Western Michigan University
Residency Policy – for Admissions and/or Tuition and Fees Purposes

The governing board at each university in Michigan has the authority to establish a residency policy for admissions and/or tuition and fee purposes. Therefore, residency policies will vary between institutions and are independent of those used by the State to determine residency for purposes such as income and property tax liability, driving and voting.

Any Western Michigan University undergraduate student who has been admitted as a degree seeking student and began enrollment as of the Spring 2017 semester or earlier, may apply for in-state resident status for any semester/session in which they are enrolled in on-campus courses by completing a residency application in accordance with university procedure.

Any Western Michigan University undergraduate student who has been admitted as a degree seeking student and began enrollment effective with the Summer I 2017 semester or later, will have their residency status determined at the time of admission and it will remain the same throughout the student’s enrollment at Western Michigan University.

Any Western Michigan University graduate student who has been admitted effective prior to the Summer II 2020 semester and began enrollment prior to Summer II 2020 may apply for in-state resident status for any semester/sessions in which they are enrolled in on-campus courses by completing a residency application in accordance with university procedure.

For Western Michigan University graduate students, admitted and enrolled effective with the Summer II 2020 semester or later, residency status is determined at the time of admission and it will remain the same throughout the student’s enrollment at Western Michigan University.

Since a student normally comes to Western Michigan University for the primary purpose of attending the University rather than to establish a domicile in Michigan, one who enrolls in the University as a non-resident shall continue to be deemed a non-resident. For those students eligible to appeal for resident status, the student must demonstrate that his/her previous domicile has been abandoned and a Michigan domicile established.

Domicile is defined as the place where an individual’s true, fixed and permanent home and principle establishment is and to which the individual returns whenever absent from the University. Twelve consecutive months of physical presence immediately preceding the first day of classes is a strong indicator of domicile.

A. Residence of Student

A student may be considered domiciled in Michigan if the student is in continuous physical presence in this state for one year (12 consecutive months) immediately preceding the first day of classes of the term for which resident status is sought and intends to make Michigan his/her permanent home and has no domicile elsewhere. The year of continuous presence is never the only criterion used for determining in-state residency status and, by itself, will not qualify a student for residency status for tuition paying purposes at Western.
B. Residence of Parents

The domicile of a dependent student is presumed to be the same as that of the student’s parents. Regardless of whether the parent is the student’s custodial parent, a dependent student with one or both parents domiciled in Michigan, according to Western’s Residency Policy, is presumed to be eligible for resident status as long as the student has not taken steps to establish a domicile outside of Michigan or any other action inconsistent with maintaining a domicile in Michigan.

The domicile of a dependent student’s legal guardian(s) has the same evidentiary effect as that of a dependent student’s parent(s), and references to parents in this policy shall include legal guardians, only when the student is the dependent of the legal guardian, and such guardianship has been established due to complete incapacity or death of the student’s natural parent(s). A parent’s inability to provide funds necessary to support a college education does not qualify as complete incapacity.

A dependent student who is living in Michigan and who is, according to Western’s Residency Policy, permanently domiciled in Michigan would maintain resident status if the parents leave Michigan provided: (1) the student has completed at least the junior year of high school prior to the parent’s departure; (2) the student remains in Michigan, enrolled as a full-time student in high school or an institution of higher education and (3) the student has not taken steps to establish a domicile outside Michigan or any other action inconsistent with maintaining a domicile in Michigan.

C. Residence of Spouse

The residence of a student who otherwise would be classified as a non-resident will follow that of his/her spouse if the spouse qualifies as a resident for tuition-paying purposes.

D. Michigan High School Enrollment and Graduation

A Michigan high school graduate who completes his/her senior year at a Michigan high school, remains physically present in Michigan immediately following high school graduation to the first day of classes of the term in which the student is enrolled in on campus courses, and provides the required State of Michigan tax documents of parent(s) or guardian(s) (for dependent student) or student (if independent) qualifies as a resident student for tuition and fee purposes at Western.

E. In-state Tuition for Military and Dependents

Western Michigan University will grant in-state tuition to all individuals who are eligible for VA educational benefits.

Western Michigan University will also grant in-state tuition to all individuals who are not eligible for VA educational benefits but have honorably served or are serving in the Reserve or Active Components of the US Armed Forces.
Western Michigan University will additionally grant in-state tuition to dependents of those individuals who have honorably served or are serving in the Reserve or Active Components of the US Armed Forces, but would otherwise not be eligible for VA educational benefits. For this purpose, a child is a dependent as defined by IRS income tax regulations. This term also includes a spouse, widow or widower of a service member or veteran who has honorably served.

