



Pennsylvania State Grant Program Virtual Workshops

2020-21 Academic Year & 2021 Summer Term

Certifying Student Eligibility – Part 2 of 2

June – August 2020



Student Certification of Eligibility



Part 2 of 2

This content has been abridged and does not supersede current program policy. For complete guidance on program administration, please refer to the *2020-21 PA State Grant Program Handbook*.

Citizenship

- May be eligible for an award as long as the student:
 - Is a United States citizen or taking steps to become a citizen
 - ‘Taking steps to become a citizen’ means the student is satisfying the definition of an eligible non-citizen as defined on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®)
- A student may begin to count the time of PA residence only once they meet either the citizen or the eligible non-citizen definition



If the United States Department of Education (ED) was unable to verify citizenship for PA State Grant awarded student, do not credit the award, submit a Special Request with the conflicting information.

Citizenship



- Fall disbursement for PHEAA College is generated on August 24 and lists Edward as PA State Grant eligible.
- When the term begins on August 25, PHEAA College becomes aware that Edward, has an unknown citizenship status.
- PHEAA College is notified on September 16, by the ED that Edward is a permanent U.S. resident (received a green card).



Questions

- When PHEAA College initially reviews Edward's eligibility at the beginning of the term, what action should the school take?
- As a result of Edward's updated status as an eligible non-citizen, what other eligibility checks may be impacted?

Citizenship



Answers

- Since Edward's citizenship status is undetermined when PHEAA College reviews eligibility at the beginning of the term, the institution should:
 - Withhold crediting of the award; and
 - Report the information via Special Request
- Depending on several factors, Edward's confirmation as an eligible non-citizen may impact the PA domicile status of the PA State Grant record.



Pennsylvania Domicile

- Pennsylvania domicile (22 Pa. Code § 121.57)
 - Student must have been a PA domiciliary for at least 12 months immediately preceding the application deadline
 - If under 18, the parent or guardian must meet the requirement
 - Schools verify the requirement according to student records
 - Ex: PA home address and voter registration, in-state tuition, no out-of-state grant, validation of “eligible non-citizen” for Pell Grant, etc.
 - Online students with non-PA addresses do not meet the requirement
 - Do not credit awards if a student’s domicile status is in question
 - Submit a Special Request with State Grant funds credited for prior terms and relevant dates and address information

High School

- High school graduation requirement is regulatory
 - Not the same criteria as for Federal aid

School Obligations:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If admission requires a high school diploma (or equivalent credential), no further review is needed | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If admission does not require a high school diploma (or equivalent credential), verify that the student meets the requirement<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Withhold crediting and report to PHEAA, if unable to verify |
|---|--|



For early admit students, identify, withhold crediting, and report to PHEAA via Special Request.

High School

- Verify that the student:
 - Graduated from an American, overseas DOD, or accredited foreign high school
 - Received a GED or equivalent
 - Graduated from a PDE approved Pennsylvania Cyber Charter School; or
 - Has a NACES – approved foreign credential
 - Has met the homeschool requirement
(Section G, Paragraph 3)
 - Supervisor-awarded diplomas issued under Act 196 (October 31, 2014)
 - Diplomas that do not meet Act 196 or are prior to October 31, 2014, must meet previous requirements



Diplomas issued by distance learning providers are not acceptable unless approved by PDE.

Changes in EFC & Federal Pell Eligibility

- PHEAA uses the EFC and Federal Pell Grant (both PHEAA-calculated) to calculate need for awarding purposes
 - **Before August 1**, PHEAA will automatically update the record with changes from ED
 - **After August 1**, PHEAA will only update if the PA State Grant record is incomplete
- When EFC changes impact PA State Grant eligibility, the record may go under review

Additional Eligibility Topics

Incarcerated Students

Ineligible for PA State Grant aid



Satisfactory Character

Report students with known prior felony convictions



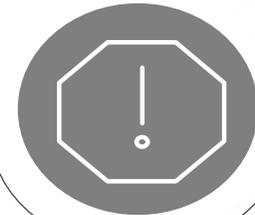
Students in Default

PHEAA may identify and reject eligibility for students in default



Student Identification Corrections

Verify with the student and report to PHEAA



Reconsideration Deadlines

Deadlines for students to submit information that may affect eligibility

- 2020-21 Academic Year = April 1, 2021
- 2021 Summer Term = October 31, 2021

Academic Progress

- Definition
 - For each award year (Fall, Winter, Spring and/or Summer) during which PA State Grant aid is received, a student must successfully complete the minimum number of credits (clock hours) appropriate to the student's enrollment status.
 - School's institutional or federal standards do **NOT** apply
 - Quantitative measure of earned credits

