

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

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

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DISTRIBUTION:	College, University and LAICU Chancellors, Financial Aid Offices, Business Offices, Registrars and Auditors; Louisiana Legislators, Officials and the Congressional Delegation; Higher Education Board; Libraries; Commission Members; Technical College Campus Deans and Student Personnel Services Officers
TOPICS:	Definition of full-time student for TOPS eligibility

The Louisiana Student Financial Assistance Commission approved an Emergency Rule and initiation of rulemaking to make the rule permanent at its meeting on March 25, 2008 that changes several provisions of the Scholarship and Grant Rules for the Tuition Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS). The change:

Revises the definition of “tuition” to include fees charged for certain accelerated programs approved by the Board of Regents,

Clarifies the deadline for submission of applications by students returning from out-of state colleges, and

Corrects a citation of legal authority for the Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership.

Accelerated Programs

Several schools have added programs that have alternative scheduling formats. Generally, these programs are accelerated to allow completion of an academic or technical program in a reduced amount of time, but also at a higher cost.

Under this change, schools may bill TOPS for students in an accelerated program acknowledged by the Board of Regents. TOPS can be billed at a higher rate if applicable, but the total cost for the student cannot exceed an equivalent cost of the current TOPS limit of eight full-time semesters for the TOPS Opportunity, Performance or Honors Award or two years for the TOPS Tech Award as applicable.

Students Returning from Out-of-State Colleges Application Deadline

The deadline for receipt of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the On-Line Application and the “Application to Return from an Out-of-State College” (the new agency application for returning students) for students returning from out-of-state colleges is July 1 immediately following the TOPS college academic year the student returns to an eligible Louisiana college or university. This change does not modify the deadline but it clarifies that the Application to Return from an Out-of-State College must be submitted by the same deadline as the FAFSA or On-Line Application.

For additional information, please contact one of our Public Information Officers by calling **225-922-1012** or toll-free by dialing **1-800-259-5626, Extension 1012**.

DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY

Student Financial Assistance Commission
Office of Student Financial Assistance
Scholarship/Grant Programs
(LAC 28:IV.301, 507, 1301)

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 rule revises the definition of “tuition” to include fees charged for certain compressed programs approved by the Board of Regents, clarifies the deadline for submission of applications by students returning from out-of state colleges, provides deadlines for submission of documents supporting applications by students returning from out-of state colleges, and corrects a citation of legal authority for the Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership.

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 March 25, 2008, and shall remain in effect for the maximum period allowed under the Administrative Procedure Act.
(SG0895E)

Chapter 3. Definitions

§301. Definitions

A. Words and terms not otherwise defined in these rules shall have the meanings ascribed to such words and terms in this Section. Where the masculine is used in these rules, it includes the feminine, and vice versa; where the singular is used, it includes the plural, and vice versa.

* * *

Tuition—the fee charged each student by a post-secondary institution to cover the student's share of the cost of instruction, including all other mandatory enrollment fees charged to all students, except for the technology fee authorized by Act 1450 of the 1997 Regular Session of the Legislature,

1. which were in effect as of January 1, 1998,

2. ~~and~~ any changes in the cost of instruction authorized by the legislature and implemented by the institution after that date, ~~and~~

3. for programs with alternative scheduling formats that are approved in writing by the Board of Regents after that date. Any payment for enrollment in one of these programs shall count towards the student's maximum eligibility for his award:

a. up to the equivalent of eight full time semesters of postsecondary education in full time semesters for the TOPS Opportunity, Performance and Honors Award or

b. up to the equivalent of two years of postsecondary education in full time semesters and summer sessions for the TOPS Tech Award.

* * *

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), LR 27:1840 (November 2001), 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), LR 33:86 (January 2007), LR 33:439

(March 2007), LR 33:1339 (July 2007), LR 33:2612 (December 2007).

Chapter 5. Applications, Federal Grant Aid and ACT Test

§507. Final Deadline for Submitting Documentation of Eligibility

A. – B.2. ...

C. Returning Students

C.1 – 2. ...

