

NJ STARS Scholarship Maintenance Requirements

The following are the requirements to maintain your NJ STARS eligibility:

- **Full-Time Enrollment:** Students must maintain full-time enrollment with a minimum of 12 college-level credits in the fall and spring semesters. Students who drop below 12 credits before the NJ STARS Roster is certified each semester will permanently lose their NJ STARS eligibility. NJ STARS scholarships will pay for up to 18 credits per semester until enough credits are completed to obtain an Associate's Degree. If less than 12 credits are needed to complete their degree in the **final semester**, students should meet with an Academic Counselor for **approval**.
- **Continuous Enrollment:** Students must maintain continuous, full-time enrollment, unless on an approved leave of absence (medical, family emergency or military), or they will permanently lose their NJ STARS eligibility. Students have up to five consecutive semesters of eligibility, **or until they have accumulated enough credits to graduate**.
- **3.0 Requirement:** Students must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or greater prior to the start of the third semester of NJ STARS eligibility (or the beginning of the second year) to maintain their NJ STARS eligibility. Grades received for remedial courses are not included in the cumulative GPA.
- **Apply for Federal Financial Aid (FAFSA):** Students must complete the FAFSA application each year by stated deadline and be sure that Bergen Community College (college code 004736) is one of the college choices. Once completed, students should start checking the Financial Aid Section in Self Service of their BCC student portal in approximately mid-March before each Fall semester to provide missing information, if necessary, and review and accept their financial aid award package. Please visit the **One Stop Center**, state their NJ STARS status, and ask to meet with Charlmaine McKinney in the Office of Financial Aid with financial aid questions.
- **State-Based Financial Aid Review (HESAA):** Students should check the "To Do List" on the main menu of the HESAA student portal, NJFAMS, for the correct academic year to be sure their FAFSA is listed and checked and that no other information was requested by HESAA. Students should also check "View & Update Your School" to be sure Bergen Community College is listed as a college choice.
- **Payment of Fees:** Students should make payment arrangements for fees and any other payments not covered by NJ STARS prior to the payment deadline for each semester. Please contact Tabatha Tucker in the Bursar's Office in L-127 with billing questions.
- **NJ STARS II:** In order to participate in NJ STARS II, students must have completed all NJ STARS requirements, and graduate from Bergen Community College within 5 semesters with a minimum of a 3.25 cumulative GPA. Students in nursing or engineering programs are given an additional unfunded 6th semester to graduate. Students whose family household equals or exceeds \$250,000 will not be eligible. NJ STARS II is separate NJ State Legislation from NJ STARS I, and can change at any time.

When to Meet with an Academic or Transfer Counselor

- Students should meet with an Academic Counselor **regularly** to be sure they are on the right track for completing their degree requirements, or if they are having any academic issues to get help resolving them as soon as possible. If necessary, students may apply for a medical, family emergency or military full or part-time leave of absence.
- Students should meet with an Academic Counselor **after registering for their final semester before the semester begins** to be sure all academic requirements are complete, especially if they will be part-time in their final semester to maintain their NJ STARS eligibility, and NJ STARS II as long as all other requirements are met. The counselor will complete the online **Academic Counselor Approval Form for NJ STARS Graduates** and send to the NJ STARS Representative so their college record can be updated.
- Students should complete the online **NJ STARS Change of Status Form** for approval by the NJ STARS Representative **with any issues that may cause them to permanently lose their NJ STARS eligibility** such as dropping a course or courses, changing from full-time to part-time enrollment, requesting a leave of absence, or when they are transferring or forfeiting their NJ STARS scholarship.
- It is never too early to talk to a Transfer Counselor! Students should make an appointment to see a Transfer Counselor after completing 48 college level credits. Visit the Transfer and Articulation Services webpages for more information.