

**Georgia LEAP Grant Program
(Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership)**

REGULATIONS – 700.

2008 - 2009 Award Year



Effective Date – July 1, 2008



**Georgia Student Finance Commission
2082 East Exchange Place
Tucker, Georgia 30084**

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702. Program Overview.

The Georgia Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership (LEAP) Grant Program assists Georgia students, who demonstrate substantial financial need, with grant aid toward their cost of attendance at Georgia's eligible postsecondary institutions. Georgia LEAP Grant recipients must meet all of the requirements of the Federal Pell Grant Program, in addition to requirements specific to the Georgia LEAP Grant Program.

The federal government created the LEAP program for the purpose of encouraging states to provide need-based grants to their students. To participate in the LEAP program, a state must match federal LEAP funds, offered through the United States Department of Education, with at least one state dollar for each federal dollar. The State of Georgia began participating in the LEAP program starting with the 2001-2002 Award Year (State Fiscal Year 2002). The Georgia Student Finance Commission (GSFC) administers the Georgia LEAP Grant Program.

Eligible students may receive a Georgia LEAP Grant award of up to \$2,000 per Award Year, depending on the extent of their financial need. Recipients may seek either a technical certificate or diploma at an eligible Georgia public postsecondary institution, or an undergraduate college degree from an eligible Georgia public or private postsecondary institution.

The Higher Education Act of 1965, Title IV, Part A, Subpart 4, as amended, 20 U.S.C.1070c-1070c-4., provide the legal authorization for the federal Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership Program, and federal regulations (34 CFR 692), provide the federal rules for administration of the LEAP program.

703. Definitions.

“Academic Year” means a period of time, usually eight or nine months, during which a Full-Time student would normally be expected to complete the equivalent of two semesters or three quarters of instruction.

“Alternative Study” means course work included in college Degree credit-earning programs of study that require travel outside of the State of Georgia, but within the United States.

“Appeal” means a formal written request from a student to the Commission for a review to determine if a rule, policy, or regulation was applied correctly in an individual’s specific case.

“Associate Degree” means a two-year college level Degree conferred on students by a postsecondary institution upon completion of a unified program of study in an academic discipline or major at the Undergraduate level. Associate Degrees typically require a student to earn at least 60 semester or 90 quarter hours of college Degree credit.

“Audit” means when a student registers for and attends a course for the purpose of personal development, with the understanding and agreement of his or her postsecondary institution that no credit hours or grade will be earned for that course work.

“Award Year” means three consecutive quarters or two consecutive semesters, beginning with the Fall term and ending with the Spring term, or the Non-Standard Term equivalent, or the Non-Term equivalent.

“Award-Year Reconciliation” means a final student-by-student reconciliation for an Award Year conducted by Eligible Postsecondary Institutions with the Commission, immediately following the completion of the Award Year.

“Baccalaureate Degree” means a four-year college level Degree conferred on students by a postsecondary institution upon completion of a unified program of study in an academic discipline or major at the Undergraduate level. Baccalaureate (Bachelor’s) Degrees typically require a student to earn at least 120 semester or 180 quarter hours of college Degree credit.

“Board of Regents” means the governing body of the University System of Georgia (USG).

“Certificate” means a credential indicating satisfactory completion of training in a technical program of study offered by a postsecondary educational institution, which is not an Associate or Baccalaureate Degree.

“Commission” means the Georgia Student Finance Commission, the agency responsible for administering certain postsecondary educational student financial aid programs offered by the State of Georgia, and other programs for which funds may be appropriated or assigned to it by the State Legislature, or from other sources, from time to time.

“Continuing Education” means postsecondary level courses designed for personal development or an extension of the traditional on-campus learning process, and does not lead to or provide credit toward a postsecondary Certificate, Diploma, or Degree.

“Cost of Attendance” means the estimated expenses, both direct and indirect, which may be incurred by a student to finance the cost of receiving a postsecondary education. These expenses include Tuition, fees, room, meals, books, supplies, transportation, and personal expenses, as determined by the student’s postsecondary institution and as defined by Federal Title IV Regulations.

“Degree” means a two-year Associate Degree or four-year Baccalaureate Degree conferred on students by a postsecondary institution upon completion of a unified program of study in an academic discipline or major at the Undergraduate level.

“Diploma” means a credential indicating satisfactory completion of training in a technical program of study offered by a postsecondary institution, which is not an Associate or Baccalaureate Degree.

“Disbursed” means the Eligible Postsecondary Institution has credited the student’s account, issued or made available to the student a check, or directly deposited the funds in the student’s personal account.

“Distance Learning” means an educational process that is characterized by the separation, in time or place, between instructor and student. It may include courses offered principally through the use of television, audio, video cassettes/discs, correspondence, audio/computer conferencing, and transmission by computer, Internet, open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, or satellite.

