

WICHE's Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) Administrative Manual

I. Background:

In the early 1950s, our Western states formed the [Western Regional Education Compact](#) and agreed to share higher education resources in the region through the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE). WICHE and its 16 members work collaboratively to expand educational access and excellence for all citizens of the West.¹ WICHE's student access programs, regional initiatives, and our research and policy work allow us to assist constituents throughout the West and beyond. WICHE's members are Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

Health care workforce needs are at an all-time high, regionally and nationally. WICHE's member state/territory policymakers are looking for the smartest investment of limited tax dollars, and sharing educational resources within the West is a fiscally responsible approach. Given fiscal pressures and other factors, it doesn't always make sense for a state to create its own public program in certain health care professions.

WICHE has been providing residents of the Western region with affordable access to the health care professions for 60 plus years through its [Professional Student Exchange Program \(PSEP\)](#).

WICHE members that use PSEP have discovered they get an excellent return on investment when they appropriate funds to educate students at other institutions within the 16-member WICHE region. Those funds are administered through WICHE's PSEP and are sent to the enrolling institutions. [The student's home state/territory pays a "support fee" for the student's position \(or seat\); this fee is negotiated between WICHE and the cooperating programs.](#)²

Students enrolled through WICHE's PSEP pay reduced tuition at out-of-state public and private institutions and receive preferential admission in some health care fields. More than 15,200 practitioners have earned their professional degrees through PSEP. They include dentists, physicians (allopathic and osteopathic), physician assistants, physical therapists, occupational therapists, optometrists, pharmacists, podiatrists, and veterinarians.

WICHE members that do not offer a particular health care education program at an in-state public institution often decide to use PSEP to offer its residents affordable education in the health care

¹ WICHE is governed by three gubernatorially-appointed Commissioners from each state/territory. The WICHE Commission molds the organization's mission and sets its priorities. The Commission meets twice a year (May and November).

² The support fee is approved by the Commission in May (even years). The fee is different for each profession but the amount is standard for each profession. Fee variations are allowed only for accelerated programs.

professions. Many of our members also provide support through PSEP in a health care field that is only offered at a private institution located within the state.

II. PSEP Overview

1. **[Health care fields available through PSEP.](#)** The WICHE Commission determines which fields will be available through PSEP. When two or more members request the addition of a new field, staff identify accredited programs within the region and determine the interest within other WICHE members in sending students in the field. Currently, the following fields are supported through PSEP:
 - a. Allopathic medicine
 - b. Dentistry
 - c. Occupational therapy
 - d. Optometry
 - e. Osteopathic medicine
 - f. Pharmacy
 - g. Physical therapy
 - h. Physician assistant
 - i. Podiatry
 - j. Veterinary medicine

2. **How each state/territory determines which fields it will make available to its residents.** Ultimately, this is a legislative decision dependent upon the appropriation of funds to pay support fees for a given number of students in the fields supported. [WICHE member states/territories that enroll their students through PSEP are listed here, along with the professional health care programs available to each state/territory's residents, and their applications.](#)

3. **How students qualify and are selected.** Students seeking WICHE PSEP support must meet requirements for (a) certification by their home state/territory and (b) admission to the participating PSEP institution of their choice. For detailed information on how applicants are selected for PSEP support, see [“How WICHE Determines Which Professional Student Exchange Program \(PSEP\) Applicants Will Receive Support”](#).
 - a. **Certification.** Each WICHE member establishes its own requirements for certification through an application process that is reviewed by the student's home state/territory certifying officer. If a student is certified, this means that he/she is a bona fide resident of his/her home state/territory and is eligible to be considered for WICHE PSEP support. Certification is not a guarantee of support because states/territories typically have more certified and qualified applicants that are admitted to a program than they have money to support.

- b. **Admission to professional programs.** The student applies for admission to any participating institution of his/her choice through regular channels. The decision to offer admission to a WICHE PSEP applicant is entirely at the discretion of the institution. In some cases, the institution may make admission contingent upon the applicant's achieving certification by his/her home state/territory or by assurance of support as a PSEP student.

Participating programs record applicants' offers on the PSEP Salesforce Administrative Portal. State certifying offices can review admissions offers to their residents on the portal. The WICHE Boulder office serves as the channel of communication between certifying officers and participating professional schools and programs in determining which admitted students will be supported.

- 4. **Financial provisions.** Institutions enrolling PSEP students receive tuition paid by the student, and a "support fee" paid to the institution through WICHE by the student's home state/territory.

The WICHE Commission establishes an annual support fee for each field that is paid by the sending state/territory through WICHE to the receiving school. Support fees are approved every two years, in even-numbered years, for the biennium. [The most current support fee rates are posted on the PSEP website.](#)

A PSEP student is to be afforded the tuition benefits to which he/she is entitled, as described below.

- a. **Private institutions:** credit the support fee against the student's private tuition.
- b. **Public programs whose resident/nonresident tuition differential is greater than the support fee (or public "self-pay" public programs that charge the same tuition rate to residents and nonresidents):** Credit the support fee against the student's nonresident tuition.
- c. **Public programs whose resident/nonresident tuition differential is less than the support fee:**
 - i. For continuing students enrolled by academic year 2018 and prior: Charge the student resident tuition; public programs are allowed to retain the full incentive for continuing students until they graduate.
 - ii. For students enrolled by summer/fall 2019 and new students enrolling summer/fall 2020 and later: Any incentive amounts in excess of the 20 percent cap must be applied to further reduce the PSEP students' resident tuition. For specific instructions for your program, the WICHE Student Access Program director at mcolalancia@wiche.edu or 303.541.0214.

