



STETSON LAW

## **Title IV Return of Aid for Leaves and Withdrawals**

Federal law and regulations require Stetson University College of Law to calculate a return of Title IV funds for any student who withdraws. Due to the specific requirements applicable to leaves under Title IV, most College of Law-approved leaves of absence and all withdrawals are treated as withdrawals for Title IV purposes. This calculation is performed using a specific formula required by the U.S. Department of Education.

### **A. Overview**

Title IV funds are awarded to a student under the assumption that the student will attend school for the entire semester or program for which the financial aid has been awarded. When a student takes leave or withdraws, the student may no longer be eligible for the full amount of Title IV funds awarded. The return of Title IV funds calculation is based on the percentage of the semester or, in the case of specific programs like summer study-abroad programs, the program period completed and the amount of Title IV aid disbursed or scheduled to be disbursed. The return of Title IV funds calculation is separate and distinct from the calculation for a refund of tuition and fees under the Refund of Tuition and Fees policy, explained in more detail below.

### **B. How the Calculation Works**

Under the Title IV calculation, the College of Law determines the amount of unearned aid that the student is responsible for returning and the amount of aid that the College of Law is responsible for returning. The Office of Admissions and Student Financial Planning completes these calculations. Because the College of Law is considered an attendance-taking institution under Title IV, the calculation for return of Title IV funds is based upon the last date of attendance at a class or documented academically related activity as determined by the Office of the Registrar.

The date of determination that triggers the timeframe for a return calculation to be completed is determined by the earliest of the following dates:

- The date the student began the College leave or withdrawal process;
- The date the student officially notified the institution of intent to withdraw or take leave;
- The date the College initiated the withdrawal process.

When a student has simply stopped attending classes without notifying the College of an intent to seek leave or withdraw, the date of determination is the point at which the student exceeds the maximum permitted absences in all classes and has thus been rendered ineligible for any course credit.

To identify the percentage of time the student has completed, the number of calendar days from the start of the semester or program to the last date of attendance is divided by the total number of calendar days in the semester or, in the case of specific programs like summer study-abroad programs, the program. The amount of Title IV aid that is “earned” by a student is based on this percentage. Scheduled breaks that are five or more calendar days long are excluded from the calculation.

The following calculations are used to determine the amount of aid that has been earned:

If the student has completed more than 60% of the semester or specific program for which aid has been awarded, the period is deemed completed, no return of the Title IV funds for that period is required, and the student is considered to have earned 100% of the Title IV funds received.

If the student has completed 60% or less of the semester or specific program for which aid has been awarded, this percentage is multiplied by the total amount of Title IV aid disbursed or scheduled to be disbursed. The difference between the amount of earned aid and the total amount of Title IV aid received is the amount of unearned aid.

### **C. Aid the College of Law Must Return:**

To determine the amount of aid the College of Law is responsible for returning, the institutional charges (tuition, fees, etc. for the entire enrollment period or payment period) are multiplied by the percentage of unearned aid. The amount the College is responsible for returning is compared to the total amount of unearned aid; the lesser amount is then returned to the student’s loans in the following order: Stafford Unsubsidized Loan followed by the Graduate PLUS loan. This amount is charged to the student’s account. At that point, the student’s situation is evaluated under the College’s Refund of Tuition and Fees policy.

In some circumstances, the student may owe the College the remaining unpaid portion of tuition and fees; depending on the circumstances, the College of Law may waive this additional balance. For additional detail on the policy on waiver of tuition balances, review the policy on Leaves of Absence and Withdrawal from School. If the amount earned is more than the amount disbursed, the student may be eligible for Post-Withdrawal Disbursement (described below).

### **D. Aid the Student Must Return:**

The student is responsible for returning any portion of the unearned aid that is not returned by the College of Law. This return of funds is in addition to any refund money the College is required to return. For any unearned aid from Title IV loans, the student is responsible for repaying those funds according to the terms of the promissory note. The Office of Admissions and Student Financial Planning will inform the student in writing of any amounts the student is responsible for paying after the return calculation has been completed.

## **E. Post-Withdrawal Disbursements:**

At the time of leave or withdrawal, if the student has received less Title IV aid than the amount deemed earned, the student may be eligible to receive additional funds in a post-withdrawal disbursement. In this situation, the Office of Admissions and Student Financial Planning will inform the student of this eligibility. The student may then request that the additional funds be disbursed or may decline some or all of the funds to prevent incurring additional debt. To decline, the student should notify the Office of Admissions and Student Financial Planning in writing of his or her desire to return the funds. The College of Law recommends that only funds required to meet direct educational expenses be requested to reduce the student's debt.

**Please note:** The determination of the percentage of institutional charges owed is not the same as the percentage of federal loans earned. Federal regulations dictate the portion of federal financial aid that can be retained, while College of Law policy controls the availability of full or partial refunds. Students are also reminded that while they may be eligible to retain a certain portion of loans, this represents a loan that must be repaid. If the calculations yield a credit balance to the student, the College of Law will apply the balance against the loan unless the student requests otherwise. Once a student-borrower has exhausted any grace period, the student will enter repayment no later than six months after the last day of attendance in at least a half time status. Borrowers are encouraged to review information on deferments and forbearances if they anticipate difficulty in repayment.

## **F. Exit Requirements for Leave or Withdrawal:**

All students who have a break in attendance either by withdrawal or leave of absence are required to complete Student Loan Exit Counseling within 30 days of leave or withdrawal. Loan Exit counseling information will be mailed to any student (or student's representative where the student is incapacitated) who fails to complete this requirement. Please contact the Office of Admissions and Student Financial Planning for more information.

**Cross-References:** *Refund of Tuition and Fees, Leaves of Absence and Withdrawal from School, Withdrawal and Leave for Electronic Education LL.M. and M.J. Students.*

*Administrative policy adopted November 16, 2009 (previously addressed in Leaves of Absence and Withdrawals from School policy); revised July 25, 2012; revised January 22, 2018.*