

A vertical black and white photograph on the left side of the slide shows a young man from behind, wearing a backpack and looking towards a brightly lit hallway with arches.

# Pennsylvania State Grant Program Virtual Workshops

*2020-21 Academic Year & 2021 Summer Term*

**Update Session**

June – August 2020

# Summary of Changes

## 2020-21 Handbook

- Five (5) Chapters:
  - Introduction and Summary of Changes
  - Added new tips and notes
  - Relocated several topics
- No policy changes; only clarifications

Pennsylvania State Grant  
**Program Handbook**  
2020-21 Academic Year & 2021 Summer Term



**PHEAA**  
Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency

# Chapters

1

School &  
Program  
Eligibility

2

Student  
Certification of  
Eligibility

3

Costs &  
Award  
Adjustments

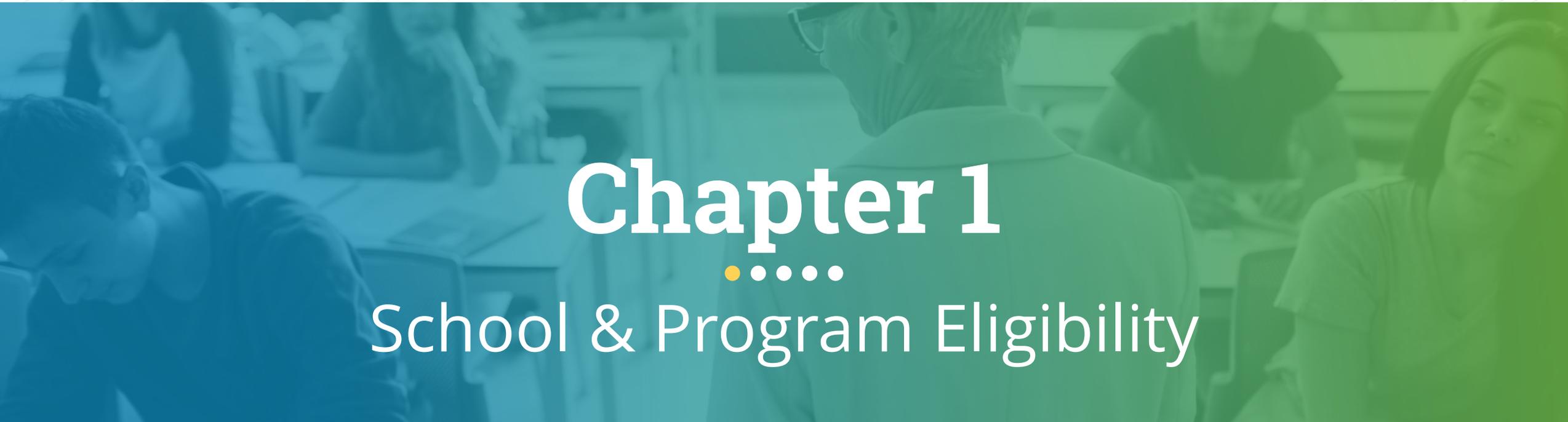
4

Disbursements  
& Cash  
Management

5

Program  
Reviews &  
Audits

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*.



# Chapter 1



## School & Program Eligibility

# School Requirements

- Program participation requirements stem from regulations
  - Participating institutions are required to:
    - Maintain accreditation and State Board approval
    - Notify PHEAA, in writing, of any changes (e.g., name, ownership, location, schedule, status, new president etc.)
      - Notify PHEAA as soon as possible to avoid processing and disbursement delays
      - A revised Master Program Participation Agreement (MPPA) may be required
      - Failure to notify PHEAA could create an administrative finding
    - Comply with all other administrative requirements

# HQD & Approved Programs of Study

- Programs must still continue to meet minimum length and approval requirements
- Institutional headquartered and domiciled (HQD) status impact student eligibility with regard to online programs of study and term enrollment

## HQD

- Distance education programs may be eligible

## Non-HQD

- Programs must be at least 50 percent in-classroom\*

\*ADA accommodations do not apply

# Term Start Dates

- Used to determine disbursement dates and eligibility for the term
- Institutions are required to:
  - Verify dates annually via the *Educational Cost Form*
  - Comply with the ranges provided by PHEAA
  - Follow the academic calendar on which transcripts are generated for awarding purposes



