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3.14 POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION SERVICES

Post-secondary education includes training programs at an accredited post-secondary educational institution in which an individual found eligible for vocational rehabilitation services may choose to participate after earning a high school diploma or a General Educational Development (GED) certificate.

Post-secondary training should be required for an individual to achieve an employment goal. This goal should reflect the individual's interests and informed choice and be consistent with his/her strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, and capabilities.

When determining the employment goal, the counselor and client should project growth in the industry being considered and the required educational requirements. It is important to train persons for occupations where there is a reasonable demand projected. The client's willingness to relocate should be explored if job opportunities are more readily available away from the home area. The case file should be documented to reflect this.

The case file should document the counselor and client discussion of transferable skills prior to consideration of the need for post-secondary educational training. If the client has transferable skills that can assist with transition into a job, then job search and placement should be recommended services. Post-secondary education training should be considered when there are no transferable skills.

The case file must also document the provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) for all students who are 21 years of age or younger who are enrolled in a post-secondary education program. WIOA defines *Student with a Disability* to include students enrolled in educational programs, including post-secondary program, so long as they satisfy the age requirement set forth. Therefore, PETS should continue after high school and be planned on the IPE for a student in post-secondary education until the student reaches the age of 22 years of age.

Residual Limitations

Post-secondary training services should not be provided when the client does not have residual limitations to a disability or disabling condition. A client with a chronic physical or mental impairment that can be removed with little or no residual limitations is not eligible for post-secondary training (i.e. treatment of ADHD with medication results in no

limitations). However, if the impairment has prevented the individual from developing suitable work skills and work experience, then VR post-secondary education may be provided to address the need.

Transferable Work Skills

Post-secondary training should not be considered when the client has transferrable skills that can be used to pursue employment that is consistent with the client's strengths, resources, interests, and informed choice. Transferable work skills, which usually take more than 30 days to acquire, are those job specific skills that a person possesses as a result of experience in skilled/semi-skilled work activities or skills received through career/academic training.

The following should apply prior to the consideration of planning post-secondary training:

- **Transition students:** Individuals in this age group have not developed a sufficient employment history to draw conclusions about transferable work skills and are exempt from consideration of their work experience as a transferable skill.
- **Adult clients with limited or no previous work experience:** Some adult clients may have very limited or no work history. To be considered for post-secondary training the counselor must show that the disability will place the client at a greater disadvantage in securing employment than peers who do not have a disability. Also, the disability is expected to prevent the client from holding employment compatible with the client's capabilities.
- **Adult clients who are under-employed:** Many adult workers may have been under-employed due to circumstances involving their disability. They may have accepted employment out of financial necessity that was not consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, capabilities, interest, and informed choice. If they lack viable transferable work skills, then post-secondary training should not be ruled out.
- **Adult clients with previous work history:** The client may be considered for training sponsorship if the disability creates an impediment to performance in the current or previous occupation and the client lacks transferable work skills for a new occupation. If the disability does not cause an impediment to the current employment or previous occupation, then other services may be necessary, but training should not be planned.

Types of post-secondary education programs:

- Academic Successful completion of coursework leads to an Associate in Arts, Baccalaureate, or higher degree.
- Career Successful completion of coursework leads to a certificate in a particular business skill area (e.g. automotive technology, barber/stylist, graphic design, office clerk, small engine repair, welding, etc.). It usually provides specific short-term, job-related instruction but does not include broad-based academic courses. Courses such as these are not usually accepted for credit by academic degree programs.
- Technical Successful completion of combined academic and technical coursework leads to a one-year or two-year technical certificate or a two-year technical Associate in Applied Science Degree.

3.14.1 POST-SECONDARY TRAINING SPONSORSHIP GUIDELINES

Post-secondary training may be appropriate for some individuals whose disabilities result in substantial impediments to employment. In addition to the VR eligibility criteria, the following guidelines are to be used when identifying a client who may reasonably be expected to benefit from the training in terms of an employment outcome.

