

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

10.06.21 Proposed; Reviewed for Equity Compliance

06.14.22 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 requested by submitting a Registration Adjustment Petition. This form can be found under Student Forms on the Ridgewater website.

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 Services Office for processing. The Student Services 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 submission of a Registration Adjustment Petition with appropriate supporting documentation. Switching of sections of the same course will only be allowed if the courses have common start and end dates. 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 submission of a Registration Adjustment Petition, with appropriate supporting documentation.

Item #5 requires submission of a Registration Adjustment Petition, with appropriate supporting documentation. 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 22 credits in a semester must obtain approval from an advisor (technical)/counselor (transfer). If there is a combination of both technical and transfer credits, both the faculty advisor and the counselor must approve.

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, students with truly unusual and extenuating circumstances may have their withdrawal approved by submitting a Registration Adjustment Petition with appropriate supporting documentation.

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.

Students who withdraw or stop attending Ridgewater College may be subjected to the return of financial aid. See [Federal Return of Title IV Policy](#).

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

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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](#), a senior citizen is a legal resident of Minnesota who has reached 62 years of age 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. The senior citizen rate applies only to students who are not collecting financial aid (including grants, loans, scholarships or other third-party funding). A student wishing to audit a class must declare this intention at the time of registration. The student will 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. Senior citizens who wish to guarantee their 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, they will not be allowed to utilize the tuition benefit for that course at a later date.

Senior Citizens taking courses for credit will be charged:

- \$20 administrative fee per credit.
- Health service fee per credit.
- State-wide student government fee per credit.
- Technology fee per credit.
- Parking fee per credit.
- Any personal property fees associated with registered courses.

Senior Citizens taking courses for Audit will be charged:

- Health service fee per credit.
- Parking fee per credit.
- Any personal property fees associated with registered courses.

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.

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

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- 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 Registration Adjustment Petition form which includes the request, the rationale, and supporting documentation. The form must be submitted 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.

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.

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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 the students' responsibility to pay for the courses that they are registered for, and if they do not plan on attending, they need to cancel their registration within the timelines allowed. If these dates are not followed the student will be financially and academically responsible for those classes regardless of attendance. The student should not rely on any process or make any assumptions, as it is their responsibility to take the appropriate action.

Students may have their registration cancelled unless at least one of the payment requirements has been met prior to 8:00 a.m. on the sixth business day of the semester. Refer to [Minnesota State Board Policy 5.12](#) and [Minnesota State Board Procedure 5.12.3](#).

Definitions:

Tuition and Fees Payment Requirements:

Using the Registration Cancellation process, Ridgewater College shall cancel student registration for all registered credit courses unless one of the following conditions has been met:

1. The student has paid 15 percent of the tuition and fees due or made a \$300 down payment towards tuition and fees, whichever is less;
2. The student has applied for financial aid through the FAFSA process and an Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR) has been received by the college;
3. The student has enrolled in an approved tuition and fee payment plan;
4. The student has received an approved deferral; or
5. The student has received an approved waiver at least equal to the amount of tuition and fees due.

Financial Aid Applied to Tuition and Fees: Financial aid will be applied 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. Veterans who have submitted the appropriate paperwork will not have their 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.

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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, students 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.

A student can sign up for Nelnet online at the College's website. Contact the Ridgewater College Business Office at 320-234-8596 with any questions.

Institution-Initiated Payment Plan: Students with a balance due on their account and have not enrolled in a student initiated payment plan, do not have third-party funding, or 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.
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.

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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 their 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 their 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.

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.

Students with balances on their his/her account are 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.

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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

Course Test Out Fee

This optional fee applies to students who feel they have sufficient prior knowledge of a course to test out with a passing score rather than take the course. A student must obtain a "Course Test-Out" form from the Ridgewater website under Student Forms, 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.

LeadMN College Student Association Fee

This per-credit fee is collected by the College and sent to LeadMN, 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.

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.

Credit for Prior Learning Fee

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

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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

11.13.17 Proposed; 2.21.18 Revised

10.06.21 Proposed; Reviewed for Equity Compliance

06.14.22 Revised