

N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY25	FY26	FY27	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates/Conflicts with/Companion to/Relates to:

Duplicates/Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act:

SECTION III: NARRATIVE

BILL SUMMARY

Senate Bill 68 (HB68) amends 21-21G NMSA 1978, the Graduate Scholarship Act, changing eligibility by increasing awards. The amendments remove United States citizenship or naturalization requirements, adds grade point average (GPA) qualification criteria, and removes full-time enrollment. The bill removes unpaid internship requirements and requires continuous enrollment in consecutive academic years to maintain qualifications for the scholarship. The bill removes the maximum award of \$7,200 per academic year to award one hundred percent (100%) of tuition and fees provided the student remains enrolled. SB68 makes several non-substantive amendments to correct outdated references within the statute. The bill adds new material to require students to serve in an internship or assistantship at the eligible institutions approved by the students' academic department.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

SB68 makes no appropriation.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Graduate scholarships are funded through New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED) Student Financial Aid line item in the General Appropriations Act. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 General Fund appropriation for graduate scholarships was \$488,300 and supported

approximately sixty-eight (68) students based on funding criteria established by the Department. The FY25 average per-semester, full tuition and fees for New Mexico higher education institutions offering graduate programs is \$4,248. The current scholarship awards are per academic year and are distributed in equal installments over the period of an academic year or period of enrollment. If an award recipient is enrolled in the program for less than an academic year, then they will receive a pro rata share of the stipend.

While SB68 removes citizenship or naturalization requirements for scholarship eligibility, graduate students must still be legally authorized to study in the United States under federal statutes. Graduate students can obtain authorization to study in the U.S. under the "F-1? visa category, which permits them to pursue academic programs at SEVP-certified institutions, provided they maintain a full course load and adhere to all immigration regulations outlined in the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). SB68 identifies an award recipient to be a New Mexico resident student. Many graduate programs allow for part-time enrollment, particularly toward the end of a program as a student is completing his or her thesis or dissertation. SB68 changes this requirement to allow part-time enrollment of six (6) credit hours or more but requires students to maintain enrollment and a 3.0 GPA in consecutive academic years to continue to receive scholarship awards. SB68 removes a doctor of medicine as eligible program of study. SB68 adds new language providing graduate scholarships to recipients until the award recipient either received a terminal degree or has qualified and received eight (8) semesters of scholarship, whichever occurs first. Recipients must agree to serve the eligible institution during the academic year in an internship or assistantship approved by the student's academic department.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

SB68 does not outline specific performance measures.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

N/A

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

N/A

TECHNICAL ISSUES

N/A

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

N/A

ALTERNATIVES

N/A

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

N/A

AMENDMENTS

N/A