



PA State Grant and Special Programs
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Memo

To: Participating Schools and Partners
From: Elizabeth K. McCloud
Vice President,
PA State Grant and Special Programs
Date: March 2020
Subject: PA State Grant Program – COVID-19 Guidance

This memo specifically addresses adjustments to program requirements of the PA State Grant Program. Guidance related to other programs administered by PHEAA is being communicated separately.

The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) has been reviewing the impact of COVID-19 on students as it relates to the PA State Grant Program. PHEAA has monitored the COVID-19 situation and been in contact with Pennsylvania postsecondary schools as they have made operational changes that may include, but are not limited to: 1) extending spring breaks; 2) moving students from the traditional classroom environment to distance education; and 3) canceling certain education experiences, such as study abroad or student teaching.

In focusing on the health and safety of Pennsylvania families, the PHEAA Board of Directors has exercised its authority as administrator and servicer of the PA State Grant Program to provide relief to students impacted by these changes as they pursue their postsecondary education. PHEAA's goal is to review policies and take appropriate actions to minimize disruption for Pennsylvania's student population by easing financial burdens and maintaining access to higher education, within the bounds of statutory authority.

Please note the following adjustments to PA State Grant Program requirements for students who are enrolled in the Winter or Spring 2020 term:

These adjustments only apply in cases where all of the following are true:

- The student has not completely withdrawn from the term prior to COVID-19 disruptions
- The student may no longer be full time; however, the student has not completely withdrawn from the term due to COVID-19 disruptions
- The school has not reversed all of the student's tuition charges for the term

1. **Previously credited PA State Grant Awards for the Winter and Spring 2020 terms** – Students who meet the above conditions will remain eligible for credited PA State Grant awards for the Winter and Spring 2020 terms under the eligibility for which the awards were initially credited prior to COVID-19 disruptions, as determined and documented by the institution. This eligibility will be retained regardless of changes within the term to: a school's academic calendar, the mode of delivery of coursework, or changes to a student's enrollment across all modules in a term.
2. **Future crediting of PA State Grant Awards for the Winter and Spring 2020 terms** – Students who meet the above conditions and whose awards have not yet been credited will be eligible to receive PA State Grant awards for the Winter and Spring 2020 terms based on each school's initial enrollment options for the term prior to COVID-19 disruptions, as determined and documented by the institution. This eligibility will be retained regardless of changes within the term to: a school's academic calendar, the mode of delivery of coursework, or changes to a student's enrollment across all modules in a term.



As a reminder, cost adjustments must be submitted for any students whose tuition and fee charges represent more than a 25% reduction to the PHEAA-approved tuition and fees. Reductions to room and board do not require any adjustment in costs.

Please remember that all schools must adhere to regulatory agency, accreditation, licensing board, Title IV, and privacy requirements, as these provisions do not override such requirements, nor does PHEAA have the authority to waive such requirements. PHEAA understands that school administrators may be working remotely and continues an expectation that student data will be appropriately safeguarded during this time.

PHEAA will make reasonable accommodations for exceptions to the ability of a school to comply with roster return and reconciliation deadlines during this extraordinary time. Please note PHEAA staff continue to receive and review institutional costs through our Costs on the Web (COTW) process. The cost collection process began on March 6 and will continue into April.

Please note, outside of the policy adjustments described in this memo, this guidance does not otherwise supersede guidance contained in the PA State Grant Handbook and should be applied in conjunction with current program policy. We recognize and continue to expect your good faith efforts to comply with the intent of the above guidance as you administer the PA State Grant Program.

FAQs with specific scenarios are forthcoming, and if there are any additional changes in policy as it relates to the COVID-19 situation, PHEAA will communicate this directly to institutions. If you have questions which have not been addressed by this guidance, please send them to sghelp@pheaa.org.

Program Management\SG - KAYF - Memo - Misc\2020\PA State Grant Program – COVID-19 Guidance