- The client has completed or terminated his/her secondary education by earning a high school diploma or a GED Certificate.
- The training is **required** for the client to enter into or engage in his/her chosen employment field.
- Documentation must show that the client can be expected to succeed in the training program. This documentation may include psychological testing, college transcripts, high school grades, scores on college entrance examination(s) or any other information which, in the counselor's professional judgement, has a direct bearing on the individual's ability to succeed in the training program.

- Cases being considered for an academic degree program must be staffed with the manager and peer counselors before developing a plan for post-secondary education. (OVR District/OVRB Regional Managers, at their discretion, may exempt senior counselors from this requirement. This does not exclude them from participating if they feel it is helpful in making a decision on a particular case.)
- Only one semester should be planned initially for students beginning college (community/senior) for the first time to ensure they can meet the demands of post-secondary education. Further plans may be made after the successful completion of this trial semester. The mid-semester grades should be used to project this since the final grades will not be available in time to plan for the next semester.

3.14.1.1 Length of Training

The length of the individual training program should not exceed the customary period required to prepare the client for reaching his/her chosen employment objective. Most programs at community colleges take two years or less to complete if attending school on a full-time basis. Most undergraduate programs take four years or less to complete if attending school on a full-time basis. The need for extensions must be substantiated and documented in the case record. VR/VRB may provide financial sponsorship for up to five semesters at a junior/ community college and up to ten semesters at an educational institution to complete his/her academic program.

The customary attendance period can only be exceeded with documentation of the reason for the extension and approval by the manager or his/her designee approval. The reason for exceeding the customary attendance period should be documented in AACE case notes. Examples of situations that may warrant exceeding the customary attendance period include:

- AT equipment needed to assist client with college training was not received on time or is not functioning properly; and
- The client or his/her family member developed an unstable medical condition which interferes with the client's ability to attend college.

Clients who participate on a part-time basis due to the disability should be encouraged to take courses during the summer session in order to complete their course of study within the limits of the customary length of training.

3.14.1.2 Dual Enrollment

Dual enrollment usually involves a student being enrolled in high school while separately taking academically related coursework at a different institution. A student may be enrolled in secondary school and also enrolled at a community college or university that participates in dual enrollment.

Dual enrollment may be used as a way to help the student ease the transition from high school to college by allowing the student to gain hands-on experience into post high school academics.

Prior to working with a student to plan dual enrollment, the following must occur:

1. The counselor must obtain current grade reports from the school that the student is attending;
2. The student's grade point average (GPA) must be at least a 2.00 on a 4.00 scale at the attending school;
3. The counselor must consult with the school counselor regarding available scholarships and aid;
4. The counselor must obtain a copy of the student's high school transcript;
5. The student must have enough high school and college course work combined to equal at least four courses;
6. The counselor must obtain proof in the case file that the student has been accepted into the post-secondary institution and program of interest;
7. The post-secondary institution must be accredited; and
8. The college coursework completed by the client while in dual enrollment must be required for the college major.

The PETS service, Counseling on Post-Secondary Educational Opportunities, must be included on the IPE when assisting a student with disability with dual enrollment or any training after high school when a student is 21 years old or younger.

3.14.2 POST-SECONDARY TRAINING FOR STUDENTS WITH A MOD AND CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

The Mississippi Occupational Diploma (MOD) and a Certificate of Completion are exiting options for a student leaving high school. However, these options will not allow the recipient to qualify for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The counselor should consider the individual for post-secondary education or training if it is determined that such training can assist with helping to achieve a more suitable employment goal. However, only career or technical programs can be considered. The individual must meet all other guidelines as described for consideration for post-

secondary programs with the exception of applying for FAFSA and completing the Financial Needs Analysis. The counselor should only consider an individual who has a MOD or Certificate of Completion for career or technical training programs after the following criteria has been met:

- The individual provides proof of the MOD/Certification of Completion that was received after exiting high school.
- The individual reports that they have not completed requirements for receiving a GED.
- The counselor receives documentation that the individual has applied to and has been accepted into an accredited institution that will facilitate the training.

