

NEW

Georgia College Completion Grant Program

REGULATIONS – 900.

2022 - 2023 Award Year



Effective Date – July 1, 2022
Updated November 4, 2022

GSFC | Georgia Student
Finance Commission

2082 East Exchange Place
Tucker, Georgia 30084

901. Table of Contents.

Section	Page
901. Table of Contents.	2
902. Program Overview.	5
903. Definitions (Electronic Link).	6
904. General Eligibility Requirements.	6
904.1. Citizenship.	6
904.2. Georgia Residency.	6
904.3. Enrollment Status.	8
904.4. Satisfactory Academic Progress.	8
904.5. Selective Service Registration.	8
904.6. Defaulted Loan or Refund Due.	9
904.7. Georgia Drug-Free Act.	10
904.8. Incarceration.	10
905. Program Specific Eligibility Requirements.	11
905.1. Academic Progress.	11
905.2. Financial Aid Gap.	11
905.4. High School Graduation or Equivalent.	11
905.8. Attainment of a Credential.	11
905.9. Transfer Students.	11
906. Eligibility Requirements by Institution.	12
907. Eligible and Ineligible Coursework.	13
907.1. Transient Coursework.	13
907.2. Distance Learning Coursework.	13
907.3. Study Away Coursework.	13

907.4. Joint Enrollment and Dual Credit Enrollment Coursework.	14
907.5. Learning Support Coursework.	14
907.6. Coursework Exemptions.	14
907.7. Continuing Education and Audit Coursework.	14
908. Student Application Requirements.	15
908.1. Application Forms.	15
908.2. Application Deadline Date.	15
909. Award Requirements.	16
909.1. Award Amounts.	16
909.2. Awards Per School Term.	16
910. Institution Allocation.	17
911. Academic Performance Reporting.	18
912. Invoicing Requirements.	19
912.1. Submission of Invoices.	19
912.2. Payment of Invoices.	20
913. Refund Requirements.	21
913.1. Calculation of Refunds.	21
913.2. Emergency Military Duty.	21
914. Reconciliation Requirements.	22
914.1. Term-Reconciliation.	22
914.2. Fiscal Year End Reconciliation.	22
915. Records Retention Requirements.	23
915.1. Length of Retention.	23
915.2. Documentation.	23
915.3. Extended Retention.	24

916. Administrative Reviews and Exceptions.	25
916.1. Administrative Reviews.....	25
916.2. Exceptions.	25
917. Compliance Reviews.	26
917.1. Compliance Review Policy.....	26
917.2. Compliance Review Process.	26
917.3. Institutional Repayment.	26

902. Program Overview.

Georgia College Completion Grant Program provides grant aid to assist eligible students who are within 80% of earning their credential and have an outstanding balance due to Direct Costs at their eligible postsecondary institution. Georgia College Completion Grant recipients must meet the financial need, academic and eligibility requirements specific to the grant program.

Eligible students may receive a College Completion Grant award of up to \$2,500, depending on the extent of their outstanding balance of Direct Costs. Recipients must be enrolled in an undergraduate degree, diploma, or certificate major or program of study at a University System of Georgia (USG) or Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) institution or an eligible non-profit private institution and meet the program eligibility requirements. Eligible postsecondary institutions are awarded an annual allocation to be awarded to their eligible students.

Georgia College Completion Grant program was created beginning with the 2022-2023 Award Year (State Fiscal Year 2023). The Georgia Student Finance Commission administers the College Completion Grant Program in accordance with the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A.) § 20-3-360, et seq.

(The remainder of this page is intentionally blank.)

903. Definitions (Electronic Link).

904. General Eligibility Requirements.

904.1. Citizenship.

1. A student must be a United States Citizen, born or naturalized, or an Eligible Non-Citizen according to the Federal Title IV Regulations as of the first day of classes of the school term for which payment is sought.