# Term Length

- Term: period of instructional time that begins on the first day of classes and ends on the last day of final exams
  - Programs must comply with term length definitions
    - Academic Year: 10-12 weeks (quarter); 15-18 weeks (semester)
    - Summer Term: 5 weeks (non-year round curriculum schools)
- Students that do not meet term length requirements should be reported as Reject G (Inadequate Term Length)

# Term Length

## Module

- A period that does not span the full length of the term
  - Can be combined (or overlapping) to meet term length requirements



For more information on intersessions, please refer to **Chapter 2, Section B.**

## Intersession

- A winter session used by some semester schools to offer students an opportunity to use credits toward the enrollment minimum
  - Cannot be used to meet the term length requirements

# Term Length

- Combining Modules
  - Must be consecutive during the academic year
  - Overlap is permitted as long as the total number of weeks meets the minimum and maximum term length
  - Must postpone crediting until the final module begins
    - Withdrawal from one or more modules does not necessarily eliminate PA State Grant eligibility (refer to **Chapter 3, Section C**)



# Modules



- PA State Grant eligible students, Devi and Ben attend PHEAA Community College, a semester school.

Devi			
Variables	Module D (Fall)	Module E (Fall)	Module F (Fall)
Number of Weeks	5	5	5
Date of Registration	7-1-2020	7-1-2020	7-1-2020
Start Date	9-1-2020	10-6-2020	11-10-2020
Number of Credits	6	6	3

Ben		
Variables	Term A (Fall)	Module I (Fall)
Number of Weeks	15	3
Date of Registration	7-1-2020	7-1-2020
Start Date	9-1-2020	10-12-2020
Number of Credits	9	3

## Questions

- When and under what status can Devi be credited the PA State Grant? Ben?

## Bonus

- If Devi and Ben fully withdrew on November 13, what would be their final enrollment statuses?

# Modules



## Answers

- Both students are eligible for full-time awards once enrollment is confirmed at the start of the final module.
  - Devi may be credited on November 10 and Ben on October 12.
- Both students would retain the full-time enrollment status if they fully withdrew on November 13, since the withdrawal occurs after the date of crediting.

Devi			
Variables	Module D (Fall)	Module E (Fall)	Module F (Fall)
Number of Weeks	5	5	5
Date of Registration	7-1-2020	7-1-2020	7-1-2020
Start Date	9-1-2020	10-6-2020	11-10-2020
Number of Credits	6	6	3

Ben		
Variables	Term A (Fall)	Module I (Fall)
Number of Weeks	15	3
Date of Registration	7-1-2020	7-1-2020
Start Date	9-1-2020	10-12-2020
Number of Credits	9	3



# Chapter 2



## Student Certification of Eligibility

# Approved Program of Study

- Definition: Overarching 2- or 4-year program under which student is initially admitted or is currently enrolled
  - Typically does not refer to student's major/minor unless attending a Business Trade and Technical (BTT) school
  - Changing a program of study may impact the student eligibility or award amount
- Students at Non-HQD schools must be enrolled in a program of study comprised of  $\geq 50\%$  classroom instruction
  - Report students with online programs as "DE" (displays as enrollment mode 5)
  - Results in Reject G status (ADA accommodations do not apply)
- Students at HQD schools may be enrolled in online programs of study
  - Report the student's appropriate enrollment mode (not "DE")

# Enrollment

- Enrollment definitions and requirements are regulatory
  - Recognized statuses: full-time, half-time, less than half-time, and not enrolled
  - Correct enrollment discrepancies before crediting
- Students' enrollment must be applicable towards degree/program objectives unless remedial exception is reported
  - Only report remedial exception if:
    - Student is awarded; and
    - Remedial credits are needed to meet enrollment minimum
  - No more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  enrolled credits may be remedial
  - Must be reported by the last day of attendance
  - May impact Academic Progress evaluation



# Instruction Delivery & Enrollment Mode

- Report percentage of online credits for awarded students on a term-by-term basis
  - Must match the student's final enrollment used for eligibility determination
  - Reporting is used to evaluate online enrollment across the Commonwealth
    - Only impacts student eligibility at Non-HQD schools for the 2020-21 AY
  - Report awarded students under one of the following
    - **Enrollment Mode 1** – “100% classroom” (system default)
    - **Enrollment Mode 2** – “Up to 50% distance education”
    - **Enrollment Mode 3** – “Greater than 50%, but less than 100% distance education”
    - **Enrollment Mode 4** – “100% distance education”



Students at Non-HQD institutions must meet the  $\geq 50\%$  classroom enrollment requirement (modes 1 or 2), unless an ADA exception is approved.