Graduate School

When the minimum educational requirement to enter the occupational field is an advanced degree, the Agency may assist the client in a graduate program. This should be planned on the IPE when the employment **goal** is agreed upon between the client and counselor. The employment goal should reflect the individual's interests and **informed choice** to the extent these factors are consistent with his/her strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, and capabilities.

3.14.3 ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

The Agency **will not** authorize funds to an institution (school) that is not accredited, licensed, or approved by the appropriate accrediting or licensing authority. Schools with provisional accreditation may be used; however, the counselor is to use caution when a client selects to attend one of these schools. If a school loses its accreditation during the school year, the counselor is to notify the client immediately and Agency funds will cease at the end of that semester.

3.14.3.1 Selecting a College

When selecting the most appropriate school the client and counselor must address, at a minimum, the following questions:

1. The appropriateness of the school. Will the education and training provided prepare the client for his/her vocational goal?
2. Does the school meet established standards for accreditation?
3. Is the school willing and able to accommodate any disability-related needs the client may have?
4. Does the client meet the school's selection/entrance criteria?

In researching potential colleges, students should learn what services and auxiliary aids are available from the college that meets their disability-related needs. This information may be key in selecting a college to attend. At the time of acceptance to the college, the client should submit any required applications and documentation to meet eligibility requirements for disabled student services.

3.14.3.2 Approved Schools / Institutions

Mississippi Community College Board, Office of Proprietary Schools, has provided the Agency with the following list of schools that are registered with the Commission of Proprietary Schools and College Registration to provide vocational, career and/or technical training in Mississippi.

To find the list of schools that are registered with the Mississippi Community College Board, Office of Proprietary Schools, please visit www.mccb.edu. On the right side of page, click on *Divisions of MCCB* then, *Academic and Student Affairs*, Next, scroll down and click on *Office of Proprietary Schools Homepage*. Scroll down to the bottom right of the page for the *Proprietary School List*.

The Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning provides a list of schools that are **approved** and **not approved** by the Mississippi Commission on College Accreditation and are fully accredited members of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools for the current school year.

To find the lists of colleges and universities approved and not approved to operate in Mississippi, please visit www.ihl.state.ms.us. Scroll down and click on *MCCA*. This will bring you to the *Approved Colleges and Universities* and the *Entities Not Approved* lists.

NOTE: Before sponsoring a client at any institution (including private and/or out-of state institutions, short term training programs, and correspondence courses) that does not appear on these listings, the counselor should contact the State Coordinator for Post-Secondary Education Services for further investigation of the school's accreditation status.

3.14.4 CLIENT'S RESPONSIBILITY

The client is expected to be progressively working toward the completion of an academic, career, or technical program/certificate, which is consistent with the employment goal on the IPE. The length of the individual training program should not exceed that which is typically necessary to complete the program.

OVR/OVRB RESOURCE GUIDE

Case Services/Program

Section 3

An individual is eligible for the Pell Grant for a total of six (6) years when attending school as a full-time student. Time will be prorated for an individual not attending as a full-time student. The counselor should make every effort to help the student attend school on a full-time basis.

The client is to register for and complete (pass) twelve (12) credit hours each semester for undergraduate; nine (9) credit hours each semester for graduate; and six (6) credit hours each semester for summer school. Payment of any fees charged for dropping a course will be the client's responsibility.