904.2. Georgia Residency.

1. A student attending a USG or TCSG institution who meets the Georgia Residency requirements of the Board of Regents (BOR) or TCSG at the time of his or her high school graduation, Home Study program completion or earned a state-approved High School Equivalency diploma, must also meet such Georgia Residency requirements for 12 consecutive months immediately prior to the first day of classes of the school term for which the College Completion Grant is sought.
 - a. A student who does not meet the Georgia Residency requirements of the BOR or TCSG at the time of high school graduation, Home Study program completion or earned a High School Equivalency diploma must meet such Georgia Residency requirements for 24 consecutive months immediately prior to the first day of classes of the school term for which the College Completion Grant is sought.
2. A student attending a private Eligible Postsecondary Institution who met the Georgia Residency requirements of the *Georgia Residency Requirements for State Programs at Private Institutions Regulations* at the time of his or her high school graduation, Home Study program completion or earned a High School Equivalency diploma, must also meet such Georgia Residency requirements for 12 consecutive months immediately prior to the first day of classes of the school term for which the College Completion Grant is sought.
 - a. A student attending a private Eligible Postsecondary Institution who did not meet the Georgia Residency requirements of the *Georgia Residency Requirements for State Programs at Private Institutions Regulations* at the time of high school graduation, Home Study program completion or earned a High School Equivalency diploma must meet such Georgia Residency requirements for 24 consecutive months immediately prior to the first day of classes of the school term for which the College Completion Grant is sought.

3. Military Personnel, Military Spouses, or Dependent Children, shall be treated as a Georgia Resident for purposes of College Completion Grant eligibility if:
 - a. The Military Personnel is stationed in Georgia on active duty, or lists Georgia as his or her home of record; or
 - b. A USG or TCSG institution grants a Military Personnel Out-of-State Tuition Waiver or Exemption.
4. No other Out-of-State Tuition Waiver, other than for Military Personnel and their dependents, applies to students in the College Completion Grant Program.
5. Members of the Georgia National Guard shall be treated as a Georgia resident for purposes of College Completion Grant eligibility.
6. Members of a reserve component of the United States Armed Forces, assigned to a reserve unit located in Georgia, shall be treated as a Georgia resident for purposes of College Completion Grant eligibility.
7. Full-time employees of the FTAA, who are recognized by the United States Department of State as based in Georgia, their spouses, and their dependents are considered to meet the Georgia Residency requirements for participation in the College Completion Grant Program, regardless of the length of time they have resided in Georgia.
8. A student, who was correctly determined to meet the Georgia Residency requirements for purposes of College Completion Grant eligibility and began receiving payment, will continue to meet the Georgia Residency requirements for purposes of College Completion Grant eligibility, unless he or she has a break in Enrollment of two or more consecutive semesters or quarters and resides outside of Georgia for 12 or more consecutive months.
 - a. If such student later returns to Georgia, he or she must re-establish Georgia Residency for 12 consecutive months, (refer to Section 904.2.1. or 904.2.3.), before regaining eligibility.
9. A student who has a break in Enrollment of two or more consecutive semesters or quarters, and who resides outside Georgia for less than 12 consecutive months, and then later returns to Georgia and Enrolls in an Eligible Postsecondary Institution within 12 consecutive months from his or her most recent date of Enrollment in an Eligible Postsecondary Institution will continue to meet the Georgia Residency requirements for purposes of College Completion Grant eligibility.

904.3. Enrollment Status.

1. A student must be Enrolled at a USG, TCSG, or an eligible non-profit Private Postsecondary Institution in a Matriculated status leading to an undergraduate degree, diploma, or certificate major or program of study.
 - a. Half-Time or Full-Time Enrollment is not a requirement.

904.4. Satisfactory Academic Progress.

1. A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP), as defined, and certified by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution.
 - a. For state aid programs, Eligible Postsecondary Institutions may establish an appeal process for students with dual-enrollment credit hours that fail to meet the quantitative standard (pace) for degree completion, generally identified as 150 percent of the published length of the program.
 - b. The appeal should consider attempted hours toward the program in which the student is enrolled, satisfactory qualitative (grade-based) standards, and the student's satisfactory pace in pursuit of completing the program with and without the dual enrollment credits. Eligible Postsecondary Institutions have sole discretion and responsibility for evaluation and approval of any such appeals.

