

Financial Aid

Handbook 2011-12



 **Prairie State College**
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Introduction

What is Financial Aid?

Financial aid are funds awarded to help pay for educational costs. The funds are need-based and awarded based on student eligibility. Federal student loans are a type of financial aid and are available to all students who have completed FAFSA. Students may also be awarded College Work Study for on-campus employment opportunities. Also, civic groups, clubs, organizations, and religious organizations serve as private sources of aid.

Financial aid is classified into three basic types:

- Grants and scholarships: Funds awarded that are not required to be repaid.
- Employment: Work on campus that is found through the Financial Aid Office.
- Loan: Money borrowed from the federal government and must be repaid, including interest.



How to Apply

Step 1. Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The school code for PSC is 001640.

There are three options to file a FAFSA:

- a. Apply online at fafsa.gov. Note: You must use the previous year's federal income tax return to complete the FAFSA. Applications are available online beginning January 1st of every year. We strongly recommend that students link into the IRS Web site to download their federal income tax information. Beginning in the 2012/13 academic year, students who do not download the information from the IRS will have to obtain a tax transcript from the IRS and submit it to the Financial Aid Office for verification.
- b. Download a FAFSA from http://federalstudentaid.ed.gov/fafsa/fafsa_options.html
You will need to complete the form and mail it in for processing.
- c. Request a paper FAFSA by calling the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-4FED-AID (1-800-433-3243 or 319-337-5665). The hearing impaired should contact the TTY line at 1-800-730-8913. Please note: using the non-electronic version of the FAFSA adds additional time to the financial aid process.

Step 2. Notification from Department of Education

If you listed PSC's school code in your FAFSA, the college's Financial Aid Office will receive your report in approximately 14 days. This report is used to confirm receipt of your FAFSA with the Department of Education. If you completed a paper FAFSA, the notification takes several weeks longer.

Step 3. Notification from PSC

Once PSC receives your FAFSA from the Department of Education, a letter will be mailed to you indicating the documents needed to complete your financial aid file. All students are required to complete the PSC Financial Aid application. It is available at <http://prairiestate.edu/finaid/finaidapp11-12.pdf>

Step 4. Determination Letter

Once all required documents are completed and submitted to the Financial Aid Office, an award or ineligible letter will be issued in two to three weeks. Students eligible for an award are notified via e-mail. The award letter can be viewed in student's WebAdvisor account. First time PSC students also will have an award letter mailed to their home.

Please note: The financial aid process can take up to 30 days. Additional information available online at prairiestate.edu/finaid

Deadlines

Application Deadlines

Financial aid deadlines are critical. Late filers may jeopardize their chances of receiving aid.

Institutional Program Deadline

Priority deadline for campus-based awards is **July 1**. This includes the Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG) and Federal Work-Study Program (FWS). Eligible students must have all paperwork turned in to the Financial Aid Office by **May 1** to be considered for a fall semester book voucher, **October 1** for a spring semester book voucher, and **March 1** for a summer semester book voucher.

Federal Program Deadline

The deadline for filing FAFSA for the 2010-11 academic year is June 30, 2011. All verification documents must be submitted to the Financial Aid Office prior to the student's last day of attendance.

State Program Deadline—Monetary Award (MAP)

New Applicants

Monetary Award Program (MAP): First time applicants' FAFSA must be received before **September 30** by the US Department of Education's Central Processing System for full-year award consideration. First-time applicants with FAFSA received on or after October 1 will be considered for only second semester eligibility. Apply early because suspension of awards may occur before the deadline if funding has been exhausted.

Previous Applicants

Monetary Award Program (MAP): Students who applied in the previous academic year for FAFSA must have his/her application received before **August 15** by the US Department of Education's Central Processing System for full-year award consideration. Students with FAFSA received on or after August 15 will be considered only for second semester eligibility. Apply early because suspension of awards may occur before the deadline if funding has been exhausted.

Eligibility Requirements

Financial aid is awarded based on financial need. The total amount of financial aid (need and non-need based) awarded to you cannot exceed your total educational costs. Most programs require that you:

- Be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen with a valid social security number.
- Demonstrate financial need as determined by review of the FAFSA.
- Not indebted to any institution for repayment of any federal grant (Pell or FSEOG) or in default on any federal student loan.
- Have a high school diploma or a General Education Development (GED®) certificate or earn a qualifying score on a federally approved ability-to-benefit test.
- Be enrolled or accepted for enrollment as a regular student working toward a degree or certificate in an eligible program.
- Not have a drug conviction for an offense that occurred while you were receiving federal student aid (such as grants, loans, or work study).
- Males between the ages of 18 to 25 years of age must be registered with Selective Service. (Visit sss.gov for more information).
- Comply with the federal verification process, if necessary.

