AN ACT Relating to apprenticeships and higher education; amending RCW 28B.92.030; adding a new chapter to Title 28B RCW; and providing an expiration date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

Sec. 1. RCW 28B.92.030 and 2019 c 406 s 21 are each amended to read as follows:

(As used in this chapter:) The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

1. "Council" means the student achievement council.
2. "Financial aid" means either loans, grants, or both, to students who demonstrate financial need enrolled or accepted for enrollment as a student at institutions of higher education.
3. "Financial need" means a demonstrated financial inability to bear the total cost of education as directed in rule by the office.
4. "Institution" or "institutions of higher education" means:
   a. Any public university, college, community college, or technical college operated by the state of Washington or any political subdivision thereof; or
   b. Any other university, college, school, or institute in the state of Washington offering instruction beyond the high school level.
that is a member institution of an accrediting association recognized by rule of the council for the purposes of this section and that agrees to and complies with program rules adopted pursuant to RCW 28B.92.150. However, any institution, branch, extension or facility operating within the state of Washington that is affiliated with an institution operating in another state must be:

(i) A separately accredited member institution of any such accrediting association;

(ii) A branch of a member institution of an accrediting association recognized by rule of the council for purposes of this section, that is eligible for federal student financial aid assistance and has operated as a nonprofit college or university delivering on-site classroom instruction for a minimum of twenty consecutive years within the state of Washington, and has an annual enrollment of at least seven hundred full-time equivalent students;

(iii) A nonprofit institution recognized by the state of Washington as provided in RCW 28B.77.240; or

(iv) An approved apprenticeship program under chapter 49.04 RCW.

(5) "Maximum Washington college grant":

(a) For students attending two or four-year institutions of higher education as defined in RCW 28B.10.016, is tuition and estimated fees for fifteen quarter credit hours or the equivalent, as determined by the office, including operating fees, building fees, and services and activities fees.

(b) For students attending private four-year not-for-profit institutions of higher education in Washington, in the 2019-20 academic year, is nine thousand seven hundred thirty-nine dollars and may increase each year afterwards by no more than the tuition growth factor.

(c) For students attending two-year private not-for-profit institutions of higher education in Washington, in the 2019-20 academic year, is three thousand six hundred ninety-four dollars and may increase each year afterwards by no more than the tuition growth factor.

(d) For students attending four-year private for-profit institutions of higher education in Washington, in the 2019-20 academic year, is eight thousand five hundred seventeen dollars and may increase each year afterwards by no more than the tuition growth factor.
(e) For students attending two-year private for-profit institutions of higher education in Washington, in the 2019-20 academic year, is two thousand eight hundred twenty-three dollars and may increase each year afterwards by no more than the tuition growth factor.

(f) For students attending Western Governors University-Washington, as established in RCW 28B.77.240, in the 2019-20 academic year, is five thousand six hundred nineteen dollars and may increase each year afterwards by no more than the tuition growth factor.

(g) For students attending approved apprenticeship programs, beginning in the 2022-23 academic year, is the same amount as the maximum Washington college grant for students attending two-year institutions of higher education as defined in (a) of this subsection to be used for tuition and fees, program supplies and equipment, and other costs that facilitate educational endeavors.

(6) "Office" means the office of student financial assistance.

(7) "Tuition growth factor" means an increase of no more than the average annual percentage growth rate of the median hourly wage for Washington for the previous fourteen years as the wage is determined by the federal bureau of labor statistics.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. (1) It is the intent of the legislature to remove barriers for students enrolled in a state registered apprenticeship program under chapter 49.04 RCW to access the Washington college grant.

(2) It is the goal of the legislature that students enrolled in state registered apprenticeship programs and receiving related supplemental instruction at a community and technical college have access to the Washington college grant through the financial aid office at their college. The Washington student achievement council shall verify access to the Washington college grant for students enrolled in state registered apprenticeship programs receiving their related supplemental instruction other than at a community and technical college.

