Pennsylvania State Grant Program Workshops

PA State Grant Certification – Part 1 of 2
2021-22 Academic Year & 2022 Summer Term

June – July 2021
Agenda

Housekeeping
PA State Grant and Special Programs (SGSP) staff welcome attendees, review the agenda, and explain how attendees should access event materials.

Presentation
Attendees receive an overview of program policy as set forth by the 2021-22 PA State Grant Handbook.

Wrap Up
Panelists will issue reminders, provide additional resources and share responses to questions posed during the session.
Objective

Part 1 of our two-part series on certifying PA State Grant awards

During this session, presenters will:

• Highlight institutional reporting obligations surrounding several general eligibility requirements (e.g., domicile, incarceration, etc.)
• Discuss how to calculate Cost Override thresholds and review the related requirements
• Explore the PA State Grant Academic Progress evaluation basics and different considerations
Citizenship

• Students must be a U.S. citizen or taking steps to become a citizen
  – If student does not meet federal definition of eligibility due to citizenship, the student is also not eligible for PA State Grant
• Schools must confirm that either U.S. Department of Education (ED) or PHEAA has verified citizenship
  – If no confirmation, alert PHEAA via Special Request

Domicile

• Students required to be PA residents
  – Age 18 and older: Student must be a PA resident for at least 12 months immediately preceding the filing deadline
  – Under 18: Parent or guardian must meet the requirement
• If domicile changes after the first day of the term, the student will retain eligibility until the end of the spring term
  – Clues that the student may not meet domicile requirement include out-of-state voter registration, out-of-state tuition charges, a home address outside of PA, etc.
High School

- High school graduation requirement is regulatory
- School required to confirm student meets requirement or report discrepant information to PHEAA
  - If admission does not require a high school diploma (or equivalent credential), verify that the student meets the requirement
    - Handbook provides details on acceptable credentials and equivalencies
  - If admission requires a high school diploma (or equivalent credential), no further review is needed
Satisfactory Character & Incarcerated Students

• Students subject to a satisfactory character review pursuant to program regulations

• Incarcerated students should be denied PA State Grant aid
  – Excludes students in halfway houses or community service centers
  – Report incarcerated students to PHEAA via Special Request and withhold crediting

• Schools no longer required to report those students with felony convictions to PHEAA, unless incarcerated
Student Reconsideration Deadline

• Final opportunity for students to complete any review or submit missing information that may impact eligibility
  – 2021-22 Academic Year Deadline = April 1, 2022
  – 2022 Summer Term Deadline = October 31, 2022

• Exceptions to this rule:
  – Students that receive correspondence from PHEAA after March 1st will have 30 days from the date of the correspondence to respond
  – If deadline falls on a non-business day, students will have until the next business day
  – Students that call PHEAA after March 1st to advise they will send additional information will have 30 days from the date of the phone call to respond

Utilize the PageCenter reports and Partner Interface record categories to encourage students to submit missing information.
Different Educational Costs

- Educational costs are first consideration when calculating PA State Grant Need and award amounts
  - All institutions required to submit costs annually during Costs on the Web (COTW) process
- Compare annual costs approved by PHEAA to actual student tuition and fee charges on a term-by-term basis
  - Charges may differ due to specialized enrollment (e.g., study abroad, combined day and evening classes, transferred credits, etc.)
  - Student award calculations should be based on actual costs, as listed in their institutional account
Different Educational Costs

• If student’s actual costs are at least 25% less than costs used by PHEAA, institutions must withhold crediting and report the reduced tuition and fees via a Cost Override
  – Submit enrollment and eligibility changes before the Cost Override
  – If actual costs charged to the student are still above the college cost cap, then do not report

• If actual tuition and fees are more than 25% greater than those reported during COTW, reporting is optional
  – Report the term and actual term costs charged via Special Request

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reported Tuition &amp; Fees for Full-time, Full-Year Equivalent</th>
<th>Institution’s Schedule</th>
<th>Term Cost</th>
<th>Full-time Threshold*</th>
<th>Part-time Threshold*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Semester Quarter</td>
<td>X/2 = Y</td>
<td>Y*.75 = Z</td>
<td>Z/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X/3 = Y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Term costs that are less than the threshold must be reported. Input into Partner Interface is a term amount. The PHEAA system annualizes the entered amount.
Different Educational Costs

- PHEAA Liberal Arts Institute operates as a semester institution
- The annual costs submitted by the institution and approved by PHEAA total $32,000
- The below students are listed on the institution’s pre-disbursement roster when the institution realizes different educational costs are being charged

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Current Enrollment Status</th>
<th>Actual Term Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grace Hanson</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>$10,351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick Skolka</td>
<td>Half-time</td>
<td>$12,375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sol Bergstein</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>$36,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coyote Bergstein</td>
<td>Less than half-time</td>
<td>$5,897</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions:
- What is the full-time term threshold for reporting reduced costs at the school?
- How can the school determine the part-time threshold for Nick S.?
- Is a Cost Override required for any of the students?
Different Educational Costs