Types of Financial Aid

This section will review all the major financial aid programs at PSC. By completing the FAFSA, you are automatically considered for each of the major programs offered by PSC.

Federal Pell Grant

The Federal Pell Grant is a federally funded program awarded to eligible undergraduate students who demonstrate significant financial need. Only students seeking their first bachelor's degree are eligible to receive this grant. The grant can be used toward educational costs. This includes books, supplies, transportation, etc. If you are eligible to receive the Pell Grant, the amount of your award is determined by the number of hours you are enrolled at PSC. Please refer to the chart below:

Number of Hours Enrolled	Percentage of Pell Grant
12+ hours	100% of award (full-time)
9 -11 hours	75% of award (3/4 time)
6 - 8 hours	50% of award (1/2 time)
1 - 5 hours	25% of award* (less than half-time)

* Only students who are eligible to receive \$400 or more per term at the full-time rate will receive 25% of their award. Students with a lower full-time award are not eligible to receive the Pell Grant for less than half-time enrollment.

Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)

Like the Pell Grant, the FSEOG is a federally funded program awarded to eligible students who demonstrate significant financial need and who are seeking their first bachelor's degree. This award is available to students who receive the Pell grant and are enrolled at least half-time (6 hours). Annual awards range from \$100 to \$200. Appropriation is limited and is subject to first come first served until all funds are awarded.

State of Illinois Monetary Award Program (MAP) Grant

The Monetary Award Program (MAP) Grant is awarded by the State of Illinois to Illinois residents attending Illinois colleges and universities. By filing the FAFSA and agreeing to share that information

with the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC), you will be considered for the MAP grant. If you meet the eligibility requirements for the MAP Grant, an award is included on your PSC Award Letter. Payment for each term is made according to the equivalent number of credit hours eligible for MAP payment, with a minimum of three and a maximum of 15 MAP paid credit hours. The following chart details your MAP eligibility based on credit hours:

Hours	Percentage of MAP
15+	100%
14	93%
13	87%
12	80%
11	73%
10	67%
9	60%
8	53%
7	47%
6	40%
5	33%
4	27%
3	20%
0-2	0%

Note: If an Illinois Monetary Award is not included in your award letter, you are not eligible for this grant for one or more of the reasons listed below:

- You are not an Illinois resident.
- You applied after the deadline.
- You have reached the maximum number of MAP paid credit hours of 75.

Eligibility for a MAP grant is tracked by the equivalent number of credit hours of MAP benefits paid on your behalf. This is called MAP paid credit hours.

MAP grant recipients may use no more than 75 MAP paid credit hours while enrolled at the freshman or sophomore level. Eligibility may be extended for one additional term at the freshman or sophomore level if the recipient has accumulated fewer than 75 MAP paid credit hours, but does not have enough credit hours of payment remaining for the number of hours for which he or she is enrolled for the term. Upon progressing to the junior level or above, the recipient may use the remaining balance of MAP paid credit hours, up to the 135 credit hour maximum.

Federal Work Study Program

The Federal Work Study Program provides on-campus and nonprofit off-campus employment for students while they attend college. Students who receive Federal Work Study funds must:

- Demonstrate need to be eligible for work-study funds.
- Be paid at least federal minimum wage.
- Perform work-study employment from 5-20 hours per week.
- The number of hours worked weekly is determined by the amount of work-study dollars awarded and financial need.

Federal Direct Loans

The Federal Direct Loans are low-cost educational loans from the federal government. There are two types of Federal Stafford Loans: subsidized and unsubsidized.

Subsidized

A loan for which a borrower is not responsible for the interest while in an in-school, grace, or deferment status.

Unsubsidized

A loan for which the borrower is fully responsible for paying the interest regardless of the loan status. Interest on unsubsidized loans accrues from the date of disbursement and continues throughout the life of the loan.

The interest rate for new borrowers for both types of loans is variable, set each July 1 and is capped at 8.25%. The actual rate at any given time is linked to the value of the 91-day Treasury bill, plus 2.77%. Both the subsidized and unsubsidized loans have a fee deducted from each disbursement. This fee, also called the “origination” or “guarantee” fee, goes to the federal government to help reduce the costs of loans. When you borrow through the Loan Program for the first time, you must sign a Master Promissory Note agreeing to pay back the money borrowed to the federal government with interest, according to the terms of the program.

Promissory Note

A promissory note is a binding legal document you sign when you get a student loan. It lists the conditions under which you’re borrowing and the terms under which you agree to pay back the loan. It will include information on how interest is calculated and what deferment and cancellation provisions are available to the borrower. It’s very important to read and save this document because you’ll need to refer to it later when you begin repaying your loan or at other times when you need information about provisions of the loan, such as deferments or forbearances.

