Carnegie Mellon University
Student Financial Aid Office

Return to Title IV Funds Policy and Procedural Statement

Policy Reason

The U. S. Department of Education requires that the university determine the amount of Federal Title IV aid earned by a student who withdrawals of fails to complete the period of enrollment. The university must determine the earned and unearned portions of Title IV aid as of the date the student ceased attendance based on the amount of time the student spent in attendance. Up through the 60% point in the period of enrollment, a pro rata schedule is used to determine the amount of Title IV funds the student has earned at the time of withdrawal. After the 60% point in the period of enrollment, a student has earned 100% of the Title IV funds he or she was scheduled to receive. For a student who withdraws after the 60% point-in-time, there are no unearned funds. Federal regulations can be found at:

Federal Student Aid Handbook, Volume 5
Chapter 1 Withdrawals and the Return of Title IV Funds
34 CFR 668.22

Policy and Procedural Statement

At Carnegie Mellon Title IV funds are awarded to a student under the assumption that the student will attend school for the entire period for which the assistance is awarded. When a student withdraws, the student may no longer be eligible for the full amount of Title IV funds that the student was originally scheduled to receive.

If a recipient of Title IV grant or loan funds withdraws from a school after beginning attendance, the amount of Title IV grant or loan assistance earned by the student must be determined. If the amount disbursed to the student is greater than the amount the student earned, the unearned funds must be returned. If the amount disbursed to the student is less than the amount the student earned, and for which the student is otherwise eligible, he or she is eligible to receive a Post-withdrawal disbursement of the earned aid that was not received.

Carnegie Mellon determines the Withdrawal Date and Date of Determination to complete the return calculation. A student's withdrawal date and date of determination varies depending on the type of withdrawal. When a student provides official notification to Carnegie Mellon through the Student Leave of Absence and Withdrawal Process, the withdrawal is defined as official withdrawal. When the student does not complete the Student Leave of Absence and Withdrawal Process and no official notification is provided by the student it is considered an unofficial withdrawal.
Leave of Absence/Withdrawal Process

A student may leave Carnegie Mellon by either taking a leave of absence (leaving the university temporarily with the firm and stated intention of returning) or by withdrawing from the university (leaving the university with no intention of returning). Students choosing to take a leave of absence should first contact their academic advisor to discuss their plans while on leave and to work out any conditions that may be necessary for a smooth return to Carnegie Mellon. A student deciding to leave the university should take the following steps:

- Complete a Leave of Absence or Withdrawal Form.
- The form must include all necessary signatures or the process will not be completed.
- Return the completed form to the University Registrar’s Office, 5000 Forbes Ave., Warner Hall A12, Pittsburgh, PA 15213.

Determination of Withdrawal Date

Official Withdrawals (Notification Provided by the Student)

Those withdrawals defined as official are processed in accordance with federal regulations. The Office of the Registrar provides information that identifies which students have processed a Student Leave of Absence and Withdrawal Form for each semester. This information includes the Date of Withdrawal, the Date of Determination, Withdrawal/Leave Status (LA, LS, & W2) and the semester of attendance. This information is maintained in the student’s academic file and in the university’s Student Information System.

For students who notify the university of their intent to withdraw or take a leave of absence, the official date of withdrawal or leave of absence is the earliest of:

- Date the student began the withdrawal or leave of absence process;
- Date the student notified his or her home department;
- Date the student notified the associate dean of his or her college; or
- Date the student notified the dean of students.

Unofficial Withdrawal (No Official Notification Provided by the Student)

For a student who withdraws without providing notification to Carnegie Mellon, the institution determines the withdrawal date using defined criteria. This category of withdrawals includes students that drop out and students that do not earn a passing grade.
To identify the unofficial withdrawals the Registrar develops a preliminary list of students that did not complete the semester by reviewing the final student grade reports. The list includes all students with: a) semester units carried, b) 0 semester units passed, c) 0 quality points earned, and d) 0.0 QPA. The Registrar contacts the academic divisions about each student to determine if the student actually completed the semester and earned the grades (0.0) or failed to complete the semester and did not notify the university of their status.

