

SELF Grad Loan Program Manual

June 2026

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About the Office of Higher Education

The Minnesota Office of Higher Education is a cabinet-level state agency providing students with financial aid programs and information to help them gain access to postsecondary education. The agency also serves as the state's clearinghouse for data, research and analysis on postsecondary enrollment, financial aid, finance and trends.

The Minnesota State Grant Program is the largest financial aid program administered by the Office of Higher Education, awarding more than \$243 million annually in need-based grants to Minnesota residents attending eligible colleges, universities and career schools in Minnesota. The agency oversees other state scholarship and grant programs, tuition reciprocity programs, a student loan program, Minnesota's 529 College Savings Plan, licensing and early college awareness programs for youth.

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Introduction

This manual is written for postsecondary institutions participating in the Minnesota SELF Grad Loan Program and is subject to all subsequent changes in Minnesota state laws and regulations, as well as additional policy guidance issued by the Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE) governing the SELF Grad Loan Program. Institutions are required to read all email and written correspondence from OHE to keep informed of any changes in policy or guidance. This manual is periodically updated, and policy changes announced during the interim have the full force and effect of the SELF Grad Loan Program Manual. To participate in the SELF Grad Loan Program, institutions must sign a SELF Participation Agreement with OHE outlining their responsibilities related specifically to the SELF Programs. Responsibilities may be different for other financial aid programs offered through OHE.

All participating institutions are required to notify OHE of any changes to the institutional contact's name, email address, or phone number.

SELF Grad Program Overview

In response to changes to the Federal Grad PLUS Loan program, the SELF Grad Loan is available to provide additional resources to graduate students. The SELF Grad Loan replaces graduate lending under the SELF Loan program. To be eligible for the Grad program's initial start, institutions must sign a new participation agreement and have been participating in SELF prior to July 1, 2025.

The online application is available at www.selfloan.mn.gov. Emails are sent throughout the application process to remind the borrower and co-signer when action is required.

Financial Aid Administrators Contact Resources

Loan origination tasks, including reviewing, processing, and approving SELF Grad Loans, are performed by Aspire Resources Inc. (Aspire) staff.

Contact Aspire for the following:

- Questions on the status of applications or disbursements.
- Changes in loan applications **prior** to approval if the institution cannot make the changes in CommonLine, i.e., loan amount reductions, loan period, and disbursement date changes, and cancellations.

iLink (a division of Aspire) is responsible for the following:

- Changes in loan applications **after** approval if the institution cannot make the changes in CommonLine, i.e., disbursement date and amount changes, cancellations, and re-issues.
- Setting up the institution's Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT).
- Disbursing loans

Aspire is responsible for servicing SELF Grad Loans, which include the following:

- Billing borrowers
- Processing loan payments
- Updating borrower and co-signer demographic information
- Setting up borrower and co-signer ACH payments
- Performing diligence activities
- Tracking enrollment/graduation status

Refer to [Appendix A](#) for contact information for OHE, Aspire, and iLink.

Institutional Duties

Institutions are required to provide OHE with contact information for an institutional representative. The institution is responsible for the following:

- verify and document Minnesota residency if the student is attending an eligible institution outside Minnesota
- disburse the loan check or credit the EFT to the student's account if determined eligible
- document in writing the disbursement date and amount of the loan check or electronically transferred funds amount (refer to [Appendix B](#) for a sample Disbursement Checklist)
- for institutions that do not participate in the National Student Clearinghouse (Clearinghouse):
- notify iLink within 30 days when a student reduces enrollment below half-time status or discontinues enrollment
- complete and maintain copies of the periodic Enrollment Verification Reports (EVR) and return reports within two weeks of receipt
- ensure all refunds of institution charges due to the SELF Grad Program are paid within 30 days of the official date of withdrawal
- withhold disbursement if the institutional representative knows that legal proceedings have begun that will affect a student's enrollment status or academic progress. If the problem is not resolved within 30 days of the disbursement date, the funds must be returned to Aspire/iLink
- provide suggested disbursement dates (up to four) that coincide with the beginning of the term but are not earlier than 10 days before the start of the term. Aspire reschedules disbursement dates when requests are made too early
- maintain documentation related to each student, which explains the SELF Grad Loan amount
- recommended by the institution; exercise care and diligence in all SELF Grad-Program required activities
- maintain a student account as described under the section [Student Account Requirement for State Financial Aid](#)
- notify OHE if there is any suspicion of fraud related to a student. OHE is required to report any suspicion of fraud to the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) and the Office of the Legislative Auditor (OLA). The institution is required to assist OHE and law enforcement authorities in any investigation concerning potential fraud.

The institution will not collect any additional fees or charges from students to cover the cost of originating loans under the SELF Grad Loan Program.

Financial Aid Administrators Web Page

A Financial Aid Administrator's Resource page is available at [Financial Aid Resources](#). The Resources page provides helpful materials, including the SELF Grad Loan Program Manual, CommonLine Certification Guides, and items to print and use in your office or distribute to students. This website is only for use by financial aid administrators.

Aspire School Portal - OASIS

Authorized institution users can request access to the Application Review System (OASIS), an institution portal provided by Aspire, by completing the form located at [Financial Aid Resources](#). OASIS allows institutions to view basic loan application, disbursement, and delinquency hold information.

OASIS portal users cannot edit any information and are limited to only viewing the following pages:

- Overview -subset of application, applicant, and co-signer data.
- School Cert -certification details.
- Disbursements- select date ranges and statuses (i.e., disbursed, on hold, pending).
- Other Loans - limited information regarding the grade level and SELF borrowing for students who did not previously attend their institution.

