

SEC. 484. [20 U.S.C. 1091] STUDENT ELIGIBILITY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In order to receive any grant, loan, or work assistance under this title, a student must—

(1) be enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a degree, certificate, or other program (including a program of study abroad approved for credit by the eligible institution at which such student is enrolled) leading to a recognized educational credential at an institution of higher education that is an eligible institution in accordance with the provisions of section 487, except as provided in subsections (b)(3) and (b)(4), and not be enrolled in an elementary or secondary school;

(2) if the student is presently enrolled at an institution, be maintaining satisfactory progress in the course of study the student is pursuing in accordance with the provisions of subsection (c);

(3) not owe a refund on grants previously received at any institution under this title, or be in default on any loan from a student loan fund at any institution provided for in part E, or a loan made, insured, or guaranteed by the Secretary under this title for attendance at any institution;

(4) file with the Secretary, as part of the original financial aid application process, a certification, which need not be notarized, but which shall include—

(A) a statement of educational purpose stating that the money attributable to such grant, loan, or loan guarantee will be used solely for expenses related to attendance or continued attendance at such institution; and

(B) such student's social security number;

(5) be a citizen or national of the United States, a permanent resident of the United States, or able to provide evidence from the Immigration and Naturalization Service that he or she is in the United States for other than a temporary purpose with the intention of becoming a citizen or permanent resident; and

(6) if the student has been convicted of, or has pled nolo contendere or guilty to, a crime involving fraud in obtaining funds under this title, have completed the repayment of such funds to the Secretary, or to the holder in the case of a loan under this title obtained by fraud.

(b) ELIGIBILITY FOR STUDENT LOANS.—(1) In order to be eligible to receive any loan under this title (other than a loan under section 428B or 428C, or under section 428H pursuant to an exercise of discretion under section 479A) for any period of enrollment, a student who is not a graduate or professional student (as defined in regulations of the Secretary), and who is enrolled in a program at an institution which has a participation agreement with the Secretary to make awards under subpart 1 of part A of this title, shall—

(A) (i) have received a determination of eligibility or ineligibility for a Pell Grant under such subpart 1 for such period of enrollment; and (ii) if determined to be eligible, have filed an application for a Pell Grant for such enrollment period; or

(B) have (A) filed an application with the Pell Grant processor for such institution for such enrollment period, and (B) received from the financial aid administrator of the institution a preliminary determination of the student's eligibility or ineligibility for a grant under such subpart 1.

(2) In order to be eligible to receive any loan under section 428A for any period of enrollment, a student shall—

(A) have received a determination of need for a loan under section 428(a)(2)(B) of this title;

(B) if determined to have need for a loan under section 428, have applied for such a loan; and

(C) has applied for a loan under section 428H, if such student is eligible to apply for such a loan.

(3) A student who—

(A) is carrying at least one-half the normal full-time work load for the course of study that the student is pursuing, as determined by an eligible institution, and

(B) is enrolled in a course of study necessary for enrollment in a program leading to a degree or certificate, shall be, notwithstanding paragraph (1) of subsection (a), eligible to apply for loans under part B or D of this title. The eligibility described in this paragraph shall be restricted to one 12-month period.

(4) A student who—

(A) is carrying at least one-half the normal full-time work load for the course of study the student is pursuing, as determined by the institution, and

(B) is enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a program at an eligible institution necessary for a professional credential or certification from a State that is required for employment as a teacher in an elementary or secondary school in that State, shall be, notwithstanding paragraph (1) of subsection (a), eligible to apply for loans under part B, D, or E or work-study assistance under part C of this title.

(5) Notwithstanding any other provision of this subsection, no incarcerated student is eligible to receive a loan under this title.

(c) SATISFACTORY PROGRESS.—(1) For the purpose of subsection (a)(2), a student is maintaining satisfactory progress if—

(A) the institution at which the student is in attendance, reviews the progress of the student at the end of each academic year, or its equivalent, as determined by the institution, and

(B) the student has a cumulative C average, or its equivalent or academic standing consistent with the requirements for graduation, as determined by the institution, at the end of the second such academic year.

(2) Whenever a student fails to meet the eligibility requirements of subsection (a)(2) as a result of the application of this subsection and subsequent to that failure the student has academic standing consistent with the requirements for graduation, as determined by the institution, for any grading period, the student may, subject to this subsection, again be eligible under subsection (a)(2) for a grant, loan, or work assistance under this title.