# Academic Progress

- Definition (22 Pa. Code § 121.58 )
  - 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
  - Summer Header
    - Review students after Spring
  - Summer Trailer
    - Review students after Summer

## Step 2

- Determine if a Review is Needed
  - Only review if student was awarded in last 10 years

## Step 3

- Gather Transcript Information
  - Verify credits successfully earned during last award year

## Step 4

- Check Academic Progress
  - Compare the credits needed for awarding to credits earned

## Step 5

- Report Lack of Progress
  - Reject "P" replaces award value

## Step 6

- Re-evaluate Progress
  - Reinstate for the next term if deficient credits were earned

## Step 7

- Report Changes
  - Cancel winter/spring if deficiency still exists

# Academic Progress

## Considerations

### Remedial Credits

- Only use remedial credits toward progress when:
  - An exception was reported during the cycle; and
  - Number of regular credits is not sufficient
- At least  $\frac{1}{2}$  the credits must be regular

### Repeat Courses

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

### Other Exceptions

- Final Year Exception may be used for progress if used for enrollment
- Extenuating circumstances *Exception Form* available
  - Progress must be checked for excepted term

### Transfer Students

- Reject awards for transfer students until:
  - Documentation is provided ; or
  - Student makes up the required credits at your school
- Other considerations may be required

# Different Educational Costs

- **REQUIRED:** Withhold crediting and report reduced tuition and fees via Cost Override if student's actual tuition and fees are at least 25% less than the approved PHEAA costs
  - New Cost Override sub-report available in the **VALIDATION/OTHER RVW** Report in PageCenter

- Optional: May report when actual tuition and fees are more than 25% greater than those costs approved by PHEAA

- Submit enrollment and eligibility changes (e.g., status, mode, etc.) before reporting tuition and fees

- If actual costs charged to the student are still above the cost cap, then do not report

