

GAP ASSISTANCE PROGRAM REQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

GAP ASSISTANCE TRACKING SPREADSHEET

TRACKING TAB

General

The Status of Approved Participants, Completed Program/Training Date, and Did Not Complete Date fields (columns N-Q) should show the status of the student as of the last day of the quarter being reported.

Dates must be in mm/dd/yy format as formulas used to prepare the annual report rely on comparing dates when doing counts of students or sums of eligible costs.

Columns W through AD, highlighted in red, are used only when there is a date in column P, Completed Program/Training Date. These are very important columns to complete as they show the benefits and outcomes of the Gap program and are included in the report submitted to the Legislature.

If a date is included in column W - New Employment, then either a Yes or No must be entered in column X - If New Employment, was employment within their in-demand occupational area?

Status of Approved Participants

Since the spreadsheet should report the status of the student as of the end of the quarter, if the student had been approved and the Enrolled in Program Date is after the end of the quarter, this person must have a date prior to the end of the quarter entered in the Waiting to Participate Date field. Otherwise, this student will not be counted for the quarter and this could make a big impact if it is the 4th quarter which is used to prepare the report. Example: Fourth quarter report (June 30, 2018) shows an Enrolled in Program Date for a student of July 7, 2018. Because this student's date is after June 30, 2018, he will not be included in the June 30, 2018, report. However, if the student would have a June 28, 2018, date entered in the Waiting to Participate Date, the June 30, 2018, report would include this student under the Waiting to Participate category.

Eligible Costs

If the student has a date entered in the Enrolled in Program Date column, then costs must be recorded in this section but can be estimated initially. It is important that the costs of enrolled students are reported in the same quarter as the Enrolled in Program date. Adjustments can be made in later quarters if necessary.

EXPENSES TAB

In the past, there has been some attempt to reconcile the Eligible Costs on the Tracking tab to the amount reported in the Expenses tab. While this may be possible, there could be timing differences when costs are actually paid from the Gap funds and when Eligible Costs are recorded on the Tracking tab.

Because of this, please meet with your accounting department and amend the Expenses tab from the beginning (July 2016) to reflect actual net expenditures as shown in the general ledger used to track Gap expenditures. The purpose of this change is to report the amount actually paid from Gap funds and supported in the accounting records. Expenses included under this tab will be the basis for expenditures reported in the annual report.

Drug testing should be part of training costs, not administrative costs if it is a requirement of the program. If it's a requirement of the college for acceptance to the gap program, then it would be an administrative expense.

GAP ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OF STUDY

ELIGIBLE PROGRAM OF STUDY LIST

There's been many additions to our list of eligible programs and only a few deletions. Please take a look at your programs and if you feel there are any that should no longer be included, please email the deletions so they can be removed from the list.

CREDIT PROGRAMS

With the passage of LB 180, eligible credit programs can be funded under the Gap program. The Federal Student Financial Aid handbook identifies two types of institutions and a community colleges may fall under both – an institution of higher education and a postsecondary vocational institution, each one with a different programmatic hourly threshold requirement to be eligible for Title IV funding. As not all of the community colleges have opted to be designated a postsecondary vocational institution by the U.S Dept. of Education, undergraduate programs that provide at least 600 clock hours, 16 semester or trimester hours, or 24 quarter hours of undergraduate instruction offered during a term of at least 15 weeks of instruction are not eligible for a Pell grant, possibly making these programs eligible for Gap funding

In order to keep the inquiries of potential Pell eligible programs to a minimum for the financial aid or similar office, you can use the following thresholds:

- If a credit program is less than 600 clock hours, 16 semester or trimester hours, or 24 quarter hours, these programs do not need to be reviewed by the financial aid or similar office that's familiar with Pell grant requirements.

- If a credit program is at least 600 clock hours, 16 semester or trimester hours, or 24 quarter hours, these programs need reviewed by the financial aid or similar office that's familiar with Pell grant requirements to determine whether the program is Pell eligible. If the financial aid or similar office determines the program isn't eligible for Pell grant funding, and therefore eligible for Gap funding, this should be documented and kept on file.

CREDIT COURSE ELIGIBILITY WHEN PART OF PELL-ELIGIBLE PROGRAM

Certain Pell-eligible programs have required introductory credit-bearing courses that, when taken on their own, could be considered Gap Assistance programs. An Associate Degree Nursing program with CNA and Med Aide classes embedded into the program would be Pell-eligible. However, the same CNA and Med Aide courses could be combined into a stand-alone credit Gap program, provided the program meets the eligibility requirements found in the guidelines for a credit Gap program of study (page 2).

By creating Gap-eligible credit programs by breaking out certain courses from Pell-eligible programs, a student could complete a Gap program and then decide to pursue a degree pathway and be eligible for Pell grants, with the Gap program coursework counting toward their degree pathway.