- d. **Public PharmD programs:** Credit the support fee against the student's nonresident tuition.
5. **Structure of PSEP.** The four principal parties involved in operating PSEP are:
- a. **The WICHE Commission and staff.** The WICHE Commission consists of three commissioners appointed by the governor in each of the member states/territories. Policies for PSEP are approved by the Commission upon recommendation of its Programs & Services Committee. Staff members in the WICHE Programs & Services Unit are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the program.
 - b. **Sending states/territories.** Each state/territory designates a certifying officer; the offices from which they operate vary but include the Boards of Regents, the higher education system offices, and higher education governing and coordinating boards. The certifying officer's costs are financed by the sending state/territory. Certifying officers promote PSEP opportunities to their state/territory's residents, process certification applications for prospective students seeking to enroll through PSEP to study in one of the health care professions, and work with WICHE to resolve special problems or needs. Certifying officers assist WICHE staff in proposing and making improvements in the administration of the program. In their respective state/territory, certifying officers develop projected budgets and initiate budget requests, inform executive and legislative agencies concerning the program, and confer with their state/territory's WICHE Commissioners and executive and legislative representatives on policy and operational matters.
 - c. **Cooperating schools/programs.** The dean or program director within an institution assigns contact persons in the designated program to maintain communications with applicants, students enrolled through WICHE's PSEP, other offices within the institution (i.e.: admissions, financial aid and tuition payment, and academic progress reporting), and the WICHE staff.
 - d. **Students/applicants.** Students actively enrolled through PSEP interface directly with their programs and with their home state/territory certifying officer. Prospective students apply directly to the programs in which they wish to enroll and work directly with their certifying officer to become certified so that they can be considered for PSEP support. Many programs give WICHE PSEP applicants preferential review for admission. Once certified, applicants report their admissions offers directly to their certifying officer. Once funded through PSEP, they renew annual PSEP contracts with their certifying officer (if required by their state/territory) and inform them of any change in address or name. Students must report any changes in enrollment status (leave of absence, repeating classes, delayed graduation, withdrawal from the program,

acceptance of new scholarships that cover tuition, etc.) immediately to their certifying officer. Students must maintain good academic standing to retain their WICHE PSEP support from term-to-term.

WICHE staff interfaces directly with the receiving program and our state/territory offices. Our certifying officers work directly with the students who are enrolled in our cooperating programs. Students communicate directly with their state/territory certifying officers and their programs. To ensure program integrity, WICHE should always serve as a liaison between certifying officers and programs. At the student's home state/territory's request, WICHE staff members are available to assist prospective and enrolled students, but the student's home state/territory certifying officer should remain the student's primary point of contact.

6. Shared Administrative Platform: The Salesforce PSEP Administrative Portal.

Authorized WICHE staff, certifying officers of states/territories that support students through PSEP, and authorized cooperating program representatives have access to WICHE's secure **PSEP Salesforce Administrative Portal to facilitate program administration**. Representatives with account access log in at <https://wiche-edu.force.com/psep/s/login/>.

State offices and authorized program representatives who need assistance with their PSEP Portal account should contact the WICHE Student Access Program director at mcolalancia@wiche.edu or 303.541.0214.

PSEP Portal Login

REMEMBER: Your email username is
FirstName.LastName-sf-sap@WICHE.edu.
(Example: Jane.Doe-sf-sap@WICHE.edu)

This is not an active WICHE email and is for login use only.
Forgot password links are sent to your institutional email.

WICHE

Username

Password

Log In

[Forgot your password?](#)

[Are you a WICHE employee? Login here](#)

III. Activities, Timelines, and Responsible Parties

The following tables detail the operations and timelines of PSEP, specifically the responsibilities of the state/territory certifying office, the receiving program offices, WICHE staff, and the PSEP student. The tables describe the processes through which students achieve certification and admission to the program of their choice, and through which state/territory support is committed and funds are distributed.

Time Period	TABLE 1: Certifying Office Activities
Ongoing	Promote PSEP through contact with state/territory professional associations, pre-health advisors and pre-health groups at state/territory higher education institutions.
Ongoing	Work with home state/territory commissioners and higher ed office (or equivalent) to establish requirements for certification and continued eligibility.
Ongoing	Maintain contact with students throughout enrollment in program and upon graduation, as is possible, providing updated addresses to WICHE Boulder.
June – October 15	<p>Update PSEP application and post on state/territory website for student access, or mail applications if requested by prospective students.</p> <p>In addition to the application, each applicant is required to complete a <i>Consent and Waiver form</i> which authorizes administrative parties to exchange necessary information for PSEP applicants and enrolled students. Applicants in veterinary medicine must also sign a <i>Statement of Intent</i>.</p>
June – October 15	Notify applicants of their eligibility as it is determined.
August/September	<p>Using DocuSign, review and sign support agreements generated by the WICHE Boulder office for students to be supported during current school year. Signed copies of the agreements are auto-saved to the state/territory’s PSEP Portal account to which each state/territory certifying officer and designated staff have log in access.</p> <p>Notify WICHE Boulder staff of any changes which will be made directly in the PSEP Portal.</p>

Time Period	Certifying Office Activities (continued)
October 15- November 1	<p>Upload names of certified students eligible for PSEP support in the coming academic year into WICHE’s PSEP Portal. Estimate number of new seats to be supported in each health care field and update the numbers in the portal for the coming year.</p> <p>Accept late certification applications if policy allows; late applications should be classified as “alternate certified”. Alternate certified applicants have second priority for support; they are only considered after all qualified certified applicants with offers are funded and if state/territory resources to support more students are still available.</p>
October 15 – November 30	<p>Receive invoice from WICHE Boulder for all students to be supported during current academic year; re-verify student enrollment and report any changes to WICHE. Process payment to send to WICHE by or before November 30th.</p>
November 15 – June 15	<p>Determine the final number of new WICHE students to be supported in each field. During budget years, time period may need to be extended until the legislatures approve the budget. Provisional admissions offers for WICHE supported positions are typically made in early January for veterinary medicine; seats will be less available as the admissions period progresses. WICHE supported positions in the other health care fields are typically offered in the spring, from April to May, but sometimes as late as June (depending on the state/territory).</p>
January 2-15	<p>Determine number of new students to be supported in veterinary medicine (if applicable) and inform WICHE Boulder office of number of seats to be released.</p>
March – May	<p>Certifying officers review applicants’ offers as reported by cooperating programs on WICHE’s PSEP Administrative Portal.</p> <p>Certifying offices cross-check offers with their applicants; applicants are required to send copies of their offer letters/emails to their home state/territory office. WICHE Boulder verifies additional offers reported to certifying offices but not entered in the PSEP Portal.</p> <p>WICHE Boulder and each certifying officer will construct a list of applicants with offers to be ranked (if a ranking is necessary in that field). WICHE staff request a minimum of two weeks’ notice to complete a ranking.</p>
July 15 or earlier	<p>Notify all certified and alternate certified applicants (new students) of their final PSEP support status (whether or not they will receive support).</p>
August 1	<p>Review completed Academic Progress Reports for PSEP students enrolled during previous and completed academic year on the PSEP Portal. Report any discrepancies to WICHE office.</p>

