

**LOUISIANA STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
COMMISSION
OFFICE OF STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

***Tuition Opportunity Program for Students
(TOPS) Bulletin***

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TOPICS:	Definition of full-time student for TOPS eligibility

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The Louisiana Student Financial Assistance Commission approved an Emergency Rule at its meeting held on February 7, 2007 that clarifies the definition of a full-time student for the purposes of TOPS eligibility.

Under normal circumstances, a student must be enrolled as a full-time student through the end of the 14th class day (semester school) or 9th class day (term or quarter school) to maintain eligibility for a TOPS award. It is recognized that in some cases a school may allow a student to add additional classes to bring them to full-time status or officially begin classes after the 14th or 9th class day (as applicable). This emergency rule clarifies that those students who attain enrollment as a full-time student after the 14th (or 9th) class day have also met the TOPS full-time student requirement. This change is effective for the 2006-2007 academic year.

The full compilation of the TOPS rules with all changes incorporated to date may be viewed on our web site at www.osfa.state.la.us. The revisions, with inserted language underlined and stricken language lined through, follow.

For additional information, please contact Melanie Amrhein, Assistant Executive Director at mamrhein@osfa.state.la.us or George Eldredge, General Counsel at geldredge@osfa.state.la.us.

DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY

Student Financial Assistance Commission Office of Student Financial Assistance Scholarship/Grant Programs (LAC 28:IV.301 and 1903)

The Louisiana Student Financial Assistance Commission (LASFAC) is exercising the emergency provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act [R.S. 49:953(B)] to amend and re-promulgate the rules of the Scholarship/Grant programs (R.S. 17:3021-3025, R.S. 3041.10-3041.15, and R.S. 17:3042.1.1-3042.8, R.S. 17:3048.1, R.S. 56:797.D(2)).

The emergency rules are necessary to implement changes to the Scholarship/Grant programs to allow the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance and state educational institutions to effectively administer these programs. A delay in promulgating rules would have an adverse impact on the financial welfare of the eligible students and the financial condition of their families. LASFAC has determined that these emergency rules are necessary in order to prevent imminent financial peril to the welfare of the affected students.

This declaration of emergency is effective February 7, 2007, and shall remain in effect for the maximum period allowed under the Administrative Procedure Act. (SG0782E)

Title 28 EDUCATION

Part IV. Student Financial Assistance- Higher Education Scholarship and Grant Programs

Chapter 3. Definitions

§301. Definitions

* * *

First-Time Freshman—a student who is awarded TOPS opportunity, performance, or honors and enrolls for the first-time as a full-time freshman in an academic program in a post-secondary school subsequent to high school graduation, and ~~continues to be is~~ enrolled full-time at the end of the 14th class day ~~or later~~ (9th class day ~~or later~~ for Louisiana Tech) or enrolls for the first time, full-time in a Louisiana public community or technical college that offers a Vocational or Technical Education Certificate or Diploma Program or a non-academic undergraduate degree to pursue a skill, occupational training, or technical training subsequent to high school graduation, ~~and is enrolled full-time at the end of the 14th class day or later (9th class day or later for term~~

~~and quarter institutions~~). A student who is awarded TOPS opportunity, performance, or honors and begins in an academic program in a post-secondary college or university in a summer session will be considered a first-time freshman for the immediately succeeding fall term. A student who is awarded TOPS opportunity, performance, or honors and begins in a non-academic program in a post-secondary school in a summer term will be considered a first-time freshman at the time of such enrollment. The fact that a student enrolls in a post-secondary school prior to graduation from high school and/or enrolls less than full time in a post-secondary school prior to the required date for full time enrollment shall not preclude the student from being a first-time freshman.

