

ARKANSAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD SPECIAL MEETING

Zoom

Tuesday, September 22, 2026

11:00 a.m.

Coordinating Board Members

Dr. Jim Carr, Chair

Lucas Pointer, Vice Chair

Dr. Katherine Dudley, Secretary

Graycen Bigger

Carolyn Rhinehart

Chris Woodard

AGENDA

- *1. Rules Governing the Arkansas Heroes Scholarship (Mrs. Alisha Lewis)
- *2. Rules Governing the Arkansas Future Grant Program (Mrs. Lewis)
- *3. Rules Governing the Military Dependents' Scholarship Program (Mrs. Lewis)
- *4. Rules Governing the Arkansas Direct Admissions Program (Mrs. Lewis)
- *5. Rules Governing the Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship Program (Mrs. Lewis)

RULES GOVERNING THE ARKANSAS HEROES SCHOLARSHIP

In compliance with the Arkansas ACCESS Act of 2025 (Act 341 Section 79), the Arkansas Division of Higher Education Rules Governing the Arkansas Heroes Scholarship are presented to the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) for final approval.

The following resolution is offered for the Board's consideration:

RESOLVED, That the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board reviews the rules presented in this agenda item for the Arkansas Heroes Scholarship to be administered by the Arkansas Division of Higher Education.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commissioner of the Arkansas Division of Higher Education or his designee is authorized to make technical changes and corrections, when necessary, in the program rules for the Arkansas Heroes Scholarship.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Arkansas Heroes Scholarship rules be approved for final approval.

Proposed Rulemaking

Title

Promulgated by:

Division of Higher Education

Title 6. Education

Chapter IV. Division of Higher Education, Department of Education

Subchapter B. Scholarships and Grants

Part 409. Arkansas Heroes Scholarship

Subpart 1. Generally

6 CAR § 409-101. Creation & Purpose.

(a) This part shall be known as the Division of Higher Education's Rules Governing the Arkansas Heroes Scholarship.

(b) This scholarship honors the heroic efforts of the individuals who served as Arkansas' heroes and their families.

6 CAR § 409-102. Definitions.

As used in this part:

(1) "Academic year" means a measure of academic work to be accomplished by the recipient during the fall, spring, and summer semesters, in that order;

(2) "Approved institution of higher education" means an institution of higher education that is approved by the Division of Higher Education to offer the Arkansas Heroes Scholarship that is a:

(A) State-supported two-year or four-year institution of higher education;

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(B) Private, nonprofit two-year or four-year institution of higher education that has its primary headquarters located in Arkansas and is eligible to receive Title IV federal student aid funds; or

(C) A public or private vocational school or public or private vocational technical school that is:

(i) Located in Arkansas; and

(ii) Approved by the Higher Learning Commission or has achieved candidacy status;

(3) “Arkansas hero” means:

(A) One (1) of the following who suffers a fatal injury or wound or becomes permanently and totally disabled as a result of injuries or wounds that occurred in the performance of a hazardous duty within the scope of his or her employment or that occurred en route to or returning from a location where a hazardous situation existed:

(i) A law enforcement officer;

(ii) A firefighter;

(iii) An emergency medical technician;

(iv) A state highway employee;

(v) A state correction employee;

(vi) A Division of Community Correction employee;

(vii) A state parks employee; or

(viii) A state forestry employee;

(B) A veteran with a disability;

(C) A prisoner of war;

(D) A recipient of a Medal of Honor or Purple Heart;

(E) A person declared to be missing in action or killed in action;

(F) A person killed on ordnance delivery;

(G) A teacher who suffers a fatal injury or wound or becomes permanently and totally disabled as a result of injuries or wounds that occurred due to an act of violence at a public school or open-enrollment charter school in this state;

(4) "Child" means a natural child, an adopted child, or a stepchild who is eligible to receive a scholarship under this part;

(5) "Division of Community Correction employee" means an employee of the Division of Community Correction who suffers a fatal injury or wound or becomes permanently and totally disabled because of an injury or wound that occurred through contact with a parolee, probationer, or center resident;

(6)(A) "Emergency medical services personnel" means an individual licensed by the Department of Health at any level established by the rules adopted by the State Board of Health under the Emergency Medical Services Act, Arkansas Code § 20-13-201 et seq., and authorized to perform the services under the rules.