The following guidelines apply to grades and grade reports:

- The client is to maintain a grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 on a 4.0 grade scale per semester, or higher, if required for the particular program in which he/she is participating.
- Should a client fail to earn the required GPA or pass the required number of semester hours, he/she will be considered to be on a probationary period with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) or Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind (VRB) for one semester during which VR/VRB sponsorship may or may not continue depending on the extenuating circumstances of the individual's case.
- Should the client fail to earn the required GPA or pass the required number of semester hours for two (2) consecutive semesters, sponsorship will be withdrawn until the client successfully completes the required number of semester hours (12 hours for undergraduate or 9 hours for graduate) at the required GPA.
- Grade reports are **required** before the counselor can authorize funds for the next semester. Each semester, the client is to provide the counselor with mid-term and regular grade reports which demonstrate satisfactory progress towards the completion of the chosen program/certificate.
- Any late fees incurred due to a delay in the client providing his/her grades to the counselor will be the client's responsibility.
- Every effort should be made to assist a student with a commitment of a full-time schedule. However, there may be circumstances, including medical or psychological issues, which prevent an individual with a disability from maintaining a full-time schedule. The counselor and the student must work

together to document any issue that prevents the student from being able to complete the required number of hours (i.e. dialysis may on certain days may limit the number of hours the student can take).

At the time a plan for post-secondary education is written, the client is to be provided a copy of the Standards for VR Sponsorship in Post-Secondary Education (MDRS-VR- PSED-01) form explaining what is expected of him/her during the training period. The counselor should explain the information listed on the form and ensure the client thoroughly understands his/her responsibilities and that any exceptions must be approved by the counselor before registration. The client is to sign the form acknowledging his/her agreement. The original form is to be kept in the case file and the client provided a copy.

Exceptions: Individual exceptions for disability accommodations and special circumstances may be considered on a semester by semester basis. Any exceptions made to the standards require a written justification by the counselor and must be reviewed by the OVR District/OVRB Regional Manager.

3.14.5 LIAISON COUNSELORS/CASE TRANSFER

Alcorn State University, Delta State University, Jackson State University, Mississippi Valley State University, Mississippi State University, Mississippi University of Mississippi, the University of Mississippi and the University of Southern Mississippi have designated liaison counselors. A rehabilitation counselor for the deaf is assigned to serve as liaison for deaf and hard of hearing clients attending Hinds Community College (HCC). A client's case is to be transferred to the liaison counselor **only** if he/she needs ongoing (other than academic) vocational rehabilitation services while attending school. Otherwise, the client's case is to be kept by the counselor serving his/her hometown area.

Exception: Case files of all deaf and hard of hearing clients attending HCC are to be transferred to the appropriate liaison counselor.

Additionally, all other VR clients outside the local district who are attending one of the public universities and receiving support services through the Agency contract with one of the university's Student Support Services Office are to be transferred to the VR/VRB liaison counselor.

Cases being transferred to a post-secondary liaison counselor are to be peer staffed, the IPE developed, and the client's responsibilities explained to him/her before case transfer. The case is to be sent to the liaison counselor at least one month prior to the start of school to allow time for him/her to issue all required

authorizations. The case should be reviewed for correctness and the case should be complete upon transfer. *Counselors should follow case transfer procedures outlined in Section 2.4 of this manual.*

3.14.6 SUPPORT SERVICES

Support Services may be defined as any service or device that assists the client in overcoming deficiencies caused by his/her disability. In the post-secondary education setting, these services should facilitate the client's ability to learn and affect his/her understanding of the coursework he/she is taking.

Student Support Services offices are located on the campuses of colleges and universities. These offices have trained staff who are there to help students with disabilities meet challenges and barriers to their education. Counselors should require each client receiving VR/VRB post-secondary education or training to register with their institution's Office for Student Support.

Although the school has the primary responsibility for ensuring a student is allowed full participation in the class, the counselor should work closely with Student Support Services at the school to be certain the client receives the assistance he/she needs to be successful. Typically, the school would be responsible for anything which would make the class accessible (i.e., textbooks, handouts, alternate testing methods, etc.). However, exceptions may be made for services such as interpreters. Specific support services to be provided by VR/VRB should be included on the client's Individualized Plan for Employment.

