

Financial Aid



Financial Aid and the Path to Degree Completion

Why the Financial Aid Changes Matter

With recent changes in state and federal laws, financial aid has become directly linked to student success rates. Our students must now demonstrate not only financial need, but clear progress toward on-time degree completion in order to remain eligible for financial aid.

For our student population, many of whom are first-generation college students from underserved communities, these changes have a tremendous potential impact on their access to education. We must take every step to help our students understand and meet the new academic requirements that affect their ability to qualify for financial aid. This is particularly true of students who enter CSUDH under-prepared for college-level courses, as well as transfer students who often take too many courses they don't need while at community college.

The focus of the Financial Aid Office moving into fall 2013 is to educate our students as well as faculty and staff about the new requirements surrounding academic performance and unit completion that must be met in order to receive financial assistance. You can help us keep our students on track so that they can continue to access the financial aid they urgently need to stay in school, graduate with a degree and empower their lives as well as their communities.

Start by familiarizing yourself with the recent changes in requirements that affect financial aid eligibility, and sharing this important information with your students.

Important Financial Aid Policies

Satisfactory Academic Progress

New federal laws require CSUDH to define and maintain clear standards for measuring our students' satisfactory academic progress toward their degrees while enrolled at our university — in other words, making sure our students are on track to graduate with their degrees in a timely manner.

These standards have an impact on students' eligibility for all federal and state financial aid, including grants, student loans and work-study. Help your students be aware of the new requirements they must meet in order to continue qualifying for their federal and state financial assistance.

What is the minimum GPA students must maintain to be eligible for federal and state financial aid?

- Doctoral, Master's: 3.0
- Credential: 2.5
- Undergraduates:
 - Junior/Senior (60+ units): 2.0
 - Sophomore (30-59 units): 1.8
 - Freshmen (0-29 units): 1.5

How many of their units must they pass?

Students must complete at least 75% of their units with a passing grade of A,B,C,D,I,CR or RP (report in progress). Students are put on warning status at the end of the semester if they're only completing between 50% and 74% of their required units with passing grades.

What is the maximum number of units a student can complete before being disqualified for federal and state financial aid?

Students must complete their program within 150% of their program's required units. For example, an undergraduate student in a 120-unit program must receive his/her degree within 180 units.

What could disqualify a student from receiving federal and state financial aid?

Students will be disqualified if they complete fewer than 50% of their units with passing grades in any semester; if they fail to complete their program within 150% of their degree program's required units; and if they allow their grade point averages to fall below the required level indicated in left column.

Can students appeal this decision?

Yes. CSUDH notifies students who are disqualified from receiving federal and state financial aid via an email and US mail notice that also include instructions on how to appeal.

Once they're disqualified, can students become eligible for aid again?

Yes. Students who are disqualified due to a low GPA or low unit completion can regain their financial aid eligibility once they raise their GPA and completed units to the required level — as long as they have not exceeded 150% of their program requirements.

Degree Progress Reports — A Powerful Tool for Keeping on Track

Because students have a much smaller margin for error in planning their degrees, using the Degree Progress Report in PeopleSoft is even more important than ever to helping our students remain eligible for financial aid. Advisors and students can use Degree Progress Reports to track both completed and missing degree requirements, as well as create "what-if" scenarios for changing degree plans.

When advising students, make sure to use the Degree Progress Report. Ask students to bring up their reports on the computer with you and review them to make sure they're clear on where they stand when it comes to on-time graduation. Help students create a plan for how many terms it may take to complete the requirements based upon their full-time or part-time enrollment status.

When questions arise about remaining eligibility for financial aid, please refer to the information in this fact sheet and on the financial aid website at CSUDH.EDU/FinancialAid. Also, make sure to refer students to the Financial Aid Office, where they can speak with a staff member in person or over the phone.



State University Grant (SUG) Requirements

Like schools across the California State University system, CSUDH continues to face budget challenges that affect our students' access to financial aid. In response to these challenges, the CSU system is implementing a number of key changes systemwide to SUG requirements.

These changes are designed to ensure that SUG funds go to those students who demonstrate financial need and who are academically on track to graduate. To achieve this, the new SUG requirements starting in fall 2013 mandate that:

- Students must be enrolled at the university at least half-time.
- Students who enter CSUDH as first-time freshmen must accumulate no more than 150 semester units earned in their undergraduate careers.
- Students who enter CSUDH as transfers with more than 75 transferable units must accumulate no more than 75 semester units while enrolled.
- Students who enter CSUDH as transfers with less than 75 transferable units must accumulate no more than 150 units total, combining their units at CSUDH and units transferred from other post-secondary schools.
- Credential students must accumulate no more than 30 earned units.

