

**Heritage Christian University  
Federal Student Financial Aid Penalties for Drug Law Violation**

**Notice to Students Concerning Penalties for Drug Violations:**

HCU follows the HEOA policy for students to regain eligibility to receive federal financial aid after a drug conviction. Any student who loses federal student aid eligibility due to drug violations will be advised of standing procedure to re-gain Title IV eligibility. Notification will be sent through email by the Office of Financial.

According to federal regulations, students convicted for a drug offense that occurred during a period of enrollment while they were receiving Title IV Federal Financial Aid, may lose eligibility for Federal Aid. If a student answers 'Yes' to question 31 on the FAFSA, they will be sent a worksheet by the federal processing center in order to determine if the conviction affects eligibility for aid. Should the financial aid office be notified that a student has been convicted of sale or possession of illegal drugs, the financial assistance will be suspended immediately.

If a conviction was reversed, set aside, or removed from the student's record it does not count. Convictions occurring during periods of non-enrollment do not count. In addition, any conviction received as a juvenile does not count, unless they were tried as an adult. The period of ineligibility is dependent upon the type of conviction (sale or possession) and if there were previous offenses.

The chart below illustrates the period of ineligibility for FSA funds, depending on whether the conviction was for sale or possession and whether the student had previous offenses. ***(Conviction for sale of drugs includes convictions for conspiring to sell drugs.)***

	<b><u>Possession of Illegal Drugs</u></b>	<b><u>Sale of Illegal Drugs</u></b>
<b><u>1st Offense</u></b>	1 year from date of conviction	2 years from date of conviction
<b><u>2nd Offense</u></b>	2 years from date of conviction	Indefinite period
<b><u>3+ Offenses</u></b>	Indefinite period	

*(If the student was convicted of both selling and possessing illegal drugs, they will be ineligible for the longer period.)*

## **Regaining Eligibility**

Students denied eligibility for an indefinite period can regain it after successfully completing an approved rehabilitation program (as described in regulation 34 CFR 668.40), having the conviction reversed, set aside, or removed from the student's record so that fewer than two convictions for sale or three convictions for possession remain on the record, or successfully complete two unannounced drug tests which are part of a rehab program. In such cases, the nature and dates of the remaining convictions will determine when the student regains eligibility.

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The Higher Education Opportunity Act requires institutions to provide to every student upon enrollment a separate, clear, and conspicuous written notice with information on the penalties associated with drug-related offenses under existing section 484(r) of the HEA. It also requires an institution to provide a timely notice to each student who has lost eligibility for any grant, loan, or work-study assistance as a result of penalties under 484(r)(1) of the HEA a separate clear, and conspicuous written notice that notifies the student of the loss of eligibility and advises the student of the ways in which to regain eligibility under section 484(r)(2) of the HEA.

## **Approved Drug Rehabilitation Program**

If your eligibility for federal student aid has been suspended due to a drug conviction, you can regain eligibility early by successfully completing an approved drug rehabilitation program or by passing two unannounced drug tests administered by an approved drug rehabilitation program. If you regain eligibility during the award year, notify your financial aid office immediately so you can get any aid for which you are eligible.

If you are convicted of a drug-related offense after you submit the FAFSA form, you might lose eligibility for federal student aid, and you might be liable for returning any financial aid you received during a period of ineligibility.

**An approved drug rehabilitation program is:**

(1) qualified to receive funds from a federal, state, or local government or from a federally or state-licensed insurance company; or

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

**Health Risks for Drug and Alcohol Abuse**

All drugs are toxic or poisonous when abused. Health risks of drug abuse include but are not limited to sleep disorders, confusion, hallucinations, paranoia, deep depression, malnutrition, liver and kidney damage, cardiac irregularities, hepatitis, and neurological damage.

Alcohol is a depressant. It depresses the central nervous system and can cause serious physical damage. Excessive drinking damages the liver, resulting in cirrhosis; chronic alcohol abuse also causes hypertension, cardiac irregularities, ulcers, pancreatitis, kidney disease, cancer of the esophagus, liver, bladder or lungs; memory loss, tremors, malnutrition, vitamin deficiencies and possibly sexual dysfunction. Abuse of alcohol or drugs during pregnancy increases the risk of birth defects, spontaneous abortion and still births.

**Assistance for Alcohol Abuse and/or Drug Abuse Problems**

Heritage Christian University will provide confidential, professional assistance for any students who request substance abuse information. Students are urged to seek information and help regarding substance abuse for themselves or their friends. A variety of services including counseling, and/or referral information are available at the Alpha Center and in the Dean of Students office. There are also a number of Alcohol and Drug Education Programs/ Rehabilitation Centers available to students in the Florence/Shoals area.

HCU believes that these resources can provide ongoing, student-centered education and prevention information including a peer education, training programs, and health promotional materials for our students. For more

information, students should contact the Dean of Student's office at extension 305, or The Alpha Center at 256-765-7111. To protect students' privacy, information regarding a student during participation in any related program will be treated confidentially.