Administration Overview

- The institution must certify that the applicant is accepted for enrollment or is currently enrolled and is making Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). The Cost of Attendance (COA) minus Other Financial Assistance (OFA) must be greater than or equal to the amount of the requested loan.
- The owner of the institution cannot certify loan applications.
- The institution and any personnel associated with it are not permitted to make payments on behalf of borrowers to enable them to receive additional disbursements or loans.
- Borrowers and co-signers will be notified electronically if their application is denied. If the denial occurs after institution certification, institutions using CommonLine will receive a notification if they have requested response files.
- Borrowers and co-signers receive an email link to the final disclosure, which indicates the approved amount of the loan.
- For loans approved at a lower amount than certified by the institution, institutions using CommonLine will receive notification of the reduced amount through a response file if they have requested response files.

- If the SELF Grad Loan is disbursed by check, the check will be mailed to the institution and made jointly payable to the student and the institution.
- If the institution wants disbursements sent electronically, the institution should contact iLink.
- Prior to disbursing SELF Grad funds to the student, a representative of the institution must verify that the student's enrollment is at least half-time and the student is maintaining SAP. Included in [Appendix B](#) is a Disbursement Checklist.

NCHER Loan Codes

SELF Grad CV 3 = SDOC1

SELF Grad Select Doctorate CV4 = SGRAD1

Lender: 825033

Guarantor: 121

Eligibility to Participate

Postsecondary Institutions

An eligible institution for the SELF Grad Loan Program means:

- a postsecondary institution that was participating in the SELF Loan program as of July 1, 2025; and
- has signed a new SELF Participation Agreement, which includes SELF Grad, agreeing to perform certain administrative procedures in loan processing.

The SELF Participation Agreement will remain in effect until amended by mutual consent of both parties and until terminated. The agreement can be terminated by either OHE or the institution, with or without cause, upon 30 days' written notice to the other party. All obligations of the institution under the agreement will continue in full force and effect with respect to all SELF Grad Loans then outstanding to the institution's students. A new SELF Participation Agreement will be required if an institution legally changes its name or ownership.

OHE may terminate an agreement with an institution to originate SELF Grad Loans if the institution is not in compliance with the requirements.

Eligible Program for SELF Grad

An eligible program is at least 8 weeks long and at least 12 quarter credits, 8 semester credits, and ends with a graduate degree or a certification. A student taking courses leading to licensure is eligible if the courses ultimately lead to a graduate certificate.

Residency

The student must either be enrolled in an eligible institution in Minnesota or be a Minnesota resident student enrolled in an eligible institution in another state.

Minnesota resident student who meets one of the following conditions:

- a student who has resided in Minnesota for purposes other than postsecondary education for at least 12 months without being enrolled at a postsecondary educational institution for more than five credits in any term; or
- a dependent student whose parent or legal guardian resided in Minnesota at the time the student applied for the SELF Grad Loan

Nonresidents:

- To be eligible to participate in the SELF Grad Program, students who are not Minnesota residents must be enrolled on at least a half-time basis and be physically attending an eligible institution located in Minnesota. Nonresidents cannot attend an out-of-state branch of a Minnesota institution.
- If a nonresident takes out the SELF Grad Loan at a Minnesota institution and transfers to an out-of-state or online institution, the student is no longer eligible to borrow future loans from the SELF Grad Loan Program.
- Residents of Colorado, Connecticut, Maine, or Puerto Rico are not eligible.

Eligibility

Borrower Eligibility:

- Must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident.
- Borrower attending, physically or a Minnesota Resident, attending an eligible school.
- Cannot be a resident of Colorado, Connecticut, Maine, or Puerto Rico.
- Age of majority in the state where they reside.
- At least half-time enrollment.
- Meeting SAP.

Borrower Credit Requirement:

- Minimum borrower FICO of 670 unless they have a co-signer.
- No more than two (2) accounts reporting 30-day delinquencies during the previous two (2) years unless they have a co-signer.
- No delinquencies of 60 days or more during the previous two (2) years unless they have a co-signer
- No charge-offs, repossessions, collection accounts, foreclosures, or garnishments by credit providers unless they have a co-signer.
- No defaulted student loan, even if paid off.
- No active or previous bankruptcies within the last seven (7) years.

- Not currently 15 or more days delinquent on any SELF Program Loan. Needs to be current before the borrower can reapply.
- No SELF Program Loan in forbearance.

Co-signer Eligibility:

- U.S. citizen or permanent resident.
- Cannot be a resident of Colorado, Connecticut, Maine, or Puerto Rico.
- Age of majority in the state they reside in.
- Borrower and co-signer can be spouses.

Co-signer Credit Requirements:

- Minimum FICO of 670.
- No more than two (2) accounts reporting 30-day delinquencies during the previous two (2) years.
- No delinquencies of 60 days or more during the previous two (2) years.
- No charge-offs, repossessions, collection accounts, foreclosures, or garnishments by credit providers within the past seven (7) years.
- No active or previous bankruptcies within the last seven (7) years.
- Not currently 15 or more days delinquent on any SELF Program Loan. Needs to be current before the person is eligible as a co-signer.
- No SELF Program Loan in forbearance.

Co-signer release:

- The co-signer is jointly and separately responsible for making loan payments (principal, interest, and other charges).
- The co-signer is relieved of this financial responsibility in the event of death or total and permanent disability of either the borrower or co-signer.
- Co-signers are eligible for release after 24 consecutive on-time payments when in full principal and interest repayment.
- Must meet co-signer release credit requirements in effect at the time of release request – these could be different than the initial co-signer credit requirements.

Enrollment Status

The student must be enrolled at least half-time in an eligible program leading to a graduate or doctoral degree or certificate. Each institution must have written definitions of “full-time” and “half-time” to support program administration, avoid confusion, and meet state audit requirements. Written definitions must be provided to institution staff responsible for certifying and disbursing SELF Grad Loans. OHE auditors verify that the institution has written definitions for half-time and full-time and cite institutions that are not in compliance with this requirement. Graduate programs may define full-time and half-time at the program level.

