

Federal Student Loan Limits for Physician Assistant Students

Under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, enacted by Congress in 2025, the Department of Education issued regulations differentiating between “graduate degrees” that would qualify for annual federal loan limits of \$20,500, and a limited number of defined “professional degrees” that would qualify for higher annual federal loan limits of \$50,000.

A federal judge in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia (DDC) recently reviewed consolidated lawsuits brought by health associations challenging the Department of Education’s definition of “professional degree.” The judge paused the Department’s original definition, and in response, the Department issued guidance identifying new programs as temporarily eligible for the newly established higher federal loan limits. This temporary eligibility is expected to remain in effect through at least December 2026 based on the DDC’s current schedule to consider the litigation.

Under the guidance, the Duke Physician Assistant program is not eligible for the higher federal loan limits. The Duke Physician Assistant program eligibility continues to be at the \$20,500 loan level limit.

Duke will continue to monitor the litigation and related guidance and will provide updates on borrowing eligibility as more information becomes available.