

**Student Financial Aid, Scholarships and Veterans Education Benefits  
Guide for Faculty and Staff  
Revised January, 2023**

We created this guide as a reference tool to assist faculty and professional advisors. We are closely connected in our service to our students and their success.

Federal and state aid, and Veterans education benefits generate in excess of **\$105 million annually** for Austin Peay State University. The most frequent reason cited for withdrawing is financial. Our partnership with the academic community is a critical component of student success.

**\*\*\*Please check frequently for revisions and updates\*\*\***

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## **Student Financial Aid**

### **I. Program of Study and Financial Aid – Course Choice Counts**

#### **This applies to undergraduate and graduate programs**

Federal financial aid (loans, grants and federal work study) will only pay for courses required in the student's program of study. Students may, however, take courses not required in their program of study as long as these courses are allowable under electives.

In addition to federal funds, this now applies to state funds such as Tennessee Lottery, Tennessee Promise, TSAA grants and any other scholarships or grants offered by the State of Tennessee.

#### *Example*

*James is an undergraduate Psychology major and enrolled for 15 hours. One of these courses is a 3-hour Computer Science course, which is **not** part of his program of study.*

*What if James drops one of his required courses? James will still be enrolled for 12 hours; however, 3 of these hours include the Computer Science course. What happens?*

- *If James has elective hours remaining, there will be no adjustment to his financial aid.*
- *If James has completed his elective hours and withdrew by the [Pell Recalculation Date \(PRD\)](#), his financial aid will be reduced from full to  $\frac{3}{4}$  time because he is in 9 hours for his program of study. If this happens after PRD, there will not be a penalty for James.*
- *Note: If James were to be in a graduate program, we review based on the 14<sup>th</sup> day census.*

#### **How will this impact course substitutions?**

It will be in the best interest of the student for faculty to submit course substitutions as soon as possible. A substituted course cannot count towards their program of study hours until it is submitted and entered in Banner.

#### **What about electives?**

Elective hours are considered part of the program of study. The number of electives a student may take is limited to the degree requirements.

#### **What happens with prerequisites?**

Financial aid will consider required prerequisite courses as part of the program of study. There may, however, be situations where the faculty has to verify a prerequisite is required.

## What if a student changes their major/program of study?

For full details, please go to <https://apsu.edu/cpos/changeofmajor.php>.

### II. Graduate Students

- Graduate students must be enrolled in 3 hours (1/2 time) to receive graduate-level loans. For summer, it is 3 hours.
- Undergraduate courses do not apply towards enrolled hours required for financial aid unless the professor provides documentation the course is a ***required*** prerequisite.
- Graduate Assistants must be enrolled full-time.

### III. Course Withdrawals and Change in Enrollment Status

#### Undergraduate

Full Time = 12 hours

¾ Time = 9 to 11 hours

½ Time = 6 to 8 hours

Below ½ Time = 1 to 5 hours

#### Graduate

Full Time = 6 hours (3 in summer)

¾ Time = 4 to 5 hours (N/A in summer)

½ Time = 3 hours (2 in summer)

Below ½ time = 1 to 2 hours (1 in summer)

Undergraduate – If an undergraduate student changes enrollment status before [PRD](#), their financial aid may be reduced. After PRD, will not result in a reduction of aid for the current term unless the student fully withdraws from the university. Please note a FN grade is considered an unofficial withdrawal. FN and FA grades are explained later in this guide.

Graduate – If a graduate student changes enrollment status by the 14<sup>th</sup>-day census, their financial aid may be reduced. Changes after the 14<sup>th</sup>-day census will not result in a reduction of aid for the current term unless the student fully withdraws from the university. Please note a FN grade is considered an unofficial withdrawal. FN and FA grades are explained later in this guide.

***Important!*** While dropping a course(s) or changing enrollment status may not result in the reduction of aid, it may negatively impact the student's completion rate (attempted vs. earned hours) which could impact eligibility for aid for future terms. See Section VII (SAP).

