

## Course Program of Study Frequently Asked Questions

U.S. Department of Education rules stipulate that colleges may only use the courses that are required for degree completion to determine a student's eligibility for federal financial aid programs. Federal financial aid programs include grants, work-study, and loans; they do not include programs such as the HOPE or Zell Miller scholarships.

Before registering for courses, all Georgia College students must complete an acknowledgement documenting their understanding of this rule.

### ***What are the course program of study requirements?***

Only courses that are required for degree completion may be used to determine a student's eligibility for federal financial aid programs.

### ***Who do these rules apply to?***

These rules apply to any graduate or undergraduate student who is receiving federal financial aid. This includes students receiving federal grants, federal work-study, and federal loans (Stafford and PLUS loans).

### ***Do I need to complete the acknowledgement even if I don't receive federal financial aid?***

Yes. Because student funding circumstances can change and applications received after the semester begins are processed, we are requiring every student to acknowledge this rule and how it may affect their future course choices.

### ***What am I agreeing to when I submit the acknowledgement form?***

You are acknowledging that you understand that you may not receive federal financial aid, if applicable, for courses that are not necessary for your degree.

### ***How do I know if a course will apply to my degree program?***

Review your DegreeWorks audit, which you can access directly from the main Unify screen.

If a course you have registered for is being applied to your core, major, required concentration (applicable for majors in Art, English, Liberal Studies, World Languages & Cultures, Middle Grades Education, or Exercise Science), legislative requirements, or total hours required your degree, it is being applied to your degree program and you may use federal financial aid to pay for that course. For example, if a freshman registered for 15 hours of courses which are all being applied to her core curriculum, her federal aid eligibility would be based on all 15 semester hours. However, if a senior needed to take 9 hours of coursework to complete his major and degree requirements and also wants to take a 3 hour class that is not needed for his core, major, required concentration, legislative requirements, or total hours for his degree, his federal aid eligibility would be based on 9, not 12, semester hours.

Federal financial aid will not pay for minor coursework, certificate coursework, or optional concentrations unless that coursework is also necessary to complete the required number of hours for a degree and . This includes both upper-level hour requirements and total hour requirements. This particular determination is based not only on the courses you have taken and are taking now, but also on the courses you will take to complete your requirements. For example, if a student is taking a 3000-level course that is not required for their major or required concentration and that course is currently placed in the 3000-4000 level course requirement of their Degreeworks audit, but by the time they complete all of their required major courses they will fulfill the upper-level hours requirement without this course, that 3000-level course will not qualify for federal aid.

### ***What if I want to take a course that is not required for my degree?***

You may still do so; however, you will not receive federal financial aid for that course. This could result in less or no aid compared to previous terms in which you received aid.

If you plan to take a course that is not required for your degree, please notify the Financial Aid Office ([financialaid@gcsu.edu](mailto:financialaid@gcsu.edu)) as soon as you enroll so they can

update your aid eligibility and help you understand how this choice will affect your aid package.

***What if I make a mistake and register for a course that does not meet requirements?***

After registration, the Financial Aid Office will begin reviewing enrollments and will let you know if a course for which you registered cannot be used to determine your aid eligibility. You will have time to drop that course before the semester begins and add another in its place. However, it is ultimately your responsibility to insure you are enrolled in the total number of hours in your degree required for the federal aid program funds you are receiving.

***What if I change my major after the semester starts? Will I have to return my federal financial aid?***

No. As long as courses are being applied to your degree program when your federal aid is disbursed to your student account, you will be in compliance with this rule. Applications received and awarded after the semester begins will be verified by the Financial Aid Office prior to making late disbursements (refunds) to your student account.

***I am receiving funds from several types of federal aid programs. How many hours are required for each program?***

All federal aid programs require students to be enrolled at least half-time which is 6 or more hours for undergraduate students and 5 or more for graduate students.

The only exception is for Pell Grant recipients. Typically, your Pell Grant disbursement will be pro-rated based on the applicable hours enrolled in your degree program. Some recipients not enrolled in an approved program of study course will not qualify for their Pell Grant award. Please contact your Financial Aid Advisor to determine your eligibility.

## Contact Information

Financial Aid Office  
Georgia College  
Parks Hall 103, Campus Box 030  
Milledgeville, GA 31061  
Office: 478-445-5149

Fax: 478-445-0729  
Email: [financialaid@gcsu.edu](mailto:financialaid@gcsu.edu)

Registrar's Office  
Georgia College  
Parks Hall 107, Campus Box 069  
Milledgeville, GA 31061  
Office: 478-445-6286  
Fax: 478-445-1914  
Email: [registrar@gcsu.edu](mailto:registrar@gcsu.edu)

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