

How do college credits earned through CiHS programs impact a student's financial aid eligibility?

Students with questions about the effect of CiHS on their student aid or scholarship packages should always check directly with the college's admissions, financial aid, and scholarship offices.

WA Grant (formerly the Washington College Grant)

Dual credit courses do not apply to the WA Grant maximum usage timeframe unless the student completes a bachelor's degree before the limit is up. Some types of financial aid have a maximum timeframe for eligibility that limits the length of time students can receive aid. The limit depends on the state, federal, and/or institutional policy. While there are some ways that dual credit participation can affect a student's access to financial aid, due to recent changes to Washington's maximum timeframe rules with the WA Grant expansion (formerly Washington College Grant, WCG), student accumulation of college credit through dual credit programs will NOT impact their ability to access state financial aid.

The new rules for the WA Grant expansion eliminate the maximum timeframe of 125% of the length of a program and replace it with maximum terms of eligibility. A maximum timeframe policy limits the length of time students are eligible to receive aid. This policy depends on the policies and practices for state, federal, and/or institutional aid.

The WA Grant maximum is defined as attending full time for a maximum of five years (15 quarters/10 semesters or the equivalent of full-time enrollment). This fulltime limit only applies to the quarters in which a student received the WA Grant.

Because dual credit students cannot receive state financial aid to pay for college credits earned through dual credit, no coursework taken in dual credit programs will apply to the WA Grant full-time limit.

Students who earn an associate degree through dual credit programs can use WA Grant toward another associate degree. Students who already have an associate degree can use WA Grant toward a second associate degree if they are enrolled in an aid-eligible program. This means students who earn an associate degree or who earn college credit toward an associate degree through dual credit programs may apply for WA Grant to pursue a second aid-eligible associate degree.

College Bound Scholarship

The College Bound Scholarship (CBS) differs from the WA Grant's maximum timeframe policy and has a different length of eligibility requirement than the WA Grant. CBS recipients may be eligible to receive four years of funding to use within five years of high school graduation. Students must enroll in a college within one year of high school graduation. The four-year limit (12 quarters/8 semesters or the equivalent of full-time

enrollment) applies regardless of whether students choose to enroll part- or full-time, or if they choose to take time off from school. The CBS maximum terms of eligibility are 12 quarters/8 semesters or the equivalent of fulltime enrollment (15 quarters/10 semesters or the equivalent of full-time enrollment). Like the WA Grant, this full-time limit only applies to the quarters in which a student received the CBS. In other words, no coursework taken in dual credit programs will apply to the CBS full time limit.

CBS Scholars must also enroll in college within one academic year following their high school graduation to be eligible for CBS consideration. For example, a CBS Scholar who graduated high school in the spring of 2021 is required to enroll in college by the fall term of 2022. CBS Scholars who do not enroll in college within a year of high school graduation are not eligible to receive the scholarship – unless they completed transcribed college credit prior to high school graduation through a dual credit program. In this case, dual credit participation helps students access state financial aid because it fulfills the CBS enrollment deadline. For example: A CBS student completes a CiHS course their senior year. The student graduates in the spring of 2021 having already met the CBS enrollment deadline because they were enrolled at a college for their CiHS course. The student does not enroll in college until the fall term of 2023. The student is still eligible for CBS consideration because they met the enrollment deadline through CiHS participation. However, the student still only has five years after high school graduation to use CBS funding, meaning they would only have three years of remaining funding left.

Federal and Institutional Aid

For federal financial aid, including the Pell Grant, the maximum timeframe policy limit is 150% of the published length of the student’s program. Every credit on a student’s college transcript is eligible to be counted towards the federal 150% maximum timeframe. This includes credits earned through dual credit programs.

Federal policies do allow for exceptions to be granted in the calculation of the limit and provide grant college/universities flexibility in determining which credits are to be applied to an individual student’s maximum timeframe.

The term “published length of program” is an important one. It allows registrars and financial aid offices to implement a policy that counts only those credits that apply to the student’s current program of study. However, how credits are applied is entirely at the discretion of the college credit transfer policy.

Specific institutional aid may also have differing maximum timeframe policy rules. Students who get close to the maximum timeframe will need to work closely with the financial aid representative at their college to maintain eligibility for federal and institutional aid. This issue is most likely to occur for students who graduate with a high number of college credits.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

For both state and federal and institutional financial aid, it is important to note that there is a requirement that students maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). SAP is a measurement of academic performance in terms of GPA and completed credits. It differs slightly for state and federal aid. Washington requires a per term SAP review. Recipients of state financial aid must earn at least one-half of the credits enrolled that they received aid for to demonstrate academic progress. This is known as the cumulative academic progress percentage. The federal SAP has a “pace” requirement instead where students must earn 67% of the credits attempted. Though specific SAP review standards may vary by institution, all SAP policies consider the maximum timeframe rules and evaluate the successful completion of a minimum number of credits or clock hours. For example, full time enrollment is successfully completing 12 credits or 300 clock hours.

It is critical for dual credit students to understand all prior college coursework that generated a college transcript, including that taken through dual credit, will potentially be evaluated for SAP. Depending on the college’s SAP policy, they may apply prior credits, including those earned through dual credit, towards the cumulative academic progress percentage.

The SAP evaluation may find that students are not meeting the Satisfactory Academic Progress standards. Depending on the student’s cumulative academic progress percentage the student may be placed on: (1) Warning Status: The student can continue to receive state aid or (2) Unsatisfactory or Denied Status: The student can no longer receive any state aid. This status is often given to students who remain in warning status for more terms than the college’s policies allow.

If a student struggled in their dual credit coursework and it hurts their SAP evaluation, all of Washington’s colleges and universities have an SAP appeals process in place. Appeals and reinstatement policies vary by institution.

Private Donor and Institutional Scholarship

Policies surrounding private scholarships rest with the donor. How institutional scholarships are awarded is controlled by each college. It is up to each private donor or each college to determine how CiHS college credits impact consideration for scholarships that are reserved for freshman.

More information is available in the CiHS FAQs published by OSPI:

<https://councilofpresidents.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/CiHS-FAQs-December-2024.pdf>