



PA State Grant and Special Programs
Phone: 1-800-443-0646 Fax: 717-720-3786
1200 North Seventh Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102-1444

Memo

To: Financial Aid Administrators
From: Elizabeth K. McCloud
Vice President,
PA State Grant and Special Programs
Date: April 2020
Subject: Update on Summer 2020 and the 2020-21 PA State Grant Program

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.

Summer 2020

The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) has continued to review the impact of COVID-19 on students as it relates to the PA State Grant Program. 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 extend the relief provided to students impacted by these changes as they pursue their postsecondary education during the Summer 2020 term. 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 Summer 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- The student has not completely withdrawn from the term prior to COVID-19 disruptions; and
- The student may no longer be full time; however, the student has not completely withdrawn from the term due to COVID-19 disruptions; and
- The school has not reversed all of the student's tuition charges for the term.

Crediting of PA State Grant Awards for the Summer 2020 term – Students who meet the above conditions at the time of crediting will be eligible to receive PA State Grant awards for the Summer 2020 term based on each school's initial enrollment plans 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 modules in a term.

As was the case for Winter and Spring 2020 terms, if a student's mode of delivery was impacted by your institution's response to COVID-19, then the student's enrollment mode should continue to align with the percentages of online and in-classroom that were planned prior to COVID-19. A student enrolled at an HQD institution should have enrollment mode reported based on the student's planned enrollment prior to the COVID-19 disruption. For example, if a student had planned to enroll "100% distance education (mode 4)", regardless of COVID-19 changes, then that would be reported. Along these same lines, a student enrolled at a Non-HQD institution would still be reported as enrolled in a "DE Program of Study" if that is applicable.

If you are a Non-HQD institution with students who intended to but no longer have the option of enrolling in classroom courses, please contact us by email at sghelp@pheaa.org to confirm the appropriate actions prior to crediting awards for the 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, 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.

If there are any additional changes in policy as it relates to the COVID-19 situation, PHEAA will communicate this directly to institutions.

2020-21 Academic Year

The PHEAA Board of Directors began consideration of the PA State Grant Program awarding formula for the 2020-21 Academic Year at the March Board meeting. While a final decision is typically made in April, due to the extraordinary impact that the pandemic is having across the Commonwealth, the Board has had to temporarily defer action on approving a 2020-21 awarding formula. This will allow additional time for the Board to receive and review updated data on applicant demand and available resources.

It is hoped that the Board will be able to take action on a 2020-21 PA State Grant Program awarding formula at the May 28, 2020 meeting. Conditional 2020-21 PA State Grant awards and 2020 Summer awards will be processed after the Board takes action on a 2020-21 formula.

If you have questions which have not been addressed by this guidance, please send them to sghelp@pheaa.org.

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