“Dual Credit Enrollment” means a situation whereby an agreement has been established between a high school and an Eligible Postsecondary Institution, wherein a student Enrolls in postsecondary course work, earning Carnegie Units of credit that count toward high school graduation requirements and simultaneously earning postsecondary credit hours for such course work.

“Eligible Non-Citizen” means a person who, in accordance with the Federal Title IV Regulations, is a United States permanent resident with a Permanent

Resident Alien Card (I-551); or a conditional permanent resident (I-551C); or the holder of an Arrival-Departure Record (I-94) from the Department of Homeland Security showing any one of the following designations: “Refugee”, “Asylum Granted”, “Parolee” (I-94 confirms paroled for a minimum of one year and status has not expired); or “Cuban-Haitian Entrant”. Victims of human trafficking, in accordance with the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act, may also be considered Eligible Non-Citizens. Persons with an F1 or F2 student visa, a J1 or J2 exchange visitor visa, or a G series visa are not Eligible Non-Citizens.

“Eligible Postsecondary Institution” means an institution that is:

- (1) a unit of the University System of Georgia; or
- (2) a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia; or
- (3) a private independent non-profit postsecondary institution located in Georgia that is eligible to participate in the Tuition Equalization Grant (TEG) program, which is not a unit of the University System of Georgia, which is not a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia, which is not a Graduate Level school or college of theology or divinity, and which is accredited or holds candidate status for accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools; or
- (4) a private proprietary (for-profit) postsecondary institution located in Georgia that is eligible to participate in the Tuition Equalization Grant (TEG) program, which is a Baccalaureate Degree granting postsecondary institution, which is accredited by a regional accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education, which is not a Bible school or college (or, at the Graduate Level, a school or college of theology or divinity), which admits as regular students only persons who have a high school diploma, a General Education Development (GED) diploma, or a Degree from an accredited postsecondary institution, whose students are eligible to participate in the Federal Pell Grant program, which has been reviewed and approved for operation and for receipt of Tuition Equalization Grant (TEG) funds by the Georgia Nonpublic Postsecondary Education Commission, and which has been in existence for at least ten years. Once any Eligible Postsecondary Institution has been approved by the United States Department of Education for participation in the Federal Title IV Programs and then such approval is suspended or revoked by the United States Department of Education; such institution is ineligible to participate in the Georgia LEAP Grant until approval for participation in Federal Title IV Programs has been restored by the United States Department of Education.

“Enroll”, “Enrolled”, or “Enrollment” means a student has completed the registration requirements, as defined by the postsecondary institution, except for payment of Tuition and fees.

“Exception” means a formal written request from a student to the Commission for a review of the student’s extenuating circumstances and to request approval

for payment, despite not having fulfilled the regulatory eligibility requirements of the program.

“FAFSA” means Free Application for Federal Student Aid, a need analysis document that must be completed by students applying for the Federal Pell Grant Program and other Federal Title IV Programs.

“Federal Title IV Programs” means the student financial aid programs administered by the U.S. Department of Education that are authorized by Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended.

“Federal Title IV Regulations” means federal regulations governing Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended by the Higher Education Amendments of 1998, found in Chapter Six of Title 34 of the Federal Register.

“Freshman” means a first-year student who is fully admitted and Enrolled in a Matriculated status to seek a college Degree or technical Certificate or Diploma at an Eligible Postsecondary Institution. Typically, a student is classified as a Freshman until he or she has earned at least 30 semester or 45 quarter hours of postsecondary level credit.

“Full-Time” means Enrollment for the equivalent of at least 12 quarter or 12 semester hours, per school term, of postsecondary credit of a Matriculated student at an Eligible Postsecondary Institution.

“GAcollege411” means the State of Georgia’s website that provides information on careers, Georgia’s postsecondary institutions, student financial aid, and accesses electronic college and financial aid applications.

“Georgia Resident” or “Georgia Residency” means an individual or the status of such individual who is a United States Citizen or Eligible Non-Citizen and is Domiciled in the State of Georgia and meets the in-state tuition requirements of the governing body of the public (USG or TCSG) Eligible Postsecondary Institution he or she attends, as specified and limited by these regulations, or meets the requirements of the Georgia Residency policy of the Commission for students attending private Eligible Postsecondary Institutions, as specified and limited by these regulations.

“Graduate Level” means the postsecondary academic level at which a student is Enrolled in a program of study beyond the Baccalaureate Degree level or in a non-undergraduate degree program.

“GSFAPPS” means the Georgia Student Financial Aid Application System, the Commission’s web-based electronic application process by which students can apply for the scholarship, grant, and service-cancelable loan programs administered by the Commission.

“Half-Time” means a Matriculated student attending an Eligible Postsecondary Institution that is Enrolled for the equivalent of at least 6 quarter or 6 semester credit hours, but not more than 11 quarter or 11 semester credit hours during a school term.