904.5. Selective Service Registration.

1. A student must be in compliance with Georgia state law requirements of having registered with the United States Selective Service System requirements, in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-3-519.1(b).
2. Selective Service registration, by required males, should be completed prior to the program application deadline in order to be eligible for payment for such school term.
 - a. A late disbursement is permitted if the student meets Selective Service requirements any time during the fiscal year.
3. GSFC will maintain Selective Service registration or exemption status information for state aid program applicants/recipients. The registration status will be available to the postsecondary institution in which the student is enrolled in order for the institution to determine program eligibility.
 - a. The Institution may collect documentation supporting a student's registration status and submit to GSFC for consideration.

4. Male applicants required to register with the Selective Service System must have a registered or exemption status on file with GSFC for a disbursement invoice to be paid.

904.6. Defaulted Loan or Refund Due.

1. A student must not be in default on a Federal Title IV or State of Georgia educational loan or owe a refund due to an over-award on a Federal Title IV or State of Georgia student financial aid program, or in any other way be in violation of Federal Title IV Programs Regulations or State of Georgia student financial aid program regulations. A student must meet the requirements of this section at the time funds are disbursed by GSFC on behalf of the student.
2. A student's federal default status can be resolved in one of five ways:
 - a. Completing an acceptable rehabilitation plan; or
 - b. Having the loan repurchased by the original lender and the default status reversed; or
 - c. Consolidating the loan out of a default status; or
 - d. Receiving an approved Title IV debt settlement, to include a compromised settlement; or
 - e. Making monthly payments over specified period agreed-upon with the lender of the Student's federal loan; each payment must be on time and voluntary to be in a satisfactory repayment plan.
3. A student's State of Georgia refund due status can be resolved by:
 - a. Paying the refund due to the Eligible Postsecondary Institution at which the over-award occurred. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution will then forward the payment to GSFC.
4. A student's default status on a State of Georgia loan can be resolved in one of two ways:
 - a. Paying off the defaulted loan in full; or
 - b. Completing an acceptable rehabilitation plan by making voluntary on time payments over a specified period agreed-upon with GSFC.
5. If such student has repaid the defaulted loan or refund due in full, or resolved the default status, then he or she may be eligible to receive state scholarship, grant or loan funds beginning with the school term in which repayment was made in full but not retroactively for previous school terms.

904.7. Georgia Drug-Free Act.

1. A student convicted of committing certain felony offenses involving marijuana, controlled substances, or dangerous drugs, may be ineligible for College Completion Grant payment from the date of conviction to the completion of the following school term, in accordance with the Georgia Drug-Free Postsecondary Education Act of 1990, O.C.G.A. § 20-1-20, et seq.

904.8. Incarceration.

1. A student is ineligible to receive College Completion Grant funding while incarcerated. Upon release from incarceration, if such student meets all eligibility requirements, he or she may be eligible for the College Completion Grant.

(The remainder of this page is intentionally blank.)

905.Program Specific Eligibility Requirements.

905.1. Academic Progress.

1. A student must have successfully completed eighty (80) percent or more credit requirements of his or her eligible undergraduate degree, diploma, or certificate major or program of study.

905.2. Financial Aid Gap.

1. A student must have a financial aid gap constituting of an outstanding balance with the institution for Direct Costs.
 - a. The outstanding balance must consist of incurred Direct Costs for the enrollment term in which the College Completion Grant is to be awarded.
 - b. After other financial aid is awarded or authorized and any payments are made, if the student has an outstanding balance of direct cost an eligible student may be awarded the grant.