Long range planning is critical in ensuring sufficient time is allowed so that materials (text books in braille, on computer, on tape, etc.) or other special services the client needs are ready and available at the beginning of each semester.

Documentation for payment of support services should be submitted monthly on a Support Service Log (MDRS-VR-PSED-02) along with a copy of the Authorization/Statement of Account. It should show the number of hours per day that services are provided, the specific course for which assistance is being provided, and be signed by both the student and provider of the services. In cases where service provision is arranged by the school, an official representative of the school should also sign the form. The hourly rate paid to the provider of the services is outlined in the Agency Fee Schedule. The MDRS-VR-PSED-02 (which includes the client's signature) is to be attached to the Statement of Account when sent to Finance for payment.

NOTE: Support Services cannot be paid for after the fact. The client is expected to inform the counselor and the school of the need for a reader, tutor, and other support services prior to receiving the service. If this does not happen, the client should be prepared to cover any expenses him/herself.

Individual exceptions for disability accommodations and special circumstances may be considered on a semester by semester basis. Any exceptions made to the guidelines provided in this subsection require a written justification for case documentation by the counselor and must be reviewed by the VR District/OVRB Regional Manager.

Examples of PSED Support Services

Assistive Technology Service

Assistive Technology is defined as the application of technology to alleviate barriers that interfere with the lives of persons with disabilities and open doors to employment. An Assistive Technology assessment should be considered for any client with obstacles identified that will require a specific support service(s) in order to successfully complete his/her course of study. This will enable the client and counselor to consider the most effective and cost-efficient method to assist the client. In some cases, it may be more effective and less costly to purchase a piece of adaptive equipment to assist the client than to pay for individual services (i.e., readers). When purchasing adaptive equipment, the general policy of the Agency is to assist with those necessary devices that are personal in nature and would be kept by the client. Items that make the classroom accessible are considered the school's responsibility.

Tutorial Services

Agency sponsored tutorial services are considered to be the provision of any tutorial hours above those provided at no cost by the institution to all students. The need for these additional hours should be well justified. Agency sponsored tutorial services will consist of an individual working one-on-one with the client to explain specific portions of the coursework which the client is having difficulty understanding. It should **not** constitute re-teaching the entire class. Tutoring is to be provided by a person who is taking or has completed the course, demonstrates a knowledge of the material, is able to communicate this knowledge effectively, and is approved (either verbally or in writing) by an official representative of the institution. Up to 20 hours of tutorial services per month may be authorized based on the individual client's disability and the nature and content of the courses being taken.

Reader Services

Reader services mean a literate, intelligible (plain-speaking) individual reading to the visually impaired printed material which is not available in an accessible format (braille, large print, tape recording, computer disk, etc.). Up to 40 hours of reader services per month may be authorized as needed. Individual needs and differences, including the nature and content of the coursework, should be considered in planning reader services. The school will locate, hire, and pay the reader. VR/VRB will reimburse at the rate established in the VR/VRB Fee Schedule for classroom activities or other hours directly associated with academic studies.

Note Taker Services

Class notes may be obtained through various methods: provision of copies by the professor, use of augmentative devices (i.e., tape recorders), or accessing copies (carbon or photo) from a classmate. If these methods are not available, the Agency could assist in paying for note taker services up to the actual number of hours in the classroom.

Interpreter Services (Sign or Native Language)

Interpreter services are limited to the actual number of hours in the classroom or in planned tutorial sessions and are to be provided by a qualified Interpreter. A qualified Interpreter is an individual who is proficient enough in the client's primary language and knowledgeable enough in the course terminology to communicate the presented information effectively (in an understandable manner) to the client. Proficiency may be demonstrated by the QA or certification level of the Interpreter and the student's acknowledgment that he/she understands the Interpreter. The school will locate, hire, and pay the interpreter. VR/VRB will reimburse at half the rate established in the VR/VRB Fee Schedule for classroom activities if the interpreter possesses at least a QA Level II and is registered with the Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing at the time he/she is hired for interpreting services.

