

SHSU Financial Aid and Scholarships Policy and Procedure Manual – Course Program of Study (CPOS)

POLICY

Per Title IV regulations, a student cannot receive federal aid for coursework that does not lead to the completion of their degree. This is stated in [CFR 34 668.32 \(a\)\(1\)\(i\)](#) which defines “a regular student as one that is enrolled or accepted for enrollment at an institution for the purpose of obtaining a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential offered by that institution.” In summary, Title IV funds are intended to pay for courses that go towards a student’s program of student to assist them in obtaining an academic credential.

While the burden for this regulation is shared between the Registrar’s and Financial Aid Offices, it is the responsibility of the advisor and the student to be knowledgeable and register for courses counting towards their degree.

For Sam Houston State University, all eligible aid is paid ten calendar days prior to the first class day based on the Federal Hours listed in the Banner system. Federal Hours are those hours that are on the student’s degree plan and counting towards their degree. Should a student receive scholarships and/or state aid, they can receive those funds based on the Standard Hours (actual enrolled hours) which may be greater than the Federal Hours.

Budgets are based on the Federal Hours and are reviewed with the Cost of Attendance adjustments prior to disbursement and immediately after census date, including census dates for Parts of Term. Prior to disbursement, any funds that the student is not eligible for are held until the final evaluation after census date and released if eligibility is confirmed or reduced/cancelled if the student is deemed ineligible.

Ineligibility could be due to one of the following circumstances:

- Change in enrollment between disbursement prior to first class day and census
- Change in course registration, thus change in courses counting for their program of study
- Change in degree program

Should a student drop a course prior to census for the full term or part of term, their budget and aid package must reflect their new enrollment level. If they add a class and that changes their enrollment level to half time, three-quarter-time or full-time, their budget will be adjusted. Due to census at parts of term, any student who changes their schedule will have their Cost of Attendance (Budget) and Course Program of Study re-ran. This could result in a reduction of aid or increased eligibility. However, the student must request the increase (if eligible) in awards from the Financial Aid Office. If the student is Pell eligible, that adjustment will automatically be made as it is an entitlement.

Students who are enrolled in courses that do not count towards their current degree are not eligible for federal aid for those hours. For example, if a student is enrolled in 12 hours and only 9 of those hours count towards their degree program; their budget and awards must be adjusted to the 9 hours counting towards their degree. This would change their enrollment status for federal aid purposes from full-time to three-quarter-time. Adjustments to awards would result in a balance being owed to the university.

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Changes in degree programs must be completed by the advisor and processed by the Registrar's Office by the end of day at census. The same is true for substitution/exemption forms. Any forms not processed and completed by census day are not effective for that term's disbursement. It is strongly suggested that advisors utilize the notes in Degree Works and Campus Connect to document advisement sessions with students and also review prior advisement sessions with the student to ensure the appropriate paperwork is being filed. Should the advisor fail to submit the required paperwork for that semester, they will have to appeal to the Registrar and Financial Aid Office for consideration. If the appeal is not granted, the student will have a balance on their account as a result of incomplete or late paperwork submitted.