Loan Application Process at PSC

As part of the default management plan to minimize the college default rate, all students interested in borrowing through the Federal Family Educational Loan Program must complete six credit hours with a grade point average of 2.0 at PSC before applying for a loan. You must maintain a 2.0 grade point average to continue borrowing under this program, and be enrolled at least half-time in an eligible degree or certificate program.

To apply for a loan:

Step 1: Complete the FAFSA.

Step 2: Submit all required documents.

Step 3: Call and make an appointment with the loan counselor at PSC at (708) 709-3520.

Veterans Benefits Eligibility

Eligibility for the various Veterans Educational Benefit programs is determined by your date of enlistment. For additional veterans’ information, call (888) 442-4551.

In all cases, the final determination of eligibility is made by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

- VA educational benefits may only be used to accomplish educational objectives defined as the completion of a VA-approved credit degree or certificate program.
- Application forms for your VA benefits are available in PSC’s Financial Aid Office.

Steps to Apply for Federal Benefits

- Complete and return the appropriate application to the Financial Aid Office.
- Attach a copy of your DD-214 to the application.
- Register and pay for your classes. The VA will reimburse you based on your eligibility.
- Provide the Financial Aid Office with a completed registration statement each semester.

Montgomery GI Bill

The Department of Veterans Affairs provides educational benefits under the Montgomery G.I. Bill-Active Duty Educational Assistance Program. The Department of Veterans Affairs determines eligibility requirements for Chapter 30 - Montgomery G.I. Bill for Active Duty, Chapter 33 - Post-9/11 GI Bill, Chapter 1606 - Montgomery G.I. Bill (Selected Reserve), and Chapter 1607 - Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP). For more information, visit gibill.va.gov

Illinois Veterans Grant

The Illinois Veterans Grant (IVG) also is available to those Illinois veterans who have an honorable discharge, have served at least one year (active duty), and entered and returned to Illinois within six months of service. IVG allows for credit and non-credit course study. To maintain eligibility, recipients must maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or better. Within four weeks from applying for IVG, a letter regarding eligibility will be mailed to the veteran from the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC). The application can be downloaded from collegezone.com/media/F103_E_IVG.pdf. Eligible veterans should bring their letter to PSC's Financial Aid Office within a week. The grant is good for up to 120 points. Each point is equivalent to a college credit hour.

National Guard Grant

Individuals who have completed one year in the Illinois National Guard, are presently attending monthly drills and have complied with selective service registration requirements are eligible to apply for a tuition grant. To maintain eligibility, recipients must maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or better. An application must be filed each year. The application can be downloaded from collegezone.com/media/F103_E_IVG.pdf.

Deadlines for the National Guard Grant:

Fall–October 1

Spring–March 1

Summer–June 15

Within four weeks of applying for the National Guard Grant, a letter regarding eligibility will be mailed to the veteran. Eligible veterans should bring their letter to the Financial Aid Office within a week. For questions about the Illinois Veterans Grant or Illinois National Guard Grant, call the Illinois Student Assistance Program at (800) 899-4722.

Credit for Military Service

PSC awards credit for military training deemed equal to specific courses in a program of study. This may include hours awarded for the completion of basic training. To obtain this credit, veterans must submit a copy of their military transcript to the Enrollment Services Office along with an Evaluation Request Form (available in the Enrollment Services Office).

Veterans Web sites

- Armed forces tuition assistance program military.com
- Articles about how veterans can obtain scholarships usmilitary.about.com
- Veteran educational resources finaid.org/military

Dependency Status

Who is declared an independent student?

If you meet any of the criteria below you are considered an Independent Student.

An independent student must be:

- At least 24 years old.
- Married (As of today), (Answer “yes” if you are separated but not divorced).
- A graduate or professional student.
- A veteran, a member of the armed forces.
- An orphan, a ward of the court.
- Someone with legal dependents other than a spouse.

Why must I provide my parents information on the FAFSA?

A basic premise of Federal Student Financial Aid is that the family is responsible for educational expenses. Be sure to include yourself when entering your parents’ family size. Read the FAFSA instructions carefully to determine whether you are dependent or independent for aid purposes.

My (or my parents') circumstances are going to change. Do I enter what is true now or what will be true on the FAFSA?

Enter what is true now. Use your previous year Federal 1040 tax information. However, if there is a significant reduction in your 2010 income or in your family’s 2010 income, or if a change occurs such as death or divorce, contact the Financial Aid Office **after** you receive your Student Aid Report from the Central Processor. We may adjust your award package.

My parents have not filed their tax return yet. Can they estimate their income?