CLARIFIED
11/4/2022

905.4. High School Graduation or Equivalent.

1. A student must have earned a high school diploma, successfully completed a Home Study program, or earned a state-approved High School Equivalency diploma through TCSG.
 - a. College Completion Grant recipients must not be simultaneously attending a secondary school of any type or pursuing a high school diploma.

905.8. Attainment of a Credential.

1. A student may be eligible for the College Completion Grant for a second credential, including a second Baccalaureate Degree.

905.9. Transfer Students.

1. A College Completion Grant recipient who transfers from one Eligible Postsecondary Institution to another Eligible Postsecondary Institution does not transfer his or her College Completion Grant funds to the Eligible Postsecondary Institution to which he or she transferred. Such student may or may not be considered for a College Completion Grant award at the Eligible Postsecondary Institution to which he or she transferred.

906. Eligibility Requirements by Institution.

1. Eligible Postsecondary Institutions shall be required to determine the eligibility of students for Georgia College Completion Grant for a term or terms in accordance with the eligibility requirements set forth in *Sections 904 and 905* of these regulations.
2. In addition to the eligibility criteria as set forth in Georgia College Completion Grant Program Regulations, Eligible Postsecondary Institutions have the authority to implement institutional policies to set additional eligibility criteria which may include one of the following, but not limited to:
 - i. Priority for number of credit hours toward graduation;
 - ii. Priority for academic performance or GPA; or
 - iii. Amount of outstanding balance for Direct Costs; or
 - iv. A required institutional program application or form

(The remainder of this page is intentionally blank.)

907. Eligible and Ineligible Coursework.

907.1. Transient Coursework.

1. A Transient student is eligible to receive College Completion Grant payment at the Home and/or the Host Institution if he or she meets all eligibility requirements.
 - a. The Home and Host institutions must be Eligible Postsecondary Institutions.
 - b. A student taking coursework through the Home and Host Institutions during the same term is eligible to receive College Completion Grant payment from each Eligible Postsecondary Institution, provided the total award does not exceed the lifetime maximum of \$2,500.00.
2. The Home and Host institution must determine the student's eligibility for College Completion Grant funds at their institution.
3. Student must have an outstanding balance of Direct Costs at the specific institution and has earned 80 percent or more of the credit requirements for his or her major or program of study. The coursework at the Host Institution must be approved for credit towards the major or program of study in which the student is pursuing and has met at least 80% of the credit requirements.
4. The Host Institution must report College Completion Grant payments for Transient students to GSFC in the same manner it reports College Completion Grant payments for its regular students.

907.2. Distance Learning Coursework.

1. A student participating in Distance Learning coursework is eligible to receive College Completion Grant payment if all other eligibility requirements are met. The institution offering the Distance Learning coursework must be an Eligible Postsecondary Institution.
2. A student taking coursework through more than one Eligible Postsecondary Institution during the same term is eligible to receive College Completion Grant payment from each Eligible Postsecondary Institution, provided the total award does not exceed the lifetime maximum of \$2,500.00. The eligibility and payment procedure for Distance Learning students is the same as for Transient students (refer to Section 907.1.).

907.3. Study Away Coursework.

1. A student is ineligible for College Completion Grant payment while participating in a Study Away program.

907.4. Joint Enrollment and Dual Credit Enrollment Coursework.

1. A student is ineligible for College Completion Grant payment for Degree coursework attempted while participating in Joint Enrollment or Dual Credit Enrollment.

907.5. Learning Support Coursework.

1. A student seeking a Degree who Enrolls in Learning Support coursework is ineligible for College Completion Grant payment for such coursework.

907.6. Coursework Exemptions.

1. A student is ineligible to receive College Completion Grant payment for coursework that was exempted or given credit by examination, testing, training, or experience.

907.7. Continuing Education and Audit Coursework.

1. A student is ineligible to receive a College Completion Grant payment for coursework classified by his or her Eligible Postsecondary Institution as Continuing Education or Audit coursework.

(The remainder of this page is intentionally blank.)

908.Student Application Requirements.