Time Period**TABLE 2: WICHE Activities**

Ongoing	Promote PSEP through various venues using printed materials, the PSEP website , social media, and other means. Contacts include professional associations, college advisors, pre-health advisors and pre-health groups at higher education institutions within the WICHE region. Respond to phone and email inquiries.
Ongoing	Maintain the WICHE PSEP Administrative Portal of currently enrolled/funded students and certified applicants, certifying officer contacts and authorized program contacts.
Ongoing	Based on information received from certifying officers, programs or students, verify any changes of status of WICHE supported students. Refund or adjust support fee payments according to program policy.
June/July	<p>WICHE emails authorized representatives of cooperating programs to complete online Academic Progress Reports for each PSEP student enrolled during the prior academic year; reports are on submitted online through the PSEP Portal.</p> <p>The cooperating program completes the reports by early July and provides graduation dates for graduating students. Program submits and online CHANGE OF STATUS report for students whose academic status will change for the coming academic year (leave of absence, academic probation, repeat year, etc.).</p>
Ongoing	<p>Cooperating programs update contact information for persons responsible for coordinating with WICHE for students enrolled through PSEP. To request access for a new representative, programs use the CONTACT WICHE option through the PSEP Portal.</p> <p>WICHE staff emails program representatives periodically to initiate updates.</p>
July - August	WICHE emails cooperating programs to complete a PSEP Tuition & Fees Survey for the coming academic year, via a link to the PSEP Portal. Cooperating programs complete surveys by the requested deadline. Transmit final survey results to certifying officers in November.
August	WICHE staff assigns funding for PSEP students who will be funded during current academic year in order to generate support agreements (contracts). WICHE emails certifying officers to review and approve funding assignments in the PSEP Portal. WICHE also emails cooperating programs to review funding assignments for the coming academic year in the Portal. WICHE staff makes updates in the PSEP Portal.

Time Period	WICHE Activities (continued)
August/September	<p>Final support agreements are generated and emailed to certifying offices via DocuSign for final review, and electronically signed by each state/territory office.</p> <p>Support agreements are then sent to enrolling program representatives for signature via DocuSign. Receiving program staff review list of students to be supported and notify WICHE of any enrollment changes or students who are no longer eligible for WICHE support because of other fellowships or military scholarships (see WICHE’s “Policy on Duplicate Support” for more information). Authorized program staff signs agreements via DocuSign.</p> <p>The WICHE Student Access Program director is the final signatory on the support agreements. The completed support agreements are autosaved to the PSEP Portal for access by all concerned parties (the student’s home state, the enrolling program, and WICHE staff).</p>
October 15	Via the PSEP Portal, WICHE generates invoices to state/territory offices for all PSEP students to be supported during current academic year.
November-February	Compile statistical information on enrollment and estimated savings for WICHE’s annual Student Access Programs: By the Numbers report for the current academic year; publish on website and in hard copy; mail copies to participating programs.
November - April (and later as needed)	WICHE emails admissions representatives of participating programs and reminds them to log into the PSEP Portal to review names of certified applicants and report any offers of admission via the secure portal.
December/January	WICHE and admissions offices of cooperating colleges of veterinary medicine agree on a date to submit rankings of certified PSEP veterinary medicine applicants. WICHE staff members compile the rankings and release student names for WICHE PSEP-supported offers as supporting states’/territories’ budgets are approved. Timing of the release of names varies by state/territory; some budgets are approved earlier than others (or in some cases the state can authorize the release of names pending final budget approval. For more information, see the vet med section of “How WICHE Selects PSEP Applicants for Support.”
January 15	WICHE mails support fee checks to cooperating programs on January 15 th (or the first Monday thereafter if it falls on a weekend). Support fees are mailed once during the academic year. Cooperating programs are asked to credit the students’ accounts as described on page 3. Programs are asked to credit a pro-rated portion of the support fee for terms prior to the payment. The balance should be credited to the student as he/she progresses through the remainder of the terms for the current academic year.

Time Period	WICHE Activities (continued)
March – May (and later as necessary)	<p>WICHE prompts certifying officers to review admissions offers made to their applicants via the WICHE PSEP Administrative Portal. WICHE staff verifies additional offers reported to state/territory offices but not reported by cooperating programs in the Portal.</p> <p>WICHE and each certifying officer construct a list of admitted students to determine if a ranking is necessary in that field. WICHE requests a minimum of two weeks’ notice to request a ranking from cooperating schools and compile the results.</p>
April – May	<p>If necessary, WICHE conducts rankings of applicants (by state/territory) with offers, as requested by certifying officers.</p>
May/June/July	<p>WICHE assigns funding to new students to be funded in the Portal. Representatives of cooperating programs review funding assignments of their students in the Portal and notify WICHE of any names that might be missing. Programs notify WICHE of any changes in enrollment of the entering class (decision not to enroll in the coming academic year, student’s acceptance of another scholarship that would make him or her ineligible for WICHE support, etc.).</p>

