

TUITION, FEES, WAIVERS, AND RELATED FUNCTIONS

POLICY

The Minnesota State Board of Trustees has the authority to set the tuition rate for the College. The President is responsible for consulting with appropriate groups and making tuition recommendations to the Board of Trustees. The President also will consult on campus and within Board Policy to set the College fee structure. The College will ensure that its procedures regarding tuition and fees are in compliance with [Minnesota State Board Policy 5.12](#) and [Minnesota State Board Procedure 5.12.1](#).

History:

08.13.07 Adopted

03.16.17 Proposed (Changed MnSCU to Minnesota State)

04.19.17 Revised

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PROCEDURES**Registration Adjustment**

A *registration adjustment* is an addition, deletion or change made to a student's course schedule. Registration adjustments include, but are not limited to:

- a. dropping and/or adding courses
- b. withdrawing from a single course
- c. withdrawing from all courses

It is the student's responsibility to initiate drops or withdrawals. A student who stops attending a course prior to the completion of the semester without following the College policy and procedures will receive the earned grade for the course and will be charged all appropriate fees. Such students will be denied any refund and may be deprived of future acceptance at other academic institutions. Failure to attend class does not in itself constitute cancellation. The College reserves the right to drop a student from a course.

Dropping and/or Adding Courses

Students may add courses through the online eService's process through the first five (5) business days of fall and spring terms and for the first three (3) business days of summer term. Business days are defined as any day that college offices are open to the public, Monday through Friday, excluding posted holidays. eServices is available 24 hours a day (12:00 a.m. – 11:59 p.m.) and office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For any course that does not begin the first week of the semester, a student must add the course within one business day following the first day of the course. Any exceptions must be approved in writing by the instructor and the appropriate Instructional Dean and processed through the Student Service Office.

Students may add courses at any time during the semester if the course has not started and there are openings in the course. Tuition payment arrangements must be made at the time of registration.

For courses that start the first week of the semester, a student may drop these courses through the first five (5) business days of that semester to receive a tuition adjustment. For courses that do not start the first week of the semester, a student has the right to attend one class and still retain the right to drop the course. The drop must be accomplished within one business day following the first day of the course. Students may drop courses through the online registration process. Courses dropped within the drop/add period do not appear on the transcript.

For flex lab and independent study courses, students have the first five business days of the semester or the first five days after registration (whichever is later) to drop the course. The registration date counts as the first day, and days are counted as business days, not calendar days or scheduled class days.

For online and blended courses, the first day of class is the posted start date of the course or the semester.

Students can drop and add classes through eServices 24 hours a day through the appropriate timelines as defined above.

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Drops made after the add/drop period are sometimes back-dated to within the add/drop period in order to generate a 100% tuition refund. Once the proper paperwork, as described below, is completed and approved, it will be forwarded to the Student Service Office for processing. The Student Service Office will then forward it to the Business Office and Financial Aid Office for any necessary financial adjustments. Following is a list of situations where back-dating is acceptable:

1. Switching sections of same course.
2. Switching to lower or higher level course.
3. Course was cancelled.
4. College error.
5. Unusual and extenuating circumstances.

Item #1 and Item #2 require approval of the Instructional Dean. Switching of section of the same course will only be allowed if the courses have common start and end dates. This approval is obtained by completing a Registration Adjustment Form with the Instructor's and Dean's signature, with appropriate supporting documentation attached. It is important to note that any drop may result in an adjustment of the student's financial aid award.

Item #3 requires approval of the appropriate Customized Training Coordinator or the Instructional Dean if the course is cancelled after the five-day add/drop period. Approval may be given via email.

Item #4 requires approval of an Instructional Dean on a Registration Adjustment Form, with appropriate supporting documentation attached.

Item #5 requires administrative approval by a combination of academic, customized training, and student service deans, with appropriate supporting information attached. This administrative option is infrequently used and is reserved for truly unusual and extenuating situations.

Credit Limits/Approval

The recommended average load for full-time students is 15 credits per semester to complete a two-year diploma or degree in two years. Students wanting to take more than 18 credits in a semester must obtain approval from an advisor (technical)/counselor (transfer).

Withdrawing From a Single Course

After the drop period of a term has elapsed, a student has the right to withdraw from a course through the online eService's process. The final date for official course withdrawal shall be the date on which eighty percent (80%) of the days in the academic semester have elapsed. For courses not on a standard academic semester schedule, the final date for official course withdrawal shall be established as the date on which eighty percent (80%) of the instructional days for the course have elapsed. Withdrawal dates for each course can be viewed in the online course schedule.

