

Impact of Early Start Grades on TOPS Continuing Eligibility

Q-150. Does a student lose eligibility for a TOPS Award by attending college during high school or during summer sessions before enrolling as a full-time college student?

- A. No. A high school student is allowed to enroll in college full or part-time while still attending high school and between graduation and first-time, full-time enrollment; however, the student's college grades will be used to calculate the student's TOPS college cumulative grade point average after the student graduates from high school and has enrolled for the first time as a full time student.

Q-151. If a student attends college during high school or during summer sessions before enrolling as a full-time college student, will his grades or hours disqualify him from a TOPS award?

- A. No. A high school student who earns college hours under these circumstances, and who otherwise qualifies for a TOPS Award, will receive the award for the first semester of full-time enrollment. However, the student's cumulative grade point average (including courses taken while in high school and during summers) will be checked after the first semester of full-time enrollment for Steady Academic Progress (at least a 2.00 cumulative GPA). If Steady Academic Progress has not been maintained, the award will be suspended (the award will not be paid the next semester and until Steady Academic Progress has been achieved).

At the end of the academic year (after the spring semester) and assuming the student has earned 24 or more hours, the college cumulative grade point average (including courses taken while in high school and during summers) will be checked for at least a 2.30 for the Opportunity Award or a 3.00 for the Performance and Honors Awards. A student who does not achieve at least 2.30 is suspended from TOPS. If the student regains the required cumulative GPA within two years of the date of suspension, the TOPS Award will be reinstated; however, if the student had the Performance or Honors Award, he will be reinstated with the Opportunity Award. Otherwise, the award is cancelled.

The award level of a student with the Performance or Honors Award who does not achieve a 3.00 but does maintain at least a 2.30 will be reduced to the Opportunity Award and stipends will no longer be paid. Once reduced, the award cannot be upgraded to the Performance or Honors Award.