For students who do not notify the university of their intent to withdraw or take a leave of absence, the official date of withdrawal or leave of absence is:

- The midpoint of the semester;
- The last date the student attended an academically-related activity such as an exam, Tutorial or study group, or the last day a student turned in a class assignment.

**Date of Determination that the Student Withdrawed**

Carnegie Mellon is not required to take attendance and the Date of Determination that a student withdrew varies depending upon the type of withdrawal: Official or Unofficial.

1. For withdrawals where the student *provided Official Notification* the Date of Determination is: The student’s withdrawal date, or the date of notification, whichever is later.

2. For withdrawals where the student *did not provide Official Notification* the Date of Determination is: The date the institution becomes aware the student has ceased attendance.

For a student who withdrawals without providing notification to the institution, the institution must determine the withdrawal date no later than 30 days after the end of the enrollment period.

**Calculation of Earned Title IV Assistance**

The withdrawal date is used to determine the point in time that the student is considered to have withdrawn so the percentage of the period of enrollment completed by the student can be determined. The percentage of Title IV aid earned is equal to the percentage of the period of enrollment completed.

The amount of Title IV federal aid earned by the student is determined on a pro-rata basis up to the end of 60% of the semester. If the student completed 30% of a term, 30% of the aid originally scheduled to be received would have been earned. Once a student has completed more than 60% of a term, all awarded aid (100%) has been earned. The percentage of federal aid earned and the order in which the unearned aid is returned are defined by federal regulatory requirements.
The calculation of earned Title IV funds includes the following grant and loan funds if they were disbursed or could have been disbursed to the student for the period of enrollment for which the Return calculation is being performed:

- Pell Grant
- Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant
- TEACH Grant (not available at Carnegie Mellon)
- FSEOG Grant
- Federal Direct Loan

**Institutional Charges**
Institutional charges are used to determine the portion of unearned Title IV aid that the school is responsible for returning. Carnegie Mellon ensures that all charges for tuition, fees, room and board, as well as all other applicable institutional charges are included in the return calculation. Institutional charges do not affect the amount of Title IV aid that a student earns when he or she withdraws. The institutional charges used in the calculation usually are the charges that were initially assessed the student for the period of enrollment. Initial charges are only adjusted by those changes the institution made prior to the student’s withdrawal (for example, for a change in enrollment status unrelated to the withdrawal). If, after a student withdraws, the institution changes the amount of institutional charges it is assessing a student, or decides to eliminate all institutional charges, those changes affect neither the charges nor aid earned in the calculation.

**Return of Unearned Funds to Title IV**
If the total amount of Title IV grant and/or loan assistance that was earned as of the withdrawal date is less than the amount that was disbursed to the student, the difference between the two amounts will be returned to the Title IV program(s) and no further disbursements will be made.

If a student has received excess funds, the College must return a portion of the excess equal to the lesser of the student’s institutional charges multiplied by the unearned percentage of funds, or the entire amount of the excess funds.

The funds will be returned in the order below as prescribed by federal regulations, within 45 days from the date of determination that a student withdrew.

- Unsubsidized Federal Stafford Loans
- Subsidized Federal Stafford Loans
- Federal PLUS loans
- Federal Pell Grants
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (FSEOG)
**Post-Withdrawal Disbursements**

If the total amounts of the Title IV grant and/or loan assistance earned as of the withdrawal date is more than the amount that was disbursed to the student, the difference between the two amounts will be treated as a post-withdrawal disbursement. In the event that there are outstanding charges on the student's account, Carnegie Mellon will credit the student's account for all or part of the amount of the post-withdrawal disbursement up to the amount of the allowable charges.

Any amount of a post-withdrawal disbursement that is not credited to a student's account will be offered to the student within 30 days of the date that the institution determined that the student withdrew. Upon receipt of a timely response from the student, the College will disburse the funds within 90 days of the date of determination of the student's withdrawal date.