To be eligible for a SELF Grad Loan, the student must be enrolled in courses that will be credited toward the student's degree. If a student chooses to take courses at another institution and those courses will not be credited toward their degree, the institution cannot include the cost of those courses in the COA, nor can it count them toward determining enrollment level.

For students enrolled in two institutions, each institution may certify a SELF Grad Loan if the student is enrolled at least half-time at both institutions and all courses will be credited toward a degree or certificate. The combined loans are subject to the annual and cumulative limits. Living and miscellaneous expenses can only be included in one of the loan requests. It is up to the two institutions to determine which one will include living and miscellaneous expenses.

If only one SELF Grad Loan is certified for students taking courses at multiple institutions, the certifying institution must verify that the courses covered by the SELF Grad Loan will count toward a degree program at the primary institution. Verification can be done through a consortium or contractual agreement, email confirmation between institutions, or documentation on the transcript verifying enrollment in a degree-seeking program.

Loans can be certified for interim-term credits as long as the term is at least 30 days, or the interim-term credits can be combined with fall, spring, or full-year loans.

A student who is retaking courses that will count toward a graduate degree is eligible for a SELF Grad Loan if they meet SAP, at least half-time enrollment, and any other SELF Grad requirement outlined in this manual.

SELF Grad Loans are not available for prerequisite coursework prior to admission to a graduate program.

SELF Grad Loans cannot be used as a look back loan to cover balances owed for terms that ended. There is a short window after the end of the loan period for the student to apply, provided the application is completed and certified, with disbursement to the school within 30 days after the end of the term.

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

The student must be making SAP, as defined in Minnesota Statutes, [section 136A.101 subdivision 10](#). The institution should base the satisfactory progress determination on the last review conducted prior to the current term. If the funds arrive after the current term has ended and a review determines that the student is not making SAP, the institution should still disburse the SELF Grad Loan if the student completed the term and would have been considered eligible at the beginning of the term. Based on the determination of unsatisfactory progress, the student may not be eligible for a SELF Grad Loan for the next term. Satisfactory progress includes terms/payment periods during which a student retains eligibility for federal Title IV aid while in a status of either financial aid warning, financial aid probation, or meeting the terms of an academic plan.

The financial aid administrator must verify the SAP requirement before certifying the loan and disbursing loan funds to the student.

The institution may certify a loan or make a disbursement to a student during a term of financial aid warning or probation. A student is also eligible for SELF Grad funds if they are meeting the terms of their academic plan, even if they are not meeting cumulative SAP requirements.

SELF Grad Loan Terms and Requirements

The Grad Loan Program has two tiers:

SELF Grad Select Doctorate: Advanced Dentistry, Dentistry, Medicine, Pharmacy, and Veterinary Medicine

SELF Grad: All other degrees or certificates beyond Bachelors.

SELF Grad Loan Limit Table

Program Type	Annual Limit	Cumulative Degree Type Limit
Grad	\$50,000	\$150,000
Grad Select Doctorate	N/A	\$300,000

Minimum Loan Amount: \$2,000

The following alphabetical designations are to be used when certifying SELF Grad Loans:

- Grade Level A- first-year of graduate program
- Grade Level B- second-year of graduate program
- Grade Level C- third-year of graduate program
- Grade Level D- fourth-year and beyond of graduate program

For institutions offering programs that qualify for different loan limits, it is up to the institution to determine each student's eligibility based on the program the student is enrolled in. If an institution certifies a loan for more than the eligible amount, the institution will be liable for any excess, including the interest on the excess.

The loan amount cannot exceed the COA minus the OFA, including Federal PLUS loans. Veterans, military, and ROTC benefits are handled in the certification process as prescribed by the institution's policy.

Grad Loan Options

Grad Loans are fixed rates with repayment terms of 10, 15, or 20 years. Rates are determined based on the term and whether the loan is co-signed. Reduced interest rates are available for co-signed loans. There are no guarantee or origination fees charged.

Institutional Responsibilities

The financial aid administrator at each postsecondary institution participating in the SELF Grad Loan Program is responsible for ensuring that the following requirements are met.

Certification

Each institution agrees to certify SELF Grad Loans by verifying and documenting the student's identity, eligible enrollment, SAP, COA, and OFA. Three items must be aligned when certifying the SELF Grad Loan: loan period, COA, and OFA. If you determine the student selected the incorrect term, you can change the dates to the correct ones; however, if you need the term changed, you will need to contact iLink.

Cost of Attendance (COA)

The financial aid administrator must determine the maximum amount a student can borrow in the SELF Grad Loan Program. The student does not need to borrow the full amount they are eligible for; however, the minimum loan is \$2,000. The loan amount cannot exceed the COA minus OFA that the student will receive for the term(s) covered by the loan period. The following items can be included in the COA and must be restricted to charges for the loan period:

- Tuition and fees
- Books, course materials, supplies, and equipment (including computers and specialty tools)
- Transportation
- Living expenses (food and housing)
- Dependent care costs (childcare expenses)
- Costs of obtaining a license, certification, or first professional credential
- Costs for study abroad programs
- Disability-related expenses
- Fees for federal student loans
- Other unusual charges

For additional information regarding COA expenses, refer to the Federal Student Aid (FSA) Handbook.

If the student receives a scholarship after the loan is fully disbursed, the institution is not required to make any adjustments to the SELF Grad Loan; however, it is encouraged to do so to reduce student debt. If there are pending disbursements and the SELF Grad disbursement would exceed the COA, the institution must cancel or reduce pending disbursements.

The loan period always starts on the first day of a term/payment period and ends on the last day of that period. It is not based on the day the student applies or when the institution certifies the loan.

Other Financial Assistance (OFA)

In general, OFA includes all scholarships, grants, loans, or other assistance known to the institution at the time the determination of the student's need is made, including national service educational awards or post-service benefits under Title I of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12511 et seq.).

If the student has federal student loans, the OFA includes the gross loan amount, and the COA includes the origination/guarantee fees.