908.1. Application Forms.

1. A student is required to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), each academic year he or she intends to apply for the College Completion Grant.
 - a. FAFSA verification requirements must be completed before a student can be awarded College Completion Grant funds.
 - b. The student does not have to be eligible to receive Federal Pell Grant funds for the Award Year or term that he or she has applied for College Completion Grant funds.
2. In addition to the FAFSA, an Eligible Postsecondary Institution may require students to complete an institutional application or request to provide supplemental information for the purpose of determining College Completion Grant eligibility.

908.2. Application Deadline Date.

1. A student must have a completed FAFSA on or before the College Completion Grant award can be made.
 - a. The FAFSA must be completed on or before the last day of the Eligible Postsecondary Institution's school term (semester or quarter) in order for the student to be awarded the College Completion Grant for that school term.

(The remainder of this page is intentionally blank.)

909. Award Requirements.

909.1. Award Amounts.

1. Georgia College Completion Grant award amount maximum is a lifetime award of \$2,500.
 - a. The award amount may be given in one term. The award must be in whole dollars.

909.2. Awards Per School Term.

1. The College Completion Grant must be used for an outstanding balance owed to the institution for Direct Costs for the term of the award.
 - a. The College Completion Grant cannot be applied to an outstanding balance for a previous aid year.
 - b. A College Completion Grant award may be made for a previous term within the aid year if the student had a completed FASFA on file by the last day of the term for the award.
2. Students may be awarded for the standard school terms of Fall, Spring, and/or Summer, semesters or Fall, Winter, Spring, and/or Summer quarters in which the student has earned eighty percent or more of his or her credit requirements for graduation from his or her major or program of study.
 - a. Summer term is a trailer for awarding purposes of the College Completion Grant.
 - b. An Eligible Postsecondary Institution may combine mini-terms or modules to form the equivalent of a standard semester or quarter.
 - c. An Eligible Postsecondary Institution may offer Non-Standard Terms or Non-Terms, in which courses or modules are taken consecutively to form the equivalent of a standard semester or quarter. Regardless of the structure of an Eligible Postsecondary Institution's school terms, a student may be awarded College Completion Grant funds for a maximum of three semesters or four quarters per Award Year.

910. Institution Allocation.

1. GSFC will determine annual allocation amounts for Georgia College Completion Grant to be awarded to each eligible postsecondary institution.
2. The annual allocation for the fiscal year will be based on the prior, prior year percentage of HOPE Scholarship and Grant students at the institution.
3. Each institution will be notified of their annual allocation through GSFC's online invoicing system, Scholarship Up-to-date Records for Electronic Reporting (SURFER).
4. Each Eligible Postsecondary Institution must complete the annual Allocation Commitment form by March 1.
5. The Allocation Commitment form is each eligible institution's official communication with GSFC of the institution's intent to award their annual Georgia College Completion Grant allocation.
 - a. The Allocation Commitment form is used for the institution to confirm all allocated funds will be disbursed to eligible students by the annual invoice deadline, rescind some or all of the allocated funds, and to request additional funds, if available.
 - b. Failure to complete the Allocation Commitment Form may affect additional funds being available.
6. Each Eligible Postsecondary Institution must manage their allocation, awards, invoices, disbursements, and Allocation Commitment through SURFER.

911. Academic Performance Reporting.

1. Eligible Postsecondary Institutions may submit through CHECS, student transcript data records for Georgia College Completion Grant recipients for the purpose of tracking enrollment and academic performance.
2. All Eligible Postsecondary Institutions must report student enrollment data to the National Student Clearinghouse.
 - a. GSFC will utilize National Student Clearinghouse data for collection of student enrollment and graduation record data.

(The remainder of this page is intentionally blank.)

