



2020-2021 CWU Return of Funds Policy

This policy directly impacts students who:

- 1) Receive Federal or CWU Institutional Funds but fail to successfully complete any credits in a term, *and/or*
- 2) Receive state funds at a certain number of credits but fail to begin attendance in all courses to match their state aid award level.

Policy Summary

When a student with **federal and/or CWU institutional aid** completes 0 (zero) credits for a term, the Financial Aid Office is required to determine how much, if any, of that term's aid they are no longer eligible for. This is called the "unearned" amount. We are also required to determine whether or not the student owes a repayment to the U.S. Department of Education. Exception: Students with federal and/or institutional aid who formally withdraw from all of their classes after actively participating in their courses past the 60% point of the quarter (see Appendix) are considered to have "earned" 100% of their financial aid.

When a student with **state aid** fails to begin attendance in enough credits to match their state aid award level, the student will owe a repayment to the State of Washington for 100% of the state aid they received for the quarter.

"Unearned" Aid

1) How is the Amount of "Unearned" Aid Determined?

The amount of federal aid that is "unearned" is calculated using a federal formula that includes such factors as the amount and type(s) of aid received, the last day of attendance (see Appendix), and the student's CWU charges.

The amount of CWU/institutional aid that is "unearned" is calculated by determining, based on the last day of attendance, the percentage of the quarter that was not completed, and ii) multiplying that percentage by the amount of aid received.

The amount of "unearned" state aid is 100% for students who do not begin attendance in enough credits to match their state aid award level.

2) What Happens to "Unearned" Aid?

Federal Aid Funds: "Unearned" federal financial aid funds will be removed from the student's account and returned to the Federal programs in the following order:

- 1st : Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan
- 2nd : Federal Direct Subsidized Stafford Loan
- 3rd : Federal Direct Graduate PLUS loan
- 4th : Federal Direct Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students
- 5th : Federal Pell Grant
- 6th : Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant
- 7th : TEACH Grant
- 8th : Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant

(If a student was not ever awarded aid from a certain program, the reduction simply skips that aid and moves down to the next until the correct amount of aid has been returned)

If the federal return of funds calculation shows that the student owes a direct repayment of federal grant funds to the U.S. Department of Education, a charge is added to the student's account and the for the amount owed. For any amount unpaid after 45 days, the charges are removed from the student's account, the debt is transferred to the U.S. Department of Education for payment/collection activities, and the student will be ineligible to receive further federal aid until the debt is paid in full.

CWU/Institutional Funds: "Unearned" CWU/Institutional funds are removed from the student's account and returned to the accounts they came from. See Appendix for a list of CWU/Institutional aid -types that are subject to Return of Funds,

WA State Funds: Students who owe back 100% of their state aid funds for the term must make payment directly to the State of WA through University Accounting Service (www.uasconnect.com or 844-870-8701).

Timeline

The return calculation process, including student notification, will be completed within 30 calendar days from the date of the withdrawal for federal and CWU/institutional aid, and within 10 days of learning that students with state aid did not begin attendance in enough credits to match their state aid award level.

Student Account Balance

After Return of Funds, a student's account balance may show that they owe 100% of their "unearned" aid. However, it may show that more or less, or even zero, is owed. Why? Because the impact of Return of Funds on a student's account depends on the status of the account prior to Return of funds. Was the account previously paid in full? Was there a refund pending? Was there a prior unpaid amount? Was there a refund of tuition and/or housing? Students who receive a Notification of Return of Funds should check their student account balance.

Return of Funds Appeal

Although an appeal cannot be submitted for state aid, appealing a federal and/or institutional return of funds may be submitted ***within 14 days of notification of the return of funds.*** Unfortunately, there are only a few circumstances that can be appealed. Appeals based on extenuating circumstance cannot be considered.

- 1) Students may provide documentation that they actively participated in at least one class through the end of the term (including taking the final).
- 2) Students who have a grade change, may notify the Financial Aid Office that their academic transcript now shows a passing grade for the term.
- 3) Students may provide documentation to the Financial Aid Office that an instructor has submitted a request to the Registrar's to change a non-passing grade to a passing grade.

Students who intend to appeal should contact the Financial Aid Office to obtain the Return of Funds Appeal form.

Appendix

Add/Drop Policy and Financial Aid Grant Proration

When a student is awarded financial aid at the beginning of the year, the amount provided for each term is based on full-time enrollment of 12 or more credits. If students are not full-time at the end of the Change of Schedule Period, also known as “add/drop,” their financial aid award will be reduced to match their lower enrollment level. For state aid only, students who are part-time as of add/drop, and who later add credits to take them to a higher enrollment level, will have their state aid award increased.

There are 4 financial aid enrollment levels for state and federal grants.

	State Financial Aid	Federal Financial Aid	Proration Percent	\$1,000 Grant Proration Amount
Full Time Enrollment	12 or more credits	12 or more credits	100%	\$1,000 Grant
$\frac{3}{4}$ Time Enrollment	9 – 11 credits	9 – 11 credits	75%	\$750 Grant
$\frac{1}{2}$ Time Enrollment	6 – 8 credits	6 – 8 credits	50%	\$500 Grant
$\frac{1}{4}$ Time Enrollment	3 – 5 credits	1 – 5 credits	25%	\$250 Grant

CWU/Institutional grant aid requires a minimum of 6 credits of enrollment.