Time Period**TABLE 3: Participating Program Activities**

Ongoing	Promote PSEP to program applicants via WICHE’s PSEP website (https://www.wiche.edu/tuition-savings/psep/).
Ongoing	Cooperating programs verify currently enrolled PSEP students’ academic progress and eligibility at the end of each term. If the status of a student changes (withdrawal, leave of absence, drop from full time enrollment, ineligible for PSEP because of a new scholarship or fellowship, will be repeating coursework, etc.) then the program official must submit a CHANGE OF STATUS report and submit it to WICHE via the PSEP Portal within 10 days of the change.
June	<p>WICHE emails designated persons from cooperating programs to complete Academic Progress Reports for each PSEP student enrolled during the prior academic year via the PSEP Portal.</p> <p>Cooperating program completes reports by early July and reports graduation dates for graduating students. Program submits and online CHANGE OF STATUS report for students whose academic status will change for the coming academic year (leave of absence, academic probation, repeat year, etc.).</p>
June – July	<p>Cooperating programs update contact information for persons responsible for coordinating with WICHE for students enrolled through PSEP. To request access for a new representative, programs use the CONTACT WICHE option through the PSEP Portal.</p> <p>WICHE staff emails program representatives periodically to initiate updates.</p>
July	WICHE emails cooperating programs a link to complete a Tuition & Fees Survey for the coming academic year, via the PSEP Portal. Cooperating programs complete surveys by the requested deadline.
June - August	WICHE assigns funding to new students to be funded in the PSEP Portal. Representatives of cooperating programs review funding assignments of their students in the Portal and notify WICHE of any names that might be missing. Programs notify WICHE of any changes in enrollment of the entering class (decision not to enroll in the coming academic year, student’s acceptance of another scholarship that would make him or her ineligible for WICHE support, etc.).
August- September	Authorized program representatives who have PSEP students enrolled in their program for given academic year will receive a support agreement via DocuSign for electronic signature. The program staff review list of students to be supported and notify WICHE of any enrollment changes or students who are no longer eligible for WICHE support because of other fellowships or military scholarships (see WICHE’s “Policy on multiple sources of tuition support” for more information). Program staff person electronically signs agreements via DocuSign by the requested deadline.

Time Period	Participating Program Activities (continued)
November 15 – through end of admissions period	<p>Cooperating programs report full admission offers to WICHE through the secure PSEP Portal. Only full offers should be reported; do not report waitlisted applicants or “alternate” offers. Input of declined offers is helpful and appreciated.</p> <p>Reporting of offers of admission to WICHE is critical. Certified applicants not showing any offers will not be included in rankings, and will miss the opportunity to be considered for support.</p>
December/January	<p>WICHE and admissions offices of cooperating colleges of veterinary medicine agree on a date to submit rankings of certified PSEP veterinary medicine applicants. WICHE staff compiles the rankings and release student names for WICHE PSEP-supported offers as supporting states’ budgets are approved. Timing of the release of names varies by state; some state/territory budgets are approved earlier than others (or in some cases the state can authorize the release of names pending final budget approval. For more information, see the vet med section of “How WICHE Selects PSEP Applicants for Support.”</p>
January 15	<p>WICHE mails support fee checks to cooperating programs on January 15th (or the first Monday thereafter if it falls on a weekend). Support fees are mailed once in the academic year. Cooperating programs are asked to credit the students’ accounts as described on page 3. Programs are asked to credit a pro-rated portion of the support fee for terms prior to the payment. The balance should be credited to the student as he/she progresses through the remainder of the terms for the current academic year.</p>
April – May (or later)	<p>WICHE monitors applicant offers and conducts rankings of applicants (by state/territory) with offers, as needed and as requested by certifying officers.</p>

Time Period

TABLE 4: Applicant/Student Responsibilities

Ongoing	Certified applicants and PSEP supported students should maintain contact with their certifying officer throughout the certification process, the admissions period, and if funded, through graduation. Graduates from states/territories where service payback is required must remain in contact until their obligation is fulfilled. Promptly reply to all of the certifying officer’s requests for information and documentation.
Ongoing	Promptly inform certifying office and enrolling program of any change of status throughout the period of support (name change, contact information changes including cell phone and email address, withdrawal from program, dismissal, leave of absence, acquiring of additional tuition scholarships (military, HIS, NHSC, fellowships, etc.).
Ongoing	Enroll and remain enrolled as a full-time student, and maintain your home state/territory residency.
Prior to October 15th	Apply for certification to home state/territory office well in advance of October 15 th the year prior to enrollment. Vet med applicants are advised to apply earlier (by September 1 or 15 th , depending on their home state/territory’s deadline). Work directly with your home office, using their application and following their procedures. Residency requirements vary by WICHE state/territory. Reply promptly to any requests for additional documentation. Start the certification process early; give yourself plenty of time to assemble the required documentation.
Prior to school deadlines for application	<p>Certified applicants apply directly to the cooperating WICHE professional schools of their choice.</p> <p>Applicants can of course apply to programs not affiliated with WICHE PSEP but cannot be funded if they enroll in a non-cooperating program.</p>
November 15 – August 1	<p>Certified applicants* must forward evidence of each admissions offer from a cooperating WICHE program to their certifying officer as soon as it is received. This will ensure that they will be included in any rankings and be considered for PSEP support. Applicants should also notify home certifying office of any declined offers. <i>WICHE encourages applicants to be courteous and formally decline all offers you do not intend to accept in a timely manner. Remember: the offer that you do not accept is important to the next applicant on the waiting list!</i></p> <p>*WICHE certified veterinary medicine applicants are ranked prior to being offered a conditionally funded WICHE position for admission.</p>
May/June	Most WICHE states/territories require PSEP students to renew their support status annually for the following school year. Complete and return all requested contracts/information promptly to your certifying officer.
Upon graduation	If your state/territory requires a service payback, complete the annual practice form as requested by your home office until your service commitment is fulfilled. If you do not plan on returning to your home state/territory, contact your certifying office to make arrangements to reimburse all WICHE support fee received while you were enrolled, plus any interest or fees, as required by your home state/territory.

