**Aspirations Program FAQ: Tuition and Fee Free for Qualified Students**

<https://www.maine.edu/students/early-college/free-for-qualified-students/>

Given the limited funding and eligibility restrictions for the Aspirations program, our campuses have been more proactive in researching which students are/are not eligible beforehand. We have faced many situations in which the tuition reimbursement request to the DOE was rejected due to ineligibility. When this happens, months into the course, it is much more difficult for our campuses to recoup these expenses. We have worked to improve our transparency about policies and procedures, and ***will now require school counselors to indicate on the student application if a student pays tuition to attend their high school*.**

We do not set these policies, but we must follow them. Our campuses already waive half of the tuition, and starting in the fall will be waiving all fees (except course specific materials or travel/housing fees. We cannot sustain our programs without covering at least a portion of our cost. When that cost is not covered by the state, we must bill the student.

Which students qualify for Aspirations funding? Note this is per Statute, not UMS policy.

* Publicly funded high school students
* Students who attend a high school or academy classified as a Private Schools Approved for the Receipt of Public Funds and who are not private pay tuition (taxpayer dollars pay tuition for public students to attend these schools such as Fryeburg Academy or Thornton Academy)
* Homeschool students who have registered with their local school district and the Maine Department of Education
* International students who are living with a host family, attending school per a Superintendents agreement, and are NOT paying tuition to that school (for example exchange program students)

Which students do not qualify for Aspirations funding?

* Students who attend private schools and pay tuition
* International students who are paying tuition to a public or private high school
* Any Maine student who is paying tuition to attend a public or private high school
* Any out of state student
* Homeschooled students who do not register with the DOE

How much do students pay if they do not qualify for Aspirations funding?

* Maine high school students be billed the Early College tuition rate
* The Early College tuition rate for Maine students is currently $138.75/credit but is subject to change when tuition rates change
* Maine high school students will not pay any fees other than course specific materials or travel/housing fees, even if they do not qualify for Aspirations funding.

How do campuses afford to offer tuition and fee free courses?

* These programs are, in part, made possible by a one-time investment by the Legislature to expand college access and affordability.
* The Aspirations program is sponsored by the Maine Department of Education, which reimburses our campuses for a portion of the tuition costs.
* Maine’s Public Universities waive the remaining tuition costs to support the state’s efforts to promote college access and affordability.