



## GAINING EARLY AWARENESS AND READINESS FOR UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS (GEAR UP)

### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

#### **How much time do I have to claim my ETA?**

Students have six years from their high school graduation to enroll in a college or university and claim their funds.

#### **How do I claim my Educational Trust Award (ETA)?**

Students must have graduated from high school and have enrolled in a college or university. Students, along with their financial aid office must complete a Qualified Funds Withdrawal Form (QFWF) and submit it to the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC).

#### **Can students request an amount less than the total balance?**

Students can request the total balance or any portion of the balance of their award. Keep in mind that any unused portion of the award not claimed within six years will be forfeited.

#### **How do I submit my QFWF?**

Submit the completed form(s) to the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC). **Email is preferred.**

Email: [gear-up@csac.ca.gov](mailto:gear-up@csac.ca.gov)

Or Mail: California Student Aid Commission  
Attn: GEAR UP  
P.O. Box 419027  
Rancho Cordova, CA. 95741

#### **How long does the process take to receive my check?**

Once a student's QFWF has been processed, it takes approximately 4-6 weeks for a check to be sent. Checks are made out to the college or university.

CSAC will notify students via email when the check has been mailed to their college or university. Students should follow up with their financial aid office in 2-3 weeks.

**What is an eligible institution?**

An eligible institution is a college or university participating in Federal Title IV student financial aid programs.

**Do I have to enroll in a four-year college or university?**

No, you can attend a community college, vocational, or proprietary school.

**Do I have to attend a college or university in California?**

No, you do not have to attend a college or university in California.

**Do I have to attend a college or university in the United States?**

Yes, you do have to attend a college or university in the United States.

**Who do I contact if I have questions about my award?**

Please contact the California State GEAR UP Program at [gear-up@csac.ca.gov](mailto:gear-up@csac.ca.gov).