912. Invoicing Requirements.

912.1. Submission of Invoices.

1. Invoices must be submitted through GSFC's online invoicing system, Scholarship Up-to-date Records for Electronic Reporting (SURFER), processed and approved by GSFC by the Invoicing Deadline Date as established by GSFC. Each invoice submitted by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution must include Enrolled-Hours and Paid-Hours and the student's program of study information, when applicable to the program.
2. Eligible Postsecondary Institutions may submit College Completion Grant invoices to GSFC as early as fifteen (15) calendar days prior to the first day of classes for the school term.
3. Prior to the beginning of any award year and no later than June 30 of each year GSFC shall establish and publish the Invoicing Deadline Dates for each school term for the upcoming Award Year.
 - a. In the event invoices are submitted to GSFC by an Eligible Postsecondary Institution after the Invoicing Deadline Date for a school term, GSFC may issue a notice of failure to meet the Invoicing Deadline Date to the President and/or governing body of the Eligible Postsecondary Institution and the invoices may not be honored.
4. Invoices submitted after the Invoicing Deadline Date during the current fiscal year may be honored or paid if the failure to meet the date was because of:
 - a. The need for supplemental documentation required by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution or GSFC to support or verify a student's eligibility; or
 - b. Late grades, late completions, grade changes; or
 - c. Other adjustments made to the student's official academic transcript that resulted in a change in eligibility, and the student met all other eligibility requirements prior to the deadline.
5. College Completion Grant invoices after the fiscal year has closed are not permitted. The Institution has an annual allocation. Allocations not utilized are not available to the institution.
6. The President of GSFC has sole discretion in the determination of invoice deadlines and extensions. The decision of the President of GSFC shall be final.

912.2. Payment of Invoices.

1. College Completion Grant funds are paid to Eligible Postsecondary Institutions by electronic transfer of funds on behalf of eligible students each school term, upon submission to GSFC of a College Completion Grant invoice.
2. Upon receipt of College Completion Grant payments from GSFC, the Eligible Postsecondary Institution must credit the amount of payment on behalf of an eligible student to the student's account and for the outstanding balance of Direct Costs the award was based upon.
3. The student cannot be refunded any portion of the College Completion Grant funds.

(The remainder of this page is intentionally blank.)

913. Refund Requirements.

913.1. Calculation of Refunds.

1. If the Eligible Postsecondary Institution reduces the student's Direct Costs covered by the College Completion Grant, the Institution must determine the amount of the refund due back to the College Completion Grant Program.
 - a. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution should return the funds determined to be owed to the Program within forty-five (45) calendar days of the refund determination. Funds cannot be held for the remainder of the year.
 - i. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution cannot adjust the student's invoice in SURFER, to create a credit for future use. The student should not be reported with a refund due status to GSFC since the funds have been repaid to GSFC.
2. If a student officially withdraws, drops out, drops hours, is expelled, or otherwise fails to complete a period of Enrollment, and is entitled to a refund of the Direct Cost covered by the College Completion Grant, the Institution must return the funds to the College Completion Grant program.
 - a. A student is ineligible for the College Completion Grant for coursework from which he or she totally withdrew, if such coursework does not appear on the student's academic transcript as a "W" or any other code or type of identification for such a withdrawal.

913.2. Emergency Military Duty.

1. A student who is a member of the United States Armed Forces, National Guard, or Military Reserve Forces receiving funds from the College Completion Grant Program who is called to emergency military duty during a school term that is already in progress should not have his or her College Completion Grant eligibility negatively impacted.
2. If the Eligible Postsecondary Institution the student attends allows the student to totally withdraw and receive a grade such as "WM" for "military withdrawal" or the Eligible Postsecondary Institution totally removes all grades for that term and corresponding credit hours from the student's records, the Eligible Postsecondary Institution should return the full amount of the College Completion Grant award.
3. This regulation may also be applied to students who are not members of the military but are otherwise unusually and detrimentally affected by the emergency activation of members of the United States Armed Forces, as determined by the president of the Eligible Postsecondary Institution that such student is attending.

