact. Through the RSP, the New England states cooperate to share academic programs offered by their public higher education institutions and provide eligible New England residents with a tuition break when they pursue approved programs not offered by their home-state public colleges and universities.

2. Participating Institutions

All of New England's public community colleges, state colleges and universities participate in the RSP, because of their state's membership in the Compact. Each institution and/or system has a designated RSP representative.

3. Criteria for RSP Eligibility

A. Student Eligibility

RSP students must be permanent residents of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island or Vermont and matriculated in RSP programs. They may be enrolled on a full-time or part-time basis, unless the institution has a different tuition policy for part-time study.

B. Program Eligibility

B1. Regional Programs of Study

a) Regional programs must be majors (not concentrations or options), which are distinguished by their content, courses and credits. Residents of a New England state are eligible for a regional program, when the participating institutions in the home state do not offer a comparable program (which may be a major, option or concentration). Regional programs are offered voluntarily by at least one participating institution in another New England state.

b) Regional undergraduate and graduate programs must be approved by the participating institutions and/or systems each year and be listed in the annual RSP catalog published by NEBHE.

B2. Additional Programs of Study

Students may be RSP-eligible for additional programs as follows.

a) Highly specialized graduate programs (in addition to those listed in the RSP catalog) are sometimes available through the RSP by student petition. If a student determines that a specialized program is not available at his/her home-state public institutions, the student may contact the RSP graduate representative to request RSP eligibility at the out-of-state New England state college or university that offers the program. The student needs to provide statements from the home-state public institutions demonstrating the program's unavailability. Approval of RSP status is at the discretion of the institution.

b) Participating institutions may choose to offer **certificate and diploma programs**, which are not necessarily listed in the RSP catalog.

c) The community colleges may choose to make available through the RSP any program of study offered at their institutions.

B3. Proximity-Based Programs of Study

In certain cases, students may apply for RSP status at an out-of-state institution that is nearer to their legal residence (in closer proximity) than a home-state institution offering the same program.

There are restrictions to this eligibility as follows:

a) Institutions accepting students may limit eligibility:

1. To commuting students only;
2. To students who reside within a certain distance from the accepting institution; and/or
3. To students enrolling in certain programs (e.g. programs listed in the RSP catalog, under-enrolled programs, etc.).

b) A home-state institution offering the same program, or a state system, may restrict the eligibility of their state's residents on this basis to commuting students only.

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Institutions from adjoining states may negotiate any conflicts in their implementation of this policy. NEBHE will act as arbiter when institutions cannot reach agreement.

Institutions must notify NEBHE during the annual RSP review whether and how they plan to accept students on this basis, and whether they plan to restrict the participation of their state's residents to commuting students only.

4. Admissions Preference

At the undergraduate level, participating institutions shall accord admissions preference to qualified undergraduate RSP applicants (freshman and transfer) among equally qualified out-of-state applicants.

At the graduate level, the colleges and universities may give admissions preference to qualified RSP applicants.

5. Application Procedure and Notification of Acceptance

There is no separate application for RSP eligibility. Some college applications include a specific reference to the RSP. Otherwise, students should state clearly on their college applications that they are applying to a program of study offered through the RSP. The institutions shall notify students of their eligibility and acceptance through the RSP.

6. Transfer Students

Both internal and external transfer students may be accepted into the RSP. In both cases, the student is eligible for RSP status from the first semester of enrollment in the RSP program of study:

- a) A student may transfer into an RSP program of study from another program at the same institution.
- b) A student may transfer into an RSP program of study from another institution.
- c) If a student transfers from an RSP program of study into one that is not offered through the RSP, this student will be charged the out-of-state tuition rate from that point on.

7. Withdrawal, Limitation or Elimination of RSP-Approved Programs

- a) An institution must give a two-year advance written notice to NEBHE, during the annual RSP review, in order to withdraw an approved program from RSP eligibility. NEBHE will include the withdrawal notice with the program's listing and delete the program from the RSP catalog effective two years from the notice. RSP students enrolled in a program at the time of its withdrawal retain their RSP status until they complete the program.
- b) An institution/system may limit or cap the enrollment of RSP students. An institution/system must give a two-year advance written notice to NEBHE, during the annual RSP review, indicating the intent to limit or cap future RSP enrollment at the present level.
- c) If an institution eliminates a program of study, the institution must notify NEBHE in a timely manner so that program can be deleted from the next RSP catalog.

8. RSP Tuition Rate

The New England Board of Higher Education sets the RSP tuition rate. Consistent with their tuition policy, participating institutions and/or systems may adopt an RSP rate equal to or lower than the RSP rate set by NEBHE. All RSP students enrolled at the same degree level (undergraduate, graduate) at an institution will be charged the same RSP tuition rate. Institutions must give written notice to NEBHE during the annual RSP review of the intent to implement a new rate in the following academic year.