Yes, they may use estimates, but the information must be corrected later to match the exact figures from the actual tax returns before aid is awarded.

My parents are divorced. Which parent should complete the FAFSA?

The parent you lived with most during the last 12 months should complete the FAFSA. If you did not live with either parent, or if you lived with each parent an equal amount of time, use the parent who provided the most support to you in the most recent calendar year.

If I do not receive support from my parents, am I required to provide their income/asset information?

If you are under 24 years of age, unmarried, have no dependents, and are not a veteran, orphan or ward of the court, you must provide your parent's income and asset information on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid even if you do not live with a parent. Students with extenuating circumstances should contact the financial aid office.



Special Circumstances

Financial aid eligibility is determined by parental and /or student income from the prior year. Understandably, there are times when some unique set of circumstances warrant special attention. If the unusual circumstance causes a reduction of income in the current year of attendance, we will use “professional judgment” to make adjustments that adequately reflect the family's ability to pay.

While the use of “professional judgment” can be quite broad in theory, some general rules are applied on a case by case basis. At a minimum:

- The family's mitigating circumstance must be documented. The documents required will be determined on a case by case basis.
- The expenses or loss of income must be of such nature that they were beyond the family's control.
- While the range of reasons for “professional judgment” are many, some very common reasons we would review a student's assistance include extreme medical expenses paid out as well as loss of income as a result of unemployment, illness, injury, divorce, death, loss of child support, or social security benefits.
- “Professional judgment” will only be performed in circumstances where the total income for the current year is at least ten percent less than the previous year.



Dependency Overrides

Under federal law you and your family are primarily responsible for paying for your college expenses. To determine how much your family can afford to pay toward your college expenses, we must collect your financial information and, if you are a dependent student, we must also collect your parents' financial information.

Under **very** limited circumstances, an otherwise dependent student may be able to submit the FAFSA without parental information due to special circumstances. Before you proceed to skip the parental section of your FAFSA, consider the following:

Examples of special circumstances where you may be able to submit your FAFSA without providing parental information include:

- Your parents are incarcerated
- You have left home due to an abusive family environment
- You do not know where your parents are and are unable to contact them (and you have not been adopted)
- You are older than 21 but not yet 24, and are unaccompanied and either homeless or self supporting and at risk of being homeless



Not all situations are considered a special circumstance. The following are situations that would **not** be considered a special circumstance:

- Your parents do not want to provide their information on your FAFSA
- Your parents refuse to contribute to your college expenses
- Your parents do not claim you as a dependent on their income taxes
- You do not live with your parents

If you believe you have a special circumstance and are unable to provide parental information, you should complete the information about you and your finances and skip any questions about your parents. You should sign your FAFSA with your PIN and leave your parent's PIN blank. It is important to note:

Once you submit your FAFSA without parental data, you must follow up with the Financial Aid Office.

- You will have to provide documentation to verify your situation. Gather as much written evidence of your situation as you can. Written evidence may include court or law enforcement documents, letters from a clergy member, school counselor or social worker, and/or any other relevant data that explains your special circumstance.
- After reviewing your circumstances carefully, the Financial Aid Office will decide if you must provide parental information or if your circumstances allow you to proceed without providing parental data.

Withdrawals and Refund Policy

Dropping classes, withdrawing from the College, stopping attendance, getting dismissed by the College, or receiving grades of all Fs will make you eligible for none or only a portion of your financial aid. If you are considering dropping or withdrawing from classes, and you are receiving financial aid, you should contact the Financial Aid Office to determine if and how your aid package will be affected.

100% Refund

If you drop courses before they start on the start date, or within 24 hours after the first scheduled class for the semester, you are entitled to a full refund of tuition and fees (with the exception of the non-refundable registration fee). After the 24 hour period, tuition and fees will be applied according to the Tuition and Fee Refund Schedule located in the current class schedule.

Not Attending Classes

Students must attend all classes in which they enroll. Your teachers are required to submit verification of your enrollment to the Enrollment Services Office. Before disbursing Pell, it is adjusted to the number of credit hours you are enrolled in and attending. Example: If you are enrolled in 12 credit hours, but only attending 6 credit hours. You will be paid a half-time award.

Reducing Enrollment

Reducing your enrollment also reduces your financial aid. Generally, the MAP grant pays for tuition charges applied after the 15 day refund period. Then the Pell grant is reduced to the number of credit hours enrolled and attending.

