Slide 1 - Instructions

This presentation contains audio and closed caption features.

Each slide is paused on entry. Use the navigation bar to: advance through the presentation, manage the audio and mute options, and launch or hide closed captions. The navigation bar can be accessed using a mouse or a combination of the space bar and the enter key.

Slide 2 - Title Slide

Hello and thank you for joining us for an overview of the Pennsylvania State Grant Program’s Student Enrollment and Program of Study requirements.

Slide 3 - Agenda

The purpose of this presentation is to supplement information presented in Sections A through C of Chapter 2 of the PA State Grant Program Handbook for the 2018-19 Academic Year and the 2019 Summer.

During this presentation, we will first review the student enrollment definitions and minimum requirements. Then we will present policy that is related to the new enrollment mode reporting. Once we finish that subject, we will discuss the student requirements for enrollment in an approved program of study and conclude the presentation with a few additional enrollment related topics. We will conclude the presentation by providing you some resources that will help you manage the PA State Grant Program.

You should note that this presentation will serve as an overview of the printed material, and should be used in conjunction with the written procedures to ensure your full understanding of and compliance with all State Grant Program policies. Also, since our presentation will focus solely on this topic, we encourage you to review the other Handbook presentations and print materials at your convenience. A copy of the Handbook can be found on our training webpage. We will provide the web address at the end of the presentation. Let’s begin by discussing the PA State Grant Program’s student enrollment definitions.

Slide 4 - Enrollment Definitions

Chapter 2 begins with a discussion on the student enrollment definitions, as outlined in the program regulations that PHEAA uses in administering the State Grant Program. Regulation section 121.1 establishes the enrollment definitions for the State Grant Program, whereas section 121.15 states that students must be enrolled at least half-time.
Unlike what is offered in terms of Federal aid, PHEAA only recognizes four enrollment statuses: full-time, half-time, less than half-time, and not enrolled. Minimum credits and clock hours for eligible enrollment statuses will be covered on the next slide.

However, it is important to mention here that only credits from courses which are applicable to the student’s degree or credential may be counted toward the State Grant minimums.

The only exception to this requirement is when a student is enrolled in remedial credits and a remedial exception is used. Remedial exceptions will be covered later in this presentation, and are also covered as they pertain to the Satisfactory Academic Progress policy within Chapter 2 of the Handbook.

An additional enrollment related requirement to keep in mind, is that credits are always counted in whole numbers and schools are not permitted to round up partial credits. For example, if a student is enrolled in 11.5 credits, he or she must be marked as half-time. Additionally, a student who is enrolled in 5.5 credits would be considered to be enrolled less than half-time and not eligible for an award.

Next, let’s review the enrollment minimums for eligible statuses.

**Slide 5 - Enrollment Minimums**

The charts on this slide illustrate the enrollment minimums mentioned on the previous slide. For schools that use credit hours, students must be enrolled in a minimum of 12 credits to be considered full-time and 6 credits to be considered half-time. The only exception is for schools that operate on a quarter schedule and use semester credits. For quarter schools that operate this way, the student must have a minimum of 8 credits to be considered full-time and 4 credits to be considered half-time. Students that are enrolled in a lesser number of credits than the established half-time minimums should be regarded as less than half-time and are therefore not eligible for an award.

Schools that use clock hours may adhere to schedules that either have two, or three payment periods. A two-payment period schedule, aligns with what would typically be considered a semester schedule with Fall and Spring terms. A three payment period schedule, would be the same as a quarter schedule with Fall, Winter, and Spring terms.

While PHEAA allows a minimum of 24 clock hours of instruction per week for full-time enrollment, 12 hours if half-time, students must still complete the minimum number of clock hours each payment period to meet the enrollment requirement. This means that students must still complete at least 450 clock hours for a two payment period cycle or 300 clock hours for a three payment period cycle.

Next, let’s review the new section on instruction delivery and enrollment mode.
Slide 6 - Instruction Delivery

Act 5 of 2018 was signed into law by Governor Wolf in February of 2018, as a measure to allow PHEAA to integrate distance education into the State Grant Program beginning with the 2018-19 Academic Year. The passage of Act 5 nullifies the requirement for students attending institutions headquartered and domiciled within the Commonwealth to be enrolled in a program of study comprised of at least 50% classroom instruction. It also provides awards for those students who have opted to take more online credits than classroom credits, and are also attending an institution that is headquartered and domiciled in PA.

