

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

This document explains how WICHE determines which applicants are awarded support through its [Professional Student Exchange Program \(PSEP\)](#).

Overview: PSEP provides students in 10 Western states and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands (CNMI) 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 tuition – usually resident tuition in public institutions or reduced tuition at private schools. The home state/territory pays a support fee to the admitting schools to help cover the cost of the student’s education. Check with your state/territory for specific information about student financial obligations associated with PSEP funding.

The following professional degree studies are supported through PSEP: Dentistry (DDS or DMD); allopathic medicine (MD); occupational therapy (MOT or OTD); optometry (OD); osteopathic medicine (DO); pharmacy (PharmD); physical therapy (DPT); physician assistant (degrees vary); podiatry (DPM); and veterinary medicine (DVM). Cooperating programs are listed [here](#).

Each participating state/territory 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/territory may offer support in a field only offered at a private institution located in the state.

Eligibility for support: To be considered for WICHE PSEP 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/territory certifying office to determine whether or not they meet the state/territory’s residency requirements; residency requirements vary. CERTIFICATION in and of itself does not guarantee support, nor an offer of admission. A certified applicant is *eligible to be considered* for support because he or she meets the state/territory’s residency requirements. Links to state/territory applications are posted [here](#).

Deadline for certification: For most fields, applicants must apply for PSEP certification by October 15th of the year prior to enrollment. **Veterinary (DVM) applicants are strongly encouraged to certifying before September 15th; Montana DVM applicants must certify by September 1st.** 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. Names of WICHE PSEP certified applicants are posted in WICHE’s secured PSEP Administrative Portal, to which authorized personnel of cooperating programs have access.

Why are rankings necessary? Given 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 for all certified entering applicants (by field and by state/territory) who hold one or more offers at the time of the ranking. Applicants are responsible for notifying their state/territory certifying officer of all admissions offers received from cooperating PSEP programs.

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/territory 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/territory 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. Cooperating programs cannot rank applicants who didn't apply to their program.

WICHE's central office then compiles all cooperating schools' rankings into one weighted ranking for all applicants (by state/territory 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/territory'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/territory 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/territory and to the schools in alphabetical order, never by rank.

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

Why does WICHE use rankings? WICHE states have been supporting students through PSEP for more than 65 years. Both the central and state/territory 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 thus far. Furthermore, WICHE recognizes the sovereignty of its cooperating schools in the admissions process. State/territory 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 cooperating program, the applicant may choose which school he/she wishes to attend.

How does the veterinary medicine selection process differ from the other PSEP fields?

Veterinary (DVM) applicants are strongly encouraged to certifying before September 15th; Montana DVM applicants must certify by September 1st. 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, our participating colleges of veterinary medicine adopted a "cooperative admissions procedure." This procedure identifies certified applicants to receive conditional WICHE support based on anticipated legislative appropriations. The top-ranked candidates receive *conditional WICHE offers of admission* from the cooperating programs. The WICHE support is conditional upon the student's home state/territory adopting a budget that funds a sufficient number of WICHE PSEP seats. In the event that the student's home state/territory's budget is not approved or is reduced and WICHE positions must be cut from the program, a new student's position could become a non-sponsored, nonresident position. Confirmation times of state/territory budgets vary; some states' budgets are signed as early as March, while others are not signed until May or June.

The chart that follows outlines WICHE's PSEP selection process in detail. For further clarification, contact WICHE's Student Access Program director at 303.541.0214. For more information about WICHE's PSEP, visit <https://www.wiche.edu/tuition-savings/psep/>.

WICHE’s PSEP Funding and Selection Process

For All PSEP Fields

- Applicant (most fields) applies to home state office for certification (residency verification) prior to October 15th. **Veterinary (DVM) applicants are strongly encouraged to certifying before September 15th; Montana DVM applicants must certify by September 1st.**
- Applicant applies to all WICHE schools where he/she would like to enroll.
- Names of WICHE PSEP certified applicants are posted in WICHE’s secured PSEP Administrative Portal, to which authorized personnel of cooperating programs have access.

For Veterinary Medicine

For All Other Healthcare Fields

- Once the admissions committees from the cooperating colleges of veterinary medicine have independently convened and evaluated all WICHE certified applicants, schools rank applicants from each state using their regular admissions criteria. This typically happens in December.
- 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. This occurs in early January.
- Prior to offers being made, WICHE releases an alphabetical list of certified applicants who will receive a *conditional WICHE offer* if accepted to a WICHE program and if sufficient state budget funds are approved and available. For example, if Montana expects to support five students, five names from Montana (in alphabetical order) are released to the state and to the schools. WICHE also releases a limited number of “alternate” names; these are certified applicants who are not WICHE funded, but they are the next in line to receive conditional support, *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 conditional WICHE offers to as many applicants as they choose (among those anticipated to receive support). The first round of conditionally funded WICHE applicants must respond to all offers by April 15th (the national VMCAS deadline).
- After conditional WICHE offers have been made, schools may make "at large" (non-sponsored) offers to applicants who are NOT anticipated to receive WICHE funding. Non-sponsored students pay nonresident or full private tuition.
- After April 15th, state vacancies created by applicants who decline all of their conditional WICHE 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 conditional WICHE support to fill a vacancy, the applicant has the prerogative to consider all new conditional WICHE offers from any of the cooperating schools.

- Applicants must notify their state office of all WICHE offers; WICHE schools must also notify WICHE’s central office of offers.
- WICHE monitors the number of applicants with offers in each state in conjunction with the state certifying 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 Procedure

- Schools cannot extend early conditional WICHE 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.

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.

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