

## **Pell Grant**

Students must complete the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)* every year to apply for all federal financial aid programs. This includes the Federal Pell Grant Program.

### ***Annual Maximum Awards***

- For the 2009-10 award year (July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010), the maximum scheduled Pell Grant award is \$5,350 for undergraduate students enrolled on a full-time basis.
  - The maximum amount can change each award year and depends on program funding. The amount you get will depend not only on your financial need, but also on your costs to attend school, your status as a full-time or part-time student, and your plans to attend school for a full academic year or less.
- The maximum scheduled Pell Grant award for the 2010-2011 award year is \$5,550 for students enrolled on a full-time basis.

### ***Key concepts and definitions***

The first critical concept revolves around the definition of an academic year.

For purposes of federal financial aid programs at The Sage Colleges, an *academic year* is a period of time (normally a minimum of 30 weeks or fall plus spring semesters) during which a full-time undergraduate student is expected to complete a minimum of 24 credit hours.

Annual grant limits are tied to the completion of an *academic year*.

*Award year* refers to the specific enrollment period. The “normal” award year at Sage is the fall and spring semesters (currently the 2009-10 year). *Award years* run from July 1 to June 30.

A “*Cross-Over Payment Period*” is any period that includes both June 30<sup>th</sup> and July 1. For the purpose of federal financial aid programs, this period must be assigned to a specific financial aid award year. These years begin each July 1.

### ***New Policies***

#### ***Eligibility Limit and Disbursement***

- Student who receives their first Pell Grant on or after July 1, 2008 may receive Pell Grants for as many as 18 semesters (or the equivalent).
- **Effective July 1, 2009** students enrolled in a certificate, associate, or baccalaureate program may receive up to two Pell Grants in one award year to **accelerate** their program.

**NOTE:** This is new legislation. We continue to receive additional clarification and implementation guidance from the Department of Education, so please continue to check this page for the latest updates **BEFORE** you make any academic decisions.

## **Summer Aid**

The Sage Colleges offers a number of summer sessions of differing lengths in an effort to be responsive to the needs of the student body. For the purposes of the federal Pell Grant program, the separate sessions are combined into one "Cross-over" Payment Period".

For the 2010 summer session we will look at BOTH your 2009-2010 FAFSA AND your 2010-2011 FAFSA and utilize whichever year that results in the HIGHEST Pell Grant award for summer. This means that currently enrolled students who are interested in accelerating their degree completion dates by taking summer courses should submit their FAFSAs before the "regular" March 1<sup>st</sup> priority application deadline.

The Office of Financial Aid will begin accepting applications for summer 2010 on March 22, 2010. *Your initial aid eligibility will be calculated based on your projected enrollment as noted on your summer application AND the information on your 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).*

## **New Pell Grant Regulations**

**If eligible**, a student will be able to receive all or a portion of a *second scheduled Pell Grant* within an award year.

- For the First Scheduled Pell Grant Award, a student must
  - Be Pell Grant eligible;
  - Be enrolled at any enrollment status (full-time,  $\frac{3}{4}$  time,  $\frac{1}{2}$  time or less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  time);
  - The amounts received will count toward the aggregate lifetime limit.
- To Qualify to Receive a Second Scheduled Award within the same award year, a student must:
  - Continue to be Pell Grant eligible (must be meeting satisfactory academic progress).
  - Have received 100% of the First Scheduled Pell Grant Award;
  - **Be enrolled on at least a half-time basis;**
  - The amounts received will count toward the aggregate lifetime limit.

*Beginning with the 2010-2011 Award Year*, the student must demonstrate *academic year acceleration*.

- At least one credit hour in the payment period when the award will be made from a *Second Scheduled Award* must be attributable to the student's *next academic year*.
  - The student need not have completed a full academic year's worth of coursework prior to the payment period in which the second scheduled award funds are paid. For example, a student earned 9 credits in the fall semester and 9 credits in the spring semester. Since Sage uses 24 credits to define the academic year, the student would need to enroll for more than 6 credits in the summer term to be paid funds out of the second scheduled award (6 credits to finish the first academic year's worth of work, plus some additional number of credits that count toward the second academic year). The student would be paid any remaining first scheduled award funds plus the amount of second scheduled award funds needed to make up the payment for the term as calculated under the appropriate Pell formula.
- Hours earned during the 2010 summer will count towards the acceleration calculation in all subsequent semesters.

### ***Transfer Students***

- If a student received 100% of the first Scheduled Award at their prior school, we will assume that the student completed an academic year.
- If a student received less than 100% of their first Scheduled Award, we will assume that the student completed the same ratio of the academic year (24 credit hours at Sage) as the percentage of the first Scheduled Award utilized at the prior school.
  - Prior school disbursed \$2,007 of a \$5,350 Scheduled Award
  - $\$2,007 \times 24/\$5,350 = 9$  credits assumed earned at the prior school

### ***Special Circumstances***

The Academic Year completion requirement can be waived if a financial aid administrator determines that the student was unable to complete the hours of the first academic year due to *special circumstances beyond the student's control*.

*Special Circumstances Beyond a Student's Control may include, but are not limited to:*

- Student withdrawing from classes due to documented illness;
- Student being unable to register for classes necessary to complete his or her program because the classes were not offered.

*Special Circumstances Beyond a Student's Control does not include* withdrawing to avoid a particular grade or failing to register for a necessary class to avoid a particular instructor.

### ***Special Adjustments for children of deceased service members***

The Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 grants an automatic zero EFC for the Pell Grant Program ONLY to Pell Grant eligible students whose parent or guardian was a member of the Armed Forces and died in Iraq or Afghanistan after September 11, 2001.

### ***Eligibility Exclusions***

Effective July 1, 2009, an individual subject to involuntary civil confinement or civil commitment upon completion of a period of incarceration for a forcible or non-forcible sexual crime is ineligible for a Pell Grant.

We are awaiting further implementation guidance from the Department of Education on this new regulation.

The National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) contacted the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and that organization indicated that, to their knowledge, 20 states had such programs: Arizona, California, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin.