

Students Convicted of Possession or Sale of Drugs

A federal or state drug conviction can disqualify a student for Federal Student Aid (FSA) funds. The student self-certifies in applying for aid that the student is eligible; you are not required to confirm this unless you have conflicting information.

Convictions only count if they were for an offense that occurred during a period of enrollment for which the student was receiving FSA. They do not count if the offense was not during such a period. Also, a conviction that was reversed, set aside or removed from the student's record does not count, nor does one received when the student was a juvenile, unless the student was tried as an adult.

The chart below illustrates the period of ineligibility for FSA funds, depending on whether the conviction was for sale or possession and whether the student had previous offenses. (A conviction for sale of drugs includes convictions for conspiring to sell drugs.)

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

Schools must provide each student who becomes ineligible for FSA funds due to a drug conviction a clear and conspicuous written notice of the student's loss of eligibility and the methods whereby the student can become eligible again.

A student regains eligibility the day after the period of ineligibility ends or when the student successfully completes a qualified drug rehabilitation program or passes two unannounced drug tests given by such a program. Further drug convictions will make the student ineligible again.

Students denied eligibility for an indefinite period can regain it after successfully completing a rehabilitation program (as described below), passing two unannounced drug tests from such a program, or if a conviction is reversed, set aside or removed from the student's record so that fewer than two convictions for sale or three convictions for possession remain on the record. In such cases, the nature and dates of the remaining convictions will determine when the student regains eligibility. It is the student's responsibility to certify that the student has successfully completed the rehabilitation program; as with the conviction question on the FAFSA, the Office of Financial Aid is not required to confirm the reported information unless the office has conflicting information.

When a student regains eligibility during the award year, the Office of Financial Aid may award Pell grant, TEACH and campus-based aid for the current payment period and direct loans for the period of enrollment.

Standards for a qualified drug rehabilitation program

A qualified drug rehabilitation program must include at least two unannounced drug tests and 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.