**Note: Please refer students to us who may change their enrollment status. We will be glad to advise them of potential financial implications.**

\*See Tennessee Lottery Scholarship and Tennessee Promise section for withdrawal information specific to our Lottery recipients: <https://www.apsu.edu/financialaid/withdrawing-from-courses/dropping/dropping-some-courses-without-full-withdrawal-university.php>.

#### IV. Attendance Reporting

FA and FN Grades – Attendance reporting is federally required by the Department of Education and Veterans Affairs for the purpose of monitoring attendance and ensuring the accurate payment of federal funds by the Office of Student Financial Aid and Veterans Affairs. In addition, state programs such as the Tennessee Lottery scholarship also require attendance grade reporting.

Failure to follow the procedure for FA and FN grades may result in a federal or state audit finding and financial penalties for the University for overpayment of funds. Faculty are encouraged to read the section on Dropping Courses, Grades Awarded, Withdrawals in the current APSU Undergraduate Bulletin for more information. After a student has officially registered for a class, the student is considered to be a member of the class unless the student officially drops the class, officially withdraws from the University, is canceled by administrative authority, or is permanently excluded by the Student Academic Grievance Committee. All financial obligations are retained when the student discontinues class attendance without officially dropping or withdrawing from the University.

- The FA grade is defined as “the grade to be assigned as of the date at which the faculty member has determined that the student has stopped attending class and is no longer receiving instruction.” A grade of FA (to include the last date of attendance) must be reported within 14 days of the last day of attendance. If the faculty later agrees to allow the student back into class, the grade of FA may be removed and the student should notify the Office of Student Financial Aid/Veterans Affairs of the grade change. Its ok if the student notifies us, however we have to have written confirmation of this change from the instructor so not sure if you want to say this too. You do say this below in the bolded note so maybe it doesn’t matter here
- Faculty should use the regular F grade, not the FA, when a student is failing due to absences that breach the faculty member’s class attendance policy but do not meet the FA policy as described above. (For example, if the class attendance policy states that a student will fail after five absences, and a student has accrued that many, the student should be given an F as either a midterm or a final grade.)
- Unlike the FA, the F grade may be given by a faculty member even when the student has continued to attend class.
- The FN grade is to be given only when a student has never attended class. A grade of FN and an entry of the first date of class in the last date of attendance column must be reported within the first 14 days of class. The FN grade is considered to be an unofficial withdrawal from the class and may impact the enrollment status of a student (full-time to part-time).

**Note: If a grade of FA or FN is changed after submission, an email from the professor confirming active participation in the class is required. A grade change from F to W does not indicate participation in the course and will not allow reinstatement of financial aid.**

*For additional information, you may refer to the University Bulletin and/or Faculty Handbook.*

## V. Full Withdrawal from University

Students who fully withdraw prior to completing 60% of the semester may be responsible for repaying some of the financial aid they received. After completing 60% of the semester, there is no financial penalty. The withdrawal may, however, impact their aid eligibility for future semesters.

**Note: Please refer students to us who may be withdrawing for financial reasons. We may be able to assist or secure additional funding for them.**

\*See Tennessee Lottery Scholarship and Tennessee Promise section for withdrawal information specific to our Lottery recipients: <https://www.apsu.edu/financialaid/withdrawing-from-courses/withdrawing-completely/dropping-all-courses-full-withdrawal-university.php>.

## VI. Student Loan Debt

Excessive student loan debt may result when:

- There is a change in program of study
- The completion rate (attempted hours vs. earned) is below 67%
- The student is not meeting graduation GPA requirement
- There are excessive course withdrawals and/or F grades
- The student is taking unnecessary courses or repeating courses
- Attending part-time and borrowing the maximum loans allowable
- Not utilizing other sources of available aid
- Accepting loans year after year without being mindful of cumulative total borrowed

## VII. Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

Our office is required to monitor both GPA and completion rate of courses for students receiving financial aid. In addition, we are required to monitor the maximum timeframe allowed to complete a degree. Our full policy may be reviewed at [http://www.apsu.edu/financialaid/sat\\_prog](http://www.apsu.edu/financialaid/sat_prog).

