**Issue 2 – Ability to Benefit**

**34 CFR § 668.156 - Approved State process.**

**§ 668.156 Approved State process.**

**(a)**

**(1)** A State that wishes the Secretary to consider its State process as an alternative to achieving a passing score on an approved, independently administered test for the purpose of determining a student's eligibility for title IV, HEA program funds must apply to the Secretary for approval of that process.

**(2)** To be an approved State process, the State process does not have to include all the institutions located in that State, but must indicate which institutions are included.

**(b)** The Secretary approves a State's process if -

**(1)** The State administering the process can demonstrate that the students it admits under that process without a high school diploma or its equivalent, who enroll in participating institutions have a success rate as determined under [paragraph (h)](https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/34/668.156#h) of this section that is within 95 percent of the success rate of students with high school diplomas; and

**(2)** The State's process satisfies the requirements contained in paragraphs (c) and (d) of this section.

**(c)** A State process must require institutions participating in the process to provide each student they admit without a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent with the following services:

**(1)** Orientation regarding the institution's academic standards and requirements, and student rights.

**(2)** Assessment of each student's existing capabilities through means other than a single standardized test.

**(3)** Tutoring in basic verbal and quantitative skills, if appropriate.

**(4)** Assistance in developing educational goals.

**(5)** Counseling, including counseling regarding the appropriate class level for that student given the student's individual's capabilities.

**(6)** Follow-up by teachers and counselors regarding the student's classroom performance and satisfactory progress toward program completion.

**(d)** A State process must -

**(1)** Monitor on an annual basis each participating institution's compliance with the requirements and standards contained in the State's process;

**(2)** Require corrective action if an institution is found to be in noncompliance with the State process requirements; and

**(3)** Terminate an institution from the State process if the institution refuses or fails to comply with the State process requirements.

**(e)**

**(1)** The Secretary responds to a State's request for approval of its State's process within six months after the Secretary's receipt of that request. If the Secretary does not respond by the end of six months, the State's process is deemed to be approved.

**(2)** An approved State process becomes effective for purposes of determining student eligibility for title IV, HEA program funds under this subpart -

**(i)** On the date the Secretary approves the process; or

**(ii)** Six months after the date on which the State submits the process to the Secretary for approval, if the Secretary neither approves nor disapproves the process during that six month period.

**(f)** The Secretary approves a State process for a period not to exceed five years.

**(g)**

**(1)** The Secretary withdraws approval of a State process if the Secretary determines that the State process violated any terms of this section or that the information that the State submitted as a basis for approval of the State process was inaccurate.

**(2)** The Secretary provides a State with the opportunity to contest a finding that the State process violated any terms of this section or that the information that the State submitted as a basis for approval of the State process was inaccurate.

**(h)** The State must calculate the success rates as referenced in [paragraph (b)](https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/34/668.156#b) of this section by -

**(1)** Determining the number of students with high school diplomas who, during the applicable award year described in [paragraph (i)](https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/34/668.156#i) of this section, enrolled in participating institutions and -

**(i)** Successfully completed education or training programs;

**(ii)** Remained enrolled in education or training programs at the end of that award year; or

**(iii)** Successfully transferred to and remained enrolled in another institution at the end of that award year;

**(2)** Determining the number of students with high school diplomas who enrolled in education or training programs in participating institutions during that award year;

**(3)** Determining the number of students calculated in paragraph (h)(2) of this section who remained enrolled after subtracting the number of students who subsequently withdrew or were expelled from participating institutions and received a 100 percent refund of their tuition under the institutions' refund policies;

**(4)** Dividing the number of students determined in [paragraph (h)(1)](https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/34/668.156#h_1) of this section by the number of students determined in paragraph (h)(3) of this section;

**(5)** Making the calculations described in paragraphs (h)(1) through (h)(4) of this section for students without a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent who enrolled in participating institutions.

**(i)** For purposes of [paragraph (h)](https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/34/668.156#h) of this section, the applicable award year is the latest complete award year for which information is available that immediately precedes the date on which the State requests the Secretary to approve its State process, except that the award year selected must be one of the latest two completed award years preceding that application date.