# Additional Eligibility Topics

**Domicile**

**Citizenship**

**Study  
Abroad**

**Students  
in  
Default**

**Bona  
Fide 5-  
Year  
Programs**

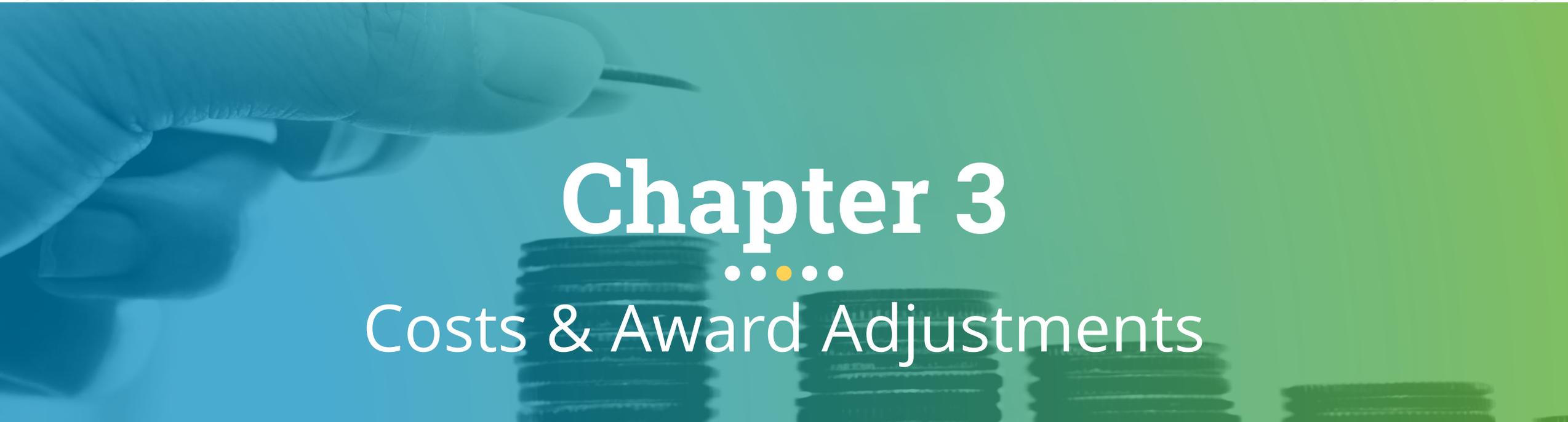
**High  
School**

**Changes in  
EFC and  
Pell  
Eligibility**

**Satisfactory  
Character**

**Graduate/  
Professional**

**Student  
Refusals**



# Chapter 3



## Costs & Award Adjustments

# Award Status & Crediting Definitions

- Awards typically travel through 3 phases



## Estimated

Announced in  
October

Early Estimator  
Spreadsheet  
provided



## Conditional

Announced in  
May/June timeframe

Can assist students in  
finalizing college  
financial decisions



## Final

Announced after  
passage of  
Commonwealth  
Budget

- Awards must be final before crediting and withdrawal procedures apply
- Package and credit as “PA State Grant”, not “PHEAA”

# Award Adjustments for Drops

- Definition = A course(s) the student was registered for but was removed from the student's schedule and no attempted course credit exists or will exist
- Monitor and report changes that may impact a student's eligibility from dropping classes
  - Drops may impact enrollment status, enrollment mode, or overall eligibility
  - Netting and offsetting policies can be used to manage excess cash created from dropped courses



# Award Adjustments for Adds

- Definition = Course(s) for which the student registers after the start of the term which will appear on the student's transcript
- Monitor and report changes that may impact a student's eligibility from adding classes
  - Added courses may impact enrollment status, enrollment mode, or overall eligibility
  - Courses added in later modules may impact when PA State Grant award can be credited

# Award Adjustments for Withdrawals

- Definition = Student charged by the school and attempted credits appear on transcript
  - Investigate students with all “F” grades to determine if grades were earned
- Award adjustment may be required, if crediting was based on enrollment status prior to withdrawal
  - A refund to PHEAA may be required depending on: **1)** the date of the student’s withdrawal; and **2)** the standard tuition refund policy of the institution
    - Refer to **Chapter 3, Section C** for Adjustment Steps
  - For student withdrawals to at least half-time, eligibility can be reduced

# Award Adjustments for Modular Terms

- When combining modules, a payment may only be made at the **beginning of the last module** based on the number of enrolled credits **minus any withdrawn credits** that occurred prior to crediting for the term

Total withdrawal from all credits in every module

Cancel for "Not Enrolled" and do not pay PA State Grant

Withdrawal resulting in full-time enrollment

Student eligible for full-time PA State Grant award payment

Withdrawal resulting in half-time enrollment

Reduce enrollment to half-time and pay half-time PA State Grant

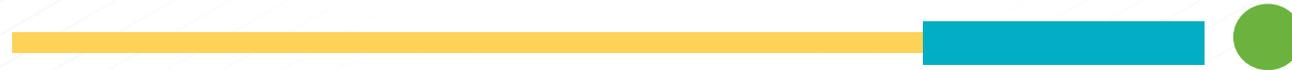
Withdrawal down to less than half-time enrollment

Student not eligible for PA State Grant and school should report as "Less than half-time"



# Withdrawal

- On January 19, Zoe enrolled in 9 regular credits plus 3 remedial credits and was reported as “Full Time Remedial 1-3 credits.”
- On January 20, the Spring award was disbursed (credited) to Zoe’s account.
- Zoe added a 3-credit regular course on January 21, then fully withdrew on February 21.



## Questions

- How did the added course impact Zoe’s enrollment status reporting?
- What is Zoe’s award status after the withdrawal?

## Bonus

- What options does Zoe have if the withdrawal results in lack of satisfactory Academic Progress?

