



## Prison Education Program Fact Sheet: Program Approval Process

As of July 1, 2023, a confined or incarcerated individual is eligible to receive a Federal Pell Grant if they enroll in an eligible Prison Education Program (PEP). This fact sheet provides more information for postsecondary schools about the approval process for a postsecondary program to become an eligible PEP.

### What is an eligible PEP?

PEPs are eligible programs defined by statute under [34 CFR 668.8](#), offered by a public or nonprofit educational institution (as defined in [34 CFR 600.4](#)), or a postsecondary vocational institution (as defined in [34 CFR 600.6](#)). Private for-profit (proprietary) institutions cannot offer a *Title IV*-eligible PEP. In addition to the definitions linked above, an eligible PEP must meet the requirements in [34 CFR 668.236](#).

### How does a school apply for a PEP?

Federal *Title IV*-eligible schools **must** use the electronic Application for Approval to Participate in the Federal Student Financial Aid Programs ([E-App](#)) to report or request approval of a PEP. To apply for PEP approval, please follow the instructions in Electronic Announcement [GENERAL 24-118](#). Before applying for a PEP, ensure that your program is consistent with your school's accreditation and any applicable state approval agency requirements, that you have been granted authorization to offer your program at the correctional facility, and that you have reached an agreement with an appropriate oversight entity. The oversight entity is defined in [34 CFR 668.235](#) as the appropriate state department of corrections, other entity that is responsible for overseeing correctional facilities, or the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

### Do all PEPs require Department approval?

Although the first program at the first two locations have specific approval requirements outlined under [34 CFR 668.238](#), all PEPs must be reported to the Department via the [E-App](#). PEPs leading to a degree must be reported even if the institution is not normally required to seek approval of degree programs. Remember to include all supporting documentation when submitting the E-App. In addition, the institution must report the correctional facility where the eligible PEP will be offered as an additional location in the "Locations" section of the E-App. Enter the facility's official name after the prepopulated institution name. This requirement applies for correctional facilities even if the students receive instruction primarily through distance education or correspondence courses at that location.

### What if my school offers a *Title IV*-eligible program to individuals who are confined or incarcerated at correctional facilities other than state or federal facilities?

Schools offering programs in a correctional facility that is not a federal or state facility must apply for and receive approval of the program as an eligible PEP. In an effort not to interrupt the postsecondary program of incarcerated students receiving Pell Grants for programs prior to the implementation of PEP requirements, otherwise eligible confined or incarcerated students who were enrolled in an eligible *Title IV* program prior to July 1, 2023, may continue to receive a Federal Pell Grant until the earlier of: (1) July 1, 2029; (2) the student no longer meets Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) requirements and reaches the maximum timeframe for program completion under [34 CFR 668.34](#); or (3) the student has reached their Pell Lifetime Eligibility Used (LEU), exhausting their Pell Grant eligibility under [34 CFR 690.6\(e\)](#).

### Are schools participating in the Second Chance Pell (SCP) experiment required to convert programs under the experiment to comply with the PEP provisions?

Yes. The revised SCP experiment will end on June 30, 2026. Therefore, all programs under the revised SCP experiment must be approved as a PEP in order for the program(s) to be Pell-eligible after the experiment ends.

### What if my school has additional questions about prison education programs?

For additional questions about PEPs, visit the [Prison Education Programs Topics page](#) on the Knowledge Center, read the Electronic Announcement [GENERAL-24-118](#) or email the Department at: [PEP@ed.gov](mailto:PEP@ed.gov).