After Act 5 was passed, PHEAA needed a method to continue collecting information regarding online enrollment for students at State Grant approved schools. The enrollment mode reporting functionality was officially debuted for use starting with the 2018 Summer term. However, the impacts of Act 5 on student awards beginning with the 2018-19 Academic Year and forward will mean that updating enrollment modes will yield different results than it did for the 2018 Summer term.

While the new enrollment mode functionality provides PHEAA with some statistical data which will be used to evaluate the purchasing power of the State Grant Program, the primary function of the enrollment mode reporting will be determination of student eligibility. Therefore reporting of enrollment modes should be treated similarly to enrollment status in that the final enrollment mode reported, should align with students’ final enrollment used for eligibility. This means that module or intersession credits used toward enrollment status, should also be included in the evaluation of enrollment mode.

Since the enrollment mode will impact a student’s eligibility, it must also be re-evaluated, and possibly updated, when students add or drop courses. Full guidance on how drops, adds and even withdrawals may impact enrollment mode reporting is available in Chapter 3.

It is important to note here some information about how the enrollment mode requirement impacts the Ready to Succeed Scholarship Program. Since the students receiving RTSS awards in combination with State Grant awards will be reported for enrollment mode, schools will also need to report the enrollment mode for those RTSS recipients who are Reject E or a Reject M for State Grant. To find additional information about this requirement as it impacts the RTSS Program, please check out the RTSS Program Guidelines.

In a slide or two we will provide details on enrollment mode reporting, but before we move on, let’s review the communication that PHEAA is using to highlight distance education awards.
Slide 7 - Distance Education Awards

Since the integration of distance education has required PHEAA to revamp a number of student eligibility policies, PHEAA wanted to ensure that we remained transparent with students and schools about the implications.

PHEAA has updated several student facing communications to inform applicants of the possible impact distance education enrollment may have on their State Grant eligibility. First, student eligibility notices will feature language which advises that due to limited resources, a student’s enrollment in more than 50% distance education credits may result in a reduced award. The eligibility notice is sent once we’ve made a determination on the student’s eligibility. Students will receive notification via email that directs them toward Account Access, where the eligibility notice is housed. Students without a valid email address will have this notification sent via U.S. Postal Mail.

In addition, Schools may refer students to the State Grant student-facing FAQs located on PHEAA.org. The webpage answers questions regarding enrollment in an online program of study, as well as for situations of greater than 50% distance education credits.

On the next slide, we will examine the different enrollment modes and how this reporting may change a student’s eligibility.

Slide 8 - Instruction Delivery and Enrollment Mode

Four enrollment modes have been developed to capture the online enrollment patterns for State Grant recipients.

Each participating institution must report awarded students under one of the modes. This reporting is dependent upon the student’s percentage of distance education credits. The method for calculating the online percentage remains consistent with existing State Grant policy. We will review a few examples on the next slide. But first let’s define the enrollment modes and explain their impact on awards for the 18 19 year.

Enrollment mode 1 is the designation for students whose term courses consist of one hundred percent classroom credits or clock hours. All students will be defaulted to this mode and will only need to be adjusted in the case that their term enrollment needs reclassification under a different mode. Enrollment mode 2 is used for students whose term credits are comprised of up to 50% distance education.

Those students enrolled in greater than 50% but less than 100% distance education credits should be reported under mode 3; and finally, enrollment mode 4 will be used for any student who is taking 100% distance education credits.

For the 2018-19 Award Year, students enrolled in modes 1 and 2 will receive a State Grant award, so long as they meet all other eligibility requirements. For modes 3 and 4, eligibility for
funds will be dependent on whether or not the student attends an institution which is headquartered and domiciled in Pennsylvania.

Again, the passage of Act 5 of 2018 allows students attending HQD institutions to receive State Grant funds even when their enrollment consists of greater than 50% or 100% distance education credits. Therefore these students will forego the Americans with Disabilities Act or ADA exception process, and receive an adjusted distance education award.

