

The Massachusetts Office of Student Financial Assistance



ACTION LETTER

Action Letter #1

August 2026

2026-2027 PROGRAMS GUIDELINES UPDATES

High School Completer Eligibility for State Financial Aid DCL

OSFA Action Letter

Dear Colleagues:

The Board of Higher Education (BHE) recently adopted technical amendments to its financial aid guidelines to clarify eligibility for High School Completers. See High School Completer Law, codified at [M.G.L. c. 15A, § 9, par. 5](#).

New for AY2026-2027: High School Completer Pathway

Previously, the BHE's financial aid guidelines stated that to access any state-administered financial aid, students must "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 policy."

This approach, however, is not mandated by the High School Completer Law, which does not include a residency requirement. The High School Completer Law extends eligibility for both in-state tuition rates and state-administered financial aid to all students who have:

- attended high school in the Commonwealth for at least three years;
- earned a diploma or the equivalent (for example, a GED) in the Commonwealth; and
- met other documentation requirements.

A student's access to in-state tuition rates as a "High School Completer" has never included a residency requirement prior to student enrollment. The BHE is now aligning and

streamlining access to state financial aid. For students seeking to access in-state tuition rates **and/or** state-administered financial aid under the High School Completer pathway, there is no residency requirement. Therefore, effective August 1, 2026, students who meet the High School Completer criteria set forth in [M.G.L.c. 15A, § 9, par. 5](#) are eligible to be considered for state-administered financial assistance, regardless of their residency status.

All other criteria in the state financial aid programs administered by the BHE, including criteria related to programmatic eligibility, otherwise still apply to all students, under the same terms.

Implementation Procedures

For Academic Year 2026-2027, OSFA is working on implementation procedures that will help institutions identify enrolled High School Completers who were previously ineligible for state financial aid due to the one-year residency requirement, and allow institutions to verify eligibility, determine award amounts, and credit students' accounts before the end of the fall semester. We intend to engage financial aid officers and other institutional representatives in the implementation process, so that we can develop an interim approach that is not overly burdensome, while the Department of Higher Education simultaneously develops more efficient, automated (e.g., MassAid) processes for the next academic year.

For any questions, please contact, Alison Connolly, Assistant Commissioner
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