Total Withdrawals

Students that withdraw from all classes are subject to the Return of Title IV Funds (ROF) Regulations. Up through the 60% of the semester, the amount of financial aid is determined on a prorating basis. Example: If you complete 30% of the semester, you have earned 30% of the original financial aid

you were scheduled to receive (does not apply to MAP). Once students complete 60% or more of the semester, they have earned all the aid they were scheduled to receive. Generally, up to the 10th week in the fall and spring semesters, and up to the 6th week in the summer term is approximately 60% of the term. The ROF calculation is done before refunds are sent out.

Below is an example of percent of financial aid earned based on days enrolled

Days	Equals	Percent of aid earned
7	=	.06
14	=	12
21	=	18
28	=	24
35	=	30
42	=	36
49	=	42
56	=	48
63	=	54
70	=	100

All Fs

If a student earns a passing grade of A, B, C, or D in any class and also earns an F, then we presume that the student completed the courses in that semester. However, when a student completes the semester with no passing grades other than Fs, then we presume the student unofficially withdrew. At PSC, we take attendance at midpoint of the semester; therefore, the midpoint of the period is the student's withdrawal date. After the grades are posted at the end of the semester, we request a query with students receiving all F's. If the student is included in the "F" report, then a return of funds is calculated to the amount earned within 45 days of the report. A ROF calculation is done using the midpoint of the term as the withdrawal date.

Rights and Responsibilities

When you accept an award from the Financial Aid Office you are entering into an agreement with the college. There are certain rights and responsibilities related to this agreement. You should clearly understand them before you accept any financial aid award(s).

Student Rights

You have the right to:

- Know what financial aid is available, including information on all federal, state, local, and institutional financial aid programs.
- Expect fair and equitable treatment from the financial aid staff. It is the goal of the office to assist all students promptly and professionally throughout the financial aid process.
- Know the interest rate on any student loan you have, the total amount you must repay, the length of time you have to repay, when you must repay, and what cancellation or deferment provisions apply.
- Request reconsideration of your financial aid package if your financial circumstances have changed. All revisions are subject to fund availability.
- Know how satisfactory academic progress is measured and how you can reestablish eligibility for federal financial aid if you fail to meet the standard.

Student Responsibilities

You are responsible for:

- Being admitted into a degree-seeking program during the term(s) that you wish to receive financial aid.
- Enrolling at least half-time (6 credit hours), except for the Federal Pell grants and state MAP grants for each term you wish to receive aid.
- Not being in default on any loan previously received at any institution.
- Reading and understanding the Guidelines for Satisfactory Academic Progress
- Making satisfactory progress toward your degree, as outlined in the Financial Aid Guidelines for Satisfactory Academic Progress.
- Obtaining the information on when and how your financial aid funds will be disbursed. via the Award Letter.
- Providing all requested documentation to the Financial Aid Office accurately and in a timely manner.
- Attending an entrance and exit interview for any student loans received at PSC.
- Understanding the college's refund policy.
- Your PSC balance and late fees if you apply late for financial aid or do not submit required documents to the FA in a timely manner.
- Pay any balance from a prior semester. Failure to do so will prevent you from receiving your current semester refund.

Financial Aid Award Packages

An award package includes all available awards you are eligible to receive as determined by the information you provide on the FAFSA. We will notify you of your award package in an Award Letter.

Changes in Eligibility to the Financial Aid Package

- You must immediately notify the Financial Aid Office, in writing, if the following occur:
 - You receive any aid (loan, grants, tuition waiver, scholarships) not considered as part of your original financial aid package reflected on your award letter.

Adjustments Made by the Financial Aid Office

The Financial Aid Office reserves the right to adjust your award package without prior notice. The reasons for this include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Failure to respond to request for information.
- Outside resources that were not originally taken into account.
- Factors making you ineligible for the aid awarded (i.e., lack of enrollment, satisfactory academic progress cancellation, etc.).
- Changes in institutional, federal, or state policies and/or regulations.
- Changes made by you or the Office of Financial Aid on your Student Aid Report (SAR).

Award packages may be increased, decreased, or canceled for one of the reasons noted above, or for a variety of other reasons. You may receive a “Revised” Award Letter if your award package is adjusted.



Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Guidelines

Regulations governing the federal student aid programs require that institutions develop standards of satisfactory academic progress for student aid recipients based on federal guidelines. These guidelines require that we establish a maximum time frame for duration of eligibility, a qualitative measurement of academic progress, and a quantitative measurement of progress to ensure completion within the maximum time frame. The following policy was written in compliance with these federal regulations. It applies to all federal, state, and institutional financial assistance programs administered by the PSC Financial Aid Office.

This policy covers all coursework attempted at PSC regardless of whether financial assistance was received.

Maximum Time Frame

You may take a maximum of 90 credit hours to still be eligible for financial aid. This includes credit hours transferred to PSC from other institutions and all PSC coursework. Academic Progress is reviewed every semester.

