

How a withdrawal affects financial aid

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 student withdraws from all courses for any reason, including medical withdrawals, 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 schools to calculate how much federal financial aid a student has earned if that student:

- Completely withdraws, or
- Stops attending before completing the semester, or
- Does not complete all modules (courses which are not scheduled for the entire semester or payment period for which he/she has registered at the time those modules began).

Based on this calculation, Northwest State Community College students who receive federal financial aid and do not complete their classes during a semester or term could be responsible for repaying a portion of the aid they received. Students who do not begin attendance must repay all financial aid disbursed for the term.

How a withdrawal affects academics

The following policies will help you understand that a withdrawal potentially affects students academically as well as financially. We encourage students to read all the information below prior to making a final decision.

- The Northwest State Academic Policy is available in the College Catalog, see Academic Policies and Procedures section.
- The Northwest State tuition refund policy is separate from the federal regulations to repay unearned aid. Whether or not a student receives a tuition refund has no bearing on the amount he/she must repay to the federal aid programs. The tuition refund policy is available in the College Catalog, see Academic Policies and Procedures section.

How the earned financial aid is calculated

Students who receive federal financial aid must “earn” the aid they receive by staying enrolled in classes. The amount of federal financial aid assistance the student earns is on a pro-rated basis. Students who withdraw or do not complete all registered classes during the semester may be required to return some of the financial aid they were awarded.

Institutions are required to determine the percentage of Title IV aid “earned” by the student and to return the unearned portion to the appropriate aid programs. Regulations require schools to perform calculations within 30 days from the date the school determines a student’s complete withdrawal. The school must return the funds within 45 days of the calculation. For example, if a student completes 30% of the payment period, they earn 30% of the aid they were originally scheduled to receive. This means 70% of the scheduled awards remain “unearned” and must be returned to the federal government. 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 federal funds.

The following formula is used to determine the percentage of unearned aid that has to be returned to the federal government:

- The percent earned is equal to the number of calendar days completed up to the withdrawal date, divided by the total calendar days in the payment period (less any scheduled breaks that are at least 5 days long).

- The payment period is the entire semester. However, for students enrolled in modules (courses which are not scheduled for the entire semester or term), the payment period only includes those days for the module(s) in which the student is registered.
- The percent unearned is equal to 100% minus the percent earned.

For students enrolled in modules: A student is considered withdrawn if the student does not complete all of the days in the payment period that the student was scheduled to complete. Northwest State will track enrollment in each module to determine if a student began enrollment in all scheduled courses. If a student officially drops courses in a later module while still attending a current module, the student is not considered as withdrawn based on not attending the later module. However, a recalculation of aid based on a change in enrollment status may still be required.

Steps in the Return of Title IV funds policy

Northwest State Community College will determine:

- A. The total amount of Title IV aid disbursed for the semester in which the student withdrew. A student's Title IV aid is counted as aid disbursed in the calculation if it has been applied to the student's account on or before the date the student withdrew.
- B. The total amount of Title IV aid disbursed plus the Title IV aid that could have been disbursed for the semester in which the student withdrew.
- C. Will calculate the percentage of Title IV aid earned as follows: the number of calendar days completed divided by the total number of calendar days in the semester in which the student withdrew. The total number of calendar days in a semester shall exclude any scheduled breaks of more than 5 days. **Days Attended ÷ Days in Enrollment Period = Percentage Completed**
- D. If the calculated percentage completed exceeds 60%, then the student has "earned" all the Title IV aid for the enrollment period.
- E. Northwest State will calculate the amount of Title IV aid earned as follows: The percentage of Title IV aid earned (Step 2) multiplied by the total amount of Title IV aid disbursed or that could have been disbursed for the term in which the student withdrew. **Total Aid Disbursed × Percentage Completed = Earned Aid**
- F. Amount of Title IV aid to be disbursed or returned
 - If the aid already disbursed equals the earned aid, no further action is required.
 - If the aid already disbursed is greater than the earned aid, the difference must be returned to the appropriate Title IV aid program.
 - **Total Disbursed Aid – Earned Aid = Unearned Aid to be Returned**
 - If the aid already disbursed is less than the earned aid, then Northwest State will calculate a post-withdrawal disbursement.

Post-Withdrawal Disbursement

Students may be eligible for a post-withdrawal disbursement if they have accepted aid that had not yet disbursed at the time of withdrawal. NSCC will notify the student within 30 days of the date of determination of any amount of a post-withdrawal disbursement. The school is permitted to credit the student's account with the post-withdrawal disbursement of Title IV grant funds without the student's permission for current charges for tuition and fees up to the amount of outstanding charges. The school must notify the student (or parent in cases of a Direct Parent PLUS loan), in writing prior to making any post-withdrawal disbursement of loan funds. If the student (or parent in cases of a Direct Parent PLUS loan) wishes to accept the loan funds, he/she must complete the Loan Request form and return it to the financial aid office. Once the school has received confirmation from the student (or parent in cases of a Direct Parent PLUS loan) that he or she wants to receive the post withdrawal disbursement of loan funds, a school must make the post withdrawal disbursement of Title IV loan proceeds as soon as possible but no later than 180 days after the date of the school's determination that the student withdrew.

Types of Withdrawals

For financial aid purposes there are two types of withdrawals: Official and Unofficial.

