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# Wisconsin Legislative Council

## ACT MEMO

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### 2019 Wisconsin Act 75 [2019 Senate Bill 334]

### Academic Protections for Students Called to Active Duty Service

## BACKGROUND

State law provides protections for a University of Wisconsin (UW) System school, technical college, or private nonprofit college student who withdraws from school because the student is a member of a national guard or a member of a reserve unit of the U.S. armed forces and is called to active duty service.

Under prior law, if a student was called to active duty for at least 30 days, a UW System school, technical college, or private nonprofit college was required to do all of the following:

- Reenroll the student in the semester in which the student was discharged.
- Give the student the same registration priority the student would have had if the student had registered at the beginning of the registration period.

A UW System school or technical college, for any of its enrolled students who were called to active duty service for at least 30 days, was also required to do either of the following, at the student's request: (1) reimburse all tuition and fees paid for courses from which the student had to withdraw, and prorate room and board; or (2) grant the student an incomplete in the courses for which the student had to withdraw, and allow the student to complete the courses within six months. A private nonprofit college, for any of its enrolled students who were called to active duty for at least 30 days, was required only to provide the latter of the two options.

Also under prior law, a school approved by the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) or the Educational Approval Board, or authorized by the distance learning authorization board was not required to provide any of the above protections to a student who was called to active duty service.

## 2019 WISCONSIN ACT 75

2019 Wisconsin Act 75 expands the protections that a college or university student must provide to a student called to active duty service. Specifically, the act requires a UW System school, technical college, or private nonprofit college or a school approved by DSPS or the Educational Approval Board, or authorized by the distance learning authorization board, to do all of the following for any student who is called to active duty service, regardless of the duration of the active duty service:

- Reenroll the student in the semester in which the student was discharged.
- Give the student the same registration priority the student would have had if the student had registered at the beginning of the registration period.

- At the student's request, do either of the following:
  - Reimburse all tuition and fees paid for courses from which the student had to withdraw, and prorate room and board.
  - Grant the student an incomplete in the courses for which the student had to withdraw, and allow the student to complete the courses within six months.
- Provide a reasonable opportunity to complete final projects or examinations for all courses with a scheduled end date not more than 30 days after the date of the order which called the student to active duty.

**Effective date:** January 22, 2020

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