Minimum GPA and Completion Ration Requirement

PSC maintains Standards of Academic Progress that financial aid recipients must meet in order to receive financial assistance. Students must maintain academic progress toward a degree or certificate as evidenced by passing (grades of A, B, C, D) at least 67% of coursework attempted and obtaining an overall 2.0 cumulative (including developmental coursework) grade point average in all PSC coursework. If you receive a grade of I, F, W, or Audit, you have not completed the course.

Probation Status

Students who fail to meet the SAP standards will be placed on financial aid probation for the next term of enrollment. A student placed on financial aid probation will be eligible to receive grant, scholarships and work study assistance during the probation period. Please note: Students maintaining the SAP standards while on probation will remain on probation indefinitely.

Termination Status

Students on financial aid probation status who do not meet the guidelines for SAP, in any subsequent term, will be placed on financial aid termination. Students on termination status are not allowed to receive further financial aid until they successfully complete at least 6 credit hours within a semester or summer session with a minimum semester cumulative G.P.A. of 2.0.

If you enroll in:

15 credit hours
12 credit hours
9 credit hours
6 credit hours
3 credit hours

You must complete:

10 credit hours
8 credit hours
6 credit hours
4 credit hours
2 credit hours

Financial Aid GPA vs. Academic GPA

There is a difference in the financial aid Grade Point Average (GPA) and the Academic GPA. The Financial Aid cumulative GPA includes all classes attempted even developmental classes below 100 levels, such as ENG 099, and courses with grades of "F".

When the college calculates your Academic GPA, it includes only those courses numbered 100 and above and excludes developmental courses and "F's. These are excluded since they do not count toward meeting degree or certificate requirements.

Your academic GPA, as shown on your transcript, may not be the same as the financial aid GPA depending on whether you took developmental courses and received grades of "F" or not.

Appeals

Students who have lost eligibility for financial aid for any reason may appeal this decision by submitting an appeal to the Financial Aid Office. Your appeal must be accompanied by an explanation and documentation for one of the following:

- A physician, who can document that you had an illness or accident that prevented you from successfully completing your studies and that you are now able to successfully resume your studies.
- A physician, who can verify that the death or life-threatening illness of an immediate family member prevented you from successfully completing your coursework

- An academic advisor/counselor who knows about circumstances beyond your control that prevented you from completing your coursework and will document that knowledge with a letter in your behalf.

If your financial aid eligibility is terminated due to exceeding the maximum 90 hours attempted, you may submit an Appeal Form. The appeal must be accompanied by the following documentation:

- A personal letter in your defense
- An Academic Plan and Program of Study, which includes total credit hours and semesters required to show completion. This plan should be prepared by an advisor. Call (708) 709-3506 for information.

Frequently Asked Questions

How Is My EFC (Estimated Family Contribution) Determined?

Cost of Attendance (Student Budget)

Represents the amount of money or resources you will need for the academic year based on your projected enrollment. These costs include tuition, fees, books, supplies, housing, transportation, clothing, and miscellaneous expenses. This figure is not a total amount owed to the college by the student; it is an estimate of your costs for the academic year.

Parent Contribution (Applies to any dependent student, See Dependency Status)

Parent contribution is the calculated amount that your parents are expected to contribute toward your educational expenses based upon the information you provided on your financial aid application?

Student Contribution

Student contribution is the calculated amount you are expected to contribute toward your educational expenses based on the information you provided on your financial aid application.

Financial Need

It is defined as the difference between the cost of the attendance and the parent and/or student contribution. Your financial need along with your expected family income (EFC), determines the award amount you are eligible for in many of the financial aid programs. Once your financial need has been determined, the Financial Aid Office assembles your financial aid award(s) or "award package." The components of this package may consist of scholarships, grants, loans, and employment and may be awarded singularly or in various combinations. Each package is put together based upon your academic level,

enrollment hours, aid preference, and availability of financial aid resources. The categories are as follows: grants, scholarships, loans, and work study.

Determining Your Financial Need

We use your Expected Family Contribution* (EFC) to determine your financial need:

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{Cost of Attendance*} \\ - \text{Expected Family Contribution (EFC)} \\ \hline = \text{Financial Need} \end{array}$$

What if I'm undecided about my major?

Undeclared and non-degree seeking students are not eligible for federal financial assistance. Please contact Counseling Academic Advising at (708) 709-3506 for assistance in selecting a major.

What if I want to pursue short term certificates?

Financial aid does not cover short-term certificates. An example of short-term would be Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). These certificates can be obtained in one semester or less. Approved certificates include Surgical Technology and Industrial Electrician. An eligible program has to be at least 15-16 credit hours and be at least 16-weeks in length. Consult the college catalog for certificate and degree requirements. Please contact the Financial Aid Office to confirm your certificate.