Students withdrawing during the withdrawal period receive a transcript symbol of "W" on their transcript. While a "W" has no impact on the GPA calculation, it has a negative impact on percentage of completion

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used to evaluate Satisfactory Academic Progress for both academic and financial aid purposes. In addition, withdrawing from courses may have tuition and financial aid implications.

Beginning with the sixth (6) business day of the semester, there will be no refund for withdrawals from individual courses. Refunds will only be given for total withdrawals (i.e., withdrawing from all courses) according to the refund schedule.

Note: Although the student has the right to withdraw, it is the College's expectation that a student will discuss course withdrawal with the relevant instructor(s) prior to withdrawing. At the discretion of the instructor, a student may forfeit the right to withdraw from any course in which the student has received a failing grade due to academic dishonesty. A student may not withdraw from any course that is completed or for which an earned grade has been assigned by the instructor.

After the withdrawal period has elapsed, a student with truly unusual and extenuating circumstances may have his/her withdrawal approved by the instructor and the appropriate Instructional Dean. The supporting information should be forwarded to the Student Services office with the late withdrawal request to be included in the student's file. This can be done via email from a Ridgewater College email account.

Withdrawing From All Courses

A student may initiate a complete withdrawal from all courses by meeting with a counselor and completing the required forms in the Student Services Office, as long as the withdrawal period for any of the student's courses has not elapsed. The student will receive a "W" with no designation as to passing or failing the courses. A student may not withdraw from any course which is completed or for which an earned grade has been assigned by the instructor.

Credit Balance Policy - Refund of Tuition and Fees:

Refund checks for a credit balance on a student's account will be processed and refunded within 14 calendar days. A student who receives confirmation of total withdrawal may be eligible for a refund according to the following schedule. The effective date of a drop or total withdrawal is the date the request is received by the Student Services Office.

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For fall and spring terms:

Withdrawal Period	Refund %
1st through 5th business day of term	100
6th through 10th business day of the term	75
11th through 15th business day of the term	50
16th through 20th business day of the term	25
after 20th business day of the term	0

For summer term:

Withdrawal Period	Refund %
1st through 5th business day of the term	100
6th through 10th business day of the term	50
after the 10th business day of the term	0

The refund schedule is based on [Minnesota State Board Policy 5.12](#).

A financial aid recipient who completely withdraws from a term prior to the 60% point of that term is subject to the return of federal aid not earned, as well as the refund calculation for the Minnesota State Grant and the SELF Loan. Examples of both calculations are available from the Financial Aid Office at the student's request.

The responsibility to repay unearned federal aid is shared by the College and the student in proportion to the aid each is assumed to possess. The College's and student's shares of the unearned aid are allocated among the following financial aid programs in the following order: Federal Unsubsidized Stafford Loan, Federal Subsidized Stafford Loan, Federal Perkins Loan, PLUS Loan, Federal Pell Grant, and Federal SEOG. *Note: The College's share will be allocated before the student's share.* Any remaining unearned aid is the responsibility of the student. The unearned aid must be collected from the student and subsequently allocated among the federal aid programs in the order indicated above.

The College will calculate and return its share of unearned federal funds no later than thirty days after it determines that the student withdrew. A student will return his/her share of unearned aid attributable to a loan under the terms and conditions of the promissory note. The College may allow a student to repay unearned aid attributable to a grant under a payment arrangement satisfactory to the College. This applies when a student withdraws from the College or it is determined that he/she is no longer in attendance.

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Special Tuition Rates**Reciprocity:**

Special agreements have been reached between various states/provinces (Manitoba, Canada) allowing students to pay tuition rates which are less than the non-resident rates. These arrangements are called reciprocity agreements. There are currently reciprocity agreements between Minnesota and Wisconsin, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Manitoba. There is also the Midwest Student Exchange program with Kansas, Michigan, Missouri and Nebraska.

Students from states/provinces covered by reciprocity agreements must apply to their home state. Applications are available from the Ridgewater College Admissions Office. Once the home state/province has processed the application, the College will be notified. Students with approved reciprocity agreements will be charged the reciprocity rate for their state/province of residence.

Non-Resident:

If a student lives in a state that has a reciprocity agreement with Minnesota, tuition and fees will be based on the student's home state reciprocity agreement. Students should contact the Admissions Office for further information. Ridgewater College allows students who reside in states that do not have reciprocity agreements with the state of Minnesota to pay in-state tuition rates.