**Return of Title IV Funds – Withdrawals for Programs Offered in Modules**

The return of Title IV funds for programs offered in modules is defined in a separate policy statement at Carnegie Mellon. This document is included as an addendum to the Carnegie Mellon University Return to Title IV Funds Policy and Procedural Statement (see page 6 of this document).

**Contact**

Questions regarding this policy or its intent should be directed to the Student Financial Aid Office at 412-268-1353.
Return of Title IV Funds Withdrawals for Programs Offered in Modules

Policies and Procedures

Federal Student Aid Handbook, Volume 5, Chapter 2
Withdrawals and the Return of Title IV Funds
CFR 668.22 (a), (f) and (l)
Dear Colleague Letter GEN-11-14 July 2011

For all programs offered in modules, a student is a withdrawal for Title IV purposes if the student ceases attendance at any point prior to completing the payment period or period of enrollment (unless the institution has written confirmation from the student that they will attend a module that begins later in the enrollment period).

The regulations require the institution to determine whether Title IV funds must be returned based on the number of days actually completed versus the number of days the student was scheduled to attend in the payment period. The regulations prevent students from enrolling in modules or compressed courses spanning the period, completing a portion of the period, and retaining all aid for the period.

A program is considered to be offered in modules if a course or courses in the program do not span the entire length of the payment period or period of enrollment. The rule impacts all programs offering courses shorter than an entire semester, including semester-based programs with a summer term consisting of two consecutive summer sessions.

The Student Financial Aid Office has established the following procedures associated with handling withdrawals from programs offered in modules. An Associate Director of Student Financial Aid has the primary responsibility for compliance and implementation of these regulatory requirements.

1. The institution will identify students enrolled for the summer session that are eligible for Title IV Aid.
   - Pell eligible students are identified
   - Students with summer loans are identified
   - The period of enrollment and enrollment status will be identified for each student

2. All Leave/Withdrawal Forms processed by the University Registrar’s Office will be reviewed for the summer sessions to record the Withdrawal Date and Date of Determination to identify any student receiving federal funding.

3. The Student Financial Aid Office will identify any students that drop courses in the summer sessions.
   - During Summer I this is standard procedure
   - During Summer II this is reviewed after 10th day reporting
• Any additional dropped courses will be reviewed through the 60% enrollment period

4. Students who are identified as official withdrawals or that officially drop all courses in a session will be reviewed to determine the amount of federal financial aid earned. If a Return of Title IV aid is required, existing institutional procedures will be followed.

5. At the end of the enrollment period the institution will determine if any students are identified as ‘unofficial withdrawals.’ If a Return of Title IV aid is required, existing institutional procedures will be followed.

6. If a student does not begin courses in all sessions, a Return of Title IV aid may not be required, but other regulatory provisions concerning recalculation may apply.
   • If a student completes both courses in module one, but officially drops courses in module two while attending module one the student is not a withdrawal.
   • Since the enrollment is less than half time, the student is no longer eligible for the loan and the funds must be returned.

The following information obtained from the Federal Student Aid Handbook, Chapter 2, Withdrawals and the Return of Title IV Funds, will be used to determine whether a student enrolled in a series of modules is a withdrawal.

How to determine whether a student in a program offered in modules has withdrawn

Schools can determine whether a student enrolled in a series of modules is a withdrawal by asking the following questions.

1) After beginning attendance in the payment period or period of enrollment, did the student cease to attend or fail to begin attendance in a course he or she was scheduled to attend?
   • If the answer is no, this is not a withdrawal.
   • If the answer is yes, go to question 2.

2) When the student ceased to attend or failed to begin attendance in a course he or she was scheduled to attend, was the student still attending any other courses?
   • If the answer is yes, this is not a withdrawal; however other regulatory provisions concerning recalculation may apply.
   • If the answer is no, go to question 3.

3) Did the student confirm attendance in a course in a module beginning later in the period (for non-term and nonstandard term programs, this must be no later than 45 calendar days after the end of the module the student ceased attending)?
   • If the answer is yes, this is not a withdrawal, unless the student does not return.
   • If the answer is no, this is a withdrawal and the Return of Title IV Funds requirements apply.