

RCW 28B.10.293 Collection of debts—Conditions and limitations on institutions of higher education.

(1) Institutions of higher education may, in the control and collection of any debt or claim due owing to it, impose reasonable financing and late charges, as well as reasonable costs and expenses incurred in the collection of such debts, if provided for in the note or agreement signed by the debtor.

(2) Institutions of higher education may not do any of the following for the purposes of debt collection, unless the debts are related to nonpayment of tuition fees, room and board fees, or financial aid funds owed:

(a) Refuse to provide an official transcript for a current or former student on the grounds that the student owes a debt;

(b) Condition the provision of an official transcript on the payment of the debt, other than a fee charged to provide the official transcript;

(c) Charge a higher fee for obtaining the official transcript, or provide less than favorable treatment of an official transcript request because a student owes a debt; or

(d) Use transcript issuance as a tool for debt collection.

(3) Institutions of higher education may not withhold a student's official transcript, regardless of debt, except the fee charged to provide an official transcript, if the official transcript is requested by a student or entity for any of the following purposes:

(a) Job applications;

(b) Transferring to another institution;

(c) Applying for financial aid;

(d) Pursuit of opportunities in the military or national guard;

or

(e) Pursuit of other postsecondary opportunities.

(4) Institutions of higher education may not withhold registration privileges as a debt collection tool, excluding the case of any debts related to nonpayment of tuition fees, room and board fees, or financial aid funds owed.

(5) If an institution of higher education chooses to withhold official transcripts or registration privileges as a tool for debt collection, the institution shall disclose to students through a secure portal or email and the class registration process the following at the start of each academic term:

(a) The amount of debt, if any, owed by the student to the institution;

(b) Information on payment of the debt, including who to contact to set up a payment plan; and

(c) Any consequences that will result from the nonpayment of the debt.

(6) For the purposes of this section:

(a) "Debt" means any money, obligation, claim, or sum, due or owing, or alleged to be due or owing, from a student.

(b) "Financial aid funds owed" means any financial aid funds owed to the institution under Title IV, or to the state, due to miscalculation, withdrawal, misinformation, or other reason, not including standard repayment of student loans.

(c) "Institutions of higher education" means the same as in RCW 28B.92.030.

(d) "Room and board fees" means any money, obligation, claim, or sum, due or owing, or alleged to be due or owing, from a student for

the provision of contractually agreed to on-campus housing or meal services plans.

(e) "Tuition fees" means tuition fees as defined in RCW 28B.15.020, services and activities fees as defined in RCW 28B.15.041, technology fees as defined in RCW 28B.15.051, and fees charged for nonstate funded, fee-based, self-supporting degree, certificate, or continuing education courses, or similar charges for nonpublic institutions. [2020 c 281 § 1; 1977 ex.s. c 18 § 1.]