3. a. Returning students, who enroll in an eligible college or university in ~~the academic year (college) fall semester of 2005-2006 or academic year (college) 2006-2007~~ or later, must submit an application to return from an out-of-state college no later than July 1 immediately following the academic year (college) the student enrolls as a full-time student in an eligible college or university and must submit any supporting documentation required by the application no later than April 15 following the July 1 deadline. ~~must submit documentation that establishes TOPS eligibility no later than July 1 immediately following the academic year (college) the student enrolls as a full-time student in an eligible college or university. For example, a student who seeks to enroll in an eligible college or university in the fall semester of 2006 must submit documentation that establishes TOPS eligibility no later than July 1, 2007.~~

b. Returning students, who enroll in an eligible college or university in the fall semester of 2007 or later, must submit an application to return from an out-of-state college no later than July 1 immediately following the academic year (college) the student enrolls as a full-time student in an eligible college or university and must submit any supporting documentation required by the application no later than January 15 following the July 1 deadline.

c. Examples:

i. A returning student who enrolled in an eligible college or university in the fall semester of 2005 must submit the application to return from an out-of-state college no later than July 1, 2006, and any required supporting documentation such as college transcripts no later than April 15, 2007.

ii. A returning student who enrolled in an eligible college or university in the spring semester of 2007 must submit the application to return from an out-of-state college no later than July 1, 2007, and any required supporting documentation such as college transcripts no later than April 15, 2008.

iii. A returning student who enrolled in an eligible college or university in the fall semester of 2007 must submit the application to return from an out-of-state college no later than July 1, 2008, and any required supporting documentation such as college transcripts no later than January 15, 2009.

iv. A returning student who enrolled in an eligible college or university in the spring semester of 2008 must submit the application to return from an out-of-state college no later than July 1, 2008, and any required supporting documentation such as college transcripts no later than January 15, 2009.

v. A returning student who enrolls in an eligible college or university in the fall semester of 2009 must submit the application to return from an out-of-state college no later than July 1, 2010, and any required supporting documentation such as college transcripts no later than January 15, 2011.

4. a. Beginning with the 2007-2008 academic year (college), all documentation and certifications necessary to establish a returning student's initial eligibility including, but not limited to, high school and/or college transcripts and certifications, copies of student aid reports, ACT and/or SAT scores, residency affidavits, proof of citizenship or permanent residency status and other documents that may be utilized in determining eligibility, must be received by LASFAC no later than January 15 immediately following the deadline for receipt of the student's FAFSA or on-line application.

b. Examples:

i. If a returning student enrolls full time in an eligible Louisiana college or university for the fall semester of 2007, his deadline to file the FAFSA or on-line application is July 1, 2008. If his initial FAFSA or on-line application is received no later than July 1, 2008, and if all the necessary supporting documentation relevant to establishing eligibility is in LASFAC's possession by January 15, 2009, the student will receive his TOPS award (reduced by the number of semesters/terms he enrolled out-of-state) retroactively beginning the fall semester of 2007.

ii. If a returning student enrolls full time in an eligible Louisiana college or university for the spring semester of 2008, his deadline to file the FAFSA or on-line application is July 1, 2008. If his initial FAFSA or on-line application is received no later than July 1, 2008, and if all the necessary supporting documentation relevant to establishing eligibility is in LASFAC's possession by January 15, 2009, the student will receive his TOPS award (reduced by the number of

semesters/terms he enrolled out-of-state) retroactively beginning the spring semester of 2008.

iii. If a returning student enrolls full time in an eligible Louisiana college or university for the spring semester of 2008, his deadline to file the FAFSA or on-line application is July 1, 2008. If his initial FAFSA or on-line application is received after July 1, 2008, but no more than 120 days later, and if all the necessary supporting documentation relevant to establishing eligibility is in LASFAC's possession by January 15, 2009, the student will receive his TOPS award (reduced by the number of semesters/terms he enrolled out-of-state and further reduced by one additional semester if one to sixty days late or by two additional semesters if 61 to 120 days late) retroactively beginning the spring semester of 2008.

D.1. – 3. ...

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 17:3021-3036, 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 24:635 (April 1998), amended LR 24:1901 (October 1998), repromulgated LR 27:1847 (November 2001), amended LR 28:447 (March 2002), LR 30:1161 (June 2004), LR 30:1471 (July 2004), LR 30:2019 (September 2004), LR 32:2238 (December 2006), LR 33:2357 (November 2007), LR 34:.

Chapter 13. Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership (LEAP)

§1301. General Provisions

A.1. – A.2. ...

a. R.S. 17:~~3032-5~~ 3031

A.2.b -F.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 17:3021-3036.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Student Financial Assistance Commission, Office of Student Financial Assistance, LR 22:338 (May 1996), repromulgated LR 24:641 (April 1998), amended LR 24:1910 (October 1998), LR 25:1458 (August 1999), repromulgated LR 27:1860 (November 2001), amended LR 28:2332 (November 2002), LR 32:2239 (December 2006), LR 33:440 (March 2007).

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General Counsel

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