(3) Any institution of higher education at which the student is in attendance may waive the provisions of paragraph (1) or paragraph (2) of this subsection for undue hardship based on—

(A) the death of a relative of the student,

- (B) the personal injury or illness of the student, or
- (C) special circumstances as determined by the institution.

(d)¹ STUDENTS WHO ARE NOT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES.—(1) STUDENT ELIGIBILITY.—In order for a student who does not have a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such certificate, to be eligible for any assistance under subparts 1, 3, and 4 of part A and parts B, C, D, and E of this title, the student shall meet the requirements of one of the following subparagraphs:

(A) The student is enrolled in an eligible career pathway program and meets one of the following standards:

(i) The student shall take an independently administered examination and shall achieve a score, specified by the Secretary, demonstrating that such student can benefit from the education or training being offered. Such examination shall be approved by the Secretary on the basis of compliance with such standards for development, administration, and scoring as the Secretary may prescribe in regulations.

(ii) The student shall be determined as having the ability to benefit from the education or training in accordance with such process as the State shall prescribe. Any such process described or approved by a State for the purposes of this section shall be effective 6 months after the date of submission to the Secretary unless the Secretary disapproves such process. In determining whether to approve or disapprove such process, the Secretary shall take into account the effectiveness of such process in enabling students without secondary school diplomas or the equivalent thereof to benefit from the instruction offered by institutions utilizing such process, and shall also take into account the cultural diversity, economic circumstances, and educational preparation of the populations served by the institutions.

(iii) The student shall be determined by the institution of higher education as having the ability to benefit from the education or training offered by the institution of higher education upon satisfactory completion of 6 credit hours or the equivalent coursework that are applicable toward a degree or certificate offered by the institution of higher education.

(B) The student has completed a secondary school education in a home school setting that is treated as a home school or private school under State law.

(2) ELIGIBLE CAREER PATHWAY PROGRAM.—In this subsection, the term ‘eligible career pathway program’ means a program that—

(A) concurrently enrolls participants in connected adult education and eligible postsecondary programs;

(B) provides counseling and supportive services to identify and attain academic and career goals;

(C) provides structured course sequences that—

(i) are articulated and contextualized; and

(ii) allow students to advance to higher levels of education and employment;

(D) provides opportunities for acceleration to attain recognized postsecondary credentials, including degrees, industry relevant certifications, and certificates of completion of apprenticeship programs;

(E) is organized to meet the needs of adults;

(F) is aligned with the education and skill needs of the regional economy; and

(G) has been developed and implemented in collaboration with partners in business, workforce development, and economic development.

(e) CERTIFICATION FOR GSL ELIGIBILITY.—Each eligible institution may certify student eligibility for a loan by an eligible lender under part B of this title prior to completing the review for accuracy of the information submitted by the applicant required by regulations issued under this title, if—

(1) checks for the loans are mailed to the eligible institution prior to disbursements;

(2) the disbursement is not made until the review is complete; and

(3) the eligible institution has no evidence or documentation on which the institution may base a determination that the information submitted by the applicant is incorrect.

¹ This subsection was amended by section 309(ca) of division G of Public Law-113-235, and applies to “students who are enrolled or who first enroll in an eligible program of study on or after July 1, 2014”. The subsection that is applicable to “students who first enrolled in a program of study on or after July 1, 2012². and prior to July 1, 2014 reads as follows:

(d) **STUDENTS WHO ARE NOT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES.**—In order for a student who does not have a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such certificate, to be eligible for any assistance under subparts 1, 3, and 4 of part A and parts B, C, D, and E of this title, the student shall have completed a secondary school education in a home school setting that is treated as a home school or private school under State law.

The subsection that is applicable to students who first enrolled prior to July 1, 2012, reads as follows:

(d) **STUDENTS WHO ARE NOT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES.**—In order for a student who does not have a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such certificate, to be eligible for any assistance under subparts 1, 3, and 4 of part A and parts B, C, D, and E of this title, the student shall meet one of the following standards:

(1) The student shall take an independently administered examination and shall achieve a score, specified by the Secretary, demonstrating that such student can benefit from the education or training being offered. Such examination shall be approved by the Secretary on the basis of compliance with such standards for development, administration, and scoring as the Secretary may prescribe in regulations.

(2) The student shall be determined as having the ability to benefit from the education or training in accordance with such process as the State shall prescribe. Any such process described or approved by a State for the purposes of this section shall be effective 6 months after the date of submission to the Secretary unless the Secretary disapproves such process. In determining whether to approve or disapprove such process, the Secretary shall take into account the effectiveness of such process in enabling students without high school diplomas or the equivalent thereof to benefit from the instruction offered by institutions utilizing such process, and shall also take into account the cultural diversity, economic circumstances, and educational preparation of the populations served by the institutions.

