



MARYLAND PRIVATE CAREER SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

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Maryland Minimum Refund Policy

QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE MARYLAND minimum refund policy have recently been fielded by PCS staff. These questions have been posed to us by school administrators as well as students and their parents. Here are the answers to the most frequently asked questions.

1. **“Our school doesn’t agree with the refund policy and would like to implement a different one.”** Many private career schools will be surprised to know that schools have a choice when it comes to their refund policy manner of calculation. The refund policy calculation contained in regulation is a *minimum* refund policy. That means that if a school would like its refund policy calculation to be more generous to the student, it may submit the proposed calculation to PCS staff for review. Of course this has to be on a completed Program Modification Application which can be downloaded from our website (<http://www.mhec.state.md.us/career/pcs/formsource.asp>).
2. **“The checklist indicates that we must provide the refund within 60 days. When does that refund time frame begin?”** It is always counted from the student’s last date of attendance, which is also identified on the checklist as the date of withdrawal or termination. The only exception is when a student fails to return from a Leave of Absence, then the refund must be paid within the required time frame starting the date the student was supposed to return.
3. **“The student told us that he would be returning to re-enroll in three months, so we didn’t do the calculations or issue the refund.”** This is a compliance issue just waiting to be uncovered. By regulation, the school has at most 60 days to perform the calculation and issue the refund if one is due. Some schools choose a 30 day time frame, others a 45 day time frame. The refund time frame identified in the school’s refund policy is rigid. No exceptions.
4. **“We don’t consider a student as having withdrawn and being owed a refund until we receive written notification from the student with her request for a refund.”** Maryland requires the school to be proactive when determining whether a student has withdrawn. Therefore, it is up to the school to make a timely determination if the student fails to notify the school. Many of our private career schools have a termination policy based on consecutive absences. If your school does not, then you should consider it. The two most common consecutive absence termination policies are when a student is absent for either 10 or 14 consecutive days, then the student status is changed to ‘withdrawn’ and the school begins the refund process. Remember that the school has a limited time frame in which to perform the refund calculation and issue a refund. The school cannot blame the student for lack of notification if PCS staff discover that the school has failed to provide a refund within the required time frame.

Words-to-the-Wise



TAKE NOTE

MHEC staff request that you note the following:

1. **2013 Annual Reports are due no later than September 3, 2013.** There are NO extensions; never have been.
2. Speaking of the Annual Report, there was a good turn-out for the 4 workshops held a few weeks ago. In total, about 75 private career school folks attended.
3. One item that came up in the Annual Report workshops is that **STATE OFFICES ARE CLOSED** on both the Friday and Monday of Labor Day weekend. The Baltimore Grand Prix is also being run that weekend. To top it all off, the outside of the Nancy Grasmick building in which we’re located is being cleaned, so our Liberty Street entrance is periodically blocked. So, if you’re planning on dropping off your annual report, plan your trip intelligently. Remember, mailing is always an option.
4. PCS staff has been approved to increase its size by one more person. We are hopeful that this will occur near the end of the calendar year. The position description and job announcement will be posted on our website home page. Click on [Who We Are](#), then [Job Openings](#). We will also be seeking someone with an extensive IT background in database administration.
5. Regarding staffing changes at MHEC, we bid farewell to Dr. Lauren Jones-Lush, our Director of Academic Affairs and our PCS immediate supervisor. At the same time, we welcome Dr. Jennifer Frank as MHEC’s Acting Assistant Secretary. Dr. Frank comes to us from the University of Maryland and has extensive background in P-20 initiatives.

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