Disbursement of Loan Funds

EFT encompasses the direct electronic transfer of funds between iLink and the institution's bank account, as well as the utilization of central disbursing through ScholarNet, iLink, or ELM. With central disbursing, funds are transferred in one lump sum to the institution's designated bank account, and a roster is sent electronically. If you are interested in EFT, contact iLink. Checks are jointly payable to the student and the institution. The loan check(s) or EFT amount(s) will be sent to the institution on the scheduled disbursement date(s). Interest accrues from the disbursement date.

If the student does not want the loan, they can request that the institution return the funds to Aspire within 30 days. If it has been more than 30 days, the borrower can make a payment to Aspire if they no longer want all or part of the loan, so that appropriate interest charges can be assessed. The student can contact Aspire, or the institution can contact iLink or submit a CommonLine change file to cancel future disbursements. If the student is no longer enrolled at least half-time when the institution receives the loan funds and the loan period covers more than one term, the institution can disburse a portion of the loan proceeds to cover prior term(s) within the loan period. The institution could disburse the funds if the student maintained at least half-time enrollment during the entire previous term(s) and was making SAP. The institution should disburse funds only to cover amounts owed to the institution for completed terms and requested living and miscellaneous expenses for the completed terms. Refer to the example in this section under [Disbursement After the Borrower Withdraws](#).

All SELF Grad funds must be disbursed to the student or the student's account within 30 days of the check or funds transfer date, or the funds must be returned to Aspire/iLink.

Disbursement When Funds Arrive Before the Loan Period

SELF Grad funds cannot be requested earlier than 10 days before the start of the loan period. The institution must verify that the student is enrolled at least half-time and making SAP. A jointly payable check must be endorsed by both the student and the institution. The institution must subtract from the proceeds the amount owed for the payment period and arrange with the student for the use of any remaining funds. The remaining funds will be returned to the student in a timely manner or retained on the student's account with their permission. The institution may not keep on account any more money than it charges for the payment period without the student's written permission. If the student does not sign the SELF Grad check within 30 days of the date on the check, the disbursement must be returned to Aspire/iLink.

SELF Grad funds must be disbursed to the student or their account within 30 days of the check or funds transfer date, or the funds must be returned to Aspire/iLink. To meet that deadline, we recommend that institutions follow up with students who need to endorse checks within 20 days of the check date. If the student officially withdraws before the beginning of the loan period or does not start attending classes, the institution is responsible for returning the entire disbursement to Aspire/iLink within 30 days.

Disbursement When Funds Arrive During the Loan Period

When SELF Grad funds arrive during the loan period, the institution must verify the student's enrollment and SAP; endorse the check along with the student, if a check is used, and subtract from the proceeds the amount owed the institution for the payment period; and arrange with the student for the use of any remaining funds. The student must be attending at least half-time at the time of disbursement. The student has the same options for receiving any remaining funds as described in the section of this manual titled [Disbursement When Funds Arrive Before the Loan Period](#).

If the student is on an institution- approved leave of absence (LOA), refer to the section of this manual titled [Leave of Absence \(LOA\)](#).

If the check or EFT payment covers two or more terms within the loan period, the institution can disburse funds only for completed terms and the current term the student is enrolled in after SAP has been verified. The remaining balance can be held for up to 30 days or returned to Aspire/iLink.

SELF Grad funds must be disbursed to the student or their account within 30 days of the check or funds transfer, or the funds must be returned to Aspire/iLink. To meet that deadline, we recommend that institutions follow up with students to endorse checks no later than 20 days from the check date.

Disbursement When Funds Arrive After the Loan Period

When SELF Grad funds arrive after the loan period, the institution must verify that the student was enrolled at least half-time and making SAP. The funds must be disbursed within 30 days of the check or funds transfer, and no later than 45 days after the end of the loan period. The institution will subtract from the proceeds the amount owed to the institution for the payment period and arrange with the student for the use of the remaining funds. The student has the same options for receiving any remaining funds as described in the section of this manual entitled [Disbursement When Funds Arrive Before the Loan Period](#).

Institutions can disburse SELF Grad funds to graduates as long as the funds are disbursed within 30 days of the check or funds transfer and not later than 45 days from the end of the loan period.

Disbursement Requiring Power of Attorney Endorsement

If the student is in an approved off-campus program and is not available to personally endorse a disbursement check, the institution may mail the check to the student to obtain their signature, or the student may provide the institution with a notarized Power of Attorney form. The Power of Attorney authorization empowers an

individual (e.g., the co-signer, parent, or spouse—it cannot be an employee of the institution) to sign the check on behalf of the borrower so it can be endorsed by the institution and cashed.

The borrower's signature on the Power of Attorney form must be notarized, and a copy of the Power of Attorney form should be stapled to each check when the institution sends it to the bank for payment. The original should be filed in the financial aid office and be available to an OHE auditor upon request. A sample Power of Attorney form is included in [Appendix D](#).

Return of Loan Funds

Institutions receiving funds electronically through ScholarNet, iLink, or ELM should follow the CommonLine procedures for returning funds. Refer to [Appendix B](#) for Aspire's address to return SELF Grad funds by check. When returning funds by check, include:

- borrower name
- last four digits of the SSN
- loan program
- disbursement date
- reason for return if needed, request to reissue later, or cancel future disbursements.

Listed below are some common reasons to return funds and actions that will result:

- Withdrawal – the loan will be taken out of the School Period and placed in the Transition Period. Future disbursements will be canceled.
- Borrower does not want the funds – loan will remain in the School Period. Future disbursements will not be canceled unless requested by the institution or the borrower.
- Enrollment has dropped below half-time – loan will be taken out of the School Period and placed in the Transition Period. Future disbursements will be canceled.
- Not making SAP, the loan will remain in the School Period. Future disbursements will not be canceled unless requested by the institution or the borrower.
- Over awarded – additional aid came in. Future disbursements will not be canceled unless requested by the institution or the borrower.

