

## Eastern Wyoming College Video Transcript

### Financial Aid: Who is eligible for financial aid?

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Hi, I'm Susan Stephenson, Financial Aid Director at Eastern Wyoming College.

How do you know if you are eligible for financial aid? Most students are eligible for some form of aid, whether it's federal aid, scholarships, tuition remissions, institutional employment, or outside awards. The main thing you need to do to determine if you are eligible for any or all types of aid is to apply. Beyond that, you need to understand how to meet initial eligibility requirements to receive awards, and then how to maintain your eligibility to keep receiving your aid.

Let's look at federal aid eligibility first, since the federal aid programs are the largest source of aid.

When you complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), your answers are used to evaluate your eligibility for the federal aid programs, which at EWC includes Pell Grants, Supplemental Grants, Federal Work Study and Federal Direct loans. Some of your answers are matched with federal databases like the Social Security Administration to confirm accuracy and determine if you meet certain *general* eligibility criteria.

To initially be eligible for federally funded financial aid programs, you must:

- Have a valid Social Security Number
- Have a high school diploma or high school equivalency certificate (like the GED, HiSET, or TASC) or have completed home schooling at the secondary level (please note that EWC must have a final, official copy of your transcript before your federal aid can be disbursed to you)
- You must also be seeking an approved certificate or degree (this means you plan to complete a program in welding or vet tech, or get a degree in English or math. You can even be undecided, as long as your goal is to complete a program, in which case you will likely be considered an Interdisciplinary Studies major)
- You must also be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen
- Males must be registered with Selective Service (did you know you can register for Selective Service directly on the FAFSA?)
- You must also have financial need (except for some loans)
- Be enrolled at least half-time--which is six credits or more--for most programs (except Pell—Pell can be prorated to any level of enrollment)
- You must be making Satisfactory Academic Progress towards completion of a certificate or degree (We'll discuss what that means later)
- You must not be in default on a federal student loan or owe repayment of a federal grant, and
- By signing the FAFSA, you are certifying that financial aid funds will only be used for educational purposes. (Valid educational purposes are things like tuition, fees, living expenses, transportation—see our *What Will College Cost?* video for details)

Please also note that students who are convicted for the sale or possession of illegal drugs for an offense that occurred while receiving federal student aid may be ineligible to receive future federal aid for a period of time.

Once you receive your federal aid, there are requirements you must meet in order to maintain that aid semester by semester. This is called Satisfactory Academic Progress (or SAP). It is important to note that SAP is based on all attempted hours, including transfer credits and credits from concurrent enrollment or dual high school enrollment, even if you did not receive federal aid for those credits and no matter how long ago the credits were taken. SAP is reviewed before awards are made, before awards are disbursed and after each semester of enrollment.

The following requirements are for *all* federal financial aid programs (*including loans*). You must:

- Maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0
- Successfully complete at least 67% of the total credits you attempt, and
- Complete your degree objective in no more than 150% of the length of program (This means that if your degree takes 60 credits to complete, once you attempt 90 credits—or, 150% of the length of your program—you can no longer receive federal financial aid).

Students are considered to be making Satisfactory Academic Progress and will be eligible for federal financial aid at EWC as long as all three requirements are met at the end of each semester.

If you DON'T meet one or more of the SAP requirements, you risk losing your federal aid. Students who do not complete the minimum number of credits or who do not possess a satisfactory GPA will be first placed on Warning status for their next semester of enrollment. You can receive financial aid while on Warning, but if both the completion rate and cumulative GPA requirement are not met at the end of the Warning term, you will lose federal aid eligibility. Students who exceed the number of credits required for their degree program are placed on Loss of Eligibility for Maximum Time Frame status.

You may regain eligibility by enrolling for a semester of classes at your own cost and regaining SAP during that semester or by appealing. Students may only appeal for extenuating circumstances such as personal injury, illness, death of a family member, or other situations *beyond your control*. Appeals must address the reasons for losing eligibility and detail a plan for being successful in the future. You must also meet with your academic advisor to go over a degree audit to ensure you are on track for completing your program. The best approach is to be successful the first time around.

Eligibility for scholarships may or may not echo federal SAP standards. The Hathaway Scholarship has initial eligibility criteria based on GPA, test scores and meeting high school curriculum requirements. Keeping the Hathaway requires continuous enrollment plus a certain GPA based on tier, and completion based on enrollment status. For information on the Hathaway scholarship and how to maintain eligibility, please see the *Hathaway Scholarship* video.

Other scholarships, whether institutional, Foundation, or third party will all have different criteria. Most scholarships require at least a 2.0 GPA, but some may require as high as 3.5 or 3.75. Some require a set number or percentage of credits to be completed each semester or year and some will limit the total amount of time the student can receive the scholarship or require applying again. It is your responsibility to understand the requirements of each and maintain eligibility for all your aid.

You can see how successful completion is really important, and how withdrawing from even one class can impact your aid. The good thing is, EWC offers many free resources to help you be successful and keep your aid, including advising, tutoring, study groups, and online help. Contact the Center for Tutoring and Learning at 307.532.8378 for information.

It is important to realize that your job is to be a successful student. You can get “paid” for that job via the various forms of aid available, but if you don’t show up for your scheduled hours or perform your work satisfactorily, you risk losing funding.

For more information on aid eligibility criteria, please see EWC’s Catalog or visit our website at [ewc.wy.edu](http://ewc.wy.edu). If you have questions, please contact us at 307.532.8224 or e-mail us at [financialaid@ewc.wy.edu](mailto:financialaid@ewc.wy.edu).