

Temporary COVID 19 Institutional Merit Aid Policy

Purpose and Scope

The Academic Excellence Scholarship and Golden Ram Awards Institutional Merit Aid are awarded to qualified first year-students who begin in the fall semester and is renewable upon continuous enrollment.

West Chester University (WCU) recognizes students and their families are experiencing unprecedented uncertainties and disruptions due to the current global pandemic that may impact their enrollment for the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 semester. Such uncertainties and disruptions include medical, personal, financial, as well as not being able to engage in the course delivery modality.

To that end the previously approved (8/25/2020) Temporary COVID 19 Institutional Merit Aid Policy for Fall 2020 has been extended to cover the 2020-2021 academic year.

Policy Statement

WCU is offering a temporary COVID 19 Institutional Merit Aid Policy for students who were awarded the Academic Excellence Scholarship or Golden Ram Awards for the 2020-21 academic year.

Policy Framework

Due to the uncertainties and disruptions of the current global pandemic the following temporary policy statements are in effect for the 2020-2021 academic year:

First-Year Students

- new first-year students who received the Academic Excellence Scholarship and/or Golden Ram Awards who defer enrollment to Spring 2021 and do not attend another post-secondary institution will still be eligible for their renewable Academic Excellence Scholarship and/or Golden Ram Awards for 8 continuous semesters upon maintaining good academic standing.
- new first-year students who received the Academic Excellence Scholarship and/or Golden Ram Awards who defer enrollment to Spring 2021 and attend another post-secondary institution will still be eligible for their renewable Academic Excellence Scholarship and/or Golden Ram Awards for 7 continuous semesters upon maintaining good academic standing.
- new first-year students who received the Academic Excellence Scholarship and/or Golden Ram Awards who attended (and successfully completed) Fall 2020 semester and who take an official leave of absence and do not attend another post-secondary institution will still be eligible for their renewable Academic Excellence Scholarship and/or Golden Ram Awards for 7 continuous semesters upon maintaining good academic standing.

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- new first-year students who received the Academic Excellence Scholarship and/or Golden Ram Awards who attended (and successfully completed) Fall 2020 semester and who take an official leave of absence and attend another post-secondary institution will still be eligible for their renewable Academic Excellence Scholarship and/or Golden Ram Awards for 6 continuous semesters upon maintaining good academic standing.

Returning Students

- Returning Students who received the Academic Excellence Scholarship and/or Golden Ram Awards who take an official leave of absence for the Fall 2020 semester and do not attend another post-secondary institution will still be eligible for their remaining Academic Excellence Scholarship and Golden Ram awards so long as they enroll for Spring 2021.
- Returning Fall 2020 Students who received the Academic Excellence Scholarship and/or Golden Ram Awards who take an official leave of absence for the Spring 2021 semester and do not attend another post-secondary institution will still be eligible for their remaining Academic Excellence Scholarship and Golden Ram awards so long as they enroll for Fall 2021.

Summer 2021

Returning students who take an official leave of absence in Fall 2020 and/or Spring 2021 will be considered for one semester's worth of Academic Excellence Scholarship and/or Golden Ram Awards if they are enrolled for a full-time courseload (12 or more credits of summer coursework). Eligibility for this exception will be reviewed on a case by case basis by the Financial Aid office. Institutional award amounts will be approved up to the amount of remaining cost after "free" credits and federal/state gift aid is applied. Utilizing these awards for summer will count as one semester of the original eight semesters granted. Therefore, students will want to work with Financial Aid to determine if this is the best use of their eligibility.

Definitions:

Academic Excellence Scholarships are renewable awards granted to new first-year students at the time of acceptance, which are based on merit including a student's pre-admission academic performance. These awards are provided to full-time students for 8 continuous semesters based on students maintaining good academic standing (cumulative GPA 2.0).

Free Credits: Credits earned during fall 2020 and/or spring 2021 as a result of not taking the full 18 credits. For example, students who took 15 credits in fall 2020 earned 3 free credits to use in winter 2020 or summer 2021.

Golden Ram Awards (GRA) are renewable need-based grants awarded to new first-year students as part of their initial financial aid review. These grants are awarded based on a combination of pre-admission academic performance and FAFSA information. The awards are provided to full-time students for 8 continuous semesters based on student maintaining good academic standing (cumulative GPA of 2.0).

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Official Leave is an Approved Temporary Leave of Absence for Fall 2020 or Spring 2021 in which students must submit a temporary leave of absence request [form](#) to the Office of the University Registrar no later than the Fall 2020 or Spring 2021 add/drop deadlines.

Reviewed by: University Registrar, Assistant Vice President for Student Financial Services and Bursar, Sr. Associate Vice President for Financial Aid and Campuses, Assistant Vice President for University Admissions.

Policy Owner: Daniel McIlhenny, Executive Director of Financial Aid

Approved: Jeffery L. Osgood Jr., Deputy Provost and Vice President for Academic Operations  November 9, 2020

Effective: 2020-2021 Academic Year