Official – an official withdrawal from Northwest State by the student. For the policy and procedure of Official Withdrawals review the NSCC College Catalog, Academic Policies section. Contact the Registrar’s Office for more information.

Unofficial – federal financial aid regulations consider a student to be an unofficial withdrawal if the student receives all F (failure) grades or a combination of all F, U, and W (withdraw) grades for the term.

Determination of the Withdrawal Date

The withdrawal date used in the return calculation of a student’s federal financial aid is the actual date indicated on the official drop form. If a student stops attending classes without notifying Northwest State, the withdrawal date will be the midpoint of the semester or the last date of academic activity as reported by the NSCC course instructor.

Withdrawing prior to completing 60% of a term

Unless a student completes 60% of the term in which federal aid was disbursed, the student will be required to return all or part of the financial aid disbursed in the term. This applies to students who have officially or unofficially withdrawn.

When a student fails to begin attendance

If a student receives financial aid, but never attends classes, NSCC will return all disbursed funds to the respective federal aid programs. If the student owes money to NSCC resulting from the return of federal funds, the student will be billed by the Business Office. If the student does not pay the funds due to the college, a business hold is placed on the student’s account. This means he/she will not be permitted to register for classes or receive transcripts until the balance is paid in full.

Students who do not receive an earned grade in a term

Financial aid is awarded under the assumption that the student will attend Northwest State for the entire term for which federal assistance was disbursed. Northwest State is required to have a procedure for determining whether a Title IV recipient who began attendance during a period completed the period or should be treated as a withdrawal. Students who attended the entire length of the course but failed to meet the academic requirements of the course at the end of the term are awarded a grade of F or U. Students who started a course but stopped attending class at some point and was given a grade of an F(failure), U(unsatisfactory), or W(withdrawal) are considered an “unofficial” withdrawal, and will be reviewed to determine that last date of an academically related activity or the midpoint of the semester.

Repayment calculation process:

Once grades are posted for the student who receives a combination of either all F, U or W grades, Northwest State will return all unearned aid back to the federal aid programs and the student’s billing account will be charged. The Business Office will mail a bill to the student’s permanent address. The student is responsible for any balance due.

Definition of an academic related activity

Examples of Northwest State academic-related activities include but are not limited to physically attending a class where there is an opportunity for direct interaction between the instructor and students.

Proof of participation:

- Exams or quizzes
- Tutorials
- Computer-assisted instruction
- Submission of an academic assignment, paper or project
- Participating in online discussion about academic matters

Repayment of Federal Aid Programs

Federal regulations require that the following aid programs be subject to the repayment calculation if the student did not attend 60% of the term in the following order:

1. Unsubsidized Direct Stafford Loan
2. Subsidized Direct Stafford Loan
3. Direct PLUS (Parent) Loan
4. Federal Pell Grant
5. Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (SEOG)

Overpayment of Federal Grant Funds

Federal regulations provide that 50% of the unearned amount of all federal grants is protected by the federal calculation. Any federal grant money subject to repayment is returned by Northwest State Community College and that amount will be billed to the student's billing account as a debt to the college.

Additional loan information to consider when withdrawing

When a student is enrolled less than part-time, the grace period begins. The student's grace period for loan repayments for Federal Direct Unsubsidized and Subsidized Loans will begin on the day of the withdrawal from the school. If the student is not enrolled part-time for more than 6 months, the loans will go into repayment. The student must contact the U.S. Department of Education or his/her lender(s) to make payment arrangements. Loans must be repaid by the loan borrower (student/parent) as outlined in the terms of the borrower's promissory note. The student should contact the lender if he/she has questions regarding their grace period or repayment status.

Repayment of unearned funds and consequences

Unearned funds are paid to the U.S. Department of Education by Northwest State Community College on the student's behalf. The school will return the funds within 45 days from the Date of Determination. If the student owes any money to the college resulting from the return of unearned federal financial aid, the student will be billed by NSCC. If the student does not pay the funds, a business hold is placed on the student's account. This means he/she will not be permitted to register for classes or receive transcripts until the balance is paid.

School and Student responsibilities in regard to the R2T4 policy & process

Northwest State Community College's responsibilities:

- Provide each student with the information given in this policy
- Identify students affected by this policy and complete the R2T4 calculation
- Inform the student of the result of the R2T4 calculation and any balance owed to the college as a result of a required return of funds
- Return funds to the U.S. Department of Education within 45 days from the Date of Determination
- Return any unearned Title IV aid that is due to the Title IV programs and, if applicable, notify the borrower's holder of federal loan funds of the student's withdrawal date
- Notify the student and/or PLUS borrower of eligibility for a Post-Withdraw Disbursement, if applicable

Student's responsibilities

- Becoming familiar with the R2T4 policy and how withdrawing from all courses affects eligibility for Title IV aid
- Resolve any outstanding balance owed to Northwest State Community College
- Resolve any repayment to the U.S. Department of Education as a result of an overpayment of Title IV grant funds

How a withdrawal affects future financial aid eligibility

Refer to the Northwest State Community College Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy to determine how a withdrawal will impact future financial aid eligibility.

Note: The procedures and policies listed above are subject to change without advance notice based on changes to federal laws, federal regulations, or school policies. If changes are made, students must abide by the most current policy. For further guidance on Return of Title IV policies and procedures please contact the Northwest State Community College Financial Aid Office.

Northwest State Community College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, disability, religion or age in its programs or activities.