Eligibility requirements for students attending Non-HQD institutions will still include the at least 50% classroom instruction component. Therefore students attending these institutions who are reported under enrollment modes 3 or 4 will likely be ineligible for a State Grant award unless they qualify for an ADA exception for the term. Students who qualify for the ADA accommodation will receive a State Grant commensurate with the adjusted distance education award amount. We will talk a bit more about the ADA exception in a few slides.

**Slide 9 - Enrollment Mode Examples**

On this slide, we have illustrated a few examples of enrollment mode reporting and the resulting impact on student eligibility. To simplify all of the examples on this slide, we assume the student is enrolled in an approved program of study that is structured to contain at least 50% classroom instruction.

In our first example the student is enrolled in 18 credits, all of which are taken in the classroom. Since this student is enrolled in 100% classroom credits and the system default for awarded students is enrollment mode 1, whether or not the student attends a HQD institution, no updates need to be made. This student will continue to be eligible for the State Grant award.

In our second example, the student enrolls in 6 classroom and 6 online credits and would need to be updated to enrollment mode 2. Even though the student’s eligibility would not be impacted and the student would still be eligible for the State Grant, updating to mode 2 is required at both HQD and Non-HQD institutions. Again, students with enrollment modes of 1 or 2 will meet the 50% classroom eligibility requirement for Non-HQD institutions.

Our third example, is for a student taking 5 classroom and 9 online credits. This student would be reported under enrollment mode 3 and if the student attends a HQD institution, the student would be eligible for State Grant funds. However, if the student is attending a Non-HQD institution, then this student would likely be ineligible for the State Grant award for cancellation reason “L,” unless there is approval for the ADA exception.

Finally, if a student enrolls in all 15 credits online, like our fourth example, the student would be reported as enrollment mode 4 and would only have State Grant eligibility if attendance is at an HQD institution. At a Non-HQD institution, this student would be subject to the ADA process and possibly result in a Cancel “L” status.
Let’s review the ADA process on the next slide.

**Slide 10 - ADA Communication Workflow**

As mentioned previously, only students enrolled at Non-HQD institutions will undergo the Americans with Disabilities Act, or ADA accommodation process. While the method for reporting online enrollment reporting has changed, the ADA process itself remains unchanged.

To review, schools should verify the enrollment mode for all awarded students enrolled in approved programs of study and update the mode for those who are not categorized as attending 100% classroom credits. Students who are enrolled up to 50% classroom must be updated to an enrollment mode 2, and will still be eligible for a State Grant award.

Students who are reported as enrolled in greater than 50% or 100% distance education credits, modes 3 or 4, for the first time during the academic year or trailing Summer term will be sent the ADA exception letter. Once a student is sent the letter, he will be provided 30 days to respond before the awards are cancelled for reason “L.” Students who are granted the ADA exception will be eligible to receive awards similar to those granted to students with the same enrollment modes at HQD institutions. Non-HQD schools should monitor students categorized under these enrollment modes using the <50% Attendance report in PageCenter to verify whether or not ADA accommodation documentation has been received.

Please keep in mind that awards for students enrolled in a D E program of study at Non-HQD institutions are rejected for reason “G.” Therefore no attempt to update these students for enrollment mode should be made, as they are not eligible for the ADA accommodation. We will discuss how students enrolled in primarily online programs of study should be reported in a few slides. But first, let’s review a few more enrollment requirements.

**Slide 11 - Enrollment Reporting**

There are a number of additional instances that would require updated enrollment reporting. For this reason, it is crucial that institutions review a student’s actual enrollment before crediting a State Grant award. Keep in mind that the award data that is provided on rosters and listings reflects what PHEAA has in our system at the point in time in which the reports are generated. Therefore, if there are updates that have yet to be submitted or processed by PHEAA, they would not be reflected on any of these point-in-time snapshots.