Other Technical Assistance Services

These services consist of any other special assistance needed to help the client successfully complete the course of study (e.g., locating library research materials for individuals who are blind and/or transcribing technical data into braille, large print, computer format, etc.). Up to ten hours of other technical assistance services per month may be authorized as needed.

Contract with the Public University Student Support Services:

The Agency contracts with a public university to recruit, select, train, and compensate personal care attendants, readers, tutors, etc. for those clients in need of such support services. Services are provided, as needed by the client, approved by the Agency counselor, and in accordance with the contract between the Agency and the public university. The MDRS-VR-PSED-02 (Support Services Log) is not needed for services covered under this contract.

3.14.7 GUIDELINES FOR PAYMENT

3.14.7.1 Comparable Benefits for PSED

Post-secondary education expenses must be itemized on the IPE and appropriate comparable benefits applied to these costs. These benefits include Federal Pell Grants, other grants and non-merit scholarships.

All clients requesting VR/VRB assistance with post-secondary education costs must make maximum efforts to secure assistance from other sources, including financial aid through the financial aid office of the institution he/ she plans to attend and by submitting an application for federal student aid. In order to determine the client's eligibility for federal financial aid, the client must complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA should be submitted as soon after January 1 as possible. Clients may apply directly online through FAFSA on the web (<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>). **Even if a client has applied for and been denied a grant previously, the client must reapply each year.**

Any other funds the student receives for the cost of training, which does not have to be repaid, are to be counted. Student loans, work-study, and scholarships awarded based on merit are not considered comparable benefits.

To help in distinguishing between merit and non-merit scholarships, refer to the following definitions:

3.14.7.1.1 Merit Scholarships

Merit Scholarships are competitive scholarships based on individual achievement. The student must demonstrate an exceptional level of performance in academics, athletics or other personal fields in order to qualify for a merit scholarship. Various merit scholarship programs have different criteria depending on the sponsoring institution and the field of expertise being considered. This type of scholarship may

be decided by a university board and public or private organizations seeking to reward a student with exceptional achievement in a specific area. This type scholarship is not considered a Comparable Benefit, unless the scholarship is earmarked for a specific service purpose (i.e. tuition, books, housing). In effort to make this determination, counselors should obtain a copy of the scholarship awards letter for the case file.

3.14.7.1.2 Non-Merit Grants/Scholarships

Non-Merit Grants/Scholarships are grants/scholarships awarded based upon non-academic criteria and are often based on the student's financial need. These types of grants/scholarships do **not** have to be repaid (e.g. Pell Grant, MTAG, HELP, SEOG). Therefore, they are counted as a Comparable Benefit. Application deadlines vary for different types of grants/scholarships. Most awards are granted well in advance of the start of a new school year. Applications should be completed according to submission guidelines. For FAFSA the deadline is usually June 30th, for HELP the deadline is usually March 31st, for MTAG and SEOG the deadline is usually September 15th.

There are new requirements for receiving **State** aid (i.e MTAG). Beginning with the Fall 2016 term, undergraduate students must enroll in and complete 15 credit hours per semester (10 hour per trimester) to maintain eligibility for State aid in programs that require full-time enrollment. Post-secondary education students should receive counseling on this requirement for state aid.

To aid in determining that all available comparable benefits are being used, the following procedures are to be followed:

- The counselor is to submit to the financial aid office the Financial Aid Transmittal Document (VR-35) form with Part I completed and signed by the client.
- Part II of the VR-35 is to be completed by the Financial Aid Officer and returned to the counselor.
- The counselor is to complete Part III of the VR-35, send the original copy to the Financial Aid Office, and keep a copy in the client's case file.
- The counselor is to consult with the Financial Aid Officer regarding any other available grants that the client may be entitled to or be eligible for.

