Memo

To: Financial Aid Administrators
From: Elizabeth K. McCloud
    Vice President
Dept: PA State Grant and Special Programs
Date: June 2021
Re: 2021-22 Academic Progress Exception Requests

The Academic Progress requirement of the PA State Grant Program is outlined in Chapter 2, Section IV of the 2021-22 Pennsylvania State Grant Program Handbook. Academic Progress is a regulatory (22 Pa. Code § 121.58) requirement whereby each grant recipient must make normal Academic Progress during an academic year to retain PA State Grant eligibility for the subsequent year.

For students who received incomplete grades for the 2020-21 Academic Year or 2021 Summer terms or who otherwise did not achieve satisfactory Academic Progress as a result of COVID-19 related impact or factors, please review Chapter 2, Section IV, paragraph H of the 2021-22 Pennsylvania State Grant Program Handbook for information regarding the exception or appeal process. Under this appeal process, students may request an exception when there is a failure to complete the required number of credits to satisfy the Academic Progress requirement. The student must report the medical condition, family illness, or other extenuating circumstance that contributed to the failure.

The Academic Progress Exception Form and instructions are available on PHEAA.org/forms under General Documents and Forms. Please note that a document titled SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR 2021-22 ACADEMIC YEAR or SUMMER 2021 COVID-19 RELATED ACADEMIC PROGRESS EXCEPTION REQUESTS has been added to the site to provide further guidance for students who lacked credits due to a withdrawal or failure to pass courses during the 2020-21 Academic Year or Summer 2021 terms for a COVID-19 related reason.

Examples of COVID-19 reasons that may be considered include, but are not limited to:

- Student was diagnosed with COVID-19 and the illness prevented them from successfully completing course(s).
- A member of the student’s household was diagnosed with COVID-19 and that family member’s illness prevented the student from successfully completing course(s).
- The student normally enrolls in-classroom, and due to school ground closures, the school only offered a continuation of the 2020-21 Academic Year or Summer 21 enrollment online and:
  - The student did not have the technology resources to continue enrollment or successfully complete coursework.
  - The student was unable to successfully adapt to the online learning environment.
  - The student experienced changes in coursework, professors, etc. that inhibited their ability to complete the course(s) successfully.
Submission of documentation of the school’s COVID-19 related disruptions or a medical situation to support the student’s appeal reason is helpful but not necessarily required in cases related to COVID-19.

Questions concerning this information should be directed to PA State Grant and Special Programs at 1-800-443-0646, a private number reserved for the use of financial aid administrators.

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