In addition to enrollment pattern reporting, schools must also report when a student’s enrollment status changes. A few common examples of this include if the student drops to half-time, does not show up, or if they fail to enroll. Whenever verifying a student’s enrollment status, institutions are required to use the definitions established by PHEAA at the start of Chapter 2. Your institutional definitions may differ and are not applicable when evaluating the enrollment minimums.
Any students that are not enrolled for the term should be reported to PHEAA, so that their award may be cancelled and their award counter preserved for future terms. If the student is not enrolled for the Fall term, but the school has reason to believe that the student will enroll for an upcoming term, then only the Fall term award should be cancelled. If no reasonable assumption exists that the student will enroll in future terms, the school is free to cancel awards for the entire year. If the student were to later enroll, a reinstatement request must be submitted to PHEAA so that the student may resume eligibility.

In instances where the student’s transcript reflects all “F” grades at the end of the term, schools should take a further look into these situations to determine if the grades were earned. It is possible that a student could be assessed an “F” grade at the end of the term but actually never showed up or unofficially withdrew. If the student is determined to be a “no show,” then he should be updated as not enrolled. For guidance on withdrawals, refer to Chapter 3.

Another reporting requirement to be mindful of is the cancellation reason of Student Graduated. This designation should be reserved for those students who have earned a Bachelor’s degree. Since going forward these students will no longer meet the undergraduate status criteria for the program, PHEAA will not review them for future eligibility. In instances when the student completes a different credential and is no longer enrolled at your institution, you should report the student as not enrolled. For example, if your institution only offers Associate-level degrees and the student completes this credential, the student should be reported as not enrolled instead of graduated.

Business, Trade, and Technical institutions that offer Associate in Specialized Business and Associate in Specialized Technology degree programs, must select one standard, clock hours or credit hours, and apply it uniformly to all students when verifying their enrollment and eligibility for these programs. Students in non-degree programs at these schools must be evaluated using clock hours.

**Slide 12 - Remedial Exception and Repeat Work**

To support students that are not fully ready for undergraduate course work, many schools will offer remedial or developmental courses that help the student prepare for future collegiate-level courses. While PHEAA does not define what courses are degree versus remedial, remedial credits are typically prerequisites which do not count towards the degree requirements.

Since some students will require completion of these remedial courses before they can advance further, PHEAA provides students with an exception to the normal enrollment requirement. This exception may be applied for a maximum of 1.0 grants and may not exceed this. Additionally, the student must be awarded and enrolled in both degree and remedial courses during the term, with the number of remedial credits not exceeding the degree credits. For example, a full-time
student enrolled in 12 semester credits could carry a maximum of 6 remedial credits with the 6
degree credits and receive the full-time remedial exception for that term.

The remedial exception allows students to use these credits, which otherwise would not be
applicable, towards the enrollment used for State Grant consideration. Therefore, schools
should only report the remedial exception for awarded students who require the addition of
remedial credits in order to meet the enrollment minimums. Meaning, students who either are
ineligible for other reasons or already meet the enrollment minimums should not be reported for
the remedial exception.

Effective the 2018-19 Academic Year, schools must report the remedial exception by the
student’s last day of attendance. This deadline is intended to allow schools sufficient time to
reconcile eligibility in a timely manner. Consistent with this reporting deadline, schools are not
permitted to retroactively report a remedial exception for a completed term, which includes
situations where the student has failed to earn the regular credits that were initially considered in
the student’s half- or full-time enrollment status.

Along the same lines, the enrollment mode reporting should also be based only on the credits
that are used for establishing eligibility. Remedial credits should only be included in the
enrollment mode reporting when those credits were used toward determining the enrollment
status.

For instance, a student taking 12 regular credits and 3 remedial credits would not have a
remedial exception reported and would be evaluated on the 12 regular credits used to attain the
full-time award status. Conversely, if a student were taking 9 regular credits and 3 remedial
credits, a remedial exception could be applied so that the 3 remedial credits would be used to
meet the full-time minimum. In this case, 12 credits should then be evaluated when reporting
enrollment mode.

Slide 13 - Approved Program of Study

Section C within Chapter 2 is all about the Approved Program of Study requirements. While
Chapter 1 outlines the requirements for program approval, Chapter 2 explains that students
must be unconditionally admitted, and enrolled in approved programs of study in order to be
eligible for State Grant awards. PHEAA defines the program of study as either the initial
degree, certificate, or diploma program under which the student was admitted, or the program in
which the student is currently enrolled.