IV. Policies and Procedures

1. **Communications.** WICHE’s [Professional Student Exchange Program \(PSEP\)](#) enables students from the sending states/territories to attend a wide range of institutions with different approaches to professional education throughout the West. Students enrolling through PSEP can choose a program that best meets their professional goals. While advantageous, this freedom and flexibility adds a level of complexity to the administration of the program. Smooth operation of the program depends upon the effective collaboration of all involved: our sending state/territory offices, our cooperating institutions, WICHE staff, and the students.

Because of variations among programs, the circumstances of individual students, the difficulty of keeping several hundred persons informed about changing state/territory funding patterns, and many other reasons, experience has shown that the program works best when certifying officers and cooperating program representatives communicate only through the WICHE office. *Except in rare, expressly approved cases, certifying officers and program officials should not communicate directly.* By handling these communications, the WICHE office can assure that those who “need to know” are informed and proper notations on student funding and status are updated in WICHE’s PSEP Salesforce Administrative Portal.

Typically several offices of a cooperating institution coordinate with the WICHE office to facilitate enrollment of students enrolled through our program. The designated institution contact person(s) are asked to keep appropriate people within the institution informed and assure that transactions affecting WICHE students are reported. Examples include:

- a. **Admissions offers to certified WICHE applicants need to be reported promptly to WICHE.** Staff also appreciates receiving updates when applicants decline offers.
- b. **WICHE PSEP students should be properly coded in campus billing systems** so that they are charged the correct reduced tuition.
- c. **Cooperating programs are required to inform WICHE about students who receive federal scholarships** such as National Health Service Corps, military scholarships or fellowships that will make PSEP students ineligible for WICHE PSEP support (see page 16).
- d. **Notify the WICHE office of changes in a student’s academic status via the PSEP Portal.** This includes WICHE PSEP students who withdraw or change status (repeat courses, take a leave of absence, are put on a decelerated program, switch to temporary part-time enrollment, or will graduate later than planned, etc.).

2. **Accreditation status of cooperating programs and how new programs can apply to participate.**

Only fully accredited programs may participate in PSEP. If a cooperating program experiences a change in accreditation status (is put on probation or has its accreditation revoked, for example), the program must report the change to WICHE within 10 days. If the new status involves a loss of the rights and privileges accorded to graduates of fully accredited programs, the participation of new WICHE PSEP students will be suspended pending restoration of full accreditation.

In May 2009, the WICHE Commission approved a small number of provisionally accredited programs for early participation in PSEP. The Commission also established the following criteria for any future requests from new and provisionally accredited schools in high-need health care fields located in the WICHE region that wish to become cooperating PSEP programs. The criteria are as follows:

- a. The institution must be (a) fully accredited by a regional accrediting agency **OR** (b) hold candidacy status (in the regional accrediting agency) and be actively pursuing regional accreditation.
- b. The institution must be authorized to offer the new professional program (if applicable) by its regional accrediting agency.
- c. The new professional program must be approved by the state higher education agency assigned to review new programs (in states where this is required).
- d. The professional program must hold provisional (or initial) accreditation by its professional accrediting body and not have any specific requirements or recommendations of major concern cited in its most recent accreditation report.
- e. The proposed school must offer a program of study in a critical need field where there is substantial competition for admission and the number of currently cooperating WICHE schools is proportionately small, compared to the demand for seats.

Provisionally accredited programs must meet all of the above criteria to be considered for early participation in PSEP.

Institutions that would like to propose a program for participation should contact WICHE's director of student access programs at 303.541.0214. WICHE staff will review the program's accreditation status, program structure and tuition. If the program qualifies, WICHE will write a contract with the new program. Staff members encourage new programs to contact WICHE at least one year prior to the anticipated date to receive full accreditation, so that all the necessary steps can be completed in advance to ensure timely participation in WICHE's PSEP.

3. **Preference for WICHE PSEP applicants.** Traditionally, all cooperating programs have given some degree of preference to WICHE-certified applicants. Some public institutions do this by considering WICHE PSEP applicants immediately after considering residents

and prior to admitting any other nonresidents; some schools consider all applicants within the pool on the same basis and extend preference to a WICHE applicant when two are equally qualified; some reserve a specific number or percentage of places for WICHE students; some are prohibited by state policy from admitting nonresident students unless they are WICHE PSEP-supported students. The method by which preference is given is determined by the program.

4. **Continuation of support.** After a student is certified and supported, the state/territory assumes the obligation to continue support for that student through the normal duration of the program, subject to appropriation of necessary funds and provided that the student remains in good academic standing. Once a student receives any state/territory support through WICHE, that student will be monitored for academic progress until all degree requirements have been met, even if the student later declines WICHE support in favor of a military or other type of scholarship.
5. **Policy on multiple sources of tuition support.** This serves as notification of our participating institutions' obligation to notify our office immediately of any students who might be receiving multiple sources of support for their tuition.

Students receiving military, federal or private scholarships or full fellowships that fully cover tuition are ineligible to receive WICHE support. Examples include but are not limited to the National Health Service Corps (NHSC), the U.S. military Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP), Indian Health Service (IHS) Scholarships, fellowships, and state scholarships for primary care medical students. WICHE encourages students taking these types of scholarships to negotiate full nonresident tuition if they are enrolled at a public institution, or full private tuition if they are enrolling at a private institution. This will allow our states to use WICHE support for another deserving student in need.

PSEP students may obtain other financial aid or scholarships to cover their study expenses or unmet tuition costs. Federal, state or private loans or scholarships used for a variety of educational expenses [including tuition (any remaining portion not covered by PSEP), fees, books, equipment, health insurance, living expenses and the like] are not a concern in regard to WICHE support, as long as there is no duplication of support for payment of the student's tuition charges.