Senior Citizen:

As defined in [Minnesota Statute 135A.51](#), Minnesota residents 62 years of age or older prior to the start of the semester in which a course is pursued or a person receiving a railroad retirement annuity who has reached 60 years of age prior to the start of the semester in which a course is pursued may enroll in credit courses on a space-available basis. [Minnesota Statute 135A.52](#) includes special provisions regarding senior citizens charges and indicates that an administrative fee of \$20 and applicable fees will be assessed per credit to a senior citizen enrolled in credit courses. The senior citizen rate applies only to students who are not collecting financial aid (including grants, loans, scholarships or other third party funding). A senior citizen who wishes to take a course but not receive credit may "audit" a credit-based course at no charge. A student wishing to audit a class must declare this intention at the time of registration. In either situation, the student will be assessed and expected to pay all fees, with the exception of the student life fee. The student will also be responsible for purchasing books and course materials. A senior citizen may register for a course during the add/drop period the day after the first class session is held if there is space available in the course. A senior citizen who wishes to guarantee his/her enrollment in a course may register earlier but will be required to pay full tuition and fees. If a senior citizen guarantees enrollment by registering early, he/she will not be allowed to utilize the tuition benefit for that course at a later date.

A senior citizen may also enroll without payment of an administrative fee in non-credit courses, except those courses designed and offered specifically and exclusively for senior citizens. A senior citizen enrolled in a non-credit course must pay for any materials, personal property or service charges for the course.

A senior citizen enrolled in closed enrollment contract training or a professional continuing education program is not eligible for these benefits.

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This procedure has been developed in accordance with [Minnesota State Board Policy 5.11](#) and [Minnesota State System Procedure 5.11.1](#).

Waivers

The President or designee may waive amounts due to the College for the following reasons:

- death of a student
- extreme medical reasons preventing the student from completing the term successfully (typically the withdrawal option would be used for medical situations)
- college error
- course conditions (a course condition exists when the location or timing of the course results in the student not being able to use the service intended by a fee)
- natural disasters or other situations beyond the control of the College

A student interested in pursuing a waiver must complete a student petition form which includes the request, the rationale and supporting documentation. The completed form must be submitted to the waiver authority, currently the Dean of Student Services, by the end of the following semester for the course(s) in question. It is important to note that these are rare and the college always examines the totality of the situation, i.e., amount of financial aid received, overage check(s) sent to student, federal and state requirements on returning unearned aid, any refund already applied, etc.

Minnesota State Employee Tuition Waiver:

Employees of Minnesota State or their dependents may be eligible for a tuition waiver based on the employee's employment contract. Students may apply for this waiver by completing a waiver petition, which is initiated in the College's Human Resources Office. Students are responsible for paying fees associated with courses.

Students Called into Active Armed Services:

Students who are members of any branch of the U.S. military reserves and who are unable to complete a semester due to having been called to active duty shall, to the extent possible, be provided one of the following options in accordance with [Board Procedure 5.12.1](#):

- a. The student may be given a full refund of tuition. Students receiving financial aid who choose this option should be aware that they may be liable for any required refunds of state or federal financial aid funds.
- b. The student may be given a grade of Incomplete in a course and complete it upon release from active duty. Course completion may be accomplished by independent study or by retaking the course without payment of tuition. Under federal financial aid policies, a course that is retaken in this manner may not be counted toward a student's enrollment load.
- c. If, in the instructor's judgment, the student has completed sufficient course work to earn a grade of C or better, the student may be given credit for completion of a course.

Students should visit with a counselor to discuss the options available to them.

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This procedure has been developed in accordance with [Minnesota State Board Policy 5.12](#) and [Minnesota State Procedure 5.12.1](#).

Tuition and Fee Payment Due Date

At Ridgewater College, the act of registration is considered an acknowledgement on the part of the student that he or she will attend and pay for the registered courses. Fee statements are available online, view your account at eServices. Paper invoices are not mailed on a routine basis. Payments can be made at one of the Ridgewater College Business Offices or online at eServices.

Tuition and Fee Due Date:

Tuition and fees are due on the posted due date before the start of each semester. Tuition must be received in the Business Office by 4:30 p.m. on the posted tuition due date.

While Ridgewater does participate in the registration cancellation for nonpayment process, there are factors that can prevent this from happening. It is your responsibility to pay for the courses that you are registered for and if you do not plan on attending, to cancel your registration within the timelines allowed. If these dates are not followed you will be financially and academically responsible for those classes regardless of attendance. Do not rely on any process or make any assumptions, it is your responsibility to take the appropriate action.