(B) "Emergency medical services personnel" includes without limitation:

(i) An emergency medical technician;

(ii) An advanced emergency medical technician;

(iii) A paramedic;

(iv) An emergency medical services instructor; and

(v) An emergency medical services instructor trainer;

(7) "Firefighter" means a firefighter employed on a full-time or volunteer status while actually engaged in the performance of his or her duties;

(8) "Law enforcement officer" means a:

(A) Constable, including without limitation all elected constables of any beat of any county within the state while actually engaged in the performance of his or her duties concerning the criminal laws of the county and state;

(B) Game warden, including without limitation all appointed game wardens employed by the state on a full-time status while actually engaged in his or her duties concerning the game laws of this state;

(C)(i) Municipal and a state-supported institution of higher education police officer, including without limitation all law enforcement officers of any municipality or state-supported institution of higher education who are regular duty personnel on full-time status.

(ii) Municipal and a state-supported institution of higher education police officer does not include auxiliary officers or those serving on a temporary or part-time status;

(D)(i) Sheriff or deputy sheriff, including without limitation all law enforcement officers on full-time status on a regular basis serving the sheriff's department of any county.

(ii) Sheriff or deputy sheriff does not include a deputy sheriff who is:

(a) Engaged in administrative or civil duty; or

(b) Serving in a temporary capacity or part-time status;

(E) State highway patrolman, including without limitation any law enforcement officer, regardless of department or bureau, of the Division of Arkansas State Police; and

(F) Any other person employed by the State of Arkansas or a political subdivision of the State of Arkansas as an appointed law enforcement officer who is responsible for the prevention and detection of crime and the enforcement of the criminal, traffic, or highway laws of this state;

(9) "Ordnance delivery" means the piloting of or flying in an experimental or test aircraft while determining its fitness or ability to perform its military function or mission;

(10)(A) "Prisoner of war", "person missing in action", "person killed in action", and "person killed on ordnance delivery" mean a person who:

(i) Was a legal resident of the State of Arkansas at the time that person entered the service of the United States Armed Forces or whose official residence is within the State of Arkansas; and

(ii) Who, while serving in the United States Armed Forces, has been declared to be a prisoner of war, a person missing in action, a person killed in action as established by the United States Secretary of Defense after January 1, 1960, or a person killed on ordnance delivery.

(B) “Prisoner of war”, “person missing in action”, “person killed in action”, and “person killed on ordnance delivery” apply whether or not capture or death occurred during a declared war or as a result of hostile action.

(C) A death as a result of injuries received while serving in the United States Armed Forces or Arkansas National Guard is only covered by (9)(a) of this section if the death occurred while on active duty or state active duty;

(11) “State correction employee” means an employee of the Division of Correction or the Arkansas Correctional School District who becomes subject to injury through contact with an inmate or parolee of the Division of Correction;

(12) “State forestry employee” means an employee of the Arkansas Forestry Commission who is actively engaged in his or her duties of fighting forest fires;

(13) “State highway employee” means an employee of the Arkansas Department of Transportation who actively engages in highway maintenance, construction, or traffic operations on the roadways and bridges of the state highway system while the roadways and bridges are open for use by the traveling public;

(14) “State parks employee” means an employee of the Department of Parks, Heritage, and Tourism who is a commissioned law enforcement officer or emergency response employee while actively engaged in the performance of his or her duties;

(15) “Teacher” means a person employed by a public school district for the purpose of providing direct instruction to students and whose employment requires state certification; and

(16) “United States Armed Forces dependent” means a spouse, a child born to or conceived by, an adopted child