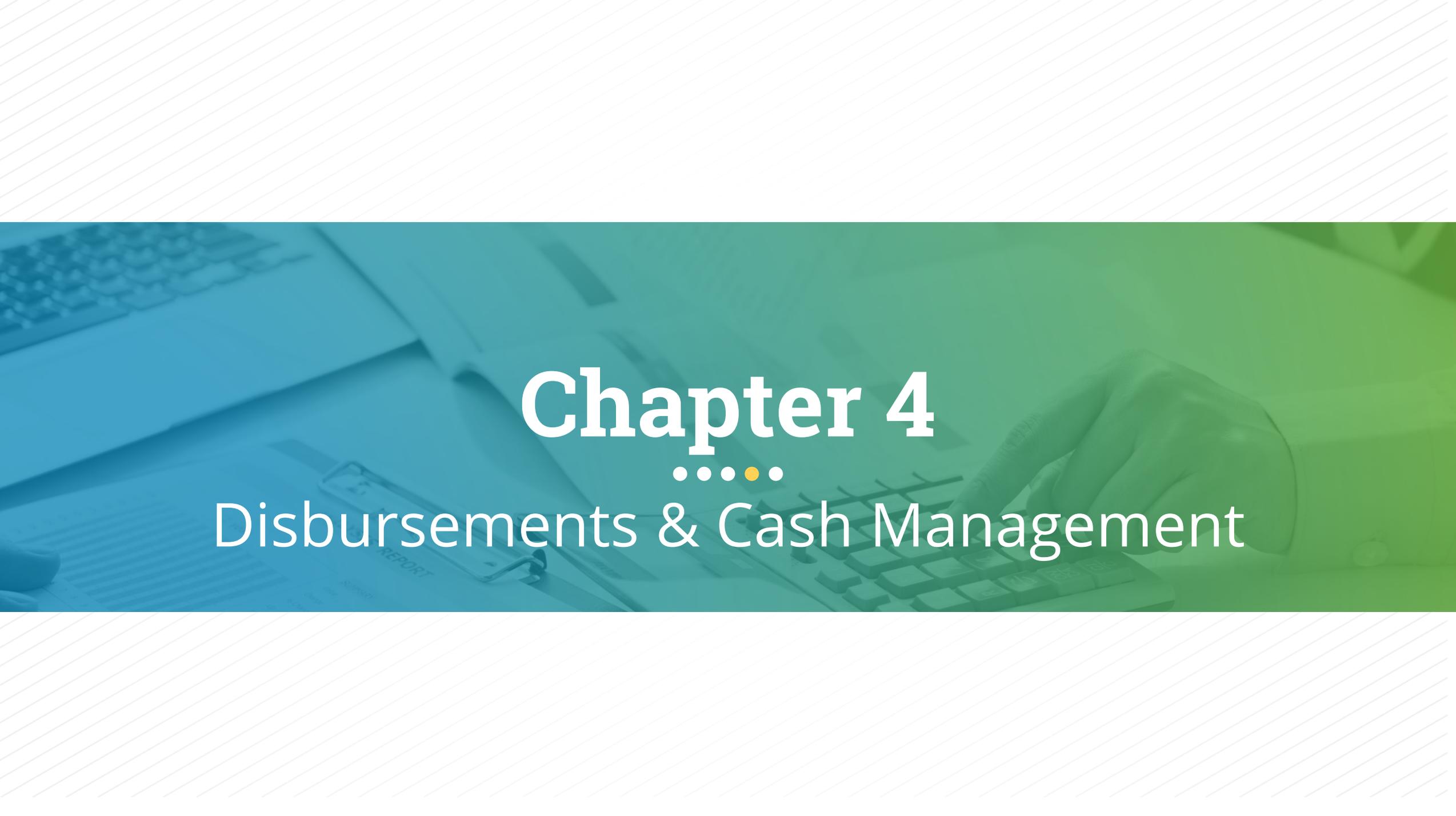
# Withdrawal



## Answers

- Zoe will need to be reported as full-time (no remedial).
- After withdrawing fully for the term, Zoe will still retain a full-time award.
- Zoe may earn the deficit credits during an unawarded term or, if there were extenuating circumstances, submit an *Academic Progress Exception Form*.





