

Important Information for TOPS Recipients

Are you receiving TOPS?

TOPS Continuation Requirements



1. **FULL-TIME ENROLLMENT**

- Students receiving TOPS must be enrolled **full-time** (as defined by your institution) through the 14th class day at semester schools or the 9th class day at quarter schools every semester or quarter they enroll (excluding summers).
- Once past the specified "census" date, the student may drop courses, according to your institutional policies, to below full-time status, but still must meet the academic year earned hours requirement (see #3).
- Effective for Summer Session 2010, TOPS Recipients with 60 or more hours may use their TOPS Award for Summer Session. To be eligible for Summer Session Payment, students must submit a **2010 Summer Session Payment Request and Acknowledgment** (available on TOPS Portal) and be enrolled full time. Hours earned during Summer Session do not count toward the TOPS Annual Hours Earned Requirement. Each Summer Session for which TOPS funds are received will count as one of the 8 Semesters of TOPS Funding.

2. **CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT**

- Students who do not enroll full time during a semester/quarter or resign from all classes during a semester/quarter will have their award canceled. [Students who do not enroll full time or resign due to exceptional/extenuating circumstances beyond their control should contact LOSFA] (see #5).
- Students may not "stop out" or take a leave of absence without approval from LOSFA (see #5).

3. **HOURS EARNED**

- TOPS recipients must **EARN 24 credit hours each Academic Year (starts with the fall semester/quarter; includes the winter quarter and winter intersession, if offered; spring semester/quarter; and ends with the spring intersession).**

For TOPS Purposes, Earned Hours INCLUDE:

- Credit hours in required remedial/developmental courses that are completed successfully (grades of NC or F will not be included).
- Credit hours successfully completed with a grade of "D" or better.
- Credit hours earned in Correspondence Studies if final grade is recorded on the official transcript as completed within the Academic Year.
- Credit hours earned during the Winter (Between Fall and Spring Semesters) and Spring (between Spring Semester and Summer Session) Intersessions.

For TOPS Purposes, Earned Hours DO NOT INCLUDE:

- Earned credit hours in summer sessions and summer intersessions.
- Earned credit hours in Intersessions that are not within the Academic Year.
- Earned credit hours by exam (CLEP), advanced placement, or standardized test scores.
- Courses scheduled and completed, but no credit earned due to failing or incomplete grade.
- Credit Hours earned in the Intersession between Summer Session and Fall Semester.

A student who does not enroll full-time, remain continuously enrolled, or does not earn 24 credit hours per academic year will have his or her TOPS award permanently CANCELED unless granted an exception (see #5). TOPS Students enrolling for the first time as a full time student in a winter or spring quarter/semester will not be checked for the 24 hour requirement during that academic year.

4. **TOPS GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA)**

Cumulative TOPS GPA is determined by the Office of Student Financial Assistance and is based on all coursework attempted by the student at all institutions attended.

- Students must meet **Steady Academic Progress (Minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA)** at the end of every semester or quarter (including summer and intersessions).
- Students receiving the **TOPS Opportunity Award** must earn a minimum **2.3 cumulative GPA** at the end of the first academic year and a minimum **2.5 cumulative GPA** at the end of each subsequent academic year.
- Students receiving the **TOPS Performance and Honors Award** must earn a minimum **3.0 cumulative GPA** at the end of each academic year to retain the stipend that accompanies that award type.
 - Students not earning the required **TOPS Performance or Honors GPA** will drop down to the **TOPS Opportunity Award** if they earn the required GPA for that award. These students can **never** regain the TOPS Performance or Honors Award stipends.
 - **TOPS Performance or Honors Award** recipients who do not earn the required **TOPS Opportunity Award GPA** will have their TOPS Award **suspended**.
 - Students who began with the **TOPS Performance or Honors Award** may regain the **TOPS Opportunity Award**, after being suspended, by raising their GPA to the level required for the **TOPS Opportunity Award**.
 - Students who have their TOPS Award **suspended** due to not meeting Steady Academic Progress or the required TOPS Cumulative GPA have **2 years** to regain the required **TOPS Opportunity Award GPA**.

Students who fail to regain the required TOPS GPA within 24 months of suspension will have their Award canceled. During periods of suspension, all continuation requirements must be met to qualify for reinstatement of the award.

5. **EXCEPTIONAL/EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES**

- Students may apply to be considered for an exception to the requirements to enroll full time, to maintain full-time enrollment, and/or to earn the required hours. Contact LOSFA (800-259-5626, ext. 1012 or custserv@osfa.la.gov) for details.
- There is no exception for suspensions or subsequent cancellations due to not meeting the TOPS Cumulative GPA requirement.

LOSFA - 800-259-5626, ext. 1012 - custserv@osfa.la.gov