

DPSCS Prison Education Program (PEP) Application



The Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) requests that all postsecondary institutions wishing to provide a Prison Education Program (PEP) in one or more of Maryland's state prisons complete the following program application.

OVERVIEW: On July 1, 2023, Pell Grants were reinstated for incarcerated individuals. Throughout 2021 and 2022, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) moved through the negotiated rulemaking process (NRMP) that included a public comment period to review regulations for the use of Pell Grants and the process postsecondary institutions must follow to apply for, and be approved, to provide Prison Education Programs (PEP) in Division of Correction (DOC) facilities. The ED released the final regulatory language in November 2022 on Pell Grant reinstatement based on the NRMP outcomes, which was provided to the public to begin preparing for the reinstatement in July. The following application includes the required ED Best Interest Determination (BID) information that DPSCS needs to approve a PEP to operate in our facilities.

PURPOSE: All DOC's are tasked with providing prior approval, including drafting a Matter of Understanding (MOU), to postsecondary institutions who wish to provide programming within a correctional facility and who demonstrate that they will operate in the best interest of the students. The best interest criteria include:

1. the existence of relevant academic and career advising services to students while confined or incarcerated, in advance of reentry, and on release;
2. the transferability of credits to at least one institution of higher education in the state in which the correctional facility is located;
3. the ability for students to be able to continue their education post-release;
4. rates of continuing education post-release;
5. the ability to provide yearly evaluation and reporting information to DPSCS and ED;
6. the experience, credentials, and rates of turnover or departure of instructors; and
7. job placement rates and earnings of released incarcerated students (not mandatory - data will be supplied through MD Labor and MLDS).

APPLICANT CONTACT INFORMATION

POINT OF CONTACT (First and Last Name)	DATE OF APPLICATION
ADDRESS	
CONTACT NUMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS
POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTION NAME	

PEP QUESTIONNAIRE

INTRODUCTION

1. Provide a brief description of the postsecondary institution.

2. Has your postsecondary institution ever offered education programming in a DOC facility before? If yes, explain where, when, and what programs. If no, why does your institution wish to provide postsecondary programming within DPSCS?

STATEMENT OF NEED

1. Briefly explain in detail the need for the proposed program. Identify the target population. Describe the impact of the proposed program on the target population. Provide any economic or labor market data that supports the need for the proposed program.

2. If the proposed education program(s) are new or were already offered within a DOC, what benefits or positive outcomes did/will your program(s) have for students and DPSCS, generally?

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1. Detail proposed program components, including the expected amount of time it will take students to complete the program, proposed timeline of program coursework, support services, and individualized education planning. Identify credential or degree pathways that will be offered to program participants. Include information on required courses and course sequence for each pathway.

2. If students complete their sentence before graduation, how will your postsecondary institution support them in continuing their studies? Include post-release scholarship opportunities and how their coursework will continue (e.g., main campus, online only).

3. How many students is your PEP seeking to enroll in its first year and how does that amount differ from the number of "traditional/main-campus" students you serve?

4. Outline the assessment or enrollment process to determine participant suitability for the proposed program. Address appropriateness of the program participants with criminal records.

5. Describe all reentry and support services (academic and non-academic) to be provided to program participants, specifically the academic and career advising services offered to students while incarcerated, in advance of reentry, and after release (such as on-site tutoring, on-site FAFSA completion, disability support, welfare services, career development, job placement services, etc.). Detail the individualized education planning process. Identify the potential transfer pathway for incarcerated individuals upon release.

6. Describe if the determined career pathway(s) for the credential(s) your PEP will offer has a licensing barrier (if applicable) for people with convictions, if career is “in demand” for this region, and if the projected income earned will provide a living wage.

7. Specify target correctional institution(s). A list of correctional institutions is provided (see Appendix 1). Identify any anticipated challenges at the participant and program level, as well as strategies to address them.

8. What instructional modality (e.g., online, face-to-face instruction) is your postsecondary institution proposing for your PEP and how do you intend to solicit feedback from students about the quality of the coursework they received during the semester?