“Home Institution” means an Eligible Postsecondary Institution in which the student is normally Enrolled and is in a Matriculated status working toward a Degree, Diploma, or Certificate.

“Host Institution” means a postsecondary institution a student is temporarily attending as a Transient student.

“Incarcerated” means to be confined by competent public authority or under due legal process. A student is considered Incarcerated if he or she is serving a criminal sentence in a federal, state, or local penitentiary, prison, jail, reformatory, work farm, half-way house, or similar correctional institution (whether operated by the government or a contractor) or is sentenced to home detention.

“Joint Enrollment” means a situation whereby a secondary (high school) student is Enrolled in postsecondary level course work with an Eligible Postsecondary Institution while continuing to pursue his or her high school diploma, but the student’s high school has not agreed to accept the postsecondary course work as credit toward the student’s high school graduation requirements.

“Learning Support” means remedial course work provided by a postsecondary institution to a student whose entrance or placement evaluation has identified deficiencies in the student’s academic preparation or readiness for specific core curriculum postsecondary level course work.

“Matriculated” means a student is fully admitted and Enrolled in an Eligible Postsecondary Institution in a unified academic program of study leading to Degree, Diploma, or Certificate.

“Military Personnel” means an active member of the Armed Forces of the United States, including members of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. Commissioned officers of the Public Health Service or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on active duty are also considered to be military personnel.

“Non-Standard Term” means a school term where all course work is expected to begin and end within a set period of time, but is not a semester, trimester, or quarter term. Non-Standard Terms may be of unequal length within an Award Year.

“Non-Term” means a program of study measuring progress in clock hours, or a program of study measuring progress in credit hours and has courses that do not begin and end within a set period of time, or has courses that overlap, or has sequential courses that do not begin and end within a term.

“Paid-Hours” means the number of quarter or semester hours for which a student received Georgia LEAP Grant payment. The number of Paid-Hours is used to determine when a student has reached the maximum number of hours he or she is eligible to receive Georgia LEAP Grant payment.

“Parent” means the natural mother or father, adoptive parent, or United States court-appointed legal guardian of a student.

“Pell Grant” means a Federal Title IV Program of non-repayable aid that is designed to be the base award for eligible low-income students who demonstrate federally determined financial need by completing a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

“Program Review” means an assessment by the Commission of an Eligible Postsecondary Institution by evaluating the Eligible Postsecondary Institution’s compliance with the regulations governing state programs.

“Satisfactory Academic Progress” means the academic standards required of students by their postsecondary institutions in order to be eligible to receive payment from Federal Title IV Programs, in accordance with Federal Title IV Regulations. The standards must include a qualitative component, such as grades, and a quantitative component with a maximum time frame for completion of a student’s program of study (no longer than 150% of the length of the program).

“Study Abroad” means postsecondary course work that requires travel outside the United States and for which a student earns credit hours that are accepted toward a program of study leading to a Degree. Study Abroad programs are also referred to by some institutions as International-Intercultural Studies.

“Substantial Financial Need” means the remainder of a student’s total Cost of Attendance, minus his or her Pell Grant award and minus the amount of any other scholarship or grant award, is equal to or greater than \$2,000 for an Award Year.

“SURFER” means the Commission’s web-based system used by Eligible Postsecondary Institutions to electronically transmit and receive student data, award information, and conduct other administrative activities related to the Commission’s scholarship and grant programs.

“Technical College System of Georgia” or “TCSG” means the State of Georgia’s unified system of public technical colleges, which is governed by the Board of Commissioners of the Technical College System of Georgia.

“Term-Reconciliation” means an official acknowledgement by an authorized official of an Eligible Postsecondary Institution, at the end of each school term, that the number of students and amount invoiced and the number of students and amount issued, according to the SURFER system, are accurate on the date of such acknowledgement.

“Transient” means a student is attending a Host Institution and is granted temporary admission for the purpose of completing course work and earning postsecondary credit to transfer back to his or her Home Institution toward a Degree, Diploma, or Certificate.

“Tuition” means the charges to a student for academic instruction without regard to other fees such as technology, activity, athletic, health, etc.

“Tuition Equalization Grant” or “TEG” means a State of Georgia student financial aid program administered by the Commission to provide non-repayable grant assistance to Georgia Residents who are Full-Time Undergraduate students attending: (1) private/independent (nonprofit or proprietary) Eligible Postsecondary Institutions located in Georgia, or (2) college level juniors or seniors attending four-year public colleges or universities located outside the State of Georgia, but within 50 miles of Georgia’s borders. The TEG program is authorized by the Official Code of Georgia Annotated § 20-3-410 and is funded by state appropriations.