F. Individuals Holding Visas

International students attending on a student visa of F1, J1, or M1 and H (work) visas are in Michigan on a temporary basis. By definition, these students are not able to establish a permanent domicile in Michigan and should not apply for Michigan resident tuition unless they qualify for residency under another provision of this policy such as residence of spouse.

Persons entitled to reside permanently in the United States may be eligible to obtain resident status. These individuals must still prove that they have established a Michigan domicile as defined in this policy. Currently, individuals will qualify under this classification only if they hold and can provide one of the following: 1) a fully processed Permanent Resident Alien Card or passport stamp verifying final approval by the filing deadline established for the applicable term 2) an I-94 card with “Refugee” designation; or 3) an A, E (primary), G or I visa.

G. Migrant Worker (Seasonal/Agricultural Employment)

If an independent student, or the parent of a dependent student, has been employed as a migrant worker in Michigan for a minimum of two (2) months each year for three (3) of the five (5) years prior to the date of the proposed in-state classification or for a minimum of three (3) months each year for two (2) of the five (5) years prior to the date of the proposed in-state classification, the student shall be classified as a resident. Proof and verification of employment is required. A migrant worker in Michigan is defined as one who travels to Michigan to pursue agricultural or related industry employment.

H. In-State Tuition Rates Required by Law

Western Michigan University will comply with all state and federal laws that require a student to be classified as a Michigan resident for the purpose of tuition and fees.

I. Misrepresentation and Falsification of Information

Students who provide false or misleading information or who intentionally omit relevant information on their admissions application or the residency application or any other document relevant to residency eligibility may be subject to disciplinary and/or legal measures. Decisions made based upon misrepresented or falsified information may be revoked.
J. Appeal Process

Any student may appeal the decision on their residency application by following the prescribed appeal process. Failure to comply with the procedure shall constitute a waiver of all claims to reclassification or rebates for the applicable semester/session. The student will receive a written response on the appeal request. The decision on the residency appeal shall be the final recourse within the University.

K. Required Documentation

A student must provide the following documentation when applying for residency.

- A copy of their valid Michigan driver’s license and a copy of the Michigan driver’s license of the person(s) upon whom the applicant is basing the claim to resident eligibility.
- Verification of U.S. citizenship or of visa status if the applicant was born outside of the United States. This verification may be based upon information already provided by the student to the University through the admission process.
- Any other documentation requested by the University that is deemed necessary to support the applicant’s claim to residency eligibility.

When applicable, applicants claiming in-state residency will be asked to provide documentation verifying the 12-month consecutive domicile requirement of Western’s policy. Types of documentation that may be requested include proof of employment, proof of Michigan personal income taxes being withheld, copies of recent Michigan and federal tax returns and W2 or 1099 forms, and enrollment verification at a Michigan school, if applicable. Additional documentation may also be requested. The application procedure for residency specifies additional detail on the nature of documentation that is required. In addition, the documentation provided must apply to the person(s) upon whom the applicant is basing the claim to resident eligibility.

L. Initial Residency Classification

A student enrolling at Western for the first time shall be classified as a resident or non-resident for tuition paying purposes. The student is responsible for reading the Residency Policy and to register under the proper residency classification. Admissions reviews the residency classification at the time of application. If an application does not denote residency status, a status of non-resident will be assigned. If an applicant indicates Michigan residency on the admissions application and Admissions questions this status then the applicant will be classified as a non-resident. Additionally, if an applicant previously attended Western as a non-resident and reappears for admission, he/she will be classified as a non-resident at the time of readmission. Questions raised regarding a student’s Michigan residency do not necessarily mean that the student will be ineligible for in-state residency. It simply means that the student’s circumstance must be documented by completing an application for a change in residency status.
M. Establishing a Michigan Domicile

The circumstances and activities described in sections A through H above may demonstrate Michigan domicile, though not conclusive or exhaustive, they may lend support to a claim of eligibility for resident status.

The following circumstances, standing alone, shall not constitute sufficient evidence of domicile to effect classification of a student as a resident under these regulations; however, they do provide some supporting evidence.

- A Michigan’s driver license
- Enrollment in a Michigan educational institution
- Michigan employment
- Payment of Michigan income or property taxes
- Ownership of property in Michigan
- 12-month lease in Michigan
- Presence of relative(s) in Michigan (other than parent(s) for dependent student)

N. Administration of the Policy

The Office of the Vice President for Business and Finance will administer this policy and is authorized to establish procedures to effectuate and interpret the Residency Policy. The Vice President and Associate Vice President for Business and Finance may grant residency status based upon the use of professional judgment in applying this policy.