PROGRAMS GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND OUTCOMES

1. Detail the goals, objectives, and measurable outcomes for the proposed program. Program outcomes should be quantifiable and measurable.
2. Are your current registration and financial aid systems able to record the demographics of students receiving federal Pell grants who are incarcerated or post-incarceration? Do you expect your DPSCS students to have a different demographic profile than your students in other settings? If so, how will this shape your program delivery?

STAFFING PLAN

1. Describe the staffing plan, including the roles, responsibilities, and background of key personnel. Include a biography for the program director that demonstrates he/she has the qualifications necessary to implement the proposed program. Detail expectations of program staff and mentors. Outline the process for identifying and selecting program staff and mentors. Include the rates of turnover or departure of current main-campus instructors who teach the same courses within the program that is proposed.
2. What staff will your institution be utilizing to deliver and administer your education program, such as college administration, advisers, and instructors, and how will students be able to connect with them regularly (please include names, titles, contact information, and credentials of staff, documented communication method between staff and students, and projected frequency of connection between staff and students)?

OPERATIONS PLAN

1. Describe the activities that will achieve the program goals, objectives and outcomes. Describe each activity/strategy and the personnel responsible for each. Detail the appropriateness of program activities/ strategies in achieving program outcomes. Provide a program implementation and activity timeline.

2. What wrap-around services will the postsecondary institution be providing students post-release, either directly or in partnership with community-based organizations, and what quality assurance mechanisms will be in place to ensure a high standard of support?

3. The institution will need policies in place for when a student is placed on segregation, is transferred to another facility, or otherwise cannot complete the program for any reason (i.e. Attendance, Tuition, Refund Policy). Considering the circumstances of students who are incarcerated, what policies and procedures will the institution put in place to address program completion, accommodations, and other support services?

DPSCS ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Describe the expected role and responsibilities for DPSCS in the implementation and sustainability of the proposed program. Include any specific classroom space and technology requirements, such as availability of internet and technology items to be brought into the facilities, that will be requested of DPSCS.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

1. Describe how the overall effectiveness of the program will be assessed. Detail how and what data will be collected and analyzed to determine if program outcomes are achieved. Provide information on how DPSCS will be notified of rates of continuing education post-release. This evaluation plan should link to program goals, objectives, and outcomes. Include what data will be collected for the ED and how and when it will be submitted.

2. What systems do the postsecondary institution have in place to gather the required information for ED, including academic outcomes of students (such as credits attempted and earned), student evaluations (completed after each semester), and continuing education (if applicable) post-incarceration?

3. How does your postsecondary institution intend to collaborate with DPSCS to document findings of best practices about your PEP?

4. What is your postsecondary institution's current accreditation status and has your institution been subject within the last 5 years of this application to any adverse action by your accreditor? Additionally, please articulate the institutions plan for compliance with your accreditor's (MSCHE) approval process.

SUSTAINABILITY

1. Describe short and long-term plans to continue program efforts for at least the next 5 years. Include specific strategies and personnel for the sustainability of the program's activities and partnership with DPSCS. What student support services does your postsecondary institution plan to provide and how accessible will that programming be available to students?

BUDGET NARRATIVE

1. Provide a budget narrative to support all costs required to sustain the PEP for at least 5 years. Explain the rationale for each item. Include what is charged to the students Pell allotment (tuition, fees, etc.) and any grant expenditures and institutional or other contributions to support the program (without financial support from DPSCS or the Incarcerated Individual).

2. Given that students who are incarcerated are prohibited from taking out student loans, explain how you can guarantee that your educational program will be covered 100% by Pell, donations, institutional grants, etc., and that there will be no additional costs to students.

POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTION APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE

I certify that the information contained in this application is accurate and correct. I understand that any omission or erroneous information may be grounds for rejection or re-submission of the application.

PRESIDENT OR DESIGNEE SIGNATURE

DATE

PRINT NAME