Here is a quick reference:

### GPA

- Cumulative GPA of less than 1.5 for 0-29 attempted hours
- Cumulative GPA of less than 1.8 for 30-45 attempted hours
- Cumulative GPA of less than 1.9 for 46-59 attempted hours
- Cumulative GPA of less than 2.0 for 60 or more attempted hours
- Cumulative GPA of less than 2.0 if pursuing a Second Bachelor's Degree
- Cumulative GPA of less than 3.0 if pursuing a Graduate Degree

- Cumulative GPA of less than 3.0 if pursuing a Second Graduate Degree
- Cumulative GPA of less than 1.8 if pursuing an Associate Degree

### Completion Rate (also referred to as Pace)

**Students must earn at least 67% of their cumulative overall combined hours attempted in order to remain eligible to receive financial aid.** This includes both hours earned at APSU and transfer hours (including military credit). This applies to associate, undergraduate and graduate students. All courses for credit will be counted as hours attempted including withdrawals, incompletes, and repeated coursework. The 67% rate is determined by dividing the cumulative overall combined number of earned credit hours by the overall combined number of attempted hours. Students in violation of the completion rate will be required to obtain a signed academic plan from their advisor.

### Maximum Timeframe

The maximum time frame must be no longer than 150% of the published length of the educational program. Most undergraduate programs require 120 hours; therefore 180 hours attempted is the maximum time frame allowed. Graduate length varies by program and will be measured according to the published length of the program; in cases where the program length may vary, the shortest length will be utilized. **If at any point it is clear the student will not be able to meet the maximum timeframe requirement or they exceed the maximum time frame, the student becomes ineligible for aid.** All transfer hours are included with the exception of remedial or developmental.

A request for an adjustment for maximum time frame may be considered for credit that does not apply towards the current degree program. This may include military credit, change in major, etc. A signed academic plan from the advisor is required.

**Note: Maximum timeframe is the end of the road for students to receive aid. Students with excessive attempted hours may either lose their eligibility or exhaust their available aid prior to receiving their degree.**

### Change of Major

Students who change their major, thus requiring additional hours to complete their degree, must complete their new program of study within the maximum time frame allowed of 180 attempted hours described in Section V. ***Changing majors, particularly more than once, may lead to not completing degree requirements within the maximum time frame.***

### Second Degree

Second Undergraduate – The maximum time frame allowable for financial aid eligibility is 150% of the hours needed to complete the first degree, plus up to 60 additional hours. Example –  $120 \times 150\% = 180 + 60 = 240$ . Therefore, the maximum timeframe for most students seeking a second degree is 240 hours.

Second Graduate – The maximum time frame allowable for financial aid eligibility is 150% of the hours needed to complete the degree.

Students **must** have their status changed to a second degree through the Registrar's Office.

## VIII. Tennessee Lottery Scholarship

### GPA and Attempted Hours

College-Level courses taken while in high school will not be included in the Lottery GPA calculation. This means the Lottery GPA, which determines continuing eligibility, may be different from the student's APSU GPA.

#### **Students may lose their Lottery scholarship if:**

- Enrollment status changes from full-time to part-time after the 14<sup>th</sup> day of class. **This results in a permanent loss.** If a student lowers their enrollment status at the Clarksville campus, they may pick up a Part B or Fort Campbell class(es) in Fall II or Spring II.
- Attendance grades of FA or FN, if enrollment status changes as a result of the attendance grade. **This results in a permanent loss.**
- Cumulative Lottery GPA lower than 2.75 at 24 and 48 attempted hours
- Cumulative Lottery GPA lower than 3.0 at 72 and 96 attempted hours
- Withdrawal from University
- Not continually enrolled

For complete details, including the appeal process, please go to <https://apsu.edu/scholarships/tn-education-lottery-programs/>.

