

Drug Convictions May Affect Your Student Aid

What do drug convictions have to do with student aid?

Some students who have drug-related convictions may be ineligible for federal student aid. According to the law, if you are convicted of a drug-related offense, you may face these restrictions:

1. For *possession* of illegal drugs, you are ineligible from the date of conviction (not arrest) for:

- One year for a first offense
- Two years for a second offense
- Indefinitely for a third offense

2. For *sale* of illegal drugs, you are ineligible from the date of conviction (not arrest) for:

- Two years for a first offense
- Indefinitely for a second offense

Do all drug convictions count?

No, do not count any conviction that was reversed, set aside, or removed from your record. Also, do not count any conviction that occurred before you turned 18, unless you were prosecuted as an adult. *Alcohol and tobacco are not illegal drugs under this law.*

If I have drug convictions, should I still apply for student aid?

Yes, even if you have drug convictions, you should complete and submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). You may be eligible, depending on the date and number of convictions. Even if you are ineligible for federal student aid, you should complete and submit your FAFSA. Some outside agencies use information from the FAFSA, and you may still be eligible for scholarships or other types of aid from their programs. And you may regain eligibility for the federal programs.

How do I answer question 23 on the FAFSA?

Question 23 on the 2017-2018 FAFSA asks about drug convictions. You can either call the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800 4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243) for help in answering the question. You can choose an interactive web questionnaire, an automated telephone questionnaire, or talk with a customer service operator. Your personal information is confidential and you will remain anonymous.

What if I'm definitely ineligible?

You can regain eligibility for federal student financial aid no matter how many or what type of drug convictions you have. You must successfully complete an acceptable drug rehabilitation program that meets the standards set by Congress and the Department of Education, and you will regain eligibility on the date you complete the program.

What is an acceptable drug rehabilitation program?

An acceptable drug rehabilitation program must have TWO unannounced drug tests.

AND it must either:

- Be qualified to receive funds from a federal, state, or local government agency or program, or from a state or federally licensed insurance company,

OR

- Be administered or recognized by a federal, state, or local government agency or court, or by a state- or federally licensed hospital, health clinic, or medical doctor.

How can I more information?

If you still have questions, please call the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-4FED-AID (1-800-433-3243).

If you want to find out if a drug rehabilitation program meets the described standards, please contact the rehabilitation program.