



# OPERATIONS MEMO

## Update from the California Student Aid Commission

STATE OF  
CALIFORNIA



**May 26, 2015**

**GOM 2015-19**

TO: Financial Aid Administrators

FROM: Catalina G. Mistler   
Chief, Program Administration & Services Division

SUBJECT: **Competitive Cal Grant Deferral Update**

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This Operations Memo from the California Student Aid Commission (Commission) provides an update on progression of the Competitive Cal Grant A/B Deferrals. This applies to new students awarded a Competitive Cal Grant A/B starting in academic year 2015-16.

As a result of recommendations approved during the April 16-17, 2015 Commission Meeting, the Commission gathered pertinent information needed to deliver a plan for the following Commission approved actions.

### Commission Approved Actions

1. Allow only student-initiated deferrals of the Competitive Cal Grant award.
2. Implement an appeal process to allow students to reinstate their Competitive Cal Grant award.
3. Implement a process that would count deferred awards in the year in which the award was paid, rather than the year originally awarded.

### **Benefits of Approved Actions**

- Improved Utilization and Paid Rates of Competitive Awards
- Increased Amount of Recycle Awards
- Enhanced Flexibility to Recycle Awards

### **Student-initiated Deferrals**

Beginning with the opening of the 2015-16 WebGrants online roster, Institution submitted Leave of Absence (LA) requests for newly awarded Competitive Cal Grant A/B students will no longer be accepted. The Adjustment Reason Code 'LA' option will be removed from the online WebGrants roster for these students only. Any transactions of LA for newly awarded competitive students sent by Institutions via batch file, will be rejected. All other roster options and functionality will remain the same for all other types of students.

The Commission will continue to receive and process **student-initiated** LA requests for all types of students including newly awarded competitive students. Students may submit a LA request online using WebGrants for Students (WGS) or over the phone by contacting our Customer Assistance and Processing Unit at (888) 224-7268. The

Commission will also accept LA requests from students using the paper Grant Record Change Form for Students (G-10).

### **Appeal Process**

The Commission has an appeal process for Students and Schools that allows a withdrawn student who failed to use the Competitive award in the award year, to provide evidence showing that the circumstances that prevented the student's use of the award were beyond the student's control. A detailed explanation addressing the reason for appeal, and supporting documentation is recommended upon submission. An approved appeal could result in a deferred award, or allow a school to pay during the awarded year.

### **Deferred Awards Counted in Year Award Paid**

Beginning in the 2015-16 academic year, Competitive Cal Grant deferred awards will be counted in the actual year in which the first Cal Grant payment is made, as opposed to the year the grant was awarded. This will allow the Commission to maximize the number of recycled awards. For example, if a student were to defer their Competitive Cal Grant award to the following academic year, the Commission could recycle that award for the current year.

### **Communication with Schools and Students**

The Commission has developed a timeline to ensure that both students and schools are notified on multiple occasions throughout the academic year regarding the Competitive Cal Grant student-initiated deferral and appeal process.

### **Need to contact us?**

- Institutional Support phone number: (888) 294-0153
- E-mail: [schoolsupport@csac.ca.gov](mailto:schoolsupport@csac.ca.gov)

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