(3) The state board for community and technical colleges must fully implement this goal by the beginning of the 2025-26 academic year.
(4) As part of the implementation process, the state board for community and technical colleges must collaborate with the office of student financial assistance, as defined in RCW 28B.92.030, to create a student information technology interface to simplify the application, verification of registration, eligibility, and award to students.

(5) The state board for community and technical colleges and the office of student financial assistance must establish data-sharing agreements with other state agencies to verify student data.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 3. (1) The student achievement council shall contract with the William D. Ruckelshaus Center to do the following:

(a) Evaluate paths to credentials for apprentices, including recommendations on the requirements and benefits of expanding the multioccupational trades degree, and exploration of other credentials that will support transfer to baccalaureate degrees or other advanced credentials for apprentices. This evaluation may include options for instructional modality and analysis of the opportunities and limitations for incorporating general education course requirements into degree pathways for apprentices. The evaluation may also include reviewing credit articulation within the college system, prior learning assessments, and competency-based models, as applicable;

(b) Examine national best practices in delivery and award of educational credentials to apprentices. This exploration may include assessment of the governance structures and operational models for delivery of apprenticeship degree pathways, including operational considerations and costs associated with those models, and make recommendations on the model or models best suited for implementation in Washington with consideration on sustainably funding and growing state registered apprenticeships in the future;

(c) Research apprentices' demand for degrees, for individuals in, or who have completed, a state registered apprenticeship program;

(d) Review the current funding model for apprentices within the community and technical college system, with consideration on the use of state funds for apprenticeships. The center must consult with the Washington state apprenticeship council established under chapter 49.04 RCW, the state board for community and technical colleges, and any other relevant or impacted parties as needed to provide recommendations to the legislature on a sustainable funding model for related supplemental instruction and credit for apprentices through
the community and technical college system to ensure it fully covers institutional and apprenticeship program costs of related supplemental instruction. This funding model review may include institutional costs of developing, administering, delivering, hosting, instructing, and contracting. These recommendations must be included in the annual report established in subsection (2) of this section;

(e) Consult with the state board for community and technical colleges, an organization representing the presidents of the public four-year institutions of higher education, the office of the superintendent of public instruction, the joint transfer council of Washington, the department of labor and industries, the Washington state labor council, the Washington building trades council, the student achievement council, the independent colleges of Washington, private career colleges, an accrediting body, career connect, and other stakeholders with interests and expertise in apprenticeship training and higher education mobility;

(f) Identify and remove barriers for apprentices to access the Washington college grant program, established under RCW 28B.92.200, and all other student services and support programs and resources.

(2) The student achievement council shall report annually by December 1st, beginning in 2023, in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the William D. Ruckelshaus Center's progress, findings, and recommendations to the appropriate higher education committees of the legislature on the evaluations in subsection (1) of this section. The annual report in 2026 shall provide viable policy options for degree pathways for individuals who complete state registered apprenticeship programs.

(3) The apprenticeship council, in consultation with the state board for community and technical colleges, the student achievement council, an organization representing the presidents of the public four-year institutions of higher education, and any other relevant or impacted parties as needed, shall explore whether the state should establish an institution, or centralized program, for apprentices to receive related supplemental instruction for credit towards a degree. A report on their findings, with a recommendation, must be included in the December 1, 2023, annual report established in subsection (2) of this section.

(4) This section expires July 1, 2028.
NEW SECTION. Sec. 4. All institutions of higher education, as defined in RCW 28B.10.016, must establish credit or course equivalencies for active state apprenticeship programs, registered during or before July 1, 2022, by the 2028-29 school year. For all state registered apprenticeship programs approved after July 1, 2022, all institutions of higher education, as defined in RCW 28B.10.016, must establish credit or course equivalencies within six years of the program's registration. While establishing course or course equivalencies, institutions of higher education must consult with their faculty representatives. Credit or course equivalencies are at the sole discretion of each institution of higher education and must be determined in consultation with their faculty representatives. Credit or course equivalencies established by institutions of higher education are not intended to impact the possible revision of previously approved related supplemental instruction in a state registered apprenticeship program.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 5. Sections 2 through 4 of this act constitute a new chapter in Title 28B RCW.

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