



PA State Grant and Special Programs
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Memo

To: Financial Aid Administrators
Postsecondary Institutions
From: Elizabeth K. McCloud
Vice President,
PA State Grant and Special Programs
Date: July 2020
Subject: Academic Progress Exception Requests

The Academic Progress requirement of the PA State Grant Program is outlined in Chapter 2, Section D of the *2020-21 Pennsylvania State Grant Program Handbook*. Academic Progress is a regulatory (22 Pa. Code § 121.58) requirement whereby each grant recipient must make normal Academic Progress from year to year in order to retain PA State Grant eligibility.

For students who received incomplete grades for the 2020 Winter, Spring, or Summer terms or who otherwise did not achieve satisfactory Academic Progress as a result of COVID-19 related impact or factors, please review Chapter 2, Section D, paragraph 8 of the *2020-21 Pennsylvania State Grant Program Handbook* for information regarding the exception or appeal process. Under this appeal process, students may request an exception when there is a failure to complete the required number of credits to satisfy the Academic Progress test. The student must report the medical condition, family illness, or other extenuating circumstance that contributed to the failure.

The Academic Progress Exception Form and instructions are available on [PHEAA.org/forms](https://www.pheaa.org/forms) under *General Documents and Forms*. **Please note that a document titled *SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR WINTER, SPRING, or SUMMER 2020 COVID-19 RELATED ACADEMIC PROGRESS EXCEPTION REQUESTS* has been added to the site to provide further guidance for students who lacked credits due to a withdrawal or failure to pass courses during the 2020 Winter, Spring, or Summer terms for a COVID-19 related reason.**

Examples of COVID-19 reasons that may be considered include, but are not limited to:

- Student was diagnosed with COVID-19 and the illness prevented them from successfully completing course(s).
- A member of the student's household was diagnosed with COVID-19 and that family member's illness prevented the student from successfully completing course(s).
- The student normally enrolls in-classroom, and due to school ground closures, the school only offered a continuation of the Winter, Spring and/or Summer 2020 enrollment online and:
 - The student did not have the technology resources to continue enrollment or successfully complete coursework.
 - The student was unable to successfully adapt to the online learning environment.
 - The student experienced changes in coursework, professors, etc. that inhibited their ability to complete the course(s) successfully.

Submission of documentation of the school's COVID-19 related disruptions or a medical situation to support the student's appeal reason is helpful but not necessarily required in cases related to COVID-19. Electronic signature instructions can be found at <https://www.pheaa.org/documents/sgsp/ph/pdf-signature.pdf>.

If you have any questions concerning this information, please contact PA State Grant and Special Programs staff at 1-800-443-0646, option 3, option 1 (for PA State Grants), a private number reserved for the use of financial aid administrators or email sghelp@pheaa.org.

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