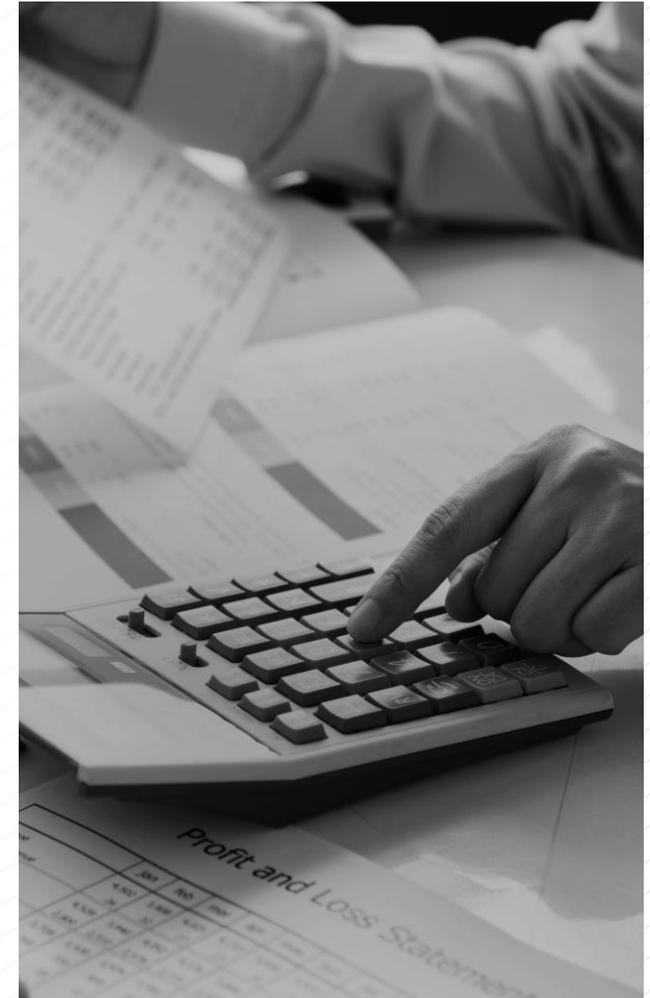
# Chapter 4



## Disbursements & Cash Management

# Maintaining Funds

- PHEAA policies and procedures in place to:
  - Minimize costs to the Commonwealth by partnering with institutions; and
  - Provide disbursement information to support budgeting and forecasting activities
- Institution accounts with PA State Grant funds must include a “PA State Grant” notation in the name of the account
  - Separate bank accounts are recommended for PA State Grant funds



# Roster & Fund Availability

- Must return each roster in order to receive subsequent rosters and disbursements
- Certify:
  - Pre-disbursement rosters after term begins
  - Term disbursement rosters within 45 days of roster generation date or latest module start date
  - Reconciliation rosters by academic year/summer term deadline

## Pre-disbursement

- Used to clean up enrollment and eligibility

## Term

- Snapshot of student enrollment and eligibility that accompanies an EFT

## Reconciliation

- Close out report used to confirm school and PHEAA records match

# Crediting

- Preliminary Credit = Optional bill deduction or deferment of payment based upon acceptable notification of PA State Grant eligibility
  - Subject to removal if the student's eligibility changes
- Final Credit = Commitment of funds to the student's account
  - Must occur on a term-by-term basis and after the certification of all eligibility requirements
  - Cannot occur before a student's final enrolled module begins if student is enrolled in a module
  - Date of award crediting must be documented in student's account

# Financial Responsibility & Program Integrity

- Delay of Funds:
  - Hold placed on the school's account when school is not timely or compliant with PHEAA policy
  - Verify hold reason on FC5S in OC/WebConnect



## Outstanding Rosters

Includes pre-disbursement, term, and reconciliation rosters



## Institutional Changes

Ex: Closure, Changes of Ownership, etc.



## Outstanding Refunds

Refunds from prior periods delay future payments



## Additional Reasons

Ex: USDE restriction/oversight, missing ACH information, etc.

# Reconciliation Best Practices



- Communicate with other campus offices (e.g., Registrar, Business, etc.)
- Employ practices that reduce over-disbursements
- Monitor balances on FG3S in OC/WebConnect
- Use Partner Interface filtering, PageCenter reports (e.g., **GPAD**), and rosters to track eligibility changes
- Review **OUTSTANDING ITEMS REPORT** in PageCenter to know when a roster or refund is due PHEAA
- Retain records for five years from the date of the last reconciliation roster



# Chapter 5



## Program Reviews & Audits

# Overview

- Reviews performed to:
  - Assess the capability of schools to manage programs administered by PHEAA; and
  - Assist with maintaining the integrity of Commonwealth postsecondary programs
- Emphasis placed upon PA State Grant Program but may include all other PHEAA-administered programs
  - Military Family Education Program (MFEP) and Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver (FosterEd) Program to be included

# Review Details



## Communication

- School notified of review type, date, and programs to be included
- Provide PHEAA any required documentation in advance of review



## Components

- Entrance and exit interview conducted with institution staff
- File review conducted by PHEAA staff
  - Sample size predetermined



## Findings

- Financial or administrative findings
- Review results may lead to additional reviews, probation, or a loss of participation



# 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://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](http://PHEAA.org)
- [Alec](#)



## SGSP Staff

- Email: [SGHelp@pheaa.org](mailto:SGHelp@pheaa.org)
- Phone: 800-443-0646



## Events

- Webinar Series
- Conferences
- Workshops



## Print

- Brochures
- Calendars
- FAQs

**Thank You!**