



Frequently Asked Questions

1. Q: How do I claim my Educational Trust Award from California GEAR UP?
A: Students must have graduated from high school and have enrolled in a postsecondary institution within one year after high school graduation. Students, along with their financial aid office must complete a Qualified Funds Withdrawal Form (QFWF) and submit it to the California Student Aid Commission (Commission).
2. Q: How long does the process take to receive my check?
A: Once a student's QFWF has been processed, it takes approximately 4-6 weeks for a check to be received at the student's school. **Students do not receive a check.** GEAR UP checks are sent to the postsecondary institution that the student attends.
3. Q: How may I obtain a QFWF?
A: You may download a QFWF from the GEAR UP Web site at castategearup.org.
4. Q: Where should I mail my QFWF?
A: California Student Aid Commission
GEAR UP
P.O. Box 419029
Rancho Cordova, CA. 95741-9029
5. Q: How can I find out if my school received my check?
A: The Commission will send an e-mail notifying students when their checks have been mailed to their schools. The e-mail notifies students to inquire at their school 2-3 weeks later regarding receipt of their GEAR UP check.
6. Q: How long do I have to claim and use my award?
A: An awardee must graduate from high school (or the equivalent) and enroll in college within one year (12 months) of their high school graduation. However, a student has six years after high school graduation to use the entire amount of their award.
7. Q: Can students request an amount less than the total balance?
A: Students can request the total balance or any portion of the balance of their award.
8. Q: What is an eligible institution?
A: A postsecondary institution is an eligible institutions participating in Federal Title IV student financial aid programs.
9. Q: Do I have to enroll in a four year school?
A: No, you can attend a community college, vocational, or proprietary school.
10. Q: Do I have to attend a college in California.
A: No, you do not have to attend a college in California.
11. Q: Who should I contact if I have questions about my award?
A: Please contact the California State GEAR UP Program at gear-up@csac.ca.gov or at 916-479-6742.