914. Reconciliation Requirements.

914.1. Term-Reconciliation.

1. Eligible Postsecondary Institutions must conduct a Term Reconciliation by the end of each term. A Term Reconciliation consists of an official acknowledgement by an authorized school official, through SURFER, that the number of students submitted for payment, amount invoiced, the number of invoices paid, and amount disbursed by GSFC to the Eligible Postsecondary Institution, according to SURFER, is accurate on that date.
 - a. GSFC will not issue any state scholarship or grant funds for the following term until the Term Reconciliation is complete.
 - i. Invoices in an academically ineligible status must be addressed and fully resolved before term reconciliation can be completed.
 - b. Funds are not returned to GSFC as part of the Term Reconciliation process.

914.2. Fiscal Year End Reconciliation.

1. Eligible Postsecondary Institutions must conduct the Fiscal Year End Reconciliation consisting of an official acknowledgement by an authorized school official, through SURFER, verifying, student by student, the accuracy of each invoice submitted by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution with respect to the student's Enrolled-Hours, Paid-Hours, Learning Support, academic eligibility status as determined by the CHECS calculations, and program of study information, when applicable to the program.
 - a. Any pending, rejected or academically ineligible invoices must be fully resolved prior to Fiscal Year End Reconciliation.
 - b. Reconciliation certification forms must be completed and submitted electronically, through SURFER, by July 15, immediately following the completion of the Fiscal Year for each State Program.
 - c. Return to GSFC any funds not utilized according to the Fiscal Year End Reconciliation by August 15 after the beginning of the new Fiscal Year.
 - d. GSFC will not issue any state scholarship or grant funds for the Fall term until the previous Fiscal Year End Reconciliation process is complete.
 - e. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution must have a procedure in place to ensure that the state scholarship and grant funds do not go to an unintended third party (i.e., state, postsecondary institution).

915. Records Retention Requirements.

915.1. Length of Retention.

1. An Eligible Postsecondary Institution shall maintain accurate records, books, documents, and other evidence concerning the College Completion Grant Program, including, but not limited to, individual student files for whichever is longer:
 - a. Three years after the Award Year in which the aid was awarded; or
 - b. For such other period as required by an applicable statute, rule, or regulation; or
 - c. Such other time as requested in writing by GSFC.

915.2. Documentation.

1. Documentation contained within an individual student file or record which supports the original determination of a student's eligibility must be retained by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution and available for review by GSFC on the Eligible Postsecondary Institution's campus in Georgia, for at least three calendar years after the most recent Award Year for which the student received College Completion Grant funds (refer to *Section 917*).
2. Eligible Postsecondary Institutions are permitted to maintain these documents in an imaged media format. The imaged media format must be capable of reproducing an accurate, legible, and complete copy of the original document.
 - a. Such documentation may include, but is not limited to, copies of permanent resident alien cards, Georgia state income tax returns, student financial aid applications and academic transcripts from previous institutions.
 - b. Documentation regarding a student's eligibility is not limited to files, records, and other information received and maintained by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution's financial aid office.
 - c. Documentation supporting a student's eligibility that is received and maintained by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution's admissions office, registrar's office, business office, and other administrative operations must be available to GSFC for the purpose of Compliance Reviews.
3. It is the Eligible Postsecondary Institution's responsibility to resolve any inconsistencies or conflicting information within a student's records, prior to awarding or disbursing College Completion Grant funds to the student.

915.3. Extended Retention.

1. An Eligible Postsecondary Institution may be required to retain student records involved in a Compliance Review, Audit, or investigation for more than the three-year retention period set forth in *Section 915.1*. If the three-year retention period expires before the issue in question is resolved, the Eligible Postsecondary Institution must continue to retain all associated records until resolution is reached.

(The remainder of this page is intentionally blank.)