Answers:

• The full-time threshold for reporting reduced tuition and fee amounts is $12,000 per semester. ($32,000 ÷ 2) x .75 = $12,000

• To determine the part-time threshold for Nick S., the school would divide the full-time threshold amount in half. ($12,000 ÷ 2 = $6,000)

• A Cost Override is only required for Grace H.
  – If Sol B. is not already receiving the maximum award, a Special Request can be submitted to see if an increased award is possible
  – Coyote B. should be reported as Less than half-time and will no longer be eligible for a PA State Grant award

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Current Enrollment Status</th>
<th>Actual Term Cost</th>
<th>Cost Override Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grace Hanson</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>$10,351</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick Skolka</td>
<td>Half-time</td>
<td>$12,375</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sol Bergstein</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>$36,000</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coyote Bergstein</td>
<td>Less than half-time</td>
<td>$5,897</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Regulation 22 PA Code § 121.58 stipulates each PA State Grant recipient must make normal Academic Progress from year to year to retain grant eligibility.

• For each award cycle, during which PA State Grant aid is awarded, a student must successfully complete the minimum total number of credits (clock hours) appropriate to the student’s enrollment status:
  – Institutional or federal standards do not apply
  – No qualitative measures considered
  – Cannot include credits earned prior to the PA State Grant award
Students are notified of the primary eligibility requirements, including Academic Progress, in the Rights and Responsibilities Certification Document. Students are advised not to sign the PA State Grant Form until they have read and agree to the document.

**Evaluation Basics**

1. Select A Yearly Cycle
2. Determine Whether to Review
3. Gather Transcripts
4. Check Academic Progress
5. Report Lack of Progress
6. Re-evaluate Progress
7. Report Changes

**Academic Progress**
Academic Progress

Step 1 – Select a Yearly Cycle

- Yearly cycle is the order in which the year is reviewed and may occur after spring or after summer
  - Institution decides whether to be a Summer Header or Summer Trailer
    - Document when PA State Grant progress is evaluated
    - Must apply the test at the same point in time annually for all students

Summer Header

- If a student has not made progress when it is checked at the end of the spring term, the student’s award must be canceled effective the following summer term
  - The student may use courses taken during the unawarded summer to make up the credit deficit

Summer Trailer

- If progress is reviewed after the summer term and a student would have otherwise failed progress based upon enrollment in the academic year terms alone, enrolling in summer may be an opportunity to make up the deficit before progress is reported
A progress evaluation is required if the student was a PA State Grant recipient within the last 10 years

- Institutions must determine the last award cycle where a PA State Grant award was received within the 10-year period
  - If the last award was received prior to the 2012-13 Academic Year, an evaluation is not needed
  - Prior grant information provided on rosters, listings, and in Partner Interface
    - “HST” (History) indicates last award was 2012 Summer term or prior
Step 3 – Gather Transcripts

- Verify credits successfully completed during last award cycle
  - Special enrollment considerations (e.g., repeat work, remedial credits, extenuating circumstances, etc.) may need to be considered
  - Courses that are marked as “passed” without a letter grade assigned, are considered as credits earned
  - Incomplete grades may not be considered as “credits earned” and may be re-evaluated once completed
    - Re-evaluation must occur prior to the reconsideration deadline
- Unofficial transcripts may be used
- Do not credit if unable to verify and document number of credits earned
Academic Progress

- Verify award statuses for each term of the last award year and calculate total minimum credits needed
  - Compare the student’s number of credits earned to the number of credits needed to meet the enrollment requirement
    - May not reduce eligibility to half-time in order to satisfy Academic Progress
    - If the minimum number of credits required to meet the enrollment status is increased due to extended term length, that increased minimum number of credits must be earned to meet Academic Progress

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### Minimum Credits/Clock Hours That Must Be Successfully Completed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For each:</th>
<th>Award Counter:</th>
<th>Student must complete a minimum of:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time Semester</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>12 Semester Credits/450 Clock Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time Quarter</td>
<td>.33/.34</td>
<td>12 Quarter or 8 Semester Credits/300 Clock Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half-time Semester</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>6 Semester Credits/225 Clock Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half-time Quarter</td>
<td>.16/.17</td>
<td>6 Quarter or 4 Semester Credits/150 Clock Hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Academic Progress

**Step 5 – Report Lack of Academic Progress**

- Report to PHEAA those students who do not make Academic Progress
  - School may elect to cancel award for the entire subsequent year or cancel the fall term only (additional terms may be canceled after fall term evaluation)

**Step 6 – Re-evaluate Academic Progress**

- Re-evaluate Reject P students on a term-by-term basis to determine if award can be reinstated

**Step 7 – Report Changes**

- If previously canceled the entire year, reinstate winter and spring if credits are made up
- If previously canceled fall only, cancel winter and spring if deficient credits still exist
## Academic Progress

- Incoming transfers must be reviewed for Academic Progress
  - Credits do not need to be transferrable to your institution
  - If unable to confirm, reject award until student earns deficient credits at your institution or provides transcript information

