The University of Mississippi

Unofficial Withdrawal

Summary/Purpose: The effect of an unofficial withdrawal on a student's federal financial aid.

An unofficial withdrawal is when a student stops attending classes during a term. Although the student did not formally withdraw from the University, the student did not complete the period of attendance for which the federal aid eligibility was based. For schools like the University of Mississippi that are not mandated to take attendance, the Department of Education requires grade review at the end of each semester. Those students who receive all F and/or W grades for a given term are contacted in order to determine if they ceased attendance. If so, they are responsible for returning a prorated portion of the Federal Title IV funds they received for the term. Some of these programs are as follows:

1. Federal Pell Grant
2. Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG),
3. National Science and Mathematics to Retain Talent Grant (SMART)
4. Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG)
5. TEACH Grant
6. Federal Perkins Loan
7. Federal Stafford Subsidized and/or Unsubsidized Loan
8. Federal Parent PLUS Loan (borrowed on the student's behalf)
9. Federal Graduate PLUS loan

These provisions are federally mandated and may supersede all refund policies.

In order to perform the grade review, The Office of Financial Aid has created a term-based report that identifies all students who received federal aid and posted all “F” and/or “W” grades. Each student is notified by letter and an email sent to their University email account that it has been determined that he/she may be an unofficial withdrawal, and as a result, federal financial aid paybacks will be issued. The letter/email informs the student of his/her right to dispute the determination. For students falling into this category, we must determine if the student actually began attendance, and if so, when the attendance ceased. If the student has attended any of his/her classes, the student should contact the instructor and have the instructor inform the Office of Financial Aid of the last date of attendance for any class related activity, before the stated deadline in the student's Unofficial Withdrawal letter. If any instructor has provided the required documentation of a later attendance date by the stated deadline, the latest date will be used for the unofficial withdrawal calculation.

Once we have that information, these students are processed as schedule cancellations (if never attended) or as unofficial withdrawals (if attended and left without officially withdrawing). For schedule cancellations, the student account will be charged for all disbursed aid so that it can be returned to the source. For unofficial withdrawals, an unofficial withdrawal calculation is performed for refund purposes.