Approved programs must meet the program length and program structure requirements. This
means that approved programs must be at least two academic years in length and offered over
a period of at least 15 months and no less than 60 weeks of instruction. Two academic years is
defined as the equivalent of a minimum of 60 semester credits, 90 quarter credits, or 1,500
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clock hours for AST or ASB programs. For non-degree programs, two academic years is equal to 1,800 clock hours.

With the passage of Act 5 of 2018, the requirement for students to be enrolled in programs of study that are comprised of at least 50% classroom instruction was nullified for HQD institutions. Students at HQD schools that are enrolled in programs with more than 50% online coursework will continue to be eligible for State Grant funds. For this reason, these students should not have their programs of study updated to D E, and will instead have their enrollment mode evaluated and reported. Award amounts for students in online programs at HQD institutions will be commensurate with the reported enrollment mode.

Students attending Non-HQD institutions must be enrolled in programs which are offered at least 50% in the classroom. Students who are enrolled in programs that are structured to be more than 50% online, should be reported as D E in the Program of Study field and will be ineligible for a State Grant award for reject reason “G.” The enrollment mode reporting and ADA accommodation are not applicable for these students.

Slide 14 - Changes to Program of Study

Since a student’s State Grant eligibility is contingent upon enrollment in an approved program of study, changes to a student’s program of study may impact his or her eligibility. As you may know, student award amounts take into consideration either the institutional costs or the specific program of study costs. Program of study changes must be reported to PHEAA to determine if the student will be permitted to retain his or her eligibility.

PHEAA will use the date of the disbursement roster generation and the student’s program of study as of that date, to determine whether or not a student retains State Grant eligibility. If the student is enrolled in an approved program of study as of the date of the roster, the student’s eligibility will begin with the current term. If the student were enrolled in a non-approved program as of the date of the roster, then changes to an approved program after the roster is generated, then the student’s eligibility would be effective beginning with the next term.

Conversely, if the student changes from an approved program to a non-approved program after the disbursement, the school should follow the withdrawal procedures described in Chapter 3 and possibly adjust the award based upon the school’s refund policy and the date that the program of study changed.

Since the costs and available award counters can differ between programs at Business, Trade, and Technical schools, all BTT schools must withhold crediting for students who change their programs of study until the awards can be reprocessed. This is to ensure that the calculation of the student’s State Grant award used the correct costs associated with the program of study and that the student has the correct number of maximum payments listed on each disbursement roster.
Slide 15 - Additional Topics

There are a few other enrollment and program of study topics covered within Chapter 2. Some of these additional topics include final year exceptions, study abroad programs, and bona fide 5-year programs. While these topics are important, they are also specific to individual schools or student situations. Therefore, we will not cover them within this training. For information on any of these topics, please review the policy guidance provided in the Handbook. Now, let’s wrap up with some State Grant resources.

Slide 16 - SGSP Resources

In conclusion, we would like to refer you to some resources that will assist you in managing the State Grant Program. On our training page, you will find the most recent version of the State Grant Program Handbook in addition to user guides, tutorials, FAQ documents, and various one-page resources. You will also find resources to assist you with the other PHEAA-administered programs.

In Alec, you will find links to the Document Library and PageCenter. PageCenter is our reporting repository and contains student and institutional reporting for your school. Within the Document Library, you will find copies of correspondence that was sent to schools throughout the year, in addition to technical resources such as our Online Roster Certification Form and our clock-hour conversion spreadsheet.

If you would like to contact us, PHEAA staff is available at 1-800-443-0646. You may also outreach to us via email to share your questions and concerns, or to express your feedback. Your feedback in writing will help us to share your input with the appropriate staff. If you have questions about institution eligibility for the State Grant Program, please call 717-720-2470.

Slide 17 - Thank you

Thank you for listening to the overview of the Enrollment and Program of Study requirements. Again, please be sure to review the current program handbook and other resources to ensure your understanding of these requirements and others that govern the program.