- Timing for the first check will depend on the first term at the new school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Winter/Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• School must check progress immediately (before crediting fall award)</td>
<td>• If no award in current year, check immediately (before crediting winter/spring award)</td>
<td>• Check immediately:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• If award in current academic year, school can choose to either:</td>
<td>– If your school normally checks after spring; or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Check immediately or assume previous school conducted SAP before crediting fall award, and check with normal cycle</td>
<td>– If last year of aid was not in the previous academic year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Check after summer, if the last year of aid was during the academic year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use Last Award, Diff School (LADS) message on rosters to assist in locating transfer students that may require a closer look.
Academic Progress

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

Remedial Credits
• Only use remedial credits toward progress when an exception was reported during the cycle and the number of regular credits is insufficient
• No more than ½ of the credits may be remedial

Visiting Students
• Before paying a summer award, verify when “home” school checks progress
• If student is enrolled in two institutions, the “home” school must check progress

Extenuating Circumstances
• Use PageCenter report to track progress exceptions
• If exception was granted, progress must be checked for excepted term (before next term begins)
**Academic Progress**

- Do not cancel awards due to institutional progress standards, if students are meeting the PA State Grant Academic Progress requirement
  - If student not making progress within major, advise students they may refuse the PA State Grant to avoid future issues

- Reach out to prior institutions as necessary for assistance with interpreting transcripts (e.g., identifying remedial courses, repeat courses, etc.)

- Students who do not meet progress due to COVID-19 disruptions (e.g., fully or partially withdrew, dropped courses, etc.) should be encouraged to complete an Academic Progress Exception Form
  - Guidance available to students on [PHEAA.org/forms](http://PHEAA.org/forms)
PHEAA Tech checks Academic Progress at the conclusion of the spring term.

Frankie Bergstein enrolled at the school during Fall 2020, completed 4 credits, but did not receive a PA State Grant. Frankie returned for the Spring 2021 term and received a full-time PA State Grant award.

The institution has determined that a “D” grade is considered passing however Frankie’s major requirements stipulate that students must pass all courses with a “C” grade in order to progress.

At the end of the Spring 2021 term, Frankie’s grades were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remedial Writing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 100</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology 100</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Communications</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>INC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry 100</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions:

- How many credits did Frankie need to earn?
- Did Frankie make Academic Progress? Based on this determination, what should happen next?
- Bonus – Could a remedial exception be (have been) reported for Frankie?
Academic Progress

**Answers:**

- Based upon the Spring 2021 full-time PA State Grant award, Frankie was required to earn a minimum of 12 credits
  - While Frankie was enrolled during the Fall 2020 term, Frankie did not receive a PA State Grant during this term so no credits were required to be earned for this enrollment period

- At this point, it cannot be determined if Frankie made Academic Progress
  - Due to the incomplete grade, the school could wait until the grade is received to continue with the Academic Progress assessment. The school should check back occasionally to see if the grade is resolved
    - The incomplete grade must be resolved before the next reconsideration deadline (April 1, 2022) in order for Frankie to establish PA State Grant eligibility for the 2021-22 Award Year
    - If there were extenuating circumstances that prevented Frankie from making progress, the Academic Progress Exception Form could be submitted

- No. A remedial exception was not required and cannot be retroactively reported to bypass the progress. The school must wait for the incomplete grade to be resolved or discuss the exception form with Frankie
• Students may decide to not accept a PA State Grant award
  – Institutions may counsel a student but final decision resides with the student

• Refusals must be made in writing
  – Retain documentation in the student’s file and submit a Special Request to inform PHEAA or direct the student to contact PHEAA
  – Refusals must be received prior to the end of the institution’s spring term (academic year) or summer term (summer term)
• Confirm student eligibility and correct discrepancies prior to crediting awards
  – Report inaccurate information timely
• Submit Costs on the Web annually and by the communicated deadline
  – Do not include costs that are not allowed by PHEAA (e.g., uniform fees, graduation fees, etc.)
• Document when Academic Progress is evaluated at your institution
• Maintain documentation used in evaluating a student’s eligibility (e.g., transcripts, ledgers, etc.)
• Cost Override reporting is required for students below the threshold
2021-22 AY Announcements

- 2021-22 Academic Year Conditional Awards Announced
  - Award maximum increased to $4,679
  - 2021-22 Estimator is available in the Document Library

2020-21 AY and Summer Reconciliation

- 2020-21 Academic Year and 2021 Summer awarding, disbursement and reconciliation underway

Event Materials

- Order the 2021-22 Handbook and other print materials via Online Ordering
- This fall look for the Post-workshop Q&A available on SGSP Resources

General Reminders

- Review the Institutional Contacts Report in PageCenter
- Confirm appropriate user access in BPAMS

PHEAA – Providing affordable access to higher education. (Public Information)
Resources

Web
- PHEAA.org
- Alec

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

Events
- Webinar Series
- Conferences
- Workshops

Print Materials
- Brochures
- Calendars
- FAQs
Thank You!