

Financial Aid Penalties for Drug Law Violations

A federal or state drug conviction can disqualify you for Title IV Federal Student Aid funds.

Convictions only count if they were for an offense that occurred during a period of enrollment for which you were receiving Title IV Federal Student Aid Funds – they do not count if the offense was not during such a period. Also, a conviction that was reversed, set aside, or removed from your record does not count, nor does one received when you were a juvenile, unless you were tried as an adult.

The chart below illustrates the period of ineligibility for Title IV Federal Student Aid funds, depending on whether the conviction was for sale or possession and whether you had previous offenses. A conviction for sale of drugs includes convictions for conspiring to sell drugs.

Length of ineligibility for Title IV Federal Student Aid Funds

Possession of Illegal Drugs

1st offense - 1 year from date of conviction

2nd offense - 2 years from date of Conviction

3+ offenses - Indefinite period

Sale of Illegal Drugs

1st offense - 2 years from date of conviction

2nd offense - Indefinite period

3+ offenses - Indefinite period

If you were convicted of both possessing and selling illegal drugs, and the periods of ineligibility are different, you will be ineligible for the longer period.

You regain eligibility the day after the period of ineligibility ends or when you successfully complete a qualified drug rehabilitation program or when you pass 2 unannounced drug tests conducted by a drug rehabilitation program which meets regulatory criteria. Further drug convictions will make you ineligible again.

If you are denied eligibility for an indefinite period you can regain eligibility after successfully completing a rehabilitation program as described below, if a conviction is reversed, set aside, or removed from your record so that fewer than two convictions of sale or three convictions for possession remain on your record or if you pass 2 unannounced drug tests conducted by a drug rehabilitation program which meets regulatory criteria. In such cases, the nature and dates of the remaining convictions will determine when you regain eligibility. It is your responsibility to certify to the NWCC Financial Aid Office that you have successfully completed the rehabilitation program.

Standards for a Qualified Drug Rehabilitation Program

A qualified drug rehabilitation program must include at least two unannounced drug tests and must satisfy at least one of the following requirements:

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

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