As with any new program, it must be submitted for approval using the new spreadsheet form found on the website. Although credit Gap programs could meet the definition of an aligned training program, these credit programs could also lead to an associate's degree, a diploma, or a certificate. Currently, non-credit CDL programs with an aligned training program are included on the Gap programs list. If a similar credit CDL program is submitted, it would be expected to include an aligned training program, which is not required to be from the same college. Please include under the Aligned Training Program heading if there is a pathway for the credit Gap program.

When creating any Gap program, keep in mind Gap funding pays for programs, not individual courses. While some Gap programs may consist of only one class such as Med Aide, once students complete the Med Aide program, they would not be eligible for further Gap funding as only one program per student is allowed.

REMEDIAL COURSES

One outcome measure in § 85-2005 is that the applicant must demonstrate the ability to be accepted to and complete an eligible program. This could imply that if a student requires remedial coursework then that student doesn't have the ability to be accepted into the program and would not be eligible.

The committee reviewed this issue and determined that when a student does not test high enough in a subject and would need one remedial course before being meeting the

requirements, this one remedial course could be included as part of a Gap program of study. This will allow a student that may not be able to afford a remedial course or not be able to afford the time to take and complete the remedial course and then start a Gap program, to take the remedial and Gap courses concurrently and finish the program more quickly.

It is important to note that only one remedial course will be allowed per program and only if the applicant's assessment determined the applicant did not test high enough in a subject and would need to take a remedial course.

COMBINING CREDIT AND NON-CREDIT PROGRAMS/COURSES INTO A SINGLE GAP PROGRAM

Credit and non-credit programs/courses can be combined into one Gap program as long as there is a logical relationship to the courses/programs. This builds on the previous guidance of combining non-credit programs into one program. When combining programs, colleges must submit the combined program of study for approval even though previously approved programs of study may be being combined. This will identify the combined program as one program. When completing the Gap Assistance Program Approval Form, you should identify the non-credit and credit hours under the correct column.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

Per the Gap Assistance guidelines for a student to be eligible:

Nebraska Revised Statute § 85-2005 requires a CCGAP applicant, through their initial assessment or other means, to demonstrate capacity to achieve the following outcomes:

- a) The ability to be accepted to and complete a Gap program of study;
- b) The ability to be accepted into and complete a postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree program for credit;
- c) The ability to obtain full-time employment; and
- d) The ability to maintain full-time employment over time.

The specific part that would make a high school student ineligible for Gap Assistance is b) The ability to be accepted into and complete a postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree program for credit. If a community college requires a high school diploma or GED to be accepted into a credit program, a high school student would not be eligible. If a community college does not have this requirement, then a high school student would be eligible if he/she meets the other requirements. With the requirements of c) and d), a high school student would need to be a senior. A junior or younger would not

be able to obtain full-time employment within a 6 to 12 month period from completing the program.

INCARCERATED PERSON ELIGIBILITY

The same criteria as used above for the eligibility of a high school student would apply to incarcerated people. First, they would need to meet the requirements of Neb. Rev. Stat. § 85-2005. With the requirements of c) and d), the incarcerated person's sentence would need to end within 6 months from completing the program.

INCOME ELIGIBILITY

Income most often is annualized on a January through December basis, i.e. if an applicant earned \$7,000 through March, the annualized income would be \$28,000. However, when determining income eligibility, the annualize period that most accurately reflects the family's ability to pay should be used. For example, if an applicant had earned \$20,000 through March, applied for Gap in July and had no other income from March through July, the college could elect to use a July through June timeframe to calculate the annualized income, in this case \$0. In this example, the applicant had been unemployed for three months and it was assumed the situation would not change. If you use a timeframe different than the standard January through December, you should note your reason in the applicant's file. Your financial aid office should be familiar with recalculating aid based on changing circumstances for federal aid if you need additional information.

REMEDIAL COURSES

See REMEDIAL COURSES under GAP ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OF STUDY above.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

OTHER FUNDING SOURCES

Neb. Rev. Stat. § 85-2005(3) conditions the awarding of Gap funding to an applicant by specifically directing the committee to "deny an application when the community college receiving the application determines that funding for an applicant's participation in an eligible program is available from any other public or private funding source." This would preclude an individual from applying for and being accepted into the Gap Assistance program and concurrently accepting Workforce Retraining Initiative (WRI) funds to pay for the Gap-approved program.

However, an individual who has not applied to the Gap Assistance program could receive WRI funding and, once the individual completes the courses/training paid by

WRI funds, he/she could apply to the Gap Assistance program with the Gap Assistance program funding the remaining courses/training in a Gap-eligible program.

An example could be a student who enrolls in one or two welding courses funded through WRI. Once the student exhausts the WRI funding, he/she could apply to the Gap Assistance program, and provided the student met the eligibility requirements, would be accepted into a Gap-eligible welding program with the courses taken through WRI counting toward the certificate.

However, this does not preclude the student receiving funds from other sources for costs Gap does not cover, such as housing. Another example could be using Vocational Rehabilitation funding for costs that the Gap program does not allow.