“Undergraduate” means a student who is in attendance at an Eligible Postsecondary Institution and who is in the process of obtaining an Associate Degree or Baccalaureate Degree.

“University System of Georgia” or “USG” means the State of Georgia’s unified system of public colleges and universities, which is governed by the Board of Regents.

“Withdrawal Date” means the date the student withdraws, as determined by the institution. The institution must determine the withdrawal date in accordance with the procedures set forth for determining withdrawal date under the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended.

704. General Eligibility Requirements.

704.1. Citizenship.

A student must be a United States Citizen or an Eligible Non-Citizen for 12 consecutive months immediately preceding the first day of classes of the school term for which payment is sought.

704.2. Georgia Residency.

- a. A Freshman student attending a USG or TCSG institution meets the Georgia Residency requirements for purposes of Georgia LEAP Grant eligibility, if he or she meets the requirements to be classified as a Georgia Resident, according to the USG or TCSG in-state tuition policy, for 12 consecutive months immediately preceding the first day of classes of the school term for which the grant is sought. If the USG or TCSG institution grants a Military Personnel out-of-state tuition waiver for a Freshman student, and such student graduated from a high school located in Georgia, then the student meets the Georgia Residency requirements of the Georgia LEAP Grant Program. No out-of-state tuition waiver, other than for the children of Military Personnel, qualifies students for Georgia LEAP Grant eligibility.
- b. A student attending a USG or TCSG institution who is not a Freshman, and who is entering the Georgia LEAP Grant program for the first time, meets the Georgia Residency requirements for purposes of Georgia LEAP Grant eligibility, if he or she meets the requirements to be classified as a Georgia Resident, according to the USG or TCSG in-state tuition policy, for 12 consecutive months immediately preceding the first day of classes of the school term for which the grant is sought. A student who is not a Freshman, and who is receiving an out-of-state tuition waiver, including a Military Personnel out-of-state tuition waiver, is not considered to be a Georgia Resident, and therefore is ineligible to enter the Georgia LEAP Grant Program.
- c. A Freshman student attending a private Eligible Postsecondary Institution meets the Georgia Residency requirements for purposes of Georgia LEAP Grant eligibility if he or she meets the criteria of the *Georgia Residency Requirements for State Programs Regulations* for 12 consecutive months immediately preceding the first day of classes of the school term for which the grant is sought. However, a Freshman student with a Military Personnel Parent who is not a resident of Georgia, meets the Georgia Residency requirements if such student graduated from a high school located in Georgia and his or her Military Personnel Parent was stationed in Georgia at the time of the student's high school graduation.
- d. A student attending a private Eligible Postsecondary Institution who is not a Freshman, and who is entering the Georgia LEAP Grant program for the first

time, meets the Georgia Residency requirements for purposes of Georgia LEAP Grant eligibility if he or she meets the criteria of the *Georgia Residency Requirements for State Programs Regulations* for 12 consecutive months immediately preceding the first day of classes of the school term for which the grant is sought. The exemption for a Freshman student who is the child of a Military Personnel Parent stationed in Georgia does not apply to a student who is not a Freshman at the time he or she is attempting to first enter the Georgia LEAP Grant Program.

- e. A student, who was correctly determined to meet the Georgia Residency requirements for purposes of Georgia LEAP Grant eligibility and began receiving Georgia LEAP Grant payment, will continue to meet the Georgia Residency requirements for purposes of Georgia LEAP Grant eligibility, unless he or she has a break in Enrollment of two or more consecutive semesters or quarters and resides outside of Georgia for 12 or more consecutive months. If such student later returns to Georgia, he or she must re-establish Georgia Residency for 12 consecutive months, (in accordance with *Section 704.2.a.b.c. and d.*), before regaining Georgia LEAP Grant eligibility. A student who has a break in Enrollment of two or more consecutive semesters or quarters, and who resides outside Georgia for less than 12 consecutive months, and then later returns to Georgia and Enrolls in an Eligible Postsecondary Institution within 12 consecutive months from his or her most recent date of Enrollment in an Eligible Postsecondary Institution, will continue to meet the Georgia Residency requirements for purposes of Georgia LEAP Grant eligibility.

704.3. Enrollment Status.

- a. A student must be Enrolled at an Eligible Postsecondary Institution as an Undergraduate in a Matriculated status leading to a Degree, Certificate, or Diploma.
- b. A student must be Enrolled in a program of study that is an eligible program for purposes of the Federal Pell Grant Program.
- c. A student must be Enrolled as at least a Half-Time student.
- d. A student must not be simultaneously attending a secondary school, or participating in Joint Enrollment or Dual Credit Enrollment, or seeking a high school diploma.

704.4. Satisfactory Academic Progress.

A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress in a program of study in accordance with the standards and practices used for Federal Title IV Programs by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution at which such student is Enrolled.