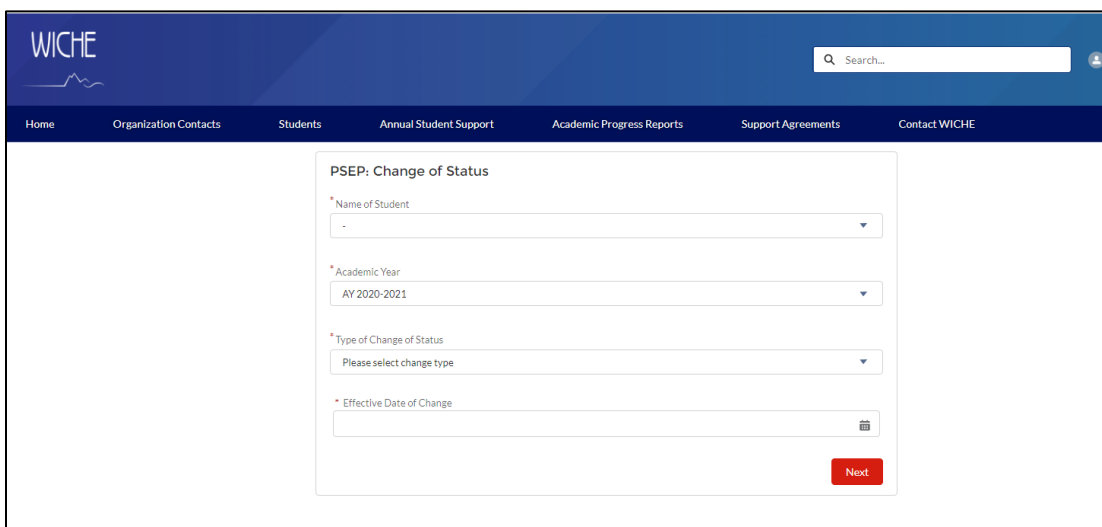
If combined WICHE PSEP support and other non-WICHE tuition support/awards will exceed the student's tuition costs, the student's home state and WICHE reserve the option to reduce the student's WICHE support to less than the standard amount. If a student's combined funding exceeds their need, contact us immediately to review the student's tuition charges to determine whether or not the student's WICHE PSEP support should be reduced.

Contact the Director of Student Access Programs at 303. 541.0214 with any questions regarding this policy or its implications for WICHE PSEP students.

6. **Policy for student withdrawals, repeat years, and leave of absence.** States/territories are entitled to refunds or adjustments of support fee payments made on behalf of students who withdraw or otherwise change their status, if a refund is payable under the institution’s policy.

Students are not supported for repeat classes or repeat periods of enrollment. Students are permitted a maximum of one academic or calendar year leave of absence from the program when that leave has been approved by the institution or program, except as permitted under individual state/territory policy, or for approved leaves to complete a concurrent degree program. A student who is granted a leave of absence prior to completing requirements in any term will not be supported upon his/her return until the repeat period has been successfully completed.

In all cases, it is the program’s obligation to notify WICHE promptly of withdrawal or other change of status of any WICHE PSEP student, and to process necessary documentation to refund fees as required. The program representative must report the student’s change of status through the PSEP Administrative Portal within 10 days of the change. Representatives with account access can log in at <https://wiche-edu.force.com/psep/s/login/> with their WICHE-assigned username.



The screenshot shows the WICHE PSEP Administrative Portal interface. At the top, there is a search bar and a user profile icon. Below the search bar is a navigation menu with the following items: Home, Organization Contacts, Students, Annual Student Support, Academic Progress Reports, Support Agreements, and Contact WICHE. The main content area displays a form titled "PSEP: Change of Status". The form contains four required fields, each marked with an asterisk: "Name of Student" (a dropdown menu), "Academic Year" (a dropdown menu showing "AY 2020-2021"), "Type of Change of Status" (a dropdown menu with the text "Please select change type"), and "Effective Date of Change" (a date picker). A red "Next" button is located at the bottom right of the form.

Each sending state/territory, through its certifying officer, determines whether a student may be supported for a period beyond the “normal” time for program completion. For example, in rare cases a student will be advised to take fewer hours each term than normal (a decelerated program) and will need longer than normal to complete the degree. It is at the state/territory’s discretion as to whether or not the student will be granted additional support; in most cases, the student is limited to the original period of support and additional funds will not be granted.

7. **Fields supported through WICHE's PSEP and duration of support.** The professional health care programs supported through PSEP as of September 2020 and the maximum length of support by field are listed below.
- a. **Medicine.** Four academic years of education in allopathic medicine leading to the MD (Doctor of Medicine) degree.
 - b. **Osteopathic Medicine.** Four academic years of education in osteopathic medicine leading to the DO (Doctor of Osteopathy) degree.
 - c. **Dentistry.** Four academic years of education leading to the DDS (Doctor of Dental Surgery) or DMD (Doctor of Dental Medicine) degree. Three year accelerated programs will receive an equivalent rate over a three-year period.
 - d. **Veterinary Medicine.** Four academic years of education leading to the DVM (Doctor of Veterinary Medicine) degree.
 - e. **Physical Therapy.** A maximum of three academic years for professional study leading to the DPT degree. Some programs are longer than the maximum support period. Two year accelerated programs will receive a 12-month equivalent rate for two years.
 - f. **Occupational Therapy.** Two academic years of professional study leading to the MOT degree plus two three-month clinical affiliations. Support in occupational therapy is paid by WICHE over two years, even though most programs are two years plus six months (including the clinical). The first-year payment is for 3 quarters or 2 semesters. The second-year payment is for 3 quarters (or 2 semesters) PLUS 6 months of clinicals; this is 166 percent (of one and two-thirds) of a one-year rate. The second-year payment should be credited as the academic terms progress. The second-year student should receive a year's worth of support during the second year, and the school should hold the balance (two-thirds) to credit in the student's third year for his/her clinicals.
 - g. **Optometry.** Four academic years of education leading to the OD (Doctor of Optometry) degree.
 - h. **Podiatry.** Four academic years of education leading to the DPM (Doctor of Podiatric Medicine) degree.
 - i. **Pharmacy.** Four academic years of education leading to the PharmD (Doctorate of Pharmacy). Accelerated three-year programs will receive an equivalent rate over the three year period.
 - j. **Physician Assistant.** A maximum of two calendar years (24 months) leading to the first professional degree or certificate in an accredited program. Degree levels vary but include a master's, bachelor's, associate's and a PA certificate.

