

Course Program of Study Frequently Asked Questions

U.S. Department of Education rules stipulate that colleges may only use the courses that are required for degree completion to determine a student's eligibility for federal financial aid programs. Federal financial aid programs include grants, work-study, and loans; they do not include programs such as the HOPE or Zell Miller scholarships.

Before registering for courses, all Georgia College students must complete an acknowledgement documenting their understanding of this rule.

What are the course program of study requirements?

Only courses that are required for degree completion may be used to determine a student's eligibility for federal financial aid programs.

Who do these rules apply to?

These rules apply to any graduate or undergraduate student who is receiving federal financial aid. This includes students receiving federal grants, federal work-study, and federal loans (Perkins, Stafford, and PLUS).

Do I need to complete the acknowledgement even if I don't receive federal financial aid?

Yes. Because student funding circumstances can change and applications received after the semester begins are processed, we are requiring every student to acknowledge this rule and how it may affect their future course choices.

What am I agreeing to when I submit the acknowledgement form?

You are acknowledging that you understand that you may not receive federal financial aid, if applicable, for courses that are not necessary for your degree.

How do I know if a course will apply to my degree program?

Review your DegreeWorks audit, which you can access directly from the main Unify screen. If a course you have registered for is being applied to your core, major, minor, or concentration, it is being applied to your degree program and you may use federal financial aid to pay for that course. If a course is needed to complete your legislative requirements, total upper-level hours, or total hours for your degree, you may also use federal financial aid to pay for that course.

For example, if a senior must complete 9 hours of coursework to complete his major and degree requirements and also wants to take a 3 hour class that is not needed for his major, minor, concentration, upper-level hours, or hours for his degree, his federal aid eligibility would be based on 9, not 12, semester hours. If a freshman registered for 15 hours of courses which are all being applied to her core curriculum, her federal aid eligibility would be based on all 15 semester hours.

What if I want to take a course that is not required for my degree?

You may still do so; however, you will not receive federal financial aid for that course. This could result in less or no aid compared to previous terms in which you received aid.

If you plan to take a course that is not required for your degree, please notify the Financial Aid Office (financialaid@gcsu.edu) as soon as you enroll so they can update your aid eligibility and help you understand how this choice will affect your aid package.

What if I make a mistake and register for a course that does not meet requirements?

After registration, the Financial Aid Office will begin reviewing enrollments and will let you know if a course for which you registered cannot be used to determine your aid eligibility. You will have time to drop that course before the semester begins and add another in its place. However, it is ultimately your responsibility to insure you are enrolled in the total number of hours in your degree required for the federal aid program funds you are receiving.

What if I change my major after the semester starts? Will I have to return my federal financial aid?

No. As long as courses are being applied to your degree program when your federal aid is disbursed to your student account, you will be in compliance with this rule. Applications received and awarded after the semester begins will be verified by the Financial Aid Office prior to making late disbursements (refunds) to your student account.

I am receiving funds from several types of federal aid programs. How many hours are required for each program?

All federal aid programs require students to be enrolled at least half-time which is 6 or more hours for undergraduate students and 5 or more for graduate students.

The only exception is for Pell Grant recipients. Typically, your Pell Grant disbursement will be pro-rated based on the applicable hours enrolled in your degree program. Some recipients not enrolled in an approved program of study course will not qualify for their Pell Grant award. Please contact your Financial Aid Advisor to determine your eligibility.

Contact Information

Financial Aid Office
Georgia College
Parks Hall 103, Campus Box 030
Milledgeville, GA 31061
Office: 478-445-5149
Fax: 478-445-0729
Email: financialaid@gcsu.edu

Registrar's Office
Georgia College
Parks Hall 107, Campus Box 069
Milledgeville, GA 31061
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Last Update: October 11, 2017