704.5. Selective Service Registration.

A student must be in compliance with the United States Selective Service System requirements, if such requirements are applicable, prior to the Georgia LEAP Grant program application deadline in order to be eligible for payment for that school term.

704.6. Defaulted Loan or Refund Due.

A student must not be in default on a Federal Title IV or State of Georgia educational loan, nor owe a refund on a Federal Title IV or State of Georgia student financial aid program, nor in any other way be in violation of Federal Title IV Regulations or State of Georgia student financial aid program regulations. If such student has repaid the defaulted loan or refund due in full, or resolved the default status, then he or she may be eligible to receive payment beginning with the school term in which repayment was made in full, but not retroactively for previous school terms. A student's default status can be resolved by one of three ways: 1) complete an acceptable rehabilitation plan, 2) having the loan repurchased by the original lender and the default status reversed, 3) by consolidating the loan out of a default status.

704.7. Georgia Drug-Free Act.

A student convicted of committing certain felony offenses involving marijuana, controlled substances, or dangerous drugs, is ineligible for Georgia LEAP Grant payment from the date of conviction to the completion of the following school term, in accordance with the Georgia Drug-Free Postsecondary Education Act of 1990.

704.8. Incarceration.

A student seeking a Degree or a technical Certificate or Diploma from an Eligible Postsecondary Institution is ineligible for Georgia LEAP Grant payment while Incarcerated. Upon release from Incarceration, such students may begin receiving Georgia LEAP Grant payments, if he or she meets all eligibility requirements.

705. Program Specific Eligibility Requirements.

705.1. Substantial Financial Need.

A student must demonstrate Substantial Financial Need. A student's Eligible Postsecondary Institution determines Substantial Financial Need by subtracting the amount of the student's Federal Pell Grant award, and the amount of any other scholarship or grant the student is receiving from any source, from the student's Cost of Attendance. The remaining amount must be equal to or greater than \$2,000 in order for the student to have Substantial Financial Need.

705.2. Federal Pell Grant Eligibility.

A student must apply for the Federal Pell Grant by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and be eligible to receive Federal Pell Grant funds for the same Award Year that he or she is receiving Georgia LEAP Grant funds. FAFSA verification requirements must be completed before a student can receive Georgia LEAP Grant funds.

705.3. High School Graduation.

A student must have earned a high school diploma, or a General Education Development (GED) equivalency diploma, or be beyond the age of compulsory school attendance in the State of Georgia and have passed an independently administered test approved by the United States Department of Education. Georgia LEAP Grant recipients must not be simultaneously attending a secondary school of any type or pursuing a high school diploma.

705.4. Educational Purpose.

A student must have signed the United States Department Education's Statement of Educational Purpose and a Certification Statement on Overpayments and Default, as required by the Federal Pell Grant Program.

705.5. Loan Limits.

A student must not have borrowed in excess of the annual or aggregate limits for Federal Title IV student loan programs.

705.6. Paid-Hours Limits.

- a. A student is eligible to receive Georgia LEAP Grant payment for a maximum of 127 semester or 190 quarter hours of Paid-Hours.
- b. As part of the invoicing process, Eligible Postsecondary Institutions must report to the Commission the actual number of hours attempted, not just the hours earned, by each student for which payment is requested for a school

term. The actual hours attempted, for which a student received payment, are counted as Paid-Hours and are not limited to the minimum Full-Time requirement of 12 hours.

- c. A student is eligible to receive the full amount of the Georgia LEAP award for a school term in which he or she first exceeds the Paid-Hours limit of 127 semester or 190 quarter hours. For example, if the student has a total of 120 semester of Paid-Hours prior to the beginning of a school term, and he or she attempts 12 semester hours during that school term, then the student is eligible for the full amount of the Georgia LEAP Grant payment for such term.

705.7. Attainment of a Baccalaureate Degree.

Regardless of the number of Paid-Hours a student has accumulated, such student is ineligible for Georgia LEAP Grant payment if he or she has attained a Baccalaureate Degree of any kind, at any time, from any postsecondary institution.

705.8. Transfer Students.

A Georgia LEAP Grant recipient who transfers from one Eligible Postsecondary Institution to another Eligible Postsecondary Institution does not transport his or her Georgia LEAP Grant funds to the Eligible Postsecondary Institution to which he or she transferred. Such student may or may not be considered for a Georgia LEAP Grant award at the Eligible Postsecondary Institution to which he or she transferred.

705.9. Title IV Drug Conviction Requirements.

A student must be in compliance with the United States Department of Education's Federal Title IV drug conviction requirements, in accordance with such student's eligibility for the Federal Pell Grant.

706. Eligible Course Work.

706.1 Joint and Dual Credit Enrollment Course Work.

A student seeking a high school diploma, who is simultaneously Enrolled in postsecondary level course work as a Joint Enrollment or Dual Credit Enrollment student at an Eligible Postsecondary Institution, is ineligible for Georgia LEAP Grant payment.