Student Account Balances

Unless otherwise authorized by the student, if the institution applies any OHE program fund disbursements to a student's account and determines those disbursements exceed the allowable charges assessed to the student, the institution must pay that balance directly to the student as soon as possible, but within 14 days of the later of the:

- date that balance occurs,
- first day of classes of a payment period/period of enrollment as applicable, or
- date the student rescinds his or her authorization to hold funds; however, no later than 45 days after the end of the loan period.

If an institution attempts to disburse funds by check or EFT to the student and is unable to locate a valid address or bank account, the funds must be returned to Aspire/iLink within 45 days after the institution's inability to locate the student.

The institution may retain interest earned on the student's credit balance.

Student Authorization

An institution must obtain written authorization from the student allowing the institution to:

- disburse SELF payments via EFT;
- hold excess funds in the student's account; or
- return excess funds to the SELF Grad Program, if it is money the student is entitled to. An institution must allow the student to rescind authorization at any time.

The authorization is valid for the award year or the period of enrollment during which the institution obtains it. The initial authorization remains valid if the institution notifies the student in subsequent periods/years of its provisions, including an explanation of any interest the institution earns on the student's funds and whether the institution pays interest to the student. The notice must be in plain and conspicuous language and provide the student with the opportunity to cancel or modify provisions.

Leave of Absence (LOA)

A LOA is a period of time approved by the institution during which the student is not in attendance but remains enrolled. Each institution that offers a LOA must have an official LOA policy. We recommend that the institution follow the definition of federal financial aid programs in 34 CFR 668.22(d). The student must follow that policy when requesting an LOA, and the institution must have approved the student's request in accordance with its policy. The total length of all LOAs cannot exceed 180 days in any 12-month period.

If the student is on an institution-approved LOA when funds arrive, the institution can disburse funds for any completed terms included in the disbursement. If the student is due to return to School status within 30 days from the date on the check/EFT funds, the institution may hold undisbursed funds until the student returns. If the student fails to return or the student does not sign the check, the funds must be returned to Aspire/iLink within 30 days from the date on the check/EFT transfer. To meet that deadline, institutions are recommended to follow up with students who need to endorse checks within 20 days of the check date.

Note: A LOA need not consist of consecutive days when granted.

If a student does not return at the end of an approved LOA, the student is considered to have withdrawn on the day the LOA began and will be moved to the Transition Period.

Non-Enrollment

If a student fails to enroll, the institution must return the funds to Aspire/iLink within 30 days of the check/EFT date.

Withdrawal and Transfer to Another Eligible Institution

If the student fails to complete the loan period at the institution where the application was certified and transfers to another eligible institution, any pending loan disbursement to the student must be canceled. Institutions that are not participating in the Clearinghouse must notify iLink within 30 days of any borrower who withdraws. If a refund is due to the student, the institution should return the funds to Aspire/iLink in accordance with OHE's requirements, using the appropriate [Refund Calculation Worksheet](#). If adequate time and a \$2,000 minimum loan eligibility remain, the borrower may apply for a new loan if the new institution participates in the SELF Grad Program.

For the student to remain in the School Period, the new institution must participate in the SELF Grad Program or the Clearinghouse. Otherwise, the loan must enter the Transition Period.

Disbursement After the Borrower Withdraws

If the student is no longer enrolled at least half-time when the loan funds are received and the loan period covers more than one term, the institution may disburse a portion of the loan proceeds to cover prior term(s) within the loan period. The student must have maintained at least half-time enrollment throughout the previous term(s) and made satisfactory progress. The institution should disburse funds only to cover requested living and miscellaneous expenses and amounts owed to the institution for completed terms.

If one check or EFT is received that covers more than one term, the funds are divided by the number of terms, and the maximum amount the institution can disburse is for the completed term(s). The institution cannot use the full disbursed amount to cover one term. For example, a student enrolled at least half-time in a semester institution, applies on January 22, 2027, with a loan period of September 6, 2026, to May 31, 2027, and the second semester started January 22, 2027. The funds arrive at the institution on February 14, 2027, and have not been disbursed when the student withdraws on February 18, 2027. The institution can disburse up to half of the amount, since there are two terms, to cover amounts owed to the institution from the first semester. However, no funds can be retained for second-semester charges because the student withdrew before the institution disbursed the funds. Enrollment is determined on the date the institution is ready to disburse funds. If the student requests funds to cover miscellaneous living expenses for the first semester, those funds can be disbursed to the student.

If the check/EFT covers only the one term from which the student withdrew, the institution cannot disburse the funds and must return the check/EFT to Aspire/iLink.

Reinstatement of a Canceled Loan

Reinstatement of a canceled loan is possible if the student still qualifies. Reinstatements can be submitted via CommonLine or requested through iLink.

- Pre-disbursement, full-loan reinstatements can be submitted with CommonLine @1-08 records.

- If a loan is canceled before the first disbursement is released, it can be fully or partially reinstated using the @1-08 Detail Record. The reinstated loan amount must not exceed the original guarantee (loan) amount.
- Pre-disbursement reinstatements can be submitted with CommonLine @1-09 records. The Disbursement Cancellation/Change (@1-09) Detail Record is used to submit full or partial disbursement cancellations prior to the release of funds for the disbursement.
- If a disbursement cancellation is made prior to the release of funds, the disbursement can be either fully or partially reinstated using this record. The sum of all scheduled disbursements, including those that have been reinstated, must not exceed the original guarantee (loan) amount.
- Post-disbursement reinstatements can be submitted with CommonLine @1-10 records.
 - The Disbursement Notification/Change (@1-10) Detail Record is used to submit full or partial disbursement cancellations after the issue of funds.
 - If you previously canceled a disbursement in full using @1-10 Detail Record, you can later use @1-10 Detail Record to request full or partial reinstatement of the disbursement.
 - Reissue requests can also be submitted using @1-10 Detail Record. A full reissue is requested when an institution returns the original disbursement amount to the disbursing agent and requests that the same amount be disbursed later. A partial reissue is requested when an institution returns the original disbursement amount to the disbursing agent and requests that a reduced amount be disbursed later.

