

and amended Pub. L. 102-40, title IV, §402(b)(1), (d)(1), May 7, 1991, 105 Stat. 238, 239.)

AMENDMENTS

1991—Pub. L. 102-40, §402(b)(1), renumbered section 4355 of this title as this section.

Subsec. (a)(1). Pub. L. 102-40, §402(d)(1), substituted “7654” for “4354” and “7617(c)(1)” for “4317(c)(1)”.

Subsec. (a)(2). Pub. L. 102-40, §402(d)(1), substituted “7654” for “4354” in two places.

SUBCHAPTER VI—EMPLOYEE INCENTIVE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

**§ 7671. Authority for program**

As part of the Educational Assistance Program, the Secretary may carry out a scholarship program under this subchapter. The program shall be known as the Department of Veterans Affairs Employee Incentive Scholarship Program (hereinafter in this subchapter referred to as the “Program”). The purpose of the Program is to assist, through the establishment of an incentive program for individuals employed in the Veterans Health Administration, in meeting the staffing needs of the Veterans Health Administration for health professional occupations for which recruitment or retention of qualified personnel is difficult.

(Added Pub. L. 105-368, title VIII, §802(a), Nov. 11, 1998, 112 Stat. 3352; amended Pub. L. 107-14, §8(a)(16), June 5, 2001, 115 Stat. 35.)

AMENDMENTS

2001—Pub. L. 107-14 substituted “hereinafter” for “hereafter”.

**§ 7672. Eligibility; agreement**

(a) **ELIGIBILITY.**—To be eligible to participate in the Program, an individual must be an eligible Department employee who is accepted for enrollment or enrolled (as described in section 7602 of this title) as a full-time or part-time student in a field of education or training described in subsection (c).

(b) **ELIGIBLE DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES.**—For purposes of subsection (a), an eligible Department employee is any employee of the Department who, as of the date on which the employee submits an application for participation in the Program, has been continuously employed by the Department for not less than one year.

(c) **QUALIFYING FIELDS OF EDUCATION OR TRAINING.**—A scholarship may be awarded under the Program only for education and training in a field leading to appointment or retention in a position under section 7401 of this title.

(d) **AWARD OF SCHOLARSHIPS.**—Notwithstanding section 7603(d) of this title, the Secretary, in selecting participants in the Program, may award a scholarship only to applicants who have a record of employment with the Veterans Health Administration which, in the judgment of the Secretary, demonstrates a high likelihood that the applicant will be successful in completing such education or training and in employment in such field.

(e) **AGREEMENT.**—(1) An agreement between the Secretary and a participant in the Program shall (in addition to the requirements set forth in section 7604 of this title) include the following:

(A) The Secretary’s agreement to provide the participant with a scholarship under the Program for a specified number (from one to three) of school years during which the participant pursues a course of education or training described in subsection (c) that meets the requirements set forth in section 7602(a) of this title.

(B) The participant’s agreement to serve as a full-time employee in the Veterans Health Administration for a period of time (hereinafter in this subchapter referred to as the “period of obligated service”) determined in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary of up to three calendar years for each school year or part thereof for which the participant was provided a scholarship under the Program, but for not less than 3 years.

(C) The participant’s agreement to serve under subparagraph (B) in a Department facility selected by the Secretary.

(2) In a case in which an extension is granted under section 7673(c)(2) of this title, the number of years for which a scholarship may be provided under the Program shall be the number of school years provided for as a result of the extension.

(3) In the case of a participant who is a part-time student, the period of obligated service shall be reduced in accordance with the proportion that the number of credit hours carried by such participant in any such school year bears to the number of credit hours required to be carried by a full-time student in the course of training being pursued by the participant, but in no event to less than 1 year.

(Added Pub. L. 105-368, title VIII, §802(a), Nov. 11, 1998, 112 Stat. 3352; amended Pub. L. 107-14, §8(a)(16), June 5, 2001, 115 Stat. 35; Pub. L. 107-135, title I, §101(b), Jan. 23, 2002, 115 Stat. 2447.)

AMENDMENTS

2002—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 107-135 substituted “one year” for “2 years”.

2001—Subsec. (e)(1)(B). Pub. L. 107-14 substituted “hereinafter” for “hereafter”.

**§ 7673. Scholarship**

(a) **SCHOLARSHIP.**—A scholarship provided to a participant in the Program for a school year shall consist of payment of the tuition (or such portion of the tuition as may be provided under subsection (b)) of the participant for that school year and payment of other reasonable educational expenses (including fees, books, and laboratory expenses) for that school year.

(b) **AMOUNTS.**—The total amount of the scholarship payable under subsection (a)—

(1) in the case of a participant in the Program who is a full-time student, may not exceed \$10,000 for the equivalent of one year of full-time coursework; and

(2) in the case of a participant in the Program who is a part-time student, shall bear the same ratio to the amount that would be paid under paragraph (1) if the participant were a full-time student in the course of education or training being pursued by the participant as the coursework carried by the par-

participant to full-time coursework in that course of education or training.