706.2. Learning Support Course Work.

A student who is required by his or her Eligible Postsecondary Institution to participate in Learning Support (remedial) course work, is eligible for Georgia LEAP Grant payment for such course work, if he or she meets all program eligibility requirements. Learning Support credit hours are counted as Paid-Hours.

706.3. Exemption by Examination Course Work.

A student is ineligible to receive Georgia LEAP Grant payment for course work that was exempted or given credit by examination, testing, training, or experience.

706.4. Distance Learning Course Work.

A student participating in Distance Learning course work at an Eligible Postsecondary Institution is eligible to receive Georgia LEAP Grant payment, if all other eligibility criteria are met.

706.5. Transient Course Work.

- a. A student Enrolled in a Matriculated status at an Eligible Postsecondary Institution, who meets all other Georgia LEAP Grant eligibility requirements, may qualify for payment as a Transient student.
- b. Such student's Home Institution, which is an Eligible Postsecondary Institution, must approve the Transient course work for credit toward the student's program of study.
- c. The Georgia LEAP Grant award amount must be the amount the student would normally receive at the Home Institution.
- d. The Georgia LEAP Grant payment must take place through the Home Institution, which must be an Eligible Postsecondary Institution, and the student must be considered to be in a Matriculated status by his or her Home Institution.

706.6. Study Abroad Course Work.

- a. A student Enrolled in a Matriculated status at an Eligible Postsecondary Institution, who meets all other Georgia LEAP Grant eligibility requirements, may qualify for payment while participating in a Study Abroad program.
- b. A student's Home Institution, which is an Eligible Postsecondary Institution, must approve the Study Abroad program for credit toward the student's Degree program prior to the student's departure.
- c. The Georgia LEAP Grant award amount must be the amount the student would normally receive at the Home Institution.
- d. The payment must take place through the Home Institution, which must be an Eligible Postsecondary Institution, and the student must be considered to be in a Matriculated status by his or her Home Institution.

706.7. Alternative Study Course Work.

- a. A student Enrolled in a Matriculated status at Eligible Postsecondary Institution may qualify for Georgia LEAP Grant payment while participating in an Alternative Study program.
- b. A student's Home Institution, which is an Eligible Postsecondary Institution, must approve the Alternative Study program for credit toward the student's Degree program prior to the student's departure.
- c. The Georgia LEAP Grant award amount must be the amount the student would normally receive at the Home Institution.
- d. The payment must take place through the Home Institution, which must be an Eligible Postsecondary Institution, and the student must be considered to be in a Matriculated status by his or her Home Institution.

706.8. Continuing Education and Audit Course Work.

- a. A student is ineligible to receive Georgia LEAP Grant payment for course work classified by his or her Eligible Postsecondary Institution as Continuing Education or Audit course work.
- b. A student who Audits a course is ineligible to receive Georgia LEAP Grant payment for the Audited course.

706.9. Total Withdrawal from Course Work.

A student is ineligible for Georgia LEAP Grant payment for course work from which he or she totally withdrew if, as a result, such course work does not appear

on the student's academic transcript as a "Withdrawal" or any other type of identification.

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707. Student Application Requirements.

707.1. Application Forms.

A student must complete and submit a current year Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to apply for the Georgia LEAP Grant. The Commission's GSFAPPS system, available through GAcademy411, does not serve as an application for the Georgia LEAP Grant. In addition to, but not in replacement of the FAFSA, an Eligible Postsecondary Institution may require students to complete the institution's application for student financial aid and/or provide supplemental information for the purpose of determining their eligibility.

707.2. Application Deadline Date.

A student must file a current year FAFSA on or before the last day of the school term (semester or quarter) or the student's withdrawal date, whichever occurs first, in order to be paid for that school term. The last day of the school term is the last day of classes or exams for the institution, whichever occurs later. Supplemental documentation required by the institution or the Commission to support or verify a student's application information may be submitted after the deadline without jeopardizing the student's eligibility.

707.3. Application Renewal.

Recipients of the Georgia LEAP Grant must complete and submit a current year FAFSA for each Award Year in order to be considered for renewal.

708. Award Requirements.

708.1. Awards Amounts.

The maximum Georgia LEAP Grant award amount for an eligible student is \$2,000 per Award Year. The minimum Georgia LEAP Grant award amount for an eligible student is \$150 per semester or \$100 per quarter.