Enrollment Verification Reports (EVR)

Institutions that do not participate in the Clearinghouse must complete and return the periodic EVR's issued by Aspire. These reports request information on borrowers' enrollment statuses and expected graduation dates. These reports must be returned to Aspire within two weeks of receipt. The institution should maintain copies of the EVR reports for audit purposes. The SELF Grad Program may suspend an institution from the program if it fails to complete these reports.

Notification of Student Enrollment Changes

Institutions that do not participate in the Clearinghouse must notify iLink within 30 days of becoming aware of any changes to the student's status that may affect their program eligibility. Examples of status changes affecting SELF Grad eligibility include dropping below half-time status, withdrawal, or graduation.

Admission and Registration Records

Each institution must maintain admission and registration records that support each student's eligibility. The financial aid administrator should refer to these records when certifying the loan and when disbursing SELF Grad funds to the student.

Disbursement Scheduling

Institutions cannot request funds more than 10 days before the start of the loan period. Checks are made jointly payable to the borrower and the eligible institution. If the loan period covers more than one academic term or payment period and processing time permits, the loan will be disbursed in installments during each academic term or payment period. For example, if an eligible institution's academic year is divided into two semesters and if the student requests a loan for the academic year, the loan amount must be scheduled for two disbursements.

SELF Grad Loan Payment Requirements

There are four different SELF Loan payment periods:

School Period

During the School Period, the borrower is required to make monthly payments of up to \$25 (currently \$15) for each Grad Loan.

The School Period is when the borrower is enrolled at least half-time in a qualifying postsecondary institution that has signed a SELF Institutional Participation Agreement or participates in the Clearinghouse. The loan can return to the School Period if it has not entered Mandatory Repayment. The borrower does not need to request the change if the institution participates in the Clearinghouse. Aspire updates the status based on Clearinghouse information. If the borrower attends a non-Clearinghouse, the borrower needs to contact Aspire to request a return to the School Period, and Aspire will confirm the enrollment status with the institution.

Transition Period

During the Transition Period (up to 12 months), the borrower is required to make monthly payments of up to \$25 (currently \$15) per SELF Grad Loan.

The Transition Period begins:

- upon graduation,
- if a borrower's enrollment drops to below half-time,
- the borrower is in a residency program, or
- if the borrower transfers to an institution that hasn't signed a SELF Institutional Participation Agreement or doesn't participate in the Clearinghouse.

Any unpaid interest from the School and Transition Periods will be capitalized - added to the principal balance - at the end of a Transition Period.

If the borrower returns to the School Period from an Extension (see below) or a Repayment Period, the Transition Period is reduced to up to six months after the borrower is no longer in the School Period, and during this time, the Repayment Period is paused. The loan is still subject to the Mandatory Repayment Period.

Extension Period

Extension Periods are only available for the Select Doctorate programs. During the Extension Period (up to 7 years), the borrower must make the \$15 monthly payment. The Extension Period is optional after the Transition Period. The loan is still subject to the Mandatory Repayment Period. Annual residency verification forms must be provided to Aspire for the loan to remain in Extension.

Repayment Period

During the Repayment Period, the borrower must make monthly payments of principal and interest.

The Repayment Period begins:

- at the end of the Transition or Extension Period, or
- ten years after the borrower took out the loan if the borrower is still in School, Transition, or Extension (Mandatory Repayment).

There are no grace periods or deferment options.

Loan Cancellation

If a student wishes to cancel their SELF Grad Loan, the student should contact Aspire, or the institution can contact iLink. If the loan is not canceled prior to disbursement, the student or institution should return the funds to Aspire/iLink within 30 days of the check/EFT date with an explanation of the cancellation. If the student wants to return only the first disbursement and still receive subsequent disbursements, that information must be provided to iLink.

Combined Billing

All of the borrower's loans are due on the same day of the month, unless transferred from the previous Servicer with a different due date, or the borrower has requested different dates. The first billing due date will be the month after disbursement. All loans in minimum payment status (School, Transition, and Extension) are due on the last calendar day of the month.

Late Payments

Aspire begins diligence activities when the account is 16 days past due. Approximately every 15 days, there is a letter and/or phone attempt to contact the borrower and co-signer. Diligence activities continue until the loan defaults, which occurs when the loan is 142 days delinquent. If a SELF Grad Loan is 60 days or more past due at the month-end reporting cut-off, the delinquency is reported to the credit bureau for both the borrower and co-signer. Late fees are not currently being charged.

Forbearance

A borrower may be granted up to twenty-four months of forbearance in monthly increments over the life of each loan. OHE will grant forbearance upon receipt of a signed request from both the borrower and co-signer. The signature requirement can be waived in certain circumstances. New loans are not approved if the borrower or co-signer has any loans in forbearance.

Institution Payments on Behalf of Students

Institutions and institution personnel are prohibited from making payments on a student's loan unless they pay interest that resulted from a late return of funds by the institution. Institutional payments would artificially delay default, potentially allowing the borrower and co-signer to obtain other financial benefits they are not entitled to.

Default

If the borrower is delinquent in payments for 142 days or has failed to meet any of the other conditions of the loan, the loan will default in accordance with established processing requirements. If a loan goes into default, OHE will take one or more of the following actions:

- file a revenue recapture claim to intercept the borrower's and co-signer's Minnesota state income tax refunds, property tax refunds, special rebates or refunds, and lottery winnings;
- take legal action against the borrower and co-signer for repayment;
- report the borrower's and co-signer's default to the credit bureau;
- use the Minnesota Department of Revenue collection entity;
- add collection fees to the defaulted balance; and
- withhold Minnesota state grant awards and certain other types of aid.