8. **Difference between “Category A” and “Category B” fields.** Historically, PSEP fields were placed in “Category A” when the nonresident positions offered were essentially only offered to WICHE applicants. In those cases, WICHE had to provide sufficient incentive to the enrolling programs for each enrolled WICHE PSEP student, so that sending states’ residents could obtain sufficient positions to meet the educational policy objectives (and workforce needs) of their home state. Today, support fees tend to come closer to covering the resident/nonresident tuition differential in more public programs in these “Category A” fields (which include medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, physical therapy, occupational therapy, optometry, podiatry, osteopathic medicine, and physician assistant). However, in more recent years with accelerated tuition increases and tightening state budgets, not all public program tuition differentials are being met for “Category A” fields.

Fields were placed in “Category B” when there were sufficient opportunities for admission of nonresidents without special admission preference as a WICHE student. The only remaining field in “Category B” is pharmacy. Its support fee does not cover the resident/nonresident tuition differential at the majority of receiving public schools of pharmacy.

9. **Tuition charges for WICHE PSEP students.** Institutions enrolling PSEP students receive tuition paid by the student, and a “support fee” paid to the institution through WICHE by the student’s home state/territory. The WICHE Commission establishes an annual support fee for each field that is paid by the sending state/territory through WICHE to the receiving school. Support fees are approved every two years, in even-numbered years, for the biennium. [The most current support fee rates are posted on the PSEP website.](#)

A PSEP student is to be afforded the tuition benefits to which he/she is entitled, as described below.

- a. **Private institutions:** credit the support fee against the student’s private tuition.
- b. **Public programs whose resident/nonresident tuition differential is greater than the support fee (or public “self-pay” public programs that charge the same tuition rate to residents and nonresidents):** Credit the support fee against the student’s nonresident tuition.
- c. **Public programs whose resident/nonresident tuition differential is less than the support fee:**
 - i. For continuing students enrolled by academic year 2018 and prior: Charge the student resident tuition; public programs are allowed to retain the full incentive for continuing students until they graduate.
 - ii. For students enrolled by summer/fall 2019 and new students enrolling summer/fall 2020 and later: Any incentive amounts in excess of the 20 percent cap must be applied to further reduce the PSEP students’ resident tuition. For

specific instructions for your program, the WICHE Student Access Program director at mcolalancia@wiche.edu or 303.541.0214.

- d. **Public PharmD programs:** Credit the support fee against the student's nonresident tuition.
10. **Support fee payment date.** Support fees are paid and sent to enrolling institutions on January 15th, in the middle of the academic year. WICHE PSEP students should not be charged late fees by the enrolling institution for the portion of the support fee that will count towards terms prior to the payment by WICHE. Private enrolling institutions are asked to credit the student the appropriate amount in anticipation of receiving the support fee for any terms prior to the January 15th payment. Public institutions are asked to charge the students resident tuition or credit them with the appropriate portion of the support fee against nonresident tuition and have them pay the balance.
11. **Support fee refunds to states/territories.** When a WICHE PSEP student withdraws from an institution or incurs some other change of status, the amount of tuition refund or other charges is determined according to the institution's refund policy for all students. If the student withdraws from the program at a date after which tuition is nonrefundable, the enrolling institution may keep the support fee for that term. If a percentage of tuition is refundable to the student, then the student's home state/territory is eligible for a matching percentage refund of the support fee for that term as well.
12. **How and when support fees are set.** In May of even-numbered years the WICHE Commission establishes support fee rates for the next biennium. For example, [in May 2020, the Commission approved staff recommendations for support fees for the 2021-22 and 2022-2023 academic years.](#)

Setting support fees involves balancing the diverse needs of students, states/territories, and institutions. States/territories that support students through PSEP face mounting fiscal pressures as they try to provide access to professional education for their residents. The receiving institutions' costs of delivering professional education continue to rise, necessitating greater financial incentives to preserve positions for nonresidents. Public institutions located in the West have for the most part experienced a sharp decline in state/territory support, and students are assuming a greater percentage of cost for professional education.

Different approaches have been taken over the years to set support fees. Initially, the fees were set to approximate the average cost of instruction for all schools in a given field. Later, fees were based on a negotiated or fee-for-service, rather than a cost-of-education approach. At this time, the Commission uses the resident/nonresident tuition differentials of public institutions as a

guide to determine increases, along with the Higher Education Cost Adjustment (HECA) which was developed by SHEEO to calculate inflation in higher education costs.³

WICHE staff analyzes tuition and fees surveys and the HECA to calculate proposed increases. Staff members then share these estimates with the certifying officers of the sending PSEP WICHE states/territories as well as deans of participating programs and invites comments and feedback. If necessary and if state/territory budgets allow, staff members adjust the proposed rates and brings them to the WICHE Commission for review, discussion and approval, every two years. The most recent memo summarizing the PSEP Support Fees for the next biennium is posted online at <https://www.wiche.edu/tuition-savings/psep/whats-a-psep-award-worth/>.

Support fees in each field are the same regardless of the home state/territory of the student, the institution in which the student is enrolled, or class level. The support fee is for the full (regular) academic period; if a student withdraws or delays enrollment, only the fee applicable for the period attended is payable and any excess already collected must be refunded.

13. **Variations in support fees by program structure.**

- a. **For accelerated programs that condense the student's studies into three academic calendar years rather than four** (some programs in pharmacy and dentistry, for example), WICHE adapts the payments guided by the principle that the fees paid for a student may not exceed the total that would be paid for a student in a traditional four-year program.
- b. **Physician assistant programs** receive a standard 12-month payment in years one and two, but nothing during the third year. Support in this field is limited to two years.
- c. **Occupational therapy support fees** are payable during the period of professional study to a maximum of (a) two academic years leading to the MOT, plus (b) two three-month clinical affiliations to be paid during the second year of study. Payment for the second year and clinicals are made in the student's second year (a "one and two-thirds" payment). Programs are required to save the final two-thirds payment until the student begins his/her clinicals after completion of the second didactic year. NOTE: The student's final term in year three is not covered by the support fee for OTD students.

