

	<h2>Temporary Dakota Corps Scholarship Guidance</h2>
<b>Date Issued:</b>	May 1, 2020

1. In response to the COVID-19 crisis, many PK-12 school systems and higher education institutions have initiated temporary grading policies that complicate applying rule provisions related to the Dakota Corps Scholarship (DCS). Additionally, employment freezes and unemployment issues are hindering recipients to effectively meet the requirements of the scholarship program in the time required. This temporary policy guidance supplements rules provided on the DCS website and promissory notes relevant to initial/ongoing eligibility, employment, and loan repayments for the DCS.
2. **Establishing Initial Eligibility (High School Curriculum Requirements) – Minimum Cumulative GPA:** A passing grade earned via satisfactory/unsatisfactory, pass/fail, or equivalent grading scales will not calculate into high school students’ cumulative GPAs for courses taken during the Spring 2020 and/or Summer 2020 terms. Therefore, these grades will neither count towards or against cumulative GPA in establishing initial eligibility for the DCS program.
3. **Continuing Eligibility Requirement – Minimum Cumulative GPA:** Prior to the start of the Fall 2020 semester, any current recipient that is identified by a participating institution as falling short of the minimum GPA continuing eligibility requirement will automatically receive a one-time exception in the form of an exemption waiver for Fall 2020.
  - a. Students will not need to submit a formal exemption request to the South Dakota Board of Regents (SDBOR) central office regarding the minimum GPA requirement for Fall 2020; institutions participating in the DCS program will have the one-time authority to grant the exemption waiver directly to students.
  - b. Participating DCS Institutions shall provide a report to the SDBOR central office detailing which students received these exemption waivers. SDBOR staff shall provide a reporting template to institutional financial aid offices.
  - c. The exemption waiver will allow a student to continue to receive DCS funding for the Fall 2020 semester, even though they are below the minimum cumulative 2.8 GPA requirement. This one-time exemption would only be allowable for Fall 2020.
  - d. A student falling short of the minimum cumulative GPA requirement for Fall 2020 shall not have that semester count towards the total number of semesters a student may fall

below the minimum requirements before they become permanently ineligible for the DCS.

- e. Any DCS recipient who does meet the continuing eligibility requirements and does not require a one-time exemption as described above at the start of the Fall 2020 semester will continue to receive their DCS funding as usual.

**4. Continuing Eligibility Requirement – Full-Time Enrollment Status – Spring 2020:** Any DCS recipient who failed to meet the full-time enrollment status requirement for Spring 2020 semester, will automatically receive a one-time exemption waiver for Spring 2020.

- a. Students will not need to submit a formal exemption request to the South Dakota Board of Regents (SDBOR) central office regarding the full-time enrollment status requirement for Spring 2020; institutions participating in the DCS program will have the one-time authority to grant the exemption waiver directly to students.
- b. Participating DCS Institutions shall provide a report to the SDBOR central office detailing which students received these exemption waivers. SDBOR staff shall provide a reporting template to institutional financial aid offices.
- c. The exemption waiver will allow a student to continue to receive DCS funding for the Fall 2020 semester.

**5. Continuing Eligibility Requirement – Continuous Enrollment:** Any DCS recipient who fails to meet the continuous (fall and spring) enrollment requirement for Fall 2020 and any subsequent semesters, will be still be required to submit a formal exemption request to the SDBOR central office.

**6. Grace Period – Spring and Summer 2020 Graduates:** Recipients who graduate from their degree programs at the conclusion of the Spring and Summer semesters, will have their six (6) month grace period automatically extended to a total of twelve (12) months to find applicable employment to meet the requirements of the scholarship.

**7. DCS Loan Repayments:** Effective immediately, all DCS recipients who have defaulted on their scholarship requirements and are currently in repayment will have their loan payments automatically deferred for six (6) months; this deferment will end on October 31, 2020.

- a. DCS loan holders will not need to submit a formal request to the South Dakota Board of Regents (SDBOR) central office requesting a deferral; the SDBOR will work directly with First National Bank for implementation directly to student loan accounts.
- b. No interest will accrue on loans during the six (6) month deferral timeframe.
- c. DCS loan holders may choose to continue to make payments during the deferral period; any payments received will be applied directly to their remaining principal balance.