(3) The student has completed a secondary school education in a home school setting that is treated as a home school or private school under State law.

(4) The student shall be determined by the institution of higher education as having the ability to benefit from the education or training offered by the institution of higher education upon satisfactory completion of six credit hours or the equivalent coursework that are applicable toward a degree or certificate offered by the institution of higher education.

(f) LOSS OF ELIGIBILITY FOR VIOLATION OF LOAN LIMITS.—(1) No student shall be eligible to receive any grant, loan, or work assistance under this title if the eligible institution determines that the student fraudulently borrowed in violation of the annual loan limits under part B, part D, or part E of this title in the same academic year, or if the student fraudulently borrowed in excess of the aggregate maximum loan limits under such part B, part D, or part E.

(2) If the institution determines that the student inadvertently borrowed amounts in excess of such annual or aggregate maximum loan limits, such institution shall allow the student to repay any amount borrowed in excess of such limits prior to certifying the student's eligibility for further assistance under this title.

(g) VERIFICATION OF IMMIGRATION STATUS.—

(1) **IN GENERAL.—**The Secretary shall implement a system under which the statements and supporting documentation, if required, of an individual declaring that such individual is in compliance with the requirements of subsection (a)(5) shall be verified prior to the individual's receipt of a grant, loan, or work assistance under this title.

(2) **SPECIAL RULE.—**The documents collected and maintained by an eligible institution in the admission of a student to the institution may be used by the student in lieu of the documents used to establish both employment authorization and identity under section 274A(b)(1)(B) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1324a) to verify eligibility to participate in work-study programs under part C of this title.

(3) **VERIFICATION MECHANISMS.—**The Secretary is authorized to verify such statements and supporting documentation through a data match, using an automated or other system, with other Federal agencies that may be in possession of information relevant to such statements and supporting documentation.

(4) **REVIEW.—**In the case of such an individual who is not a citizen or national of the United States, if the statement described in paragraph (1) is submitted but the documentation required under paragraph (2) is not presented or if the documentation required under paragraph (2)(A) is presented but such documentation is not verified under paragraph (3)—

(A) the institution—

(i) shall provide a reasonable opportunity to submit to the institution evidence indicating a satisfactory immigration status, and

(ii) may not delay, deny, reduce, or terminate the individual's eligibility for the grant, loan, or work assistance on the basis of the individual's immigration status until such a reasonable opportunity has been provided; and

(B) if there are submitted documents which the institution determines constitute reasonable evidence indicating such status—

(i) the institution shall transmit to the Immigration and Naturalization Service either photostatic or other similar copies of such documents, or information from such documents, as specified by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, for official verification,

(ii) pending such verification, the institution may not delay, deny, reduce, or terminate the individual's eligibility for the grant, loan, or work assistance on the basis of the individual's immigration status, and

(iii) the institution shall not be liable for the consequences of any action, delay, or failure of the Service to conduct such verification.

(h) LIMITATIONS OF ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS AGAINST INSTITUTIONS.—The Secretary shall not take any compliance, disallowance, penalty, or other regulatory action against an institution of higher education with respect to any error in the institution's determination to make a student eligible for a grant, loan, or work assistance based on citizenship or immigration status—

(1) if the institution has provided such eligibility based on a verification of satisfactory immigration status by the Immigration and Naturalization Service,

(2) because the institution, under subsection (g)(4)(A)(i), was required to provide a reasonable opportunity to submit documentation, or

(3) because the institution, under subsection (g)(4)(B)(i), was required to wait for the response of the Immigration and Naturalization Service to the institution's request for official verification of the immigration status of the student.

(i) VALIDITY OF LOAN GUARANTEES FOR LOAN PAYMENTS MADE BEFORE IMMIGRATION STATUS VERIFICATION COMPLETED.—Notwithstanding subsection (h), if—

(1) a guaranty is made under this title for a loan made with respect to an individual,

(2) at the time the guaranty is entered into, the provisions of subsection (h) had been complied with,

(3) amounts are paid under the loan subject to such guaranty, and

(4) there is a subsequent determination that, because of an unsatisfactory immigration status, the individual is not eligible for the loan,

the official of the institution making the determination shall notify and instruct the entity making the loan to cease further payments under the loan, but such guaranty shall not be voided or otherwise nullified with respect to such payments made before the date the entity receives the notice.

