

Federal Student Aid Penalties for Drug Convictions

Students completing the FAFSA will encounter the question: “Have you been convicted for the possession or sale of illegal drugs for an offense that occurred while you were receiving federal student aid?” Students who answer “Yes” will be asked an additional series of questions to determine if the conviction affects their eligibility for federal student aid since a federal or state drug conviction can disqualify a student for federal student aid funds.

Convictions only count if they were for an offense that occurred during a period of enrollment for which the student was receiving federal financial aid—they do not count if the offense was not during such a period. Also, a conviction that was reversed, set aside, or removed from the student’s record does not count, nor does one received when the student was a juvenile, unless the student was tried as an adult.

A student who has been convicted of possession or sale of illegal drugs loses federal student aid eligibility for a period of time specified in law. The period of ineligibility depends on whether the conviction was for possession or sale of (including conspiring to sell) illegal drugs.

For convictions involving possession, the periods of ineligibility are as follows:

- 1st Offense: one year after the date of conviction
- 2nd Offense: two years after the date of the second conviction
- 3 or more Offenses: indefinite from the date of the third conviction

For convictions involving sale, the periods of ineligibility are as follows:

- 1st Offense: two years after the date of conviction
- 2 or more Offenses: indefinite from the date of the second conviction

Regaining Eligibility

A student regains eligibility the day after the period of ineligibility ends or when the student successfully completes a qualified drug rehabilitation program or passes two unannounced drug tests given by such a program. Further drug convictions will make the student ineligible again.

Students denied eligibility for an indefinite period can regain it after successfully completing a rehabilitation program (as described below), passing two unannounced drug tests from such a program, or if a conviction is reversed, set aside, or removed from the student’s record so that fewer than two convictions for sale or three convictions for possession remain on the record. In such cases, the nature and dates of the remaining convictions will determine when the student regains eligibility.

A qualified drug rehabilitation program must include at least two unannounced drug tests and must satisfy at least one of the following requirements:

- Be qualified to receive funds directly or indirectly from a federal, state, or local government program.

- Be qualified to receive payment directly or indirectly from a federally or state-licensed insurance company.
- Be administered or recognized by a federal, state, or local government agency or court.
- Be administered or recognized by a federally or state-licensed hospital, health clinic, or medical doctor.

When a student regains eligibility during the award year, the student may be awarded Pell grant and Campus-based aid for the current payment period and Direct loans for the period of enrollment.

Class Attendance Policy

Regular and punctual attendance is expected of all students. Students are not entitled to a certain number of absences; information presented in the classroom is critical in the learning process. Any one of these four options may result in the student being removed from the class and an administrative withdrawal being processed:

- Student fails to begin attendance
- Student ceases participation for at least two consecutive weeks
- Student misses 15 percent or more of the coursework
- Student misses 15 percent or more of the course as defined by the instructor

Individual programs may have more rigorous attendance and participation requirements.

Jefferson College is an attendance-taking institution. Weekly attendance reporting is required. At the beginning of the semester, the instructor will notify his or her students of the attendance and punctuality requirements for the class.

Students earn their financial aid by regularly attending and actively participating in their coursework. If a student does not actively participate, he/she may have to return financial aid funds. Consult the Office of Student Financial Services for more details.

Administrative Withdrawal

Any student who fails to begin attendance or ceases participation for at least two consecutive weeks may be administratively withdrawn from the course(s). Additionally, any student who has sporadic participation in a course resulting in the student missing 15% or more of the coursework may be administratively withdrawn. Individual programs may have more rigorous attendance and participation requirements.

Any student who feels that the administrative withdrawal was executed unfairly or inaccurately can appeal the withdrawal within 10 calendar days of notification. The student must submit a written letter of appeal to the appropriate division chair or director. A student who is administratively withdrawn will receive a grade of “WX” for the course(s) and will be financially responsible for all tuition and fees associated with the course(s).

An administrative withdrawal may only be granted through the official College withdrawal deadline for each course(s).