708.2. Awards Per School Term.

Georgia LEAP Grant payment is available to students for the standard school terms of Fall and Spring semesters or Fall, Winter, and Spring quarters. The Georgia LEAP Grant is not available for Summer terms. An Eligible Postsecondary Institution may combine mini-terms or modules to form the equivalent of a standard semester or quarter. An institution may offer Non-Standard Terms or Non-Terms, in which courses or modules are taken consecutively to form the equivalent of a standard semester or quarter. Regardless of the structure of an Eligible Postsecondary Institution's school terms, a student may be awarded Georgia LEAP Grant funds for a maximum of two semesters or three quarters per Award Year.

708.3. Student Notification of Award.

An Eligible Postsecondary Institution must notify each Georgia LEAP Grant recipient of the amount of LEAP funds he or she is awarded for the Award Year, and identify such funds as a Georgia LEAP Grant award.

708.4. Adjustments to Award Amounts.

An Eligible Postsecondary Institution is not required to reduce a student's Georgia LEAP Grant award amount because of other aid the student may be receiving, as long as the total amount of scholarship and grant aid the student is receiving, including Georgia LEAP Grant funds, does not exceed the student's Cost of Attendance.

709. Invoicing Requirements.

709.1. Submission of Invoices.

Eligible Postsecondary Institutions may submit invoices to the Commission as early as 15 days prior to the first day of classes for the school term.

709.2. Payment of Invoices.

Upon submission of a valid invoice to the Commission, funds for a school term are paid to an Eligible Postsecondary Institution, on behalf of eligible students, by method of check or electronic transfer of funds.

709.3. Payment to Students.

Georgia LEAP Grant funds may be applied to any of the Eligible Postsecondary Institution's direct charges, such as Tuition, fees, room and meals. If a student does not owe a balance, the institution shall pay over the same or any remaining amount of the award to the student to be used toward other Cost of Attendance expenses.

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710. Refund Requirements.

710.1. Calculation of Refund Amounts.

- a. If the student officially withdraws, drops out, drops hours, is expelled, or otherwise fails to complete a period of Enrollment, and is entitled to a refund, a portion of the student's Georgia LEAP Grant award may need to be returned to the institution's Georgia LEAP Grant account. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution must determine the amount of the refund and post the refund on the student's record in the Commission's SURFER system within 45 days of the determination. The remainder of the award is retained by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution to cover the institution's cost for the portion of the school term that the student was Enrolled. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution may re-award to another student the funds that were returned to the institution's Georgia LEAP Grant fund. Surplus funds are returned to the Commission at the time of the Award-Year Reconciliation and must not be returned to the United States Department of Education by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution.
- b. If a refund is due, the Eligible Postsecondary Institution must first apply the Federal Title IV Return of Funds policy to the student's Pell Grant award and to any other Federal Title IV funds the student may have been awarded. The portion of the student's Georgia LEAP Grant award that is comprised of federal funds is not included in this Federal Title IV Return of Funds calculation.
- c. Although the allocation of Georgia LEAP Grant funds granted by the Commission to each Eligible Postsecondary Institution is comprised of both federal and state funds, refunds must be treated as a State of Georgia program, rather than a Federal Title IV Program. To determine the amount of Georgia LEAP Grant funds that must be refunded, the Eligible Postsecondary Institution must follow its own institutional refund policy, which may or may not be the same as the Federal Title IV Return of Funds policy.

710.2. Collection of Refunds.

A student who owes a refund to the Commission should pay the Eligible Postsecondary Institution and the Eligible Postsecondary Institution should pay the Commission or, at its sole discretion, the Commission may require the student to pay the refund directly to the Commission. Nothing herein shall be deemed to prohibit the Commission or the Eligible Postsecondary Institution from using all available legal and equitable remedies to collect the refund.

710.3. Unavailable Evidence.

If later evidence, not available at the time of awarding, indicates that a student should not have received a Georgia LEAP Grant payment, then all future awards

must be canceled. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution is held harmless by the Commission, if the student's file is appropriately documented with available evidence and it is determined by the Commission that the institution was not at fault. Evidence is considered unavailable at the time of awarding if it is not available in the student's institutional files (i.e. financial aid, admissions, registrar, etc.). The institution must notify the student and the Commission of a refund due. The student is ineligible to receive additional state aid from the Commission until the refund is paid in full, in accordance with *Section 710.2.*

710.4. Emergency Military Duty.

A student who is a member of the U.S. Armed Services, National Guard, or Armed Forces Reserve receiving funds from the Georgia LEAP Grant program who is called to emergency military duty during a school term that is already in progress should not have their Georgia LEAP Grant eligibility negatively impacted by the loss of Paid-Hours. If the Eligible Postsecondary Institution the student attends allows the student to totally withdraw and receive a grade such as "WM" for "military withdrawal" or the institution totally removes all grades for that term and corresponding credit hours from the student's records, the institution should cancel the student's Georgia LEAP Grant award on SURFER, and return the full amount of the student's payment to the institution's Georgia LEAP Grant account. This regulation may also be applied to students who are not members of the military but are otherwise unusually and detrimentally affected by the emergency activation of members of the military, as determined by the president of the Eligible Postsecondary Institution that such student is attending.