(k)¹ SPECIAL RULE FOR CORRESPONDENCE COURSES.—A student shall not be eligible to receive grant, loan, or work assistance under this title for a correspondence course unless such course is part of a program leading to an associate, bachelor or graduate degree.

(l) COURSES OFFERED THROUGH DISTANCE EDUCATION.—

(1) RELATION TO CORRESPONDENCE COURSES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—A student enrolled in a course of instruction at an institution of higher education that is offered principally through distance education and leads to a recognized certificate, or recognized associate, recognized

¹ So in law. Subection (j) was repealed by section 485(a)(4) of Public Law 110–315.

baccalaureate, or recognized graduate degree, conferred by such institution, shall not be considered to be enrolled in correspondence courses.

(B) EXCEPTION.—An institution of higher education referred to in subparagraph (A) shall not include an institution or school described in section 3(3)(C) of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006.

(2) REDUCTIONS OF FINANCIAL AID.—A student's eligibility to receive grants, loans, or work assistance under this title shall be reduced if a financial aid officer determines under the discretionary authority provided in section 479A that distance education results in a substantially reduced cost of attendance to such student.

(3) SPECIAL RULE.—For award years beginning prior to July 1, 2008, the Secretary shall not take any compliance, disallowance, penalty, or other action based on a violation of this subsection against a student or an eligible institution when such action arises out of such institution's prior award of student assistance under this title if the institution demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Secretary that its course of instruction would have been in conformance with the requirements of this subsection.

(m) STUDENTS WITH A FIRST BACCALAUREATE OR PROFESSIONAL DEGREE.—A student shall not be ineligible for assistance under parts B, C, D, and E of this title because such student has previously received a baccalaureate or professional degree.

(n) DATA BASE MATCHING.—To enforce the Selective Service registration provisions of section 12(f) of the Military Selective Service Act (50 U.S.C. App. 462(f)), the Secretary shall conduct data base matches with the Selective Service, using common demographic data elements. Appropriate confirmation, through an application output document or through other means, of any person's registration shall fulfill the requirement to file a separate statement of compliance. In the absence of a confirmation from such data matches, an institution may also use data or documents that support either the student's registration, or the absence of a registration requirement for the student, to fulfill the requirement to file a separate statement of compliance. The mechanism for reporting the resolution of nonconfirmed matches shall be prescribed by the Secretary in regulations.

(o) STUDY ABROAD.—Nothing in this Act shall be construed to limit or otherwise prohibit access to study abroad programs approved by the home institution at which a student is enrolled. An otherwise eligible student who is engaged in a program of study abroad approved for academic credit by the home institution at which the student is enrolled shall be eligible to receive grant, loan, or work assistance under this title, without regard to whether such study abroad program is required as part of the student's degree program.

(p) VERIFICATION OF SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER.—The Secretary of Education, in cooperation with the Commissioner of the Social Security Administration, shall verify any social security number provided by a student to an eligible institution under subsection (a)(4) and shall enforce the following conditions:

(1) Except as provided in paragraphs (2) and (3), an institution shall not deny, reduce, delay, or terminate a student's eligibility for assistance under this part because social security number verification is pending.

(2) If there is a determination by the Secretary that the social security number provided to an eligible institution by a student is incorrect, the institution shall deny or terminate the student's eligibility for any grant, loan, or work assistance under this title until such time as the student provides documented evidence of a social security number that is determined by the institution to be correct.

(3) If there is a determination by the Secretary that the social security number provided to an eligible institution by a student is incorrect, and a correct social security number cannot be provided by such student, and a loan has been guaranteed for such student under part B of this title, the institution shall notify and instruct the lender and guaranty agency making and guaranteeing the loan, respectively, to cease further disbursements of the loan, but such guaranty shall not be voided or otherwise nullified with respect to such disbursements made before the date that the lender and the guaranty agency receives such notice.

(4) Nothing in this subsection shall permit the Secretary to take any compliance, disallowance, penalty, or other regulatory action against—

(A) any institution of higher education with respect to any error in a social security number, unless such error was a result of fraud on the part of the institution; or

(B) any student with respect to any error in a social security number, unless such error was a result of fraud on the part of the student.