The counselor should not supplement grants, scholarships, and/or other comparable benefits in excess of the actual costs for tuition, room, and books. If the amount of the client's financial aid exceeds these costs, the excess is to be applied towards remaining training expenses.

The counselor is to authorize to the institution for payment of tuition, dorm, books, and other expenses identified in the IPE well in advance of the registration date. If the enrollment deadline requires authorization prior to the client receiving notification of the grant award, the counselor may do so as long as the client's file contains evidence of grant application.

The counselor should not process the authorization for payment until the Agency receives notification of the grant award. Once this is received, the Agency will then pay, amend, or cancel the authorization based upon the amount of grant awarded to the client less any comparable benefits.

If a client is in default on a student loan, the client will be unable to receive any grants, additional student loans or work study assistance. Clients who are in default are required to provide the counselor documentation that they have made a reasonable effort to clear his/her default status. A determination by the Agency to provide assistance can only be made on an individual basis after careful examination of all the circumstances involving the default status and the individual's financial situation. Default status can be cleared if the holder of the loan certifies, for the purpose of reinstating eligibility, the borrower has made satisfactory arrangements to repay the defaulted loan or the loan is discharged or forgiven.

3.14.7.2 In-State Public PSED Institutions/Schools

- Academic, Career, or Technical Training The Agency will pay the actual costs allowed for tuition, dormitory, and books less comparable benefits/client participation. (Approved fees, provided by the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning and the Office of Community and Junior College Relations, will be transmitted in memorandum form annually.)
- Housing - Off Campus If the client relocates to attend the institution and chooses to live off campus, the counselor will pay the housing cost less comparable benefits. The payments for the combined total of housing and transportation are not to exceed the dormitory fee allowed at that particular institution. The counselor should authorize for off campus housing in three installments. The counselor should issue the authorization directly to the client. The counselor should determine the amount of the dorm fee at the

school the client is attending and divide that amount by three to determine the amount of each installment. A receipt documenting that the funds were used to pay rent is required for each installment before the next authorization is issued. This receipt should be filed in the case file.

- Individual exceptions for disability accommodations and special circumstances may be considered on a semester by semester basis. Any exceptions made to these guidelines for payment require a written justification by the counselor for case file documentation and must be reviewed by the manager.
- Housing costs not paid directly to the school should be authorized to the client under the service area - **Maintenance: Room/Board/Personal Items-Housing/Lodging.** Only housing costs paid to the institution should be charged to the service area - **Maintenance: Training-Related - Dormitory.**
- Meals - Dormitory Students Dormitory students who purchase meals will be allowed the agency's approved allowance for meals or the actual cost of the meal plan, whichever is less. The authorization for meals will be issued to the school.
 - Dormitory students who are **not** on a meal plan will be allowed current agency approved per diem rate for students not purchasing a meal plan. The counselor will authorize to the client in three equal installments.
 - Day Students will be allowed a maximum per diem amount for each actual class day attended.

The counselor should authorize meal costs directly to the school under the service area – **Maintenance: Training-Related-Meals.** Meal costs paid directly to the client should be authorized under the service area - **Maintenance: Room/Board/Personal Items – Food.**

- Transportation - Day Students The counselor should authorize the cost of transportation monthly at the current state authorized rate less comparable benefits. The client must maintain a travel log to document the number of days the individual travels each month and provide it to the counselor along with the signed authorization. The counselor should pay transportation based on the number of miles (round trip) the individual actually travels to school.

The cost of travel each semester cannot exceed the cost of dorms per semester at the school the individual attends. Case note documentation must document the need for transportation services.

Other Training Related Expenses Course-required books, training materials (audio cassettes, video cassettes, and special software), tools, and fees may be provided at the actual cost less comparable benefits/client participation. Documentation from the school verifying the need for these items is required.

3.14.7.3 Private or Out-of-State PSED Institutions/Schools

Academic, Career, or Technical –The Agency will pay the institution’s fees up to the maximum that would be allowed for that individual for tuition, dorm and/or books if taking a comparable program at a Mississippi public institution, less comparable benefits. The client is responsible for any balance.