By limiting the number of units students can take to receive SUG, the CSU system is striving to encourage students to stay on track toward successful degree completion and graduation in a reasonable amount of time.

Federal Pell Grant Eligibility

Congress recently adopted a new provision that affects students' eligibility for Federal Pell Grants. This provision limits Pell Grant funds students can receive to the equivalent of six years of full-time enrollment. As with the other changes, this new requirement is designed to promote timely degree completion among students.

To check their Pell Grant eligibility, students should log in to the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS) Student Access website at http://www.nsls.ed.gov/nsls_SA/.

Repeating Classes Can Reduce Awards

New policies related to repeat classes also affect students' eligibility for financial aid. Students retaking previously passed classes are now eligible to receive financial aid only once. Students who fail a class they had previously taken and passed cannot include any additional attempts to complete the class on their enrollment status used to determine financial aid.

The Financial Aid Office will be identifying and notifying students who are repeating previously passed coursework, as well as the consequent reduction in their financial aid award amount based on the students' adjusted enrollment status. Students should also be aware that repeating classes may count against their Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP), which plays a key role in determining financial aid eligibility. This new policy regarding repeated classes and financial aid eligibility is aimed at making sure students are not unnecessarily repeating classes and prolonging their graduation.

Student Profile

Marcos Soltero



CSUDH senior Marcos Soltero served three tours in Iraq as a Marine before attending the university. Along with his veteran's education benefits, Marcos also receives financial aid and holds a work-study position in the Veteran Student Programs office to help pay for his education.

"Financial aid has given me the opportunity to concentrate fully on my courses here at CSUDH," says Marcos. "The Financial Aid Office has outstanding customer service and works hard to ensure the proper assistance for each student."

We're focused on making sure deserving students like Marcos continue to receive their financial aid and reach their goals.

Important Financial Aid Deadlines

- March 4** Priority filing deadline for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- March 4** California Dream Act application deadline
- March 16** All requested documents must be submitted to the Financial Aid Office by this date to be eligible for deferment of registration fees

Applying for Financial Aid

- 1. Students apply for financial aid between January 1 and March 4.**
 - Students are encouraged to electronically file federal tax returns with the IRS at least two to three weeks before the March 4 priority filing deadline.
 - Submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at fafsa.gov.
 - Enter CSUDH's institutional code 001141 in the Federal School Code Field and CSUDH will receive the results immediately.
- 2. Students receive their acknowledgement notice from CSUDH's Financial Aid Office once the FAFSA information has been received.***
- 3. Students are awarded financial aid.**
 - Students receive email notifications of financial aid award and amount.
 - Newly admitted students receive a financial aid award letter and award guide.
 - Students may check status of financial aid award at My.CSUDH.EDU.
- 4. Students accept or decline financial aid award at My.CSUDH.EDU.**
- 5. Students who have been offered student loans must complete additional requirements to receive the loan, including:**
 - Complete an online entrance interview.
 - Complete an online master student promissory note committing student to repay the loan. Available at STUDENTLOANS.GOV.
- 6. Financial aid refund checks (minus tuition fees and/or university housing charges) are mailed to students one week before the semester begins.**

*Students may be randomly selected by the Federal Government for a "verification" process. In this event, students will be required to complete additional steps before their financial aid application can be processed. The Financial Aid Office will notify students who have been selected for verification, and will guide them through the additional steps required. Students selected for verification will also be notified via My.CSUDH.EDU.

Where to Go for Help

If you or your students have any questions about these important changes in academic and financial aid policies, please contact the Financial Aid Office at (310) 243-3691.



California Dream Act

The California Dream Act makes it possible for non-resident students to apply for and receive financial assistance. To be eligible for the California Dream Act, students must have:

- Attended high school in California for three or more years.
- Graduated from a California high school or attained the equivalent prior to the start of the term.
- Filed an AB540 Affidavit with the university stating that he or she has filed an application to legalize his or her immigration status, or will file an application as soon as he or she is eligible to do so.

Students are invited to apply for the California Dream Act online at http://www.csac.ca.gov/dream_act.asp. Students should also complete and submit their AB540 Affidavit to the Admissions & Records Office located in Welch Hall Room C-290.