(q) USE OF INCOME DATA.—

(1) MATCHING WITH IRS.—The Secretary, in cooperation with the Secretary of the Treasury, is authorized to obtain from the Internal Revenue Service such information reported on Federal income tax returns by applicants, or by any other person whose financial information is required to be provided on the Federal student financial aid application, as the Secretary determines is necessary for the purpose of—

(A) repopulating the Federal student financial aid application described in section 483; or

(B) verifying the information reported on such student financial aid applications.

(2) CONSENT.—The Secretary may require that applicants for financial assistance under this title provide a consent to the disclosure of the data described in paragraph (1) as a condition of the student receiving assistance under this title. The parents of an applicant, in the case of a dependent student, or the spouse of an applicant, in the case of an applicant who is married but files separately, may also be required to provide consent as a condition of the student receiving assistance under this title.

(r) SUSPENSION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR DRUG-RELATED OFFENSES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—A student who is convicted of any offense under any Federal or State law involving the possession or sale of a controlled substance for conduct that occurred during a period of enrollment for which the student was receiving

any grant, loan, or work assistance under this title shall not be eligible to receive any grant, loan, or work assistance under this title from the date of that conviction for the period of time specified in the following table:

If convicted of an offense involving:	
The possession of a controlled substance:	Ineligibility period is:
First offense	1 year
Second offense	2 years
Third offense	Indefinite.
The sale of a controlled substance:	Ineligibility period is:
First offense	2 years
Second offense	Indefinite.

(2) **REHABILITATION.**—A student whose eligibility has been suspended under paragraph (1) may resume eligibility before the end of the ineligibility period determined under such paragraph if—

(A) the student satisfactorily completes a drug rehabilitation program that—

- (i) complies with such criteria as the Secretary shall prescribe in regulations for purposes of this paragraph; and
- (ii) includes two unannounced drug tests;

(B) the student successfully passes two unannounced drug tests conducted by a drug rehabilitation program that complies with such criteria as the Secretary shall prescribe in regulations for purposes of subparagraph (A)(i); or

(C) the conviction is reversed, set aside, or otherwise rendered nugatory.

(3) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this subsection, the term “controlled substance” has the meaning given the term in section 102(6) of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 802(6)).

(s) **STUDENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES.**—

(1) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this subsection the terms “comprehensive transition and postsecondary program for students with intellectual disabilities” and “student with an intellectual disability” have the meanings given the terms in section 760.

(2) **REQUIREMENTS.**—Notwithstanding subsections (a), (c), and (d), in order to receive any grant or work assistance under section 401, subpart 3 of part A, or part C, a student with an intellectual disability shall—

(A) be enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a comprehensive transition and postsecondary program for students with intellectual disabilities at an institution of higher education;

(B) be maintaining satisfactory progress in the program as determined by the institution, in accordance with standards established by the institution; and

(C) meet the requirements of paragraphs (3), (4), (5), and (6) of subsection (a).

(3) **AUTHORITY.**—Notwithstanding any other provision of law unless such provision is enacted with specific reference to this section, the Secretary is authorized to waive any statutory provision applicable to the student financial assistance programs under section 401, subpart 3 of part A, or part C (other than a provision of part F related to such a program), or any institutional eligibility provisions of this title, as the Secretary determines necessary to ensure that programs enrolling students with intellectual disabilities otherwise determined to be eligible under this subsection may receive such financial assistance.

(4) **REGULATIONS.**—Notwithstanding regulations applicable to grant or work assistance awards made under section 401, subpart 3 of part A, and part C (other than a regulation under part F related to such an award), including with respect to eligible programs, instructional time, credit status, and enrollment status as described in section 481, the Secretary shall promulgate regulations allowing programs enrolling students with intellectual disabilities otherwise determined to be eligible under this subsection to receive such awards.

(t) **DATA ANALYSIS ON ACCESS TO FEDERAL STUDENT AID FOR CERTAIN POPULATIONS.**—

(1) **DEVELOPMENT OF THE SYSTEM.**—Within one year of enactment of the Higher Education Opportunity Act, the Secretary shall analyze data from the FAFSA containing information regarding the number, characteristics, and circumstances of students denied Federal student aid based on a drug conviction while receiving Federal aid.

(2) **RESULTS FROM ANALYSIS.**—The results from the analysis of such information shall be made available on a continuous basis via the Department website and the Digest of Education Statistics.

(3) **DATA UPDATING.**—The data analyzed under this subsection shall be updated at the beginning of each award year and at least one additional time during such award year.

(4) **REPORT TO CONGRESS.**—The Secretary shall prepare and submit to the authorizing committees, in each fiscal year, a report describing the results obtained by the establishment and operation of the data system authorized by this subsection.