Academic Progress

STEP 1 – Select a yearly cycle

- Schools choose a consistent cycle to review all students:
 - **Summer Header:** Review all students after spring
 - **Summer Trailer:** Review all students after summer
- Review must begin with the first awarded term

Yearly Cycle: Summer, Fall, Spring			
Term	Summer 2019	Fall 2019	Spring 2020
Credits Attempted	6	12	12
PA State Grant Awarded	No Award	Full-time	Full-time
Credits Earned	3	9	12
Summary	The progress check BEGINS with the fall term. Summer credits are NOT permitted to be used in the evaluation of progress. Student earned 21 credits (9+12), but needed 24 credits.		

Academic Progress

STEP 2 – Determine whether a review is required

- Review if student was last awarded within 10 years
 - No review if last award was prior to 2011-12 (HST) for the 2020-21 AY
 - Prior grant information available

STEP 3 – Gather transcript information

- Verify credits successfully completed during last award cycle
 - Do not credit if unable to verify and document number of credits earned
 - Incomplete grades may not be considered as “credits earned” and must be re-evaluated once completed
 - Review special enrollment considerations (e.g., repeat work, remedial credits, extenuating circumstances, other exceptions, etc.)

Academic Progress

STEP 4 – Check Academic Progress

- Verify award statuses for each term of the last award year
- Calculate the total minimum of credits needed
- Compare the student's number of credits earned to the number of credits needed to meet the enrollment requirement

Minimum Credits/Clock Hours that Must Be Successfully Completed

Timeframe	Award Counter	Minimum Student Completion
Full-time Semester	.50	12 Semester Credits/450 Clock Hours
Full-time Quarter	.33/.34	12 Quarter or 8 Semester Credits/300 Clock Hours
Half-time Semester	.25	6 Semester Credits/225 Clock Hours
Half-time Quarter	.16/.17	6 Quarter or 4 Semester Credits/150 Clock Hours

Academic Progress

STEP 5 – Report lack of progress

- Report if the student does not meet progress standard
 - Reject P replaces award value

STEP 6 – Re-evaluate progress

- Re-evaluate Reject P status on a term-by-term basis
- Reinstate for the next term if deficient credits are earned

STEP 7 – Report Changes

- Cancel or reinstate awards as appropriate
 - Reinstate winter and spring if credits are made up
 - Cancel winter and spring if deficient credits still exist

Academic Progress Considerations



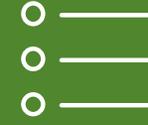
Remedial Credits

- Use remedial credits toward progress only when:
 - Student received an exception; and
 - Number of regular credits is not sufficient
- No more than ½ of the credits for the remedial counter used may be remedial



Repeat Courses

- Count successfully completed courses once
 - Count a second attempt for progress if the previous attempt was failed or taken prior to PA State Grant eligibility
- Work with other areas of your school to identify students with repeat courses



Other Exceptions

- Final Year Exception policy is the same as the enrollment section
- Academic Progress Exception Form available
 - Progress must be checked for excepted term

Review the guidance on [PHEAA.org/COVID19](https://pheaa.org/COVID19) for COVID-19 related considerations.

Academic Progress Considerations



- PHEAA Community College checks progress after summer.
- In 2019-20, Alyssa received full-time awards for taking 12 credits each in the Fall, Spring and Summer terms.
- For the Fall and Spring terms, Alyssa earned 24 credits.
- For Summer 2020, Alyssa earned credits for two 3-credit courses but deferred grades for the other two due to COVID-19 related reasons.
- The deferred grades will display as incomplete on the transcript until the deferred grade deadline, eight weeks into the Fall 2020 term.

Questions

- Assuming no modular enrollment, can Alyssa's award be paid at the start of the fall term when PA State Grant eligibility is reviewed at PHEAA CC for all students? Why or why not?
- What are Alyssa's options for receiving a Fall 2020 award?
 - Depending on Alyssa's decision, what additional action does PHEAA CC need to take?

Academic Progress Considerations



Answers

- At the start of the term, when PHEAA CC reviews eligibility for all students, Alyssa will likely not be eligible for awarding, since only 30 of the 36 credits needed will have been earned.
- Alyssa has the option to either:
 - Submit an Academic Progress Exception form documenting the reason for the incomplete grades; or
 - Wait until the deferred grade deadline to have eligibility re-evaluated.
- If Alyssa is granted an Academic Progress exception, then PHEAA CC will need to review progress after Fall 2020 term.
- If PHEAA CC waits until the deferred grade deadline, then PHEAA CC will need to determine Fall 2020 eligibility once the grades have been submitted.