## IX. Tennessee Promise

To remain continually eligible, a student must:

- Primary Degree must be Associate's Degree.
- Maintain continuous full-time enrollment in courses that are not 3000 or 4000 levels (unless it is the student's final semester in an associate degree program before graduation). If a student drops below full time while enrolled at the Clarksville campus, they may pick up a Fort Campbell class(es) in Fall II or Spring II.
- Maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0
- Complete community service requirement of 8 hours each semester. Community service hours are monitored by Tennessee Achieves.

For complete details go to <https://www.apsu.edu/scholarships/tennessee-promise>.

## **X. Institutional, Donor, Outside, and Athletic Scholarships**

Institutional: Most institutional funds are awarded by the Office of Admissions. The criteria and other details are at <http://www.apsu.edu/scholarships>.

Donor: Donor funds are typically awarded by a departmental committee or the Office of Admissions. The criteria and other details are at <http://www.apsu.edu/scholarships>. Recipients must have applied through the scholarship portal.

Outside: These are private scholarships offered from such entities as churches, employers, civic organization, etc. These must be reported to the Office of Student Financial Aid.

Athletic: All athletic related awards are determined by the Athletics Office and posted to the student's account by the Office of Student Financial Aid using the Additional Resources Form.

## **XI. Year Around Pell**

Eligible students will have Pell grant funds available to them for fall, spring and summer classes. This should increase the interest in summer classes and help students progress more quickly to degree completion. If a student receives full time Pell fall and spring, then they must be at least half time in the summer in order to be eligible for Pell grant.

## **XII. Fort Campbell Campus**

For financial aid purposes, full time is 12 hours for an undergraduate student.

Example

Sarah is enrolled 6 hours for Fall I. Her grants and Lottery will be prorated and paid at half-time enrollment. Because loans only require half-time enrollment, the full amount will pay out at Fall I. If she subsequently enrolls for Fall II for 6 hours, she will then receive the remainder of her grants and lottery as a full-time student. She will not receive another loan disbursement.

## **XIII. Veterans Education Benefits**

- VA will only pay for courses that are part of the program of study AND listed on the prior credit evaluation. This applies to undergraduate and graduate.
- Each term, we verify courses are in the program using the prior credit evaluation on file with our office. A prior credit evaluation is required:
  - By the end of the first term of enrollment with APSU.
  - A revised prior credit evaluation is required when a student changes their program of study.
  - A course substitution must be submitted through AP Web for Faculty before VA staff can review and certify the substitution.

- Repeat courses in which a passing grade has already been received, including courses taken at another school or courses under the CARE/Fresh Start policy, cannot be included in the VA enrollment certification unless there is a requirement of a grade of “C” or better for the course.
- A change of major with APSU does not change the student’s major with VA. A change of major form with VA is required.
- Enrollment of at least half-time is required for Chapter 33 students to receive the housing benefit.

*For additional information on these programs and other VA or Vocational Rehabilitation programs, please go to <http://www.apsu.edu/veterans-affairs>.*

#### **XIV. Contact Information for Financial Aid**

Main Office                    931-221-7907  
Office Email                    [sfao@apsu.edu](mailto:sfao@apsu.edu)

Donna Price, Executive Director  
X7410  
[priced@apsu.edu](mailto:priced@apsu.edu)

Randi Robinson  
X7208  
[robinsonr@apsu.edu](mailto:robinsonr@apsu.edu)

Brittney Herron, Associate Director  
X6362  
[herronb@apsu.edu](mailto:herronb@apsu.edu)

Kayla Scott, Scholarship Coordinator (Lottery, TN Promise)  
X6178  
[scottkn@apsu.edu](mailto:scottkn@apsu.edu)

Sherri Devers, Scholarship Coordinator (academic, private and departmental scholarships and scholarship placement)  
X7035  
[deverss@apsu.edu](mailto:deverss@apsu.edu)

#### **XIV. Contact Information for Veterans Education Benefits Office**

Main Office                    931-221-7760  
Office Email                    [ova@apsu.edu](mailto:ova@apsu.edu)

Elizabeth Stonerock, Director for VA  
X7956  
[stonerocke@apsu.edu](mailto:stonerocke@apsu.edu)