Examples:

1.	$\frac{3000}{\text{Institution's Tuition}}$	$\frac{1200}{\text{Max In-State Tuition}}$	$\frac{500}{\text{Comparable Benefits}}$	$\frac{700}{\text{Agency Pays}}$
2.	$\frac{400}{\text{Institution's Dorm}}$	$\frac{500}{\text{Max In-State Dorm}}$	$\frac{100}{\text{Comparable Benefits}}$	$\frac{300}{\text{Agency Pays}}$

Gallaudet University and the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) - These are the only national, fully accessible post-secondary institutions for the deaf. They are funded by federal legislative appropriations for this purpose.

Gallaudet is a liberal arts college located in Washington, D. C. NTID is a technical school located at the Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, NY. There are no comparable institutions in the State. The Agency will treat them as it does an in-state university. The Agency will pay the actual costs of tuition, dorm, and books less comparable benefits/client participation.

The Agency will pay one round trip ticket per semester for travel to Gallaudet and NTID from the client’s home. Gallaudet requires the student to have health insurance. Therefore, the Agency will pay the cost of the university health insurance in those instances that the client does not have private insurance. Furthermore, the Agency will cover the full cost of meals for students attending these schools.

The guidelines listed under In-State Public Institutions are to be applied to all other fees.

NOTE: Mississippi is a part of the Southern Regional Education Board (a sixteen southern states interstate compact) that may provide financial assistance to individuals attending out-of-state programs in one of the member states if that particular curriculum is not available in the state where the student resides. To request student financial assistance under this contract, contact the Director of Student Affairs at Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning, at (601) 432-6482.

3.14.7.4 Non-Semester Programs

All in-state, public institutions operate on a semester schedule. In order to determine the allowable costs for programs that operate on a different schedule (quarter, trimester, etc.), the following procedure should be followed:

- Divide the maximum allowable in-state fee by 16 (number of weeks in a semester) to get a weekly rate.
- Multiply this weekly rate by the number of weeks in the private or out-of-state program to get the amount allowed for the quarter, trimester, etc.

3.14.7.5 Summer Sessions

Unless State Office advises otherwise by May 1 each year, summer sessions will be allowed. The guidelines on the Standards for VR Sponsorship in Post-Secondary Education (MDRS-VR-PSED-01) apply to summer semesters in the manner they apply to fall and spring semesters.

3.14.7.6 Distance Learning

A client may be sponsored in a distance learning program including correspondence courses, internet based curriculums, or computer based tutorials if it is approved by the Department of Education within the state of which it operates. The agency will not consider programs in which the entire package or curriculum must be purchased initially. The agency may sponsor individuals enrolled in online classes when the class is not available through a traditional on-campus program or when the individual has disability-related problems that prevents participation in an on-campus program. The State Coordinator for Post-secondary Education Services will assist in determining the course's approval status. If the course is offered at an in-state public institution, the counselor is to staff the case on an individual basis with the OVR District/OVRB Regional Manager. Approved in-state fees for a comparable program (community or senior college) should not be exceeded.

3.14.7.7 Hinds Community College – Support Services for Clients with

Hearing Impairments

MDRS contracts with Hinds Community College (HCC) annually to provide needed support services to clients who are deaf or who are identified as having a hearing loss. These include the full range of services identified in section 3.14.6 of this manual. The cost of these services is paid through the contract. Therefore, these expenses are **not** taken from the counselor's caseload budget.

The student is not limited in the amount of hours that necessary services can be provided. Hinds Community College employs full-time and part-time staff interpreters to provide interpreting services to provide these services for both classroom and extracurricular activities as requested. Support Services are coordinated through the Disability Support Services Office at HCC.

Cases for clients attending HCC who are deaf or who have hearing loss are to be transferred to the appropriate liaison counselor in District V as per section 3.14.5 of this manual.