Academic Progress – Transfer Students

- All incoming transfers must be reviewed for Academic Progress
 - Timing for the first Academic Progress check depends on the **first term** at the new school
- Reject awards for transfer students until either:
 - Transcript from previous school confirms that progress was made; or
 - Student makes up the required number of deficient credits at your school
- Credits successfully completed at the previous school:
 - Do **NOT** need to be transferable to your school in order to be included in the total
 - Must be earned at a PA State Grant approved or Federal Title IV eligible postsecondary institution
 - Must be converted if the previous school used different course values
- Repeat/remedial courses from the prior school must be considered
- Contact the prior school's Financial Aid Office, if needed

Academic Progress – Transfer Students

Timing for Evaluating Academic Progress for Transfer Students

Fall	Winter/Spring	Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School must check progress immediately (before crediting fall award)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If no award in current year, check immediately (before crediting winter/spring award)• If award in current academic year, school can choose to either:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Check immediately (before crediting winter/spring award); or– Assume previous school conducted SAP before crediting fall award, and check with normal cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check immediately:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– If your school normally checks after spring; or– If last year of aid was not in the previous academic year• Check after summer, if the last year of aid was during the academic year

Academic Progress – Transfer Students

Q&A

- PHEAA U. checks progress after the spring term.
- Jack starts at PHEAA U. in Spring 2021.
- The prior grant information lists a half-time award in Summer 2019 and full-time awards in Fall 2019, Spring 2020 and Fall 2020.
- Jack's transcripts say there were 3 credits earned for Summer 2019, 16 credits for Fall 2019, 11 credits in Spring 2020.

Questions

- Is PHEAA U. required conduct a full progress review for Jack prior to Spring 2021 crediting? Why or why not?
- Can Jack be awarded the Spring 2021 PA State Grant? Why or why not?



Academic Progress – Transfer Students

Q&A

Answers

- PHEAA U. has two options for Jack and all other mid-year transfers with an award in a prior term of the current academic year:
 - Either assume the prior institution confirmed academic progress prior to crediting for Fall 2020 and credit the Spring 2021 award. Point-in-time documentation is required; or
 - Check progress prior to crediting Spring 2020.
- Yes!
 - If the school elects to assume the prior institution checked progress, then the Spring 2021 award should be paid. Jack would then be reviewed for progress with the school's normal cycle.
 - If the school's choice is to check immediately, then Jack's Spring 2021 award can be paid since the required number of credits for the 2019-20 Award Year have been earned.



Reminders

- Confirm student eligibility and correct discrepancies prior to crediting awards
 - Review Appendix I – PA State Grant Certification Checklist for a detailed list of eligibility requirements
 - Use PHEAA reporting (e.g. GPAD, status listings, filtered Partner Interface lists, etc.) to review student eligibility and track request processing
 - Email sghelp@pheaa.org to request email notifications
 - Sign up for Transmissions to send and receive student-level data for all your students' records
 - Additional access may be required



Wrap Up

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Reminders & Resources

Reminders



- 2020-21 PA State Grants finalized in May 2020
 - Maximum award increased to \$4,525
 - Award increase made possible by Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding
 - No award adjustment factor applied for online enrollment (HQD schools only)
 - Student award notifications began in June 2020
 - Award information accessible via Partner Interface and weekly PageCenter reports

Reminders

- 2019-20 Academic Year and 2020 Summer awarding, disbursement and reconciliation underway
 - Review [PHEAA.org/COVID19](https://www.pheaa.org/COVID19) for policy adjustments, FAQs, etc.
- Institutional contacts and information
 - Email PHEAA staff when contacts change or need updated
 - Confirm and update access to PHEAA systems annually or as needed



Reminders



- Post-workshop Q&A released this Fall
- Order the 2020-21 Handbook and other print materials from [PHEAA.org](https://www.pheaa.org)
- Please complete the survey
 - Feedback is used to plan for future workshops and to create new training materials

Resources



Web

- PHEAA.org
- [Alec](#)



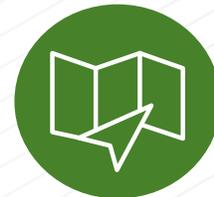
SGSP Staff

- Email: SGHelp@pheaa.org
- Phone: 800-443-0646



Events

- Webinar Series
- Conferences
- Workshops



Print

- Brochures
- Calendars
- FAQs

Thank You!