

**Covid-19's Impact on Spring 2020
and Scholarship and Financial Aid
Renewal Criteria for Academic Year 2020-2021**

(April 13, 2020)

In light of the optional modifications of Wofford's grading system for the spring 2020 semester, the following updates/changes have been made to reflect what the Office of Financial Aid currently understands and will implement at the conclusion of the spring semester. Text in red indicates the new criteria based on the optional grading system for the spring.

Because renewal requirements vary among sources, we have outlined each one specifically in this document.

As always, should you have any questions or concerns, contact us at finaid@wofford.edu or 864-597-4160.

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Federal Aid

Federal aid requires a student to meet Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to renew aid. Wofford College's SAP policy can be found on page 10 of the Financial Aid Handbook. Below is a summary and how pass/fail credits will be counted.

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) consists of both a Qualitative Component and Quantitative Component which assesses a student's advancement toward graduation.

Qualitative Component

Wofford College requires a minimum 2.00 GPA for Satisfactory Academic Progress. Satisfactory progress requires that a student's academic record remain above the level for Academic Exclusion found at www.wofford.edu/registrar/printCatalog.aspx. Exceptions to the exclusion granted through the appeal process to the Registrar will not automatically reinstate financial aid eligibility until the student has re-established SAP.

Quantitative Component

Wofford College requires that a student must earn 67% of the hours attempted each academic year. Attempted hours are the hours a student is "locked" into after the drop/add date each term. Earned hours are the hours a student "earns" at the end of a semester and/or academic year. Any course from which a student withdraws, repeats or receives an incomplete is counted toward the total credit hours attempted. Transfer credits that the Wofford College Registrar approves are counted toward the student's attempted and earned hours. If a student changes a major, those courses taken under the previous major are counted toward the total credit hours attempted.

For the Qualitative Component, the 2.00 GPA will stand regardless if a student chooses graded (A-F grade) versus Credit (CR), Credit with D (CRD) and No Credit (NC) grading option that will be available for spring 2020. Please keep in mind that CR or CRD is not calculated into the GPA as it does not have quality points related to it. Therefore, a student must be mindful of the GPA one had at the end of the fall 2019 semester and/or Interim if choosing a grade with CR and CRD.

For the Quantitative Component, earned grades include all A, B, C and D as well as CR and CRD. A student must earn 67% of all courses attempted.

For anyone who does not meet SAP at the end of the spring 2020 semester, summer school at Wofford College is recommended.

State Merit Aid (Palmetto Fellows and LIFE Scholarships)

Original renewal criteria for state scholarships may be found on pages 15-17 of the Financial Aid Handbook.

Per Memorandum issued by Dr. Karen Woodfaulk, director of the Division of Student Affairs at the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education on March 25, 2020:

If the institution determines that the only Pass/Fail grades will be used in determining a student's performance in a course, and those Pass/Fail designations do not carry a grade with quality points, then they cannot be used in the GPA calculation for the scholarships.

Moving to Pass/Fail for spring 2020 would place students in a situation where they would not impact their GPA for spring 2020.

The determination by an institution to move to Pass/Fail grading for spring 2020 would impact students who entered the term with below a 3.0 GPA by possibly placing them in a situation where summer school is necessary. As stated above, assuming that Pass/Fail coursework is not included in the GPA calculation for scholarship eligibility, then students would not increase or decrease their GPA based on spring 2020 performance. This will allow some students the opportunity to essentially be eligible for the 2020-21 academic year based on fall 2019 academic performance, but it also may cause students to fall out of eligibility for the 2020-21 academic year based on their fall 2019 academic performance. In these cases, the student may have summer school as an opportunity to increase their GPA.

Please note: Wofford has options for graded courses during Interim. If a student was enrolled in a graded Interim course and received an A-F, that grade also will be calculated into the LIFE GPA. Also, any coursework taken during summer and/or high school at another institution also is used in the LIFE GPA calculation.

Students with a LIFE Scholarship can go to myWofford > Student Section > My Scholarships & Financial Aid box > *Click on* My SC LIFE Scholarship to view the status of your LIFE GPA.

Institutional Aid (Scholars and other merit scholarships)

Original Criteria may be found on page 8 of the Financial Aid Handbook.

Scholarship Amount	Cumulative GPA	Annual Hours
\$20,000 or more	3.0	24
\$19,999 or less	2.75	24

If a student opts in to the Credit (CR), Credit with D (CRD) or No Credit (NC) grading system for spring 2020, keep in mind that this option does not calculate into the GPA. Therefore, a student's GPA will be as-is from Interim 2020. If the above requirements were not met as of the last graded term, the student has the option to attend summer school.

