

IN-DEPTH DEPARTMENTAL BRIEF

OBBBA & Admissions

Detailed guidance for admissions & enrollment

Why this matters now

Admissions is where students and families set their financing expectations — and OBBBA changes what federal aid will cover, especially for graduate, professional, and Parent PLUS families, beginning July 1, 2026. At the same time, the mix of programs you can confidently recruit for may shift, and Workforce Pell opens new markets. Honest, accurate financing conversations become a competitive advantage.

The changes in detail

- **Financing changes families will feel.** Grad PLUS is eliminated; graduate (\$20,500/yr), professional (\$50,000/yr), and Parent PLUS (\$20,000/yr, \$65,000 per dependent) borrowing is capped; a \$257,500 lifetime federal loan cap applies; and some students lose Pell eligibility.
- **Program eligibility risk.** Programs that fail the earnings-accountability test can lose federal Direct Loan eligibility, which directly affects their recruitability and the financing available to their students.
- **New short-term pathways.** Workforce Pell extends federal aid to eligible short-term, career-focused programs — a recruiting opportunity, especially for adult and career-changer audiences.

OPERATIONAL IMPACT

- Counselors need accurate command of the new loan, Pell, and repayment realities to avoid over-promising affordability.
- Net-price and financing messaging, and the financial aid hand-off, must reflect the new rules.
- Recruitment planning should account for which programs are at accountability risk and which new Workforce Pell markets to pursue.

RISKS & WATCH-ITEMS

- Yield and reputation damage if admitted students discover financing gaps late in the cycle.
- Recruiting heavily into programs at risk of losing loan eligibility.
- Graduate/professional enrollment softening as Grad PLUS disappears and caps bind.

Action plan

Immediate (0–3 months)

- Train admissions and enrollment staff on the new financing landscape, coordinated with Financial Aid.
- Review recruitment plans against the list of programs at earnings-accountability risk.

Near-term

- Update net-price, affordability, and financing messaging and the counselor talk track.
- Where offered, build targeted recruitment for Workforce Pell-eligible short-term programs.

Ongoing

- Monitor competitor and market shifts as financing changes ripple through graduate and professional enrollment.



What good looks like



Every counselor can accurately explain what federal aid will and won't cover in 2026–27.



Recruitment resources aligned to programs with strong outcomes and stable eligibility.



New enrollment channels opened through Workforce Pell where the institution qualifies.

How CampusWorks & Dynamic Campus can help

We help translate the financing changes into clear counselor talk tracks and family-facing messaging, align recruitment strategy with program-level accountability risk, and identify and stand up Workforce Pell markets that fit your mission.

CAMPUSWORKS +  Dynamic Campus