Bankruptcy

Federal bankruptcy laws exclude student loans made by a state agency from discharge, except in cases of court-approved hardship. If a borrower is adjudicated bankrupt and has liability discharged for the SELF Grad Loan, the co-signer, if not part of the bankruptcy, remains liable for unpaid principal and interest.

Death and Disability Provisions

If the borrower dies, the borrower's and the co-signer's obligation to pay principal and interest is canceled as of the date of the death. If an institution becomes aware of a borrower's death, please contact OHE immediately so a hold can be placed on the account to prevent any collection letters or phone calls.

If the borrower becomes totally and permanently disabled after the loan is fully disbursed, the borrower and co-signer's obligation to make any further payment of principal and interest on a SELF Grad Loan is canceled as of the date medical documentation is received and approved by OHE.

Totally and permanently disabled means the inability to engage in any gainful employment activity because of a medically determinable impairment expected to continue for a long and indefinite period or to result in death.

If, after loan disbursement, the borrower becomes temporarily totally disabled, the borrower may be eligible for temporary disability status. Upon receipt of acceptable medical documentation, no interest will accrue, and no payments will be required for a limited period. The disability must be anticipated to last at least four months. The status can be renewed for up to one year at a time, for a maximum of three years. At the end of the nonaccrual period for interest, payments resume in an amount sufficient to repay the loan within the time period required by the promissory note, unless the borrower negotiates a payment extension agreement with OHE.

If the co-signer dies, or if, after full disbursement of the loan, the co-signer becomes totally and permanently disabled, the co-signer's obligations are canceled as of the date medical documentation is received and approved by OHE or the date of death. The borrower is still responsible for repayment.

State Audits

General Requirements

OHE auditors or auditors designated under Minnesota Statute 136A.1313 will periodically review records of participating institutions to conduct a compliance audit. All pertinent books, documents, papers, and records for audit and examination must be available to auditors for three years after the last day of a fiscal year or until audit exceptions for the period are resolved.

Student Eligibility

The institution must have written documentation to support the students' eligibility, including the following:

- each student borrower attending an out-of-state institution was an eligible Minnesota resident;
- the student borrower was enrolled at least half-time from the date of the loan application through the disbursement of SELF Grad funds;
- the student was properly enrolled and making SAP as defined by the institution at the time of loan application and disbursement of SELF Grad funds. The SAP determination should be based on the last review done prior to the current term. Institutions participating in federal financial aid programs are required to use the federal definitions of SAP, as found in Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Sections 668.16(e), 668.32(f), and 668.34. The federal definitions are recommended for use by institutions that do not participate in federal financial aid programs.
- the estimated OFA and a reasonable COA were documented for each student (the institution may use a documented, standardized COA if it wishes); and
- the borrower was eligible for the loan amount recommended by the institution.

The institution must document how the COA was determined. Copying the certification screen is not sufficient, as it does not document how the cost was determined.

The institution must clearly label the disbursement as “SELF Grad Loan” or “MN SELF Grad” and document the disbursement date on either the student’s account record or ledger.

Within 30 days of receipt of the loan funds, the financial aid office must:

- verify the enrollment and SAP of the borrower (the institution is liable to the SELF Grad Program for funds delivered to students who were not properly enrolled). The SAP determination should be based on the last review done prior to the current term.
- deliver a loan check or transfer funds electronically to the borrower if the student is eligible.
- reconcile each EFT roster to make sure funds are posted to the student’s account; and
- return SELF Grad funds to Aspire/iLink for those borrowers not currently eligible.

Refer to [Appendix B](#) for a Disbursement Checklist that institutions can use to ensure all required steps have been taken prior to disbursing the SELF Grad Loan.

Refunds

The proper refund amount must be calculated according to OHE regulations governing refunds and returned to Aspire/iLink within 30 days. Written documentation of the refund calculation must be retained in the student’s file at the institution, refer to the appropriate [Refund Calculation Worksheet](#).

If additional aid results in a refund, the school is encouraged to return funds to the SELF Grad Loan Program if the student’s total aid exceeds the COA. If the student’s total aid does not exceed the COA, the refund should go to the student, unless the student has requested in writing that the excess be refunded to the SELF Grad Loan. If there are pending disbursements and the SELF Grad disbursement would exceed the COA, the institution must cancel or reduce pending disbursements.

If, after the Drop/Add period, you determine the student never attended classes, you would need to refund the entire SELF Grad Loan.

Note: How institutions calculate refunds depends on the institution’s policy for handling ROTC and VA benefits.

Withdrawal Date

For institutions participating in federal financial aid programs, the withdrawal date is defined in 668.22 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). Institutions not participating in federal aid programs are subject to any definition of withdrawal date that exists in state law or, if none exists, institutional policy.

Student Account Requirements for State Financial Aid

Institutions must maintain a student account for each student. Unless otherwise authorized by the student, whenever an institution applies state financial aid disbursements to a student’s account and determines that the amount of those disbursements exceeds the amount of allowable charges the institution assessed the student for the payment period, the institution must pay that balance directly to the student as soon as possible, but within 14 days of the later of:

- the date that the balance occurs,
- the first day of classes of a payment period/period of enrollment as applicable, or
- the date the student rescinds his or her authorization to hold funds.

If an institution receives authorization to hold excess funds, the institution must identify the student and the amount of funds held for the student in a subsidiary ledger account designated for that purpose. The institution must also maintain, at all times, cash in its bank account equal to or greater than the amount it holds for students. Because state financial aid funds are awarded to students to pay current year charges, notwithstanding any authorization obtained by an institution from a student or parent, the institution must pay any remaining state credit balance by:

- the end of the loan period for state loans, and
- the end of the last payment period in the award year for which they were awarded, for any other remaining balance of state financial aid disbursements.