How Last Date of Attendance is Determined

As mentioned earlier, the student's last date of attendance is one of the factors used in determining the amount of federal and/or CWU/Institutional aid is “unearned. Last day of attendance is determined differently for formal withdrawals and informal withdrawals.

- 1) **Formal Withdrawal:** A formal withdrawal happens when a student works with the Registrar's Office during the term and course “meeting dates” to withdraw from all courses prior to the end of the quarter. “Last Day of Attendance” means the last day of active participation in a class. As part of the Registrar's formal withdrawal process, students are asked to self-report their last day of active participation in a course. This date is used as the last day of attendance for Return of Funds and can be corroborated with instructions.

In-person class: Active participation for an in-person course includes physically attending and participating in the class, submitting an assignment, and taking an exam.

On-line class: Active participation for an online course requires participating in a class discussion, submitting an assignment, or taking a test. Just logging on to the online service (i.e. Blackboard or Canvas) is not considered active participation.

- 2) Informal Withdrawal: An informal withdrawal is when a student does not formally withdraw with the Registrar's Office from all courses but does not complete any credits for the quarter. In accordance with federal regulations, a student who informally withdraws is considered to have completed 50% of the quarter.

"More than" 60%

Students who complete more than 60% of the quarter prior to completing a formal withdrawal are considered to have "earned" 100% of their federal and CWU/Institutional aid. For 2020-2021, the first days that are more than 60% for a quarter are:

- Fall 2020: 10/22/2020
- Winter 2021: 2/18/2021
- Spring 2021: 5/13/2021
- Summer 2021: (6 Week Session: 7/15/2021) (Full Session: 7/27/2021)

**** Students whose Summer Term classes are not in the 6 week or full session will have their more than 60% point calculated based on their class's length and schedule.*

Beginning Attendance in a Class

A student is considered to have begun attendance in a class based on:

Any assigned grade other than **W** (Withdrawal), **HW** (Hardship Withdrawal, or **NS** (No Show).

or

For students with **W** or **HW** grades, the last day of active participation reported by a student to Registrar's (which can be corroborated by instructors) as part of the formal withdrawal process.

or

Information from instructors.

CWU/Institutional Aid That is Subject Return of Funds

CWU Grant	CWU Veteran's Waiver
CWU Tuition Waiver	CWU Student's First Fund
CWU FA Need Grant	CWU Western undergraduate Exchange (WUE) Waiver
CWU Veteran's Grant	CWU Institutional Scholarships

"No Show" Grades and Proration of Federal and CWU/Institutional Grants

"No Show" (NS) grades do not just impact students with state aid, and they don't just have an impact on the Return of Funds process.

Federal Grants: For students with federal grants, a recalculation of their grant award will be necessary if the number of credits without NS grades is not enough to match their federal grant enrollment level. If the student also fails to complete any credits for the quarter, the Return of Funds calculation will be based on the aid that

remains after the adjustment for the NS grade(s). Students with all NS grades will have 100% of their federal aid cancelled.

CWU/Institutional Grants: Institutional grants will be cancelled if the student receives one or more NS grades and is determined to have begun attendance in less than 6 credits.

Situational Examples

Although these examples do not cover every situation a student may be in, we've included several common situations in an effort to help better explain where you might be if you complete a quarter with less credits than you originally began in.

Example 1: A student begins the term enrolled in three 5-credit classes for a total of 15 credits and receives a full-time state and federal aid award. At the end of the term the student has one NS grade and two B grades.

- *State Aid:* Because the student was awarded state aid at full-time enrollment status but only began attendance in 10 credits, the student will owe a repayment of 100% of the state aid funds they received for that term.
- *Federal Aid:* Because the student completed one or more credits, a federal return of funds calculation is not required.

Example 2: A student begins the term enrolled in two 5-credit classes for a total of 10 credits. On the add/drop date, their state and federal aid awards are reduced to the $\frac{3}{4}$ -time level. The student only attends one of the classes and later withdraws from that class. At the end of the term they have an NS grade and a W.

- *State Aid:* Because the student was awarded state aid for $\frac{3}{4}$ time but only began attendance in 5 credits, the student will owe a repayment of 100% of the state aid funds they received for that term.
- *Federal Aid:* Because the student did not complete any credits, a federal return of funds calculation is required.

Example 3: A student begins the term enrolled in two classes for a total of 6 credits. After the add/drop deadline, the student's state and federal aid awards are reduced to the $\frac{1}{2}$ -time level. Four days later, the student adds another 5-credit class and the state aid award is increased to the $\frac{3}{4}$ -time level. At the end of the term the student receives a C+ in all three classes.

- *State Aid:* Because the student began attending each class, the student does not owe a repayment of state aid.
- *Federal Aid:* Because the student successfully completed one or more credits, a return of federal funds calculation is not required.

Example 4: A student begins the term enrolled in one 5-credit class and one 1-credit class for a total of 6 credits. On the add/drop date, their state and federal aid awards are reduced to the $\frac{1}{2}$ -time level. A few days later, the student adds another 5-credit class and the state aid is revised upward to the $\frac{3}{4}$ -time level. At the end of the term, the student's account shows an NS grade in one of the 5-credit classes, a W in the 1-credit class, and an F in the other 5-credit class.

- *State Aid:* Because the student was awarded state aid at the $\frac{3}{4}$ -time level but only began attendance in 6 credits, the student will owe a repayment of 100% of the state aid funds they received for that term.
- *Federal Aid:* Because the student did not complete any credits, a federal return of funds calculation is required.