Can my financial aid packages be adjusted?

The Financial Aid Office reserves the right to adjust your award package without prior notice. The reasons for this include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Failure to respond to request for information.
- Outside resources that were not originally taken into account (i.e., tuition waivers, scholarships).
- Factors making you ineligible for the aid awarded (i.e., lack of enrollment, unsatisfactory progress cancellation).

- Concurrently enrolled at another school and receiving financial aid.
- Changes were made in institutional, federal, or state policies and/or regulations since the time of your original award.
- You or the Financial Aid Office made changes on your Student Aid Report (SAR).
- Award packages may be increased, decreased, or canceled for one of the reasons noted above, or for a variety of other reasons. You may receive a "revised" Award Letter if your award package is adjusted.

I have a bachelors degree. Am I still eligible to receive financial aid?

Yes; however, the only financial assistance you may qualify for is student loans. Please see the Loan Advisor in the Financial Aid Office to determine eligibility.

I attended full-time (12 credit hours or more) for the fall and spring terms. Can I receive financial aid for classes during the summer term?

No, if you attended 12 credit hours or more for both the fall and spring semester at either PSC or your home school (transfer students), you would have exhausted your available funds for the academic school year. There will be no remaining funds available for the summer session.

How are refund checks distributed?

If funds are remaining from your financial aid awards after all charges are paid, you are due a refund check. All refund checks will be mailed. There is no exception to this policy. If you have moved, please change your address with the Enrollment Services Office. Your refund check will be mailed to the address on record with that office. Please see award letter for the Disbursement Dates.

I've been convicted of a drug offense. Does this mean I won't get any aid?

The question on the FAFSA regarding drug offenses asks about convictions for possessing or selling illegal drugs (not including alcohol and tobacco) if the offense occurred during a period of enrollment for which you were receiving federal student aid (grants, loans, and/or work-study). When answering this question, do not count convictions that have been removed from your record. Also, do not count convictions that occurred before you turned 18, unless you were tried as an adult.

Drug Conviction Worksheet

To determine whether a drug offense affects your eligibility, please visit the Department of Education Web site at fafsa.gov and go to the Drug Conviction Worksheet. After you complete the Drug Conviction Worksheet, your responses will result in one of these answers:

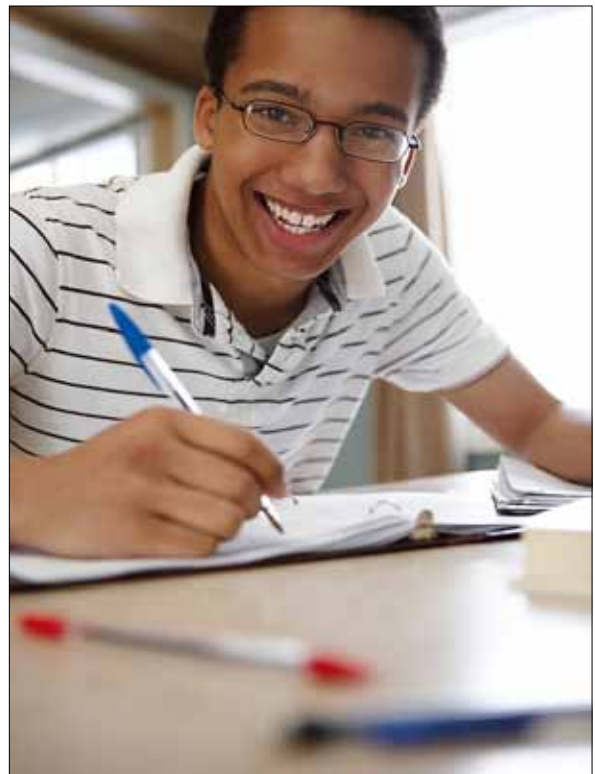
Answer	Means
1. No	Eligible. Your eligibility for federal student aid is not affected.
2. Yes (partially during the year)	Partially eligible. You will become eligible for federal aid during the school year. You can become eligible earlier in the school year if you complete an acceptable drug rehabilitation program.
3. Yes/Don't Know	Ineligible/don't know. You are not eligible for federal aid for this school year unless you complete an acceptable drug rehabilitation program. You may still be eligible for state and school aid.

Even if you are not eligible for federal aid, you may be eligible for state aid or scholarships. If you become eligible for federal financial aid (for example, if your eligibility date arrives or if you complete an acceptable drug rehabilitation program), notify the financial aid office. If you are convicted of possessing or selling drugs after you submit your FAFSA, you must notify the Financial Aid Office immediately. You will lose your eligibility and be required to pay back all aid you received after your conviction. Contact the US Department of Education at (800) 433-3243, for more information.