A student may have his/her registration cancelled for non-payment when payment is not made in full, as defined by the established due date. A student registering after the tuition and fee due date is expected to make payment in full at the time of registration. Failure to do so may result in cancellation of the student's course registrations. Cancellation for non-payment will occur periodically, at the College's discretion.

The Director of Business Services will cancel a student's registration at 4:30 p.m. on the tuition due date. After the cancellation list has been processed, a new candidate list will be run to collect the names of students who have enrolled and have not made payment in full since the original list was developed. These students, who have not made payment in full, may have their registrations cancelled on the fifth business day of the term. Refer to [Minnesota State Board Policy 5.12](#) and [Minnesota State Board Procedure 5.12.3](#).

Definitions:

Payment in Full: Payment in full is defined through any appropriate combination of (a) cash, check, money order or credit card; (b) financial aid applied to tuition and fees; (c) an approved tuition and fee payment plan; (d) an approved waiver, such that the combined total is at least equal to the amount of tuition and fees owed; (e) a third party authorization on file with the Business Office stating which state or federal agency/program is to be billed for the student's tuition and fees.

Financial Aid Applied to Tuition and Fees: The College has received a student's FAFSA results from the U.S. Department of Education and the student has received an award that exceeds 15% or \$300 of the tuition and fee balance on the account. This may require acceptance of loans. Financial aid will be applied

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to the student's account the second week of the semester. Only amounts of financial aid in excess of the outstanding balance will be disbursed to the student.

Safe Harbor Payment: A student may pay \$300 down in order to be excluded from the registration cancellation for non-payment process.

Veterans: A student who is receiving veteran educational benefits must complete and sign a VA deferment form. A veteran who has submitted the appropriate paperwork will not have his/her registration cancelled for non-payment.

Payment Plans: [Minnesota State Board Policy 5.12 - Tuition and Fees, Due Dates, Refunds, Withdrawals, and Waivers](#) authorizes colleges and universities to provide payment plans to students, permitting them to pay tuition and fees after the tuition and fee payment due date.

Student-Initiated Payment Plan: A student may meet the requirement of payment in full for tuition and fees at or before the tuition and fee due date by entering into an approved payment plan. A payment plan may be the primary method of payment, or it may supplement other forms of payment such as financial aid or tuition waiver. The College has a payment plan, called Nelnet, which allows students to make monthly payments for tuition and fees. Through e-services on the College's website, you will be able to pay your tuition and fees.

Through an agreement with Nelnet, payments will be automatically processed each month (either on the 5th or 20th), either by automated bank payments or by charging payments to Visa, MasterCard, or Discover. This is not a loan, and there is no interest/finance fee. The only fee to budget payments through Nelnet is a non-refundable enrollment fee of \$24.00 per semester. A student who has any scheduling changes or receives a financial aid award letter after enrolling in the Nelnet payment plan will need to contact the Business Office to correct payment plan amounts. An email from Nelnet will be sent.

The application process is quick and easy. A student can sign up for Nelnet online at the College's website. Contact the Business Office at 320-222-5741 or 320-234-8596 with any questions.

Institution-Initiated Payment Plan: A student not paid in full, enrolled in Nelnet Payment Plan, with third-party funding, or with a signed veteran's deferment in place will automatically be enrolled in an institution-initiated payment plan on the 25th day of the term and assessed a \$30.00 payment plan fee in accordance with [Minnesota State Board Policy 5.11 - Tuition and Fees](#).

Institution-initiated payment plans established for the remaining balance due for fall, spring, and other terms at least twelve weeks in length will consist of three payments, generally due four weeks apart starting with the established tuition and fee due date as follows:

1. The first payment of no less than one-third of the student's remaining tuition and fee balance is due no later than the close of business on the last business day of the fifth week of the term.
2. The second payment of no less than one-half of the student's remaining tuition and fee balance is due no later than the close of business on the last business day of the ninth week of the term.

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3. The final payment of the student's remaining tuition and fee balance is due no later than the close of business on the last business day of the thirteenth week of the term, or the last week of the term if earlier.

Institution-initiated payment plans established for the remaining balance due for summer and other terms at least five but less than twelve weeks in length will consist of one or two payments generally four weeks apart starting with the established tuition and fee due date as follows:

1. The first payment is due no later than the close of business on the last business day of the fifth week of the term. For terms at least nine weeks in length, the first payment shall be no less than one-half of the student's remaining tuition and fee balance. For terms less than nine weeks in length, the first payment is the only payment and the student's remaining tuition and fee balance is due.
2. For terms at least nine weeks in length, the final payment of the student's remaining tuition and fee balance is due no later than the close of business on the last business day of the last week of the term.