916. Administrative Reviews and Exceptions.

916.1. Administrative Reviews.

1. The College Completion Grant regulations are applied to each student considered for Grant funds by appropriate officials of Eligible Postsecondary Institutions and by the administrative staff of GSFC.
2. If a student believes a College Completion Grant rule or regulation was incorrectly applied in his or her case, the student has the right to file a request for an Administrative Review with GSFC and must follow the College Completion Grant Administrative Review process as set forth in these regulations.
3. In order for a request for an Administrative Review to be considered, the student must submit a written request for an Administrative Review to GSFC's office within forty-five (45) calendar days of receiving notice of denial from the Eligible Postsecondary Institution. If additional information is requested from the student, it must be provided within the time frame specified by GSFC.
 - a. GSFC will review the case and determine whether the rule or regulation was applied correctly and notify the student and Eligible Postsecondary Institution of the determination.
 - b. GSFC decides a case based only on documentation provided, rather than a personal presentation.

916.2. Exceptions.

1. Requests for Exceptions to the College Completion Grant Program cannot be considered, reviewed, or granted under any circumstances.

(The remainder of this page is intentionally blank.)

917. Compliance Reviews.

917.1. Compliance Review Policy.

GSFC may conduct Compliance Reviews of Eligible Postsecondary Institutions in order to assess administration of the program and compliance with the program's regulations. Such Compliance Reviews may be conducted no less frequently than once every three years in accordance with GSFC's *Compliance Review Process and Procedures* document, which is available at gsfc.georgia.gov, under *Information for School Compliance*.

917.2. Compliance Review Process.

1. GSFC selects a sampling of the Eligible Postsecondary Institution's College Completion Grant recipients, for the Award Year under review, and the Eligible Postsecondary Institution's files and records for the sample are examined to assure compliance. Records which document and support a student's eligibility must be available for review at the Georgia campus of the postsecondary institution.
 - a. GSFC will exclude Residency determinations for College Completion Grant recipients, as they relate to *Section 904.2.1.* and SAP determinations, in the selected sample for any USG or TCSG institution, that has submitted a signed certification to GSFC's Compliance Department by the President of the Eligible Postsecondary Institution that:
 - i. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution is in compliance with its policies and procedures in the determination and the administration of the financial aid award process relative to Residency and SAP requirements; and
 - ii. The Residency and SAP determinations have been fairly and consistently applied with respect to all students receiving College Completion Grant awards.
 - b. Such certification must be submitted annually to GSFC's Compliance Department in the format required by GSFC.
 - i. Failure to provide such certification will result in a review of Residency determinations and SAP determinations made for College Completion Grant recipients in the selected sample.

917.3. Institutional Repayment.

1. In the event it is determined that an Eligible Postsecondary Institution knowingly or through error certified an ineligible student to be eligible for College Completion Grant, the amount of such scholarship shall be refunded by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution to GSFC.

2. GSFC may suspend an Eligible Postsecondary Institution from receiving College Completion Grant payments if it fails to timely refund any monies deemed due based on the Compliance Review.
3. Any person who knowingly makes or furnishes any false statement or misrepresentation, or who accepts such statement or misrepresentation knowing it to be false, for the purpose of enabling an ineligible student to wrongfully obtain a College Completion Grant award shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. GSFC shall refer such matters to appropriate law enforcement agencies for investigation.
4. If evidence not available at the time of awarding, indicates that a student should not have received the College Completion Grant payment, then all future College Completion Grant awards for that student must be canceled.
 - a. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution is held harmless by GSFC, if the student's file is adequately documented with available evidence and it is determined by GSFC that the Eligible Postsecondary Institution was not at fault.
 - b. Evidence is considered unavailable at the time of awarding if it is not available in the student's institutional files (i.e., financial aid, admissions, registrar, etc.).
5. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution must notify the student and GSFC of a refund due to GSFC.
6. The student will be ineligible to receive additional state aid from GSFC until the repayment is paid in full, in accordance with *Section 904.6.3*.
7. If GSFC determines the student's file is not adequately documented, then the Eligible Postsecondary Institution may be solely responsible for the repayment.
8. GSFC may suspend a qualified institution from receiving payments under this program if it fails to refund any moneys as required by statute and these regulations.

(The remainder of this page is intentionally blank.)