

Federal Return to Title IV Policy

Federal regulations require Title IV financial aid funds to be awarded under the assumption that a student will attend the institution for the entire period in which federal assistance was awarded. When a federal financial aid recipient withdraws from all courses or receives no credit for attempted courses (e.g. all F or W grades, excluding arranged incompletes) in a given semester for any reason, he/she may no longer be eligible for the full amount of Title IV funds that he/she was originally scheduled to receive. The return of funds is based upon the premise that students earn their financial aid in proportion to the amount of time in which they are enrolled. A pro-rated schedule is used to determine the amount of federal student aid funds he/she will have earned at the time of the withdrawal. Once 60% of the semester is completed, a student is considered to have earned all of his/her financial aid and will not be required to return any funds.

Federal law requires that USF calculate how much federal aid is earned and return unearned funds in all of the following cases:

Official Withdrawals:

- Student completes a Petition to Withdraw form
- Student completes a Leave of Absence form
- Student otherwise reports in writing that they are withdrawing from all classes in a given semester

Unofficial Withdrawals:

- Student reports in person or via phone to any USF employee that they plan to withdraw from all classes or withdraw from USF entirely
- Student stops attending class before completing the semester but does not report that they intend to withdraw and receives all 'F' or 'W' grades or a combination of both in a given semester

The withdrawal date that is used to calculate the pro-rated return amount is determined by the date that the student informed a USF employee that they planned to withdraw, or the date reported on an official Withdrawal or Leave of Absence Form, whichever is earlier.

If a student ceases attendance without reporting their official withdrawal date, the Financial Aid Office will use the mid-point of the semester as the withdrawal date and return 50% of all Federal Financial Aid for that semester. If a student is able to provide documentation of academic participation (exams or assignments submitted or written communication with instructor) past the mid-point of the semester, he/she may retroactively appeal this decision within 30 days from the date on their Return to Title IV notice. Returned aid will be recalculated and any further earned aid will be reinstated to the student's account. If academic participation is documented after 60% of the semester had been completed, all federal aid for the semester will be reinstated.

Federal regulations require that the amount of unearned Federal financial aid be calculated by measuring the number of days the student completed against the number of days in the term in which the student withdraws, that the University's Student Accounts office return the unearned aid they accepted in payment of charges, and that the University notify the student of his/her responsibility for returning unearned aid he or she received as a refund after all charges had been paid.

If aid funds must be returned to the Title IV aid programs, funds received by the Student Accounts office and by the student, if any, will be returned in the following order as long as there is any amount to be returned:

- Unsubsidized William D. Ford Federal Direct Stafford Loan
- Subsidized William D. Ford Federal Direct Stafford Loan
- Federal Perkins Loan
- Federal Direct Parent or Graduate PLUS Loan
- Federal Pell Grant
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG)
- Federal TEACH Grant
- Other assistance programs authorized by Title IV of the Higher Education Assistance Act

Please refer to the USF Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) policy to determine how a withdrawal will impact future financial aid eligibility.

Examples of repayment calculations are available.