Appeals

Federal/SAP appeals stand per Financial Aid Handbook page 10.

State Merit Aid Appeals (i.e. SC LIFE, SC Palmetto Fellows) must be made through the S.C. Commission on Higher Education at <https://www.che.sc.gov/Students,FamiliesMilitary/StudentAppeals.aspx>.

S.C. Tuition Grant Appeals must be made through the SC Tuition Grants Commission. Please note: This is separate from SC LIFE and SC Palmetto Fellows. <https://sctuitiongrants.org/documents/>

Institutional aid may be appealed at the end of the spring 2020 semester if renewal requirements are not met. Please send an email to finaid@wofford.edu. We ask students to send a letter explaining their circumstances and the reason they did not meet the renewal criteria and what their plan is to improve next year.

FERPA Question and Answers

From the Financial Aid Handbook, page 4.

Wofford College complies with the amended Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (commonly referred to as the “Buckley Amendment” or “FERPA”). FERPA is designed to protect the confidentiality of records that educational institutions maintain on their students and to give students the right to access those records to assure the accuracy of their contents. Generally, FERPA requires that written consent from the student be received before personally identifiable information about the student is released. Institutions may release, without written consent, those items specified as public or directory information during a health or safety emergency.

For purposes of FERPA’s health or safety emergency exception, the determination by an educational agency or institution that there is a specific emergency is not based on a generalized or distant threat of a possible or eventual emergency for which the likelihood of occurrence is unknown, such as would be addressed in general emergency preparedness activities. If local public health authorities determine that a public health emergency, such as COVID-19, is a significant threat to students or other individuals in the community, an educational agency or institution in that community may determine that an emergency exists as well. **Under the FERPA health or safety emergency exception, an educational agency or institution is responsible for making a determination, on a case-by-case basis, whether to disclose PII from education records, and it may take into account the totality of the circumstances pertaining to the threat.**

To read more about your rights under FERPA, go to <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/resources/ferpa-and-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>.

Taking a Gap Year or semester

Students interested in taking a Gap year, may do so; however, it will affect their aid in the following ways.

Returning Students with Federal Loans (Subsidized, Unsubsidized, PLUS)

Once a student falls below half-time (6 hours), the student's 6-month grace period of repayment begins. Therefore, if a student takes a full gap year and does not enroll anywhere at least half time, it is likely they will begin repaying their student loans before the next academic year begins. Failure to make payments, will put the student in default.

Returning Students with State Aid (SC LIFE, SC Palmetto Fellows)

As of now, the continued eligibility requirements have not changed. To be eligible for the fall 2021 term, the student needs to be eligible at the end of the spring 2021 term for the next year. Students utilizing the break in enrollment for fall 2020, will still need to meet the continuing eligibility requirements for scholarships. Scholarship continuing eligibility requirements (PFS: 30 earned credit hours and an institutional 3.0 GPA; and LIFE: 3.0 LIFE GPA and an average of 30 earned credit hours) are assessed at the end of the Spring term. Students can attend Summer term(s) to meet the continued eligibility requirements and regain eligibility for fall 2021; however, they will not be able to use a term of their scholarship for Summer 2021 because they did not meet the continuing eligibility requirements at the end of Spring 2021.

NEW/Incoming Students with Palmetto Fellows Scholarship

Students who were eligible for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship entering the Fall 2020 term can utilize a GAP year for the 2020-2021 academic year. Students must re-enroll for the Fall 2021 term. Eligible students can continue to receive the scholarship for eight semesters upon their re-enrollment in Fall 2021.

NEW/Incoming Students with LIFE Scholarship

Students who were eligible for the LIFE Scholarship entering the Fall 2020 term can defer enrollment as long as they are not enrolled at any institution of higher education. As soon as a student enrolls in a higher education institution, their LIFE "clock" begins. The student's eight semesters of eligibility will begin at this time.

A STUDENT CANNOT ATTEMPT/EARN ANY COLLEGE CREDITS DURING THE GAP PERIOD.

SC Tuition Grant

If a student elects to defer enrollment for Fall 2020, they must submit an appeal to the SC Tuition Grants Commission for a spring-only grant by November 15, 2020. The link to the appeal may be found here:

https://sctuitiongrants.org/wp-content/uploads/S-FORM-Appeal_Request.pdf

Institutional Aid

A student may receive institutional aid for a total of 4 years or 8 semesters. If a student chooses to take a gap year/semester, then the student needs to notify the Office of Financial Aid at the time that the gap period begins and then again when the student returns to campus. The same amount originally offered will be awarded. If a student enrolls or takes coursework elsewhere, institutional aid may be reevaluated.