

Did you know being convicted of a drug charge will cause you to lose your financial aid?

A federal or state drug conviction can disqualify a student for Federal Student Aid funds. Depending on the seriousness of the offense, the disqualification can be for a brief period, or indefinitely. The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 includes provisions that authorize federal and state judges to deny certain federal benefits, including student aid, to persons convicted of drug trafficking or possession.

When does a conviction NOT count?

Convictions only count if they were for an offense that occurred during a period of enrollment for which the student was receiving Title IV aid. Further, a conviction does not count if the offense was reversed, set aside, or removed from the student's record does not count, nor does one received when the student was a juvenile, unless the student was tried as an adult.

How long do the consequences of conviction last?

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

	Possession of illegal drugs	Sale of illegal drugs
1st offense	1 year from date of conviction	2 years from date of conviction
2nd offense	2 years from date of conviction	Indefinite period
3+ offenses	Indefinite period	

If the student was convicted of *both* possessing and selling illegal drugs, and the periods of ineligibility are different, the student will be ineligible for the longer period.

Can I re-establish eligibility?

Yes. Students can regain eligibility for Federal Student Aid the day after the period of ineligibility ends or when the student successfully completes a qualified drug rehabilitation program. Students who are denied eligibility for an indefinite period can only regain eligibility after successfully completing a qualified drug rehabilitation program. It is the student's responsibility to notify the financial aid office of such completion.

What kind of drug rehabilitation programs count?

A qualified drug rehabilitation program must include at least two unannounced drug tests and must satisfy at least one of the following requirements:

- Be qualified to receive funds directly or indirectly from a federal, state, or local government program.
- Be qualified to receive payment directly or indirectly from a federally or state-licensed insurance company.
- Be administered or recognized by a federal, state or local government agency or court.
- Be administered or recognized by a federally or state-licensed hospital, health clinic or medical doctor.