

RCW 28B.77.290 Financial aid package award letters—Consistent terminology. (1) In collaboration with financial aid experts from public four-year and two-year institutions of higher education, as well as independent colleges in Washington state, the Washington student achievement council shall develop clear, consistent definitions for institutions of higher education to adopt regarding financial aid package award letters.

(2) By July 1, 2021, all public four-year and two-year institutions of higher education, as well as all independent colleges in Washington state, must adopt uniform terminology and a standardized template for financial aid award packages so that students may easily compare them. [2020 c 307 s 3.]

Intent—2020 c 307: "The legislature recognizes the increasing importance of postsecondary education as a tool for economic resilience and mobility, as well as the financial barriers many students in our state face in pursuing postsecondary education. In light of the 2019 expansion of the Washington college grant, it is also important to share information about new financial aid opportunities available to prospective postsecondary students. The legislature also acknowledges Washington's low completion rate of the free application for federal student aid in comparison with other states, as well as other states' successes in increasing these rates by expanding supports for students and their families. Research has shown that increased completion of student aid applications in other states has led to increases in high school graduation and college matriculation, especially for students in underrepresented groups. Given these facts, the legislature intends to undertake several actions to improve financial aid awareness and to increase coordination in this area among schools, districts, agencies, and institutions of higher education." [2020 c 307 s 1.]

Conflict with federal requirements—2020 c 307: "If any part of this act is found to be in conflict with federal requirements that are a prescribed condition to the allocation of federal funds to the state, the conflicting part of this act is inoperative solely to the extent of the conflict and with respect to the agencies directly affected, and this finding does not affect the operation of the remainder of this act in its application to the agencies concerned. Rules adopted under this act must meet federal requirements that are a necessary condition to the receipt of federal funds by the state." [2020 c 307 s 8.]