Students placed on the institution-initiated payment plan will be notified by an invoice and letter mailed to the permanent address on file. The sum of the payments must equal the total amount due. A late fee shall be charged for all payments not received by the due dates in accordance with [Minnesota State Board Policy 5.11 - Tuition and Fees](#). A hold will be placed on the account and the student will not be allowed to register for the next term until the account has been paid in full.

Third Party and Private Scholarship Funds:

If a third party agency is providing payment, whether partial or full, on behalf of a student for the cost of his/her college charges for tuition, student fees, course fees, textbooks, etc., a written authorization must be provided to the Business Office before the payment due date of each term. Depending on the funding source, there are different requirements.

Send authorizations (vouchers) to: Business Office - Third Party
Ridgewater College
2101 15th Ave NW
Willmar, MN 56201

The College does not accept authorizations specifying that payment will be delayed until the final grades for the term are posted.

The third party authorization is recorded on the student's account, and the College invoices the third party agency if all information is provided. If the third party agency notifies the College that the authorization has been cancelled, the student then becomes financially liable for the College charges on his/her account.

Funding from third party agencies is considered financial assistance to the student. Therefore, the authorization amount is included in the student's overall financial aid award package.

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Late Fees:

A late fee will be charged to a student's account each semester when an outstanding balance remains after the published due date. The late fee will be applied thirty days after the published due date. The late fee is \$30 and is subject to change without notice. The Director of Business Services is the only person authorized to cancel a late fee.

A student with a balance on his/her account is not permitted to register for subsequent terms until full payment of that balance is made. In addition, transcripts and/or diplomas will not be released until full payment is made.

Financial Aid Disbursement

With the exception of monies paid to students for work performed through the work study program, all institutionally administered financial aid funds (grants and loans) will be paid beginning the tenth day of each semester.

1. Student Services and Business Office will develop and publish a calendar of payment dates.
2. Work Study pay checks will normally be issued per the published payroll dates in the Student Employment Handbook.
3. All monies due the student will be paid by check or direct deposit to a checking or savings account.
4. No financial aid funds will be released until all required materials are submitted to Student Services.

Fees/Definitions**Credit by Exam Fee:**

This optional fee applies to a student who feels s/he has sufficient prior knowledge of a course to test out with a passing score rather than take the course. A student must obtain a "Credit by Examination/Test-Out" form from the Counseling Office, complete the form, and follow the instructions provided on the form. Students are encouraged to follow this process prior to registering for the course.

Health Service Fee:

This per credit fee is designed to provide health information for students and to address health and safety issues that affect the College's educational environment.

Minnesota State College Student Association (MSCSA) Fee:

This per credit fee is collected by the College and sent to the Minnesota State College Student Association, which represents students in matters related to students' rights, legislation, etc.

Parking Fee:

This per credit fee is mandated by the Minnesota legislature and designed to provide repair and replacement of parking lots. Students who demonstrate that they do not use campus parking facilities may file a parking waiver form to receive a refund. Waiver forms are available at the Business Office on either campus.

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Personal Property Fee:

Colleges may charge students the actual cost of property and services. The fee shall be for items that become the personal property of a student and have an educational or personal value beyond the classroom or for services for or on behalf of the student.

Prior Learning Experience Fee:

This fee is charged to students who make application to use prior experiential learning for transfer toward course credits. A "Request for Prior Learning Experience Credit" form can be found under Student Forms on the College webpage.

Student Life Fee:

This per credit fee is to support student activities at the College. Activities include clubs, intramurals, athletics, guest speakers/entertainers, etc.

Technology Fee:

This per credit fee is for updating and maintaining access to technology.

Fee amounts can be found on the Ridgewater website at <http://ridgewater.edu/Future-Students/Paying-For-College/Pages/Tuition-and-Fees.aspx>

History:

08.13.07 Adopted

07.10.08 Revised with Updated Fee Amounts

07.13.09 Revised with Updated Fee Amounts

05.13.10 Revised

05.21.10 Revised with Updated Fee Amounts

05.28.10 Revised to reflect change in age of "senior citizen" from 62 to 66 per state statute, eff. 08.01.10

12.06.10 Revised

08.04.11 Revised to reflect changes in age of "senior citizen" from 66 to 62 per state statute; tuition payment dates.

11.15.11 Revised to clarify statute concerning the senior citizen fee.

12.18.12 Revised to reflect changes to final date for official course withdrawal.

06.12.14 Revised to reflect current procedures.

11.26.14 Proposed (additional revisions made 08.13.15)

11.16.15 Revised

03.16.17 Proposed

04.19.17 Revised