What Is An Acceptable Drug Rehabilitation Program?

An acceptable drug rehabilitation program must include two unannounced drug tests. It also must:

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



Web sites

The following Web sites can provide additional information on financial assistance for education:

College Zone
www.collegezone.com

College Illinois
www.collegeillinois.org

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
www.fafsa.ed.gov

FAFSA4caster
www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov/f4capp/index

U.S. Department of Education
www.ed.gov/index.jhtml

Student Guide to Financial Aid
www.studentaid.ed.gov/students/publications/student_guide/index.html

School Soup Financial Assistance
www.schoolsoup.com

Glossary of Terms

Award Letter

Official notification of the amount financial aid a student is eligible to receive.

Book Vouchers

After tuition and fees are paid from the Pell Grant, any amount remaining is given to the student in the form of a voucher to purchase books.

Career Programs

Programs that lead to employment upon completion.

Dependent Student

Whether or not the student is financially dependent on his or her parents is based on federal guidelines. All students are considered dependents unless he or she is 24 years or older, is a graduate student, is married, has legal dependents, is an orphan or ward of the court, or is a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Eligible Programs

Students must pursue a two-year degree program or a minimum one-year certificate to be eligible for financial aid.

Financial Aid and No Class Attendance

Upon the receipt of the Midterm Verification Form, students who are not attending all of their classes will receive a reduced award.

Financial Aid and Withdrawal

Students who withdraw from a class may receive a reduced award. See the Financial Aid Office for details.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

A required form that must be completed as the first step in applying for many types of financial aid.

Full-Time Student

Anyone taking 12 credit hours or more during the fall or spring semesters, or six or more credit hours during the summer semester.

Grants

Financial aid which does not have to be repaid.

Independent Student

A student is considered independent if he or she is 24 years or older, is a graduate student, is married, has legal dependents, is an orphan or ward of the court, or is a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces.

MAP Grant

Available to Illinois residents who will attend approved Illinois colleges and demonstrate financial need based on the information provided on the FAFSA.

Part-time Student

Anyone taking 11 credit hours or less during the fall and spring semesters or five credit hours or less during the summer semester.

Pell Grant

Need-based financial aid awarded to undergraduate students. Repayment is not required.

Pell Refund

The remaining balance of funds in the Pell Grant that students are eligible for.

Priority Deadline

July 1—Date that all paperwork is due to be given priority consideration for financial aid dollars.

Program Intent

Students must pursue a two-year degree program or a minimum one-year certificate to be eligible for financial aid. Students must declare this on their FAFSA.

Standards of Academic Progress

Standards that identify students' expected progress in terms of credits earned and time elapsed.

Scholarships

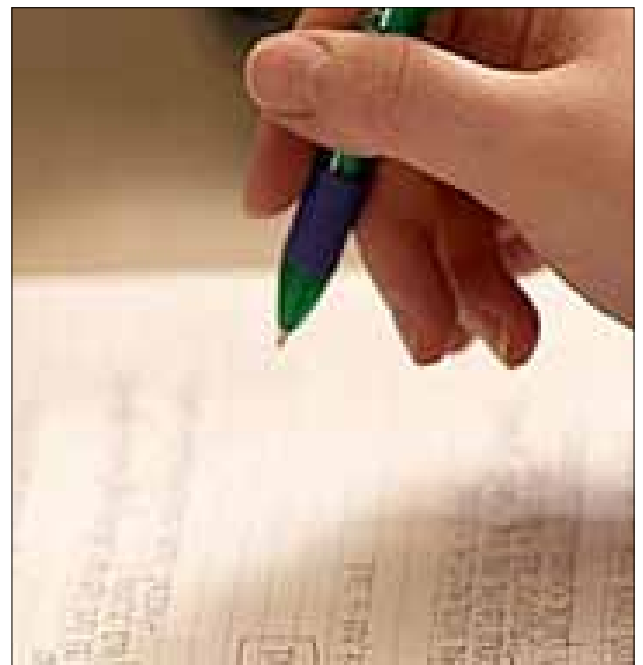
A form of financial assistance that does not need to be repaid. Scholarships are generally offered to students who possess certain characteristics important to the scholarship provider (such as academic performance, talent, hobbies, ethnicity, etc.) The PSC Foundation offers a wide-range of scholarships. See the Financial Aid Office for details.

Summer Financial Aid

Students who attend full-time and received during fall and spring terms are not eligible for aid in the summer.

Verification

Process whereby a student must document information reported on their FAFSA and submit it to the Financial Aid Department.



Prairie State College



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Office of Financial Aid and Veterans Affairs

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