



REQUIREMENTS TO QUALIFY FOR TOPS FOR  
STUDENTS RETURNING FROM OUT-OF-STATE INSTITUTIONS

Act 63 of the 2003 Regular Session of the Legislature permits students who have academically qualified for a TOPS Award, but who elected to enroll as first time college students at out-of-state institutions, to apply for a TOPS award upon transferring to an eligible Louisiana college or university. To qualify, the student MUST meet all of the following criteria:

- Must make application for a TOPS Award by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). If a FAFSA has been filed for any prior academic year, this requirement has been met. Please indicate the date you filed (or will file) your initial FAFSA on the front of this form. **Your TOPS eligibility cannot be determined until this office has received the results of your FAFSA from the federal processor.** Applicants who can demonstrate that they do not qualify for federal grant aid may apply by answering selected questions on the paper version of the FAFSA. Families choosing this option will not qualify for any federal financial aid assistance (federal work-study, grants, or student/parent loans) and would be the first eliminated from participating in TOPS if the legislature does not appropriate sufficient funds to fund all TOPS Awards. For more information on filing an abbreviated form of the FAFSA, contact one of our Public Information Representatives at 1-800-259-5626, ext. 1012.
- Must have enrolled full time as a first-time freshman in a regionally accredited out-of-state college or university no later than the fall semester or term following the first anniversary of his/her high school graduation, and maintained continuous enrollment thereafter (summers excluded). If enlisted in a regular branch of the Armed Forces within a year of high school graduation, the student can defer enrollment until the first regular semester following the fifth anniversary of high school graduation. The student must enter the out of state institution as a first time, full time student within one year of discharge, and will need to provide a copy of the discharge (Form DD-214) when this form is submitted.
- While enrolled at the out of state institution:
  - Must have maintained at least the minimum Cumulative Grade Point Averages (Cum GPA) required for the Opportunity Award, as determined at the end of each Academic Year.

2.30 with less than 48 completed hours  
2.50 after the completion of 48 hours
  - If the applicant's Cum GPA fell below a 2.0 (on a 4.0 scale) at the end of any semester, term or session (Steady Academic Progress), or the applicant failed to maintain the required Cum GPA at the end of the Academic Year, the award is suspended, although it may be reinstated if the minimum required cum GPA is achieved.
  - Suspended awards will be cancelled if the required Cum GPA is not achieved within two years of the date of suspension.
  - Must have enrolled **full-time** each regular semester/term and have earned a minimum of 24 credit hours each Academic Year. The Academic Year begins with the fall semester or term, includes the winter term (if applicable) and culminates with the spring semester or term. If the applicant enrolled as a first-time, full-time student in the middle of the Academic Year (spring semester or winter/spring quarter), he/she will not be required to meet the 24-hour rule that year. Credits from Advanced Placement, CLEP, summer or Intersession terms or Credit by Exam are not included in Academic Year earned hours. The applicant must have met all requirements, even if the applicant dropped courses, changed majors or transferred schools. Failure to earn 24 credit hours per academic year, or not maintaining continuous full-time enrollment, results in cancellation of a TOPS Award unless granted an exception for cause by the Louisiana Student Financial Assistance Commission. The form and instructions for requesting an exception to the full-time or continuous enrollment requirements can be found at our Web site, [www.osfa.state.la.us](http://www.osfa.state.la.us).

If you have any questions about this form, please call our  
Public Information and Communications Division at (800) 259-5626, Ext. 1012