

***California Student Aid Commission*****Revision to the 2009-10 Cal Grant C Scoring Criteria**

---

Last year, Commission staff began discussions with the Grant Advisory Committee (GAC) to explore ways to simplify the Cal Grant C application process for students. Cal Grant C awards may only be used for occupational or technical training. The maximum Cal Grant C award amount and the total amount of funding for Cal Grant C awards are established by the Budget Act. The Commission establishes selection criteria for Cal Grant C awards, thus requiring a supplemental application form to be filled out by potentially eligible students. Paper Cal Grant C Supplement application forms are mailed to potentially eligible students after Commission staff has processed the FAFSA and Grade Point Average information constituting the standard Cal Grant application and has identified those students. Students are required to submit the completed applications by a specified deadline to enable Commission staff to score each application based on selection criteria, to rank the scored applications in cohorts based on score, and to make Cal Grant C awards based on the amount in the Budget Act.

Commission staff proposed to develop an electronic Cal Grant C Supplement application form on the Commission website to streamline the application process and eliminate the need for paper forms. On October 9, 2008, GAC established the Cal Grant C Program work group to review the current Cal Grant C application process and to assess the impact of the proposed changes.

Commission staff convened a teleconference on March 5, 2009, which included GAC members and interested participants from various institutions. During the discussion, Question 9 of the Cal Grant C Supplement application was identified as a source of delays and problems impairing the student's ability to submit a timely completed application. Question 9 must be completed and signed by a teacher, counselor, school official, employer or other professional individual who knows the student well and can comment knowledgeably about the student's interest or achievement in occupational/technical areas. An earlier survey conducted by GAC members indicated that Question 9 caused problems for students in obtaining recommendations from qualified individuals and did not necessarily accurately predict the success of students in the occupational/technical programs they were pursuing.

In an effort to gauge the impact of eliminating Question 9, Commission staff collected and analyzed data to determine whether the inclusion of Question 9 on the Cal Grant C Supplement affected the outcome of awards. Results indicated that Question 9 did not have a significant effect on whether a student was awarded or not awarded a Cal Grant C, and that the elimination of Question 9 would not have a significant effect on the scoring process or the Cal Grant C awarding process. Question 9 was worth up to 35 points out of 100 possible points. However, there was merely a 4.60 difference in the average scores on Question 9 between awarded students and non-awarded students. Students in both categories consistently scored high on Question 9, since students generally request recommendations from trustworthy individuals who

provide high recommendations, and the Question 9 results were not significant in determining which students received Cal Grant C awards.

In addition, maintaining Question 9 would reduce somewhat the benefits of the proposed electronic Cal Grant C Supplement application form, since a third party would still be required to submit a separate, paper response to Question 9.

As a result of the discussions held and data reviewed, Commission staff and GAC agreed that for the 2009-10 academic year, Question 9 should be eliminated from the Cal Grant C Supplement application form to implement the electronic application. In addition, for the 2010-11 academic year, Commission staff and GAC agreed that further discussion and additional data analysis are needed to determine whether to replace Question 9 with a different criterion, such as "need," and whether to re-distribute the remaining points.

With respect to the Cal Grant C scoring process, GAC recommended to Commission staff that the total point scale for determining Cal Grant C award recipients for the 2009-10 academic year be reduced from 100 to 65 points, reflecting the elimination of the 35 points for Question 9.

Commission staff agrees because a simulation recently conducted established that there was no change reflected in applicants who did or did not receive awards when the 65- and 100-point scales were used.

**Recommendation:**

For the 2009-10 academic year, eliminate Question 9 from the Cal Grant C Supplement application form, and score the applications based on a total of 65 points.

***Responsible Person(s):***

Catalina Mistler, Chief  
Program Administration & Services Division

Gloria Falcon, Manager  
Program, Policy and Development

Tae Kang, Associate Analyst  
Program, Policy and Development

Mary Lindsey, Vice Chair  
Grant Advisory Committee