



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

Office of Higher Education

2017 Legislative Highlights

Public Act 17-56, An Act Concerning the Legislative Commissioners' Recommendations for Technical Revisions to the Higher Education Statutes

This Act makes minor language changes and clarifies terminology associated with the Board of Regents.

Public Act 17-173, An Act Concerning Minor Revisions and Additions to the Education Statutes
Section 3 of this Act adjusts to July 1 of 2018 the requirement that, in order to obtain a professional educator certificate, teachers obtain a master's degree in a subject matter area related to each individual's certification endorsement area.

Public Act 17-14, An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Department of Education
This Act makes several changes to teacher preparation and education requirements, including reconstituting a waiver provision from the state competency exam in reading, writing and mathematics (Sec. 3); clarifying the requirements for an initial educator certificate (Sec. 8); and deleting the requirement that an individual serving under a temporary ninety-day certificate participate in a support and assessment program.

Public Act 17-206, An Act Concerning the Promotion of Loan Forgiveness Programs (Effective July 1, 2017)

Pursuant to this Act, public service organizations in Connecticut shall provide information to employees concerning the availability of federal loan forgiveness programs. In furtherance of this goal, the Office of Higher Education shall create and distribute materials, including standardized letters, fact sheets, frequently asked questions, and contact information for the Office. Public service organizations shall provide this information to new employees within two weeks of their start date, shall post such information conspicuously, and shall provide employment certification forms as necessary for employees seeking to take advantage of a loan forgiveness program for which they are eligible. The Office of Higher Education is responsible for investigating complaints received about lack of compliance by employers within thirty days, and shall order corrective action in the event of a violation.

Public Act 17-44, An Act Concerning the Accreditation of Dental Assisting Programs

This Act expands accreditation of dental assisting programs from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges to any national or regional accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education.

Public Act 17-229, An Act Concerning the Publication of Transfer and Articulation Programs in the State and the Membership and Duties of the Planning Commission for Higher Education (Effective January 1, 2018)

In an effort to promote and raise awareness of existing transfer and articulation agreements between institutions of higher education, this Act requires the Office of Higher Education to publish on its website links to such agreement programs between the University of Connecticut and institutions within the Connecticut state colleges and universities system. Additionally, these institutions shall provide a link to the Office of Higher Education's website, conduct an annual analysis, and report to the higher education committee on their observations. The Act also requires each Connecticut institution of higher education that receives federal financial aid to publish on its website a link to the most recent institutional profile as compiled by the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

Section 2 of the Act reconstitutes and restructures the Planning Commission for Higher Education in Connecticut. Membership on the commission is enumerated and the entity is placed within the Office of Higher Education for the purposes of policy implementation. Two standing subcommittees are also created and overall goals are reaffirmed. Funds solicited or collected by the Office of Higher Education in furtherance of the commission, including private funds, shall be placed in an account specifically designated for that purpose.

Public Act 17-191, An Act Concerning the Authority of the Executive Director of the Office of Higher Education Relating to Teach-out Plans and On-Site Review of Academic Programs (Effective July 1, 2017)

In accordance with this Act, non-regionally accredited institutions of higher education that display indications of closure may be required by the executive director of the Office of Higher Education to establish and implement a teach-out plan for enrolled students, as long as such plan was previously discussed. Additionally, the executive director may require an on-site review of any program offered by an institution of higher education for which a license is required to practice as well as evidence that such program meets state or federal requirements for the licensure of its graduates.

Public Act 17-139, An Act Concerning Postsecondary Career Schools (Effective July 1, 2017)

This Act makes a number of changes to the statutes regulating postsecondary career schools. The Act first clarifies the definition of a postsecondary career school, including adding an exemption for instruction in the arts or recreation (and training of students to provide instruction in those fields). It also expands an exemption enacted in 2016 to enable all postsecondary career schools that lack accreditation and enroll fewer than ten students annually to submit compiled financial statements to the Office of Higher Education in lieu of audited or reviewed ones.

All postsecondary career schools in Connecticut must maintain a separate duplicate transcript file for each student. The Act specifies what must be included in such a duplicate file, and requires that all files maintained pursuant to this Act be turned over to the Office of Higher Education in the event the school closes. The Office of Education is empowered to assess administrative penalties in the event of noncompliance.

Lastly, refund applications by students of schools that close unexpectedly must be submitted to the Office of Higher Education within two years of the school's closure date. Further, the refund policies administered by the Office of Higher Education in such instances are streamlined and now more closely correlate with those of the United States Department of Education.

Public Act 17-63, An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Board of Regents for Higher Education (Effective from passage)

This Act transfers a number of responsibilities from the Board of Regents for Higher Education to the Office of Higher Education. Among them: The Office of Higher Education shall obtain information on new programs and methods of teaching being developed at public colleges across the country and state. The Office shall keep such information current, publicize it, and encourage the development of new and improved programs and methods to recruit and prepare personnel in such programs. The Act also transfers administration of three unfunded loan reimbursement programs to the Office of Higher Education. As a component of this, the Office shall, in consultation with the state Department of Education, annually prepare and publish on its website a list of green jobs, courses, and green job certificate and degree programs offered by the vocational technical schools and public institutions of higher education, as well as an inventory of green jobs-related equipment used by the vocational technical schools and public institutions of higher education.

The Act also makes some changes to the Endowed Chair Investment Fund currently administered by the Office of Higher Education. Adjustments include the option for funds to be transferred to a foundation of the University of Connecticut or the Connecticut State University System for the purposes of investing and supporting an endowed chair, as well as detailing reports to be submitted by the foundations or boards of trustees to the legislature's higher education committee and the Office of Higher Education. Provisions affecting the endowed chairs are effective July 1, 2017.

Public Act 17-130, An Act Authorizing Guidelines for Programs to Reduce Student Costs and Exempting Constituent Unit Qualified, Revenue and Nonmonetary Contracts from Certain Statutory Requirements (Effective, in pertinent part, January 1, 2018)

This Act authorizes the Office of Higher Education to establish guidelines that encourage institutions of higher education to implement programs to reduce the cost of textbooks and other educational resources for students.

Public Act 17-2, An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2019, Making Appropriations Therefor, Authorizing And Adjusting Bonds Of The State And Implementing Provisions Of The Budget (Effective from passage)

The appropriations to the Office of Higher Education for the biennium are as follows (numbers below do not reflect holdbacks):

	2018	2019
Personal Services	\$1,428,180	\$1,428,180
Other Expenses	\$69,964	\$69,964
Minority Advancement Program	\$1,789,690	\$1,789,690
National Service Act	\$260,896	\$260,896
Minority Teacher Incentive Program	\$355,704	\$355,704
Roberta B. Willis Scholarship Fund	\$35,345,804	\$33,388,637
AGENCY TOTAL	\$39,250,238	\$37,293,071