* * *

Full-Time Student—

a. a student enrolled in an institution of higher education who is carrying a full-time academic workload as determined by the school under the standards applicable to all students enrolled;

b. for continuation purposes, a student must be enrolled full-time at the end of the 14th class day or later at a semester school or the 9th class day or later at a quarter or term school;

c. for continuation purposes, a student is considered to have met the full-time requirement if by the completion of the academic year he has earned at least 24 hours of total credit as reported by the institution for the fall and spring semesters at institutions defining 12 semester hours as the minimum for standing as a full-time undergraduate or as reported by the institution for the fall, winter and spring quarters at institutions defining eight quarter hours as the minimum for standing as a full-time undergraduate. For purposes of TOPS and except where specified otherwise within these rules, a student shall be credited for hours earned as reported by the institution which the student attends in accordance with that institution's published policies. Students should be aware that these policies may differ depending on the school the student attends (see §§705.A, 705.D, 805.A, and 907.A for more expanded TOPS requirements);

d. for programs which permit graduate study, a graduate student must have earned at least 18 hours of total credit during the fall, winter and spring terms;

e. a student enrolled in two or more institutions of higher education when such multiple enrollment is necessary for the student to gain access to the courses required for completion of the degree in the chosen discipline and where the total number of hours earned at all institutions during the academic

year is the equivalent of carrying a full-time academic workload as determined by the institution which will award the degree;

f. correspondence courses may not be used to establish full time status;

* * *

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 17:3021-3025, R.S. 17:3042.1 and R.S. 17:3048.1.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Student Financial Assistance Commission, Office of Student Financial Assistance, LR 22:338 (May 1996), repromulgated LR 24:632 (April 1998), amended LR 24:1898 (October 1998), LR 24:2237 (December 1998), LR 25:256 (February 1999), LR 25:654 (April 1999), LR 25:1458 and 1460 (August 1999), LR 25:1794 (October 1999), LR 26:65 (January 2000), LR 26:688 (April 2000), LR 26:1262 (June 2000), LR 26:1601 (August 2000), LR 26:1993, 1999 (September 2000), LR 26:2268 (October 2000), LR 26:2752 (December 2000), LR 27:36 (January 2001), LR 27:284 (March 2001), LR 27:1219 (August 2001), repromulgated LR 27:1842 (November 2001), amended LR 27:1875 (November 2001), LR 28:45 (January 2002), LR 28:446 (March 2002), LR 28:772 (April 2002), LR 28:2330, 2331 (November 2002), LR 29:555 (April 2003), LR 29:879 (June 2003), LR 30:1159 (June 2004), LR 30:2015 (September 2004), LR 31:36 (January 2005), LR 31:3112 (December 2005).

Chapter 19. Eligibility and Responsibilities of Post-Secondary Institutions

§1903. Responsibilities of Post-Secondary Institutions

A. - B.1. ...

2. institutions will bill LASFAC based on

their certification that the recipient of a TOPS Award or a GO-Youth ChalleNGe Program Grant is enrolled full-time, as defined in §301, at the end of the 14th class day [or later](#) for semester schools and the 9th class day [or later](#) for quarter and term schools, and for any qualifying summer sessions at the end of the last day to drop and receive a full refund for the full summer session. Institutions shall not bill for students who are enrolled less than full-time at the end of the 14th class day for semester schools or the 9th class day for quarter and term schools, and for any qualifying summer sessions at the end of the last day to drop and receive a full refund for the summer session, unless the student qualifies for payment for less than full-time enrollment as defined in §2103.C. Students failing to meet the full-time enrollment requirement are responsible for reimbursing the institution for any awards received. Refunds of awards to students who are not receiving federal Title IV aid, for less than full-time enrollment after the 14th or 9th class day, as applicable, shall be returned to the state. Refunds to students who are receiving federal Title IV aid shall be refunded to the state in accordance with the institution's federal Title IV aid refund procedures;

B.3. - G. ...

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 17:3021-3036, R.S. 17:3042.1, 17:3041.10-3041.15, 17:3041.21-3041.26 and R.S. 17:3048.1 and R.S. 17:3050.1–3050.4.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Student Financial Assistance Commission, Office of Student Financial Assistance, LR 22:338 (May 1996), repromulgated LR 24:645 (April 1998), amended LR 24:1914 (October 1998), LR 25:1459 (August 1999), LR 26:1998 and 2002 (September 2000), repromulgated LR 27:1864 (November 2001), amended LR 28:448 (March 2002), LR 28:775 (April 2002), LR 28:1760 (August 2002), LR 28:2333

(November 2002), LR 30:784 (April 2004), LR 30:1166 (June 2004), LR 31:40 (January 2005), LR 31:3111, 3114 (December 2005).

George Badge Eldredge
General Counsel

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