If an institution attempts to disburse funds by check or EFT transaction to the student and the check is returned to the institution or the EFT transaction is rejected, the institution may make additional attempts to disburse the funds to the student, provided those attempts take place within 45 days after the funds were returned or rejected. If no additional attempts to disburse funds are made, the funds must be returned to the program within that 45-day period. If an institution attempts to disburse funds by check to the student, and the check is not cashed, the institution must return funds to the program within 240 days of the check being issued.

If an institution cannot locate a student to whom a state financial aid credit balance must be paid, the institution must return the credit balance to the SELF Grad Loan, if appropriate. The institution is permitted to retain any interest earned on the student's credit balance funds.

Document Requirements for State Audits for the SELF Grad Program

Each institution must be able to produce the following for auditors:

- individual student financial aid files for SELF Grad borrowers and related student account records, which identify disbursements as MN SELF Grad Loan or other clear designation;
- written definition of full-time student;
- written definition of half-time student;
- written definitions of grade level classifications to identify what standards are used to qualify a student's movement from one grade level to the next for SELF Grad eligibility;
- written documentation/verification of student's enrollment status on at least a half-time basis;
- written documentation/verification supporting budgetary attendance costs of borrowers and estimated OFA;
- written documentation of each student's SELF Grad disbursement, including the date of disbursement and a dollar amount disbursed (refer to Appendix B for Disbursement Checklist that may be used);
- copies of EVR's sent by Aspire to institutions that do not participate in the Clearinghouse (keep for three years after the last day of a fiscal year or until audit exceptions for the period are resolved); and

- written documentation of refund calculations for individual SELF Grad recipients (e.g. copy of Refund Calculation Worksheet).

Clearinghouse Information

If your institution is interested in joining the Clearinghouse, please call 703.742.7791 for more information. There is no charge for institutions to join the Clearinghouse.

Appendices

Appendix A: SELF Loan Contacts

Minnesota Office of Higher Education SELF Program Contact Information

Type	Contact Details
Borrower and School	651.642.0567 or 800.657.3866 Staff are available Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Central Time.
Physical Address	Office of Higher Education 1450 Energy Park Drive, Suite 350 St. Paul, MN 55108-5227
SELF email address	selfloan.ohe@state.mn.us
SELF Loan website	www.selfloan.mn.gov
Financial Aid Administrators SELF Resources website	SELF Resources MN Office of Higher Education
SELF Loan Manager	Marilyn Kosir 651.355.0600 Marilyn.kosir@state.mn.us
SELF Loan Assistant Manager	Sarah Linehan 651.355.0602 Sarah.linehan@state.mn.us

Aspire Contact Information

Type	Contact Details
Borrower Services	800.243.7552 Representatives are available Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Central Time
Fax Number	515.471.3983
Borrower Payment Address for SELF Loans	Aspire Servicing Center PO Box 659701, West Des Moines, IA 50265-0970
Website Access	SELF borrower and co-signer information is available at: www.aspireresourcesinc.com
Address For Returning Disbursement Checks and Other School Correspondence	Aspire Servicing Center PO Box 659701, West Des Moines, IA 50265-0970 Overnight Address: Aspire Servicing Center Attn Payment Processing 6805 Vista Drive, West Des Moines, IA 50266-9307
School Disbursement Processing	iLink Department 800.833.4876 iLink@AspireResourcesInc.com 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Central Time

Appendix B: Disbursement Checklist

Paper Checks:	
Date of Check:	
Amount of Check:	
Date check endorsed by institution:	
Date check endorsed by student:	
Was student enrolled at least half-time on date check was endorsed by student?	
Is the student maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress?	

EFT Funds:	
Date of EFT:	
Amount of EFT:	
Date funds posted to the student's account:	
Was the student enrolled at least half-time on the date funds were posted to the student's account?	
Is the student maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress?	

Appendix C: Waiver of SELF Maximum Effort Test

Minnesota Office of Higher Education
1450 Energy Park Drive, Suite 350, St Paul, MN 55108-5227

Waiver of SELF Maximum Effort Test

(Form cannot be used for families who will not complete the FAFSA). If the student meets the following requirements, a FAFSA is not needed.

- Student applied for financial aid last year and was found to demonstrate little or no financial need. The FAFSA must be completed the first year unless the student is an international or undocumented student who would not be eligible for aid. Undocumented Minnesota residents are required to complete the Minnesota Alternative State Aid Application (MASAA) State Financial Aid Application for the first year.
- The student's family financial situation has not changed or deteriorated since last year.

I, the Financial Aid Administrator, believe that little or no financial need would be found if an application were to be filed this year.

Financial Aid Administrator's Signature

Date Signed

When completed, please place this form in the applicant's financial aid file.

Appendix D: Power of Attorney – SELF Programs

Because I will not be present to sign disbursement checks for a SELF Program through the Minnesota Office of Higher Education,

I, _____
(Print Borrower's Name) (Address) (City) (State) (Zip)

do hereby appoint:

(Print Name) (Address) (City) (State) (Zip)

to act on my behalf. In my absence, I want the above-named individual to:

1. Endorse SELF Program check(s) made payable to me and to the institution;
2. Make sure my institution account, if any, is credited with the proceeds of the loan;
3. If any proceeds remain after paying institution charges, make sure the institution either (check one):
 - keeps any remaining proceeds on account at the institution for me, or
 - forwards any remaining proceeds to me.

This power of attorney shall end in the event of my disability.

This power of attorney does not authorize the above-named individual to whom I have given power to act on my behalf to transfer my SELF Program proceeds to himself or herself.

This power of attorney shall end with the disbursement of my last SELF Program disbursement for the loan period used on the application, or one calendar year after the date written above my signature below, whichever comes first.

In witness of the above statement, I sign my name, this _____ day of _

(Borrower's Signature)

(Signature of Person Given Power)

Subscribed and sworn before me this _____ day of _

(Signature of Notary Public)