

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOLAR-INTERNSHIP MATCH FUND

PURPOSE

As part of the 2006 Economic Stimulus legislation (Chapter 123 of the Acts of 2006), the Massachusetts Legislature enacted the Massachusetts Scholar-Internship Match Fund (Chapter 29, Section 2UUU of the M.G.L.). The purpose of the Scholar-Internship Match Fund is to provide a match for industry scholarships and internships given to Massachusetts students going on to study for a post-secondary degree at Massachusetts public higher education institutions. Students shall pursue post-secondary degrees and career paths in specific science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines that link directly related work experience with their academic program. These disciplines do and will directly support the economic development of the Commonwealth by fulfilling the employment needs of business and industry in high-demand fields. The Massachusetts Scholar-Internship Match Fund creates a framework whereby internship and scholarship funds from business, industry and other sources may be deposited as matching resources to enhance student progress toward degrees in fields vital to the Commonwealth.

DEFINITIONS

ELIGIBLE INSTITUTION:

An institution within the system of public institutions of higher education, as identified in Section 5 of Chapter 15A of the Massachusetts General Laws.

ELIGIBLE PROGRAM:

An undergraduate degree program offered by an eligible institution in high-demand STEM areas, as designated in the Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent (SMART) list, exclusive of foreign languages, as developed by the U.S. Department of Education and as amended by the Board of Higher Education.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for the Scholar-Internship Match Fund program, the student must:

- a) physically reside in Massachusetts for at least one year, as of the start of the enrolled term, with an intent to remain in Massachusetts consistent with Board of Higher Education (BHE) policy;
- b) be a U.S. Citizen, lawful permanent resident, or non-citizen eligible under Title IV regulations; or have an approved eligibility status designated by the BHE pursuant to the Massachusetts Tuition Equity Law² or otherwise;

- c) be accepted for admission to, or be currently enrolled, full-time in an eligible program, at an eligible institution as defined above;
- d) submit an application for the Massachusetts Scholar-Internship Program, and for approval must:
 - a. if a high school senior, have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0;
 - b. if a current college student, meet satisfactory academic progress standards as defined by the institution, and have maintained a cumulative GPA of 3.0 on all college work and meet other eligibility criteria established by the Board of Higher Education;
 - c. complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the Massachusetts Application for State Financial Aid (MASFA) as applicable for eligible students under the Massachusetts Tuition Equity Law annually;
 - d. comply with financial aid verification requirements;
 - e. sign an agreement to comply with the internship requirements of the Scholar-Internship Program with a designated Massachusetts employer in a career-related field under the guidance of the Board of Higher Education;
 - f. complete the minimum number of internships as required; and
 - g. upon the completion of the undergraduate degree program, seek and attain employment in a career-related field in Massachusetts.

MAINTENANCE OF ELIGIBILITY

It is the responsibility of each recipient of the Scholar-Internship Match Fund Program to maintain their continued eligibility for scholarship assistance and/or internship experience while completing the undergraduate degree program. Recipients must demonstrate continued progress in the academic discipline through an annual submission of the college academic transcript, which will be evaluated by the appropriate official. The recipient is responsible for providing the transcript to the proper official at the Board of Higher Education, as designated, in a timely manner to facilitate continued awarding of the scholarship and/or assigned internship.

REPORTS

The Commissioner of Higher Education shall, no later than July 1, annually report to the House and Senate Committees on Ways and Means, the Joint Committee on Economic

Development and Emerging Technologies, the Joint Committee on Labor and Workforce Development, the Joint Committee on Education and the Joint Committee on Higher Education. The report shall include:

- a) a list of matching scholarship recipients,
- b) the associated match amount,
- c) the amounts of non-state funding as a result of the match,
- d) the purposes of the match,
- e) whether there was an internship associated with the industry match,
- f) an annual statement of cash inflows and outflows detailing the sources and uses of funds,
- g) a forecast of future payments based on current binding obligations, and
- h) a detailed account of the purposes and amount of administrative costs charged to the fund.

The Commissioner shall include in the annual report a detailed five-year legislative review of the Scholar- Internship Match Fund for consideration for recapitalization.

ANNUAL REVIEW

The Department of Higher Education is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of the Scholar- Internship Match Fund. Institutions that have signed an agreement to participate in the Massachusetts State financial aid programs are required to share data for all students with the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education (DHE) or its designee, and the Office of Student Financial Assistance for this purpose. The program may be evaluated annually to determine any immediate impact or to determine if adjustments are required for various processes, such as disbursement of funds.

PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

All institutions receiving funds under the Scholar- Internship Match Fund must have an active Massachusetts State Financial Aid Participation Agreement on file with the Massachusetts Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA).

AUDIT REQUIREMENT

- a) It shall be the responsibility of each college to maintain documentation of a recipient student's eligibility for the Scholar- Internship Match Fund.
- b) The Commissioner shall require each college to furnish annually to the BHE a report detailing specific information regarding recipients of the Scholar- Internship Match Fund. OSFA will establish the timeline, specifications, and procedures for this report.

- c) All financial books, records and documents pertaining to this Program shall, at all times, be open to inspection, review and audit by the Commissioner, the State Auditor or their authorized representatives who shall have access to the premises wherever such books, records, and documents are for seven years. An institution may retain such records for a period of five years, if approval is received from the Records Conservation Board in accordance with General Laws, Chapter 30, Section 42.