(c) LIMITATIONS ON PERIOD OF PAYMENT.—(1) The maximum number of school years for which a scholarship may be paid under subsection (a) to a participant in the Program shall be six school years.

(2) A participant in the Program may not receive a scholarship under subsection (a) for more than the equivalent of three years of full-time coursework.

(d) PAYMENT OF EDUCATIONAL EXPENSES BY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.—The Secretary may arrange with an educational institution in which a participant in the Program is enrolled for the payment of the educational expenses described in subsection (a). Such payments may be made without regard to subsections (a) and (b) of section 3324 of title 31.

(e) FULL-TIME COURSEWORK.—For purposes of this section, full-time coursework shall consist of the following:

(1) In the case of undergraduate coursework, 30 semester hours per undergraduate school year.

(2) In the case of graduate coursework, 18 semester hours per graduate school year.

(Added Pub. L. 105-368, title VIII, §802(a), Nov. 11, 1998, 112 Stat. 3353; amended Pub. L. 107-135, title I, §101(c)-(e), Jan. 23, 2002, 115 Stat. 2447, 2448.)

#### AMENDMENTS

2002—Subsec. (b)(1). Pub. L. 107-135, §101(c)(1), substituted “for the equivalent of one year of full-time coursework” for “for any 1 year”.

Subsec. (b)(2). Pub. L. 107-135, §101(c)(2), added par. (2) and struck out former par. (2) which read as follows: “in the case of a participant in the Program who is a part-time student, shall be the amount specified in paragraph (1) reduced in accordance with the proportion that the number of credit hours carried by the participant in that school year bears to the number of credit hours required to be carried by a full-time student in the course of education or training being pursued by the participant.”

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 107-135, §101(d), amended heading and text of subsec. (c) generally. Prior to amendment, text read as follows:

“(1) Subject to paragraph (2), a participant in the Program may not receive a scholarship under subsection (a) for more than three school years.

“(2) The Secretary may extend the number of school years for which a scholarship may be awarded to a participant in the Program who is a part-time student to a maximum of six school years if the Secretary determines that the extension would be in the best interest of the United States.”

Subsec. (e). Pub. L. 107-135, §101(e), added subsec. (e).

#### § 7674. Obligated service

(a) IN GENERAL.—Each participant in the Program shall provide service as a full-time employee of the Department for the period of obligated service provided in the agreement of the participant entered into under section 7603 of this title. Such service shall be provided in the full-time clinical practice of such participant's profession or in another health-care position in an assignment or location determined by the Secretary.

(b) DETERMINATION OF SERVICE COMMENCEMENT DATE.—(1) Not later than 60 days before a par-

participant's service commencement date, the Secretary shall notify the participant of that service commencement date. That date is the date for the beginning of the participant's period of obligated service.

(2) As soon as possible after a participant's service commencement date, the Secretary shall—

(A) in the case of a participant who is not a full-time employee in the Veterans Health Administration, appoint the participant as such an employee; and

(B) in the case of a participant who is an employee in the Veterans Health Administration but is not serving in a position for which the participant's course of education or training prepared the participant, assign the participant to such a position.

(3)(A) In the case of a participant receiving a degree from a school of medicine, osteopathy, dentistry, optometry, or podiatry, the participant's service commencement date is the date upon which the participant becomes licensed to practice medicine, osteopathy, dentistry, optometry, or podiatry, as the case may be, in a State.

(B) In the case of a participant receiving a degree from a school of nursing, the participant's service commencement date is the later of—

(i) the participant's course completion date; or

(ii) the date upon which the participant becomes licensed as a registered nurse in a State.

(C) In the case of a participant not covered by subparagraph (A) or (B), the participant's service commencement date is the later of—

(i) the participant's course completion date; or

(ii) the date the participant meets any applicable licensure or certification requirements.

(4) The Secretary shall by regulation prescribe the service commencement date for participants who were part-time students. Such regulations shall prescribe terms as similar as practicable to the terms set forth in paragraph (3).

(c) COMMENCEMENT OF OBLIGATED SERVICE.—(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), a participant in the Program shall be considered to have begun serving the participant's period of obligated service—

(A) on the date, after the participant's course completion date, on which the participant (in accordance with subsection (b)) is appointed as a full-time employee in the Veterans Health Administration; or

(B) if the participant is a full-time employee in the Veterans Health Administration on such course completion date, on the date thereafter on which the participant is assigned to a position for which the participant's course of training prepared the participant.

(2) A participant in the Program who on the participant's course completion date is a full-time employee in the Veterans Health Administration serving in a capacity for which the participant's course of training prepared the participant shall be considered to have begun serving the participant's period of obligated service on such course completion date.