



Maryland Higher Education Commission
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CREDIT COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS

Delegate Howard P. Rawlings Educational Excellence Awards

Students who have received a Delegate Howard P. Rawlings Educational Excellence Award for at least two years must meet a credit completion requirement in order to renew their award in future years. This is to encourage students to make on-time progress towards degree completion.

Which Awards Apply?

Any of the Delegate Howard P. Rawlings Educational Excellence Awards:

- Guaranteed Access Grant (GA)
- Educational Assistance Grant (EA)
- Campus-Based Educational Assistance Grant (CB-EAG)

Students can have received only one type of award, or a combination of awards, but if they have received any combination of the above awards for at least two years, then the credit completion requirement will apply.

What is the Credit Completion Requirement?

Starting in the third year of receiving a GA, EA, or CB-EAG, the number of credits a student completes in the previous year affects both their ability to renew the award and the amount of money they will get for the next year.

- To get the **full eligible amount** of the GA, EA, or CB-EAG in the third and fourth years, a **student must complete 30 credits** in the second and third years.
- If a student completes **between 24 and 29** credits in their second and third years, they will receive a **smaller (reduced) award** for the third and fourth years.
- If a student completes **less than 24 credits**, they are not **eligible to renew** any Educational Excellence Awards for the following year.

Examples

Student A received \$12,500 in the **second year** of being awarded the GA and **completed 25 credits** that year. For their **third year**, their **GA award amount is reduced**:

$$(25 \text{ credits completed} / 30 \text{ credits}) \times \$12,500 \text{ max. eligible GA award amount} =$$

\$10,416 award amount for the third year of the GA

Student B received has received the **maximum \$3,000** for the past 3 years of receiving the EA, and completed at least 30 credits each year in their first and second year. In their **third year**, they completed only **28 credits**. Their **fourth year EA amount is reduced**:

$$(28 \text{ credits completed} / 30 \text{ credits}) \times \$3,000 \text{ max. EA award amount} =$$

\$2,800 award amount for the fourth year of the EA

Student C received the GA for one year, then received the **EA their second year**. Their **second year** they **completed 30 credits**. The **third year** they will receive the **maximum amount of EA** they are eligible to be awarded.

Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. Will a student's enrollment in summer enrichment courses during the summer semester (i.e. reading or math courses) at a community college trigger the beginning of a student's academic year?**

Yes. If the student is enrolled as degree-seeking and the courses are credit-bearing. Subsection 18-303(a)(1) states that a student must be accepted in the regular undergraduate program at an eligible institution or be enrolled in a 2-year associate degree program in which the coursework is acceptable for transfer credit for an accredited baccalaureate program in an eligible institution. Therefore if the community college defines a student enrolling in a summer course (enrichment) as a degree seeking student, the summer semester would count as the student's first academic year of enrollment because the institution has defined the student as a degree seeking. The only way the student's summer courses would not count as an academic year is if the institution does not define the student as a degree seeking student or the coursework that the student is completing during that summer session is not transferable into an accredited baccalaureate program.

- 2. How is the year of enrollment defined?**

A student's year of Enrollment in the Educational Excellence Award (EEA) program will be defined as the years in which the student received the award. Meaning the student must have received (disbursed) an EEA award at least once during each academic year for at least two years before adhering to the credit completion requirements.

- 3. Are dually enrolled students excluded from the credit completion requirements?**

Yes. A dually enrolled student taking college courses while still enrolled in high school is excluded from the credit completion requirements. A high school student is ineligible to receive the grant, per § 18-303(b)(1). Since the student is still a high school student the college courses the student takes and completes while in high school will not be counted when determining the student's academic year of enrollment, nor counted during the credit completion requirements after the student graduates from high school and begins college.

- 4. Will MHEC require an institution to adjust and or cancel a student's state aid award if the institution later finds out that the student was ineligible for the award?**

The institution will not have to return/cancel the student's award from the prior year if no documentation was readily available at the time the award was certified and paid to confirm the student's ineligibility, or during the academic year no information/documentation was available to the institution to verify that the student was ineligible for the award. However, the institution is responsible for canceling the award if documentation is provided during the academic year confirming that the student is ineligible for the award.

- 5. For transfer students, is the institution verifying the credit completion requirement based on the number of credits the student successfully completed (at the end of their second academic year of receiving the award) using the credits earned from the transfer institution?**

The accepting institution should verify the credit completion requirement based on the number of credits the student successfully completed. The accepting institution does not need to analyze which credits were accepted for purposes of determining credit completion.

- 6. How will repeated courses be applied?**

Repeated course work shall be counted in accordance with the institution's established policies and procedures.

- 7. Will credits earned from certificate courses count towards the credit completion requirement?**

No. Credits earned while a student is enrolled in a certificate program are not included in the credit completion requirements. A student enrolled in a certificate program is ineligible for an EEA award.

- 8. How will OSFA measure if a student successfully completed a course?**

Successfully completed courses means a course in which a student received any grade higher than an "F" regardless of any school or program policy.

Frequently Asked Questions (Continued)

- 9. If the institution has to request a transcript to report the students credit information, can the student provide an unofficial transcript?**

Yes. The student can provide an unofficial or official transcript to the institution to verify the credit completion requirement.

- 10. Are institutions required to verify the number of credits the student successfully completed, if the student transferred from an out-of-state institution?**

If a student previously attended an out-of-state institution and completed at least two years of enrollment, and is now attending an in-state school, and is a recipient of the EEA state award, the credit completion requirements will not apply until the student has received the EEA award for at least two years.

- 11. If a student is awarded for the first time the Educational Assistance Grant in their third year of enrollment, does the credit completion requirement at the end of their second year of enrollment determine their award amount?**

No. Since the third year is the student first year of receiving the EA award the number of credits successfully completed at the end of the students second year of enrollment has no bearing on the student award amount in the third year. The student will not have to adhere to the credit completion requirements until the end of the student's second year of receiving the award, which in this case would occur at the end of the student's fourth academic year if an award was received. Therefore, if the student enrolled for a fifth year, the credit completion requirements would apply to their eligibility of the fifth year award.

- 12. Can an institution use the cumulative number of credits successfully completed in the students first and second academic years of receiving the award to determine if the student meets the credit completion requirement?**

No. Institutions are required to report the number of credits successfully completed at the end of the student's second academic year and thereafter in which the student received the award only.

- 13. If a student received a reduced award in the third year, can they get the full amount again in the fourth year?**

Yes, if the student completes 30 credits in their third year, they would be able to receive the full eligible amount again in the fourth year.

- 14. If a student fails to meet the credit completion requirement at the end of their second academic year of receiving the award, can they potentially regain their eligibility if they meet the credit completion requirement at the end of their third year?**

Yes. If a student fails to meet the credit completion requirement at the end of their second year of receiving the award, eligibility can be regained at the end of the subsequent year and thereafter, if the student successfully completes at least 24 credits and has remaining eligibility.

- 15. If a student receives a CB-EAG award in Year 1 and then receives the EA Grant in Year 2, but in Year 3 the student fails to complete the FAFSA by March 1; can the student receive the CB-EAG award, and is the award amount based on the number of credits the**

Yes. The student is eligible for the CB-EAG award in Year 3 if the student met the credit completion requirement at the end of their second year of receiving the award and the institution chooses to award the student.