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711. Reconciliation Requirements.

711.1. Term-Reconciliation.

An Eligible Postsecondary Institution must conduct a Term-Reconciliation near the end of each term. A Term-Reconciliation consists of an official acknowledgement by an authorized school official that the number of students and amount invoiced by the institution and the number of students awarded and amount issued by the Commission, according to the SURFER system, is accurate on that date. The Commission will not issue Georgia LEAP Grant funds for the following school term until the Term-Reconciliation is complete. Surplus funds are not returned to the Commission as part of the Term-Reconciliation process.

711.2. Award-Year Reconciliation.

In addition to the Term-Reconciliations, the Eligible Postsecondary Institution must conduct the Award-Year Reconciliation. The institution must conduct a complete student-by-student Award-Year Reconciliation with the Commission, and submit a Reconciliation Certification Form to the Commission by August 1, immediately following the completion of the Award Year.

711.3. Return of Funds.

The institution must return to the Commission any Georgia LEAP Grant funds not utilized according to the final reconciliation within 30 days of completing the Award-Year Reconciliation process. The institution must have a procedure in place to ensure that the Georgia LEAP Grant funds do not go to an unintended third party (i.e. U.S. Department of Education, State Treasury, postsecondary institution).

712. Records Retention Requirements.

712.1. Length of Retention.

An Eligible Postsecondary Institution shall maintain accurate records, books, documents and other evidence concerning the Georgia LEAP Grant program, including, but not limited to individual student files for the later of three years after the Award Year in which the aid was awarded; or for such other period as required by an applicable statute, rule, or regulation; or such other time as requested in writing by the Commission.

712.2. Documentation.

Documentation contained within an individual student file or record, which supports the original determination of a student's eligibility, must be retained by the institution and available for review by the Commission on the institution's campus, located within the State of Georgia, for at least three years after the most recent Award Year for which the student received Georgia LEAP Grant funds. (Refer to *Section 714.*) Institutions are permitted to maintain these documents in an imaged media format. The imaged media format must be capable of reproducing an accurate, legible, and complete copy of the original document.

Such documentation may include, but is not limited to, copies of Permanent Resident Alien Cards, Georgia State Income Tax Returns, applications and application forms. Documentation regarding a student's eligibility is not limited to files, records, and other information received and maintained by the institution's Student Financial Aid Office. Documentation supporting a student's eligibility that is received and maintained by the institution's admissions office, registrars office, business office, and other administrative operations of the institution must be available to the Commission for the purpose of Program Reviews. It is the institution's responsibility to resolve any inconsistencies or conflicting information within a student's records, prior to awarding or disbursing Georgia LEAP Grant funds to the student.

712.3. Extended Retention.

An institution may be required to retain student records involved in a program review, audit, or investigation for more than the three-year retention period described above. If the three-year retention period expires before the issue in question is resolved, the institution must continue to retain all associated records until resolution is reached.

713. Appeals and Exceptions.

713.1. Appeals.

- a. The Georgia LEAP Grant Program Regulations are applied to each student considered for Georgia LEAP Grant funds by appropriate officials of Eligible Postsecondary Institutions and by the administrative staff of the Commission. If a student believes a rule or regulation was incorrectly applied in his or her case, the student has the right to file an Appeal with the Commission. The Commission will review the case and determine whether the rule or regulation was applied correctly and notify the student and institution of the determination.
- b. In order for an Appeal to be considered, the student must write a request for an Appeal to the Commission office within 45 days of receiving notice of denial. If additional information is requested from the student, it must be provided within the time frame specified by the Commission. The Commission decides a case based only on documentation provided, rather than a personal presentation.

713.2. Exceptions.

Requests for Exceptions to the Georgia LEAP Grant Program Regulations cannot be considered, reviewed, or granted under any circumstances.

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714. Program Reviews.

The Commission shall conduct Program Reviews of Eligible Postsecondary Institutions participating in the Georgia LEAP Grant program in order to assess institutional administration of the program and compliance with the program's regulations. The Commission selects a sampling of the institution's Georgia LEAP Grant recipients, for the Award Year under review, and the institution's files and records for the sample are examined to assure compliance. Each Eligible Postsecondary Institution must have all student-records, which document and support the eligibility of that institution's Georgia LEAP Grant recipients, available for review by the Commission on the campus of the Eligible Postsecondary Institution, and such campus must be located within the State of Georgia. (Refer to *Section 712.*) If a recipient is determined to have been ineligible for payment, the institution or the recipient may be required to repay to the Commission the funds awarded to the recipient.

Detailed information regarding the Commission's Program Review process and procedures is available on the *gsfc.org* website, under *School and Lender Information - Compliance Documents*.

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