14. **Allocation of PSEP income and the 20% cap on support fee incentives for new students enrolling in public programs starting summer/fall 2019 and forward.** Income derived from tuition payments by WICHE students and from support fees may be treated by the institution like other current institutional income for allocation at the institution's discretion. If the support fee exceeds the resident/nonresident tuition differential at a cooperating program at a public institution, the program or institution may keep the additional amount as an incentive to

³ For more about HECA, see https://sheeo.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Technical_Paper_A_HECA_1.pdf.

preferentially admit WICHE PSEP applicants.

However, in 2017, the WICHE Commission capped the maximum incentive for each PSEP public program at 20 percent of the respective field's support fee. This policy became effective for new students enrolling in Fall 2019 and forward. Continuing students (those who enrolled in their respective PSEP program prior to academic year 2019) continue to pay resident tuition to public programs receiving an incentive, and programs are allowed to retain the full incentive for continuing students until they graduate. Additionally, for new students enrolling in summer/fall 2019 and later, any incentive amounts in excess of the 20 percent cap must be credited to the student's account, further reducing his/her resident tuition.

If your program is affected by the 20 percent cap on support fee incentives for AY2020-21, WICHE staff will contact you with an illustration.

Programs not affected by the 20 percent cap on support fee incentives are listed below. If your program falls into one of these categories, credit the support fee to the student's nonresident or full private tuition, and charge the PSEP student the balance:

1. Public programs whose resident/nonresident tuition differential is greater than the support fee;
2. "Self-pay" public programs that charge residents and nonresidents the same tuition rate;
3. Private programs.

15. **PSEP is a tuition reduction and student access program.** Payments are made directly to the institution to reduce the student's tuition. Payments are not made to the student. Though often termed a "scholarship," WICHE and its sending states/territories do not consider PSEP support as a scholarship but rather a tuition reduction program that promotes affordable access to studies in the health care professions. Some WICHE states/territories require graduates to complete a service payback. If the graduate does not return to the home state/territory to serve, the support fees become a loan which must be reimbursed. Repayment terms (interest rate, repayment period and other details) vary by state/territory.
16. **Bilateral contracts.** For historic, geographic proximity and other reasons, some states have contracts with specific institutions outside the region (in fields including dentistry and optometry). At the discretion of all parties, these contracts can be administered by the WICHE office under the same rules and timelines used by regular PSEP programs. To maintain a robust Professional Student Exchange Program, WICHE leadership encourages WICHE states/territories to use the existing in-region programs whenever possible and discourages the development of future bilateral contracts outside of the WICHE region. If a state/territory perceives that an insufficient number of positions are available in a particular health care profession for its residents, WICHE encourages the state/territory to explore creative in-region options with

WICHE's director of Student Access Programs and the vice president of WICHE's Programs and Services.

17. **Adding new fields to PSEP.** A state/territory that is prepared to support students in a field requests that WICHE staff conduct a feasibility study with the state/territory's WICHE Commissioners' approval. Then WICHE staff members identify all accredited programs in that field in the WICHE region. WICHE staff survey the WICHE states/territories that do not have an accredited program in the specified field in their public higher education institutions to determine the extent of those members' interest in supporting students in that field under the PSEP. WICHE staff then survey the accredited programs to determine their interest in enrolling students through PSEP.

If the results of the feasibility study indicate that the field is a good prospect for inclusion in PSEP, WICHE staff conducts a tuition and fees analysis for that field and determine the appropriate support fee rate for the field. WICHE staff members submit a report to WICHE's Executive Committee. With their approval, the proposal is placed on the agenda for the next WICHE Commission meeting. The Programs & Services Committee considers the proposal and adopts a recommendation to the full Commission. The Commission then votes; if the field is approved, they also approve the support fee rate for the new field.

Once the field is approved to offer through PSEP, each accredited program in the region is invited to sign a contract with WICHE as a receiving program. Cooperating programs are listed on PSEP's website. Each potential WICHE sending state/territory is asked annually whether they wish to support students in the new field. Legislative action is usually necessary before a state/territory can support exchange students in a new field.

NOTE: Professional health care fields not offered through PSEP may be offered through WICHE's [Western Regional Graduate Program \(WRGP\)](#). WRGP is a tuition savings program whereby participating institutions enroll students from other WICHE states/territories and charge them up to 150 percent of resident tuition (instead of the nonresident rate).

Qualified residents of WICHE states/territories have many options through WRGP in the fields of graduate nursing, public health, speech pathology and audiology, and more. Participating institutions and eligible graduate programs are listed in the [WRGP Savings Finder](#).

18. **Loan forgiveness and service payback requirements.** PSEP is an effective means for western states/territories to address their needs for health care professionals by sharing resources. WICHE shares state/territory concerns about the return of graduates and recognizes the right of states/territories to impose service requirements on PSEP graduates. However, service requirements raise issues of fairness for WICHE students compared to in-state students and carry significant administrative costs for enforcement. That said, it may be in the state/territory's interest to require service of PSEP graduates in order to stimulate higher return rates. WICHE also encourages its states/territories to consider increasing rural or underserved incentives such as loan repayment programs or tax incentives that will make service in these areas affordable and feasible for health care professionals who typically carry a high student debt load.

States/territories can independently track the return of their PSEP graduates, and WICHE invites its sending PSEP states/territories to periodically participate in a coordinated reporting of PSEP graduates using common tracking protocol. The last return survey was conducted in 2017 and is published in the most recent [WICHE Student Access Programs: By the Numbers 2019-20 report](#).

V. **Frequently Asked Questions about PSEP**

[Frequently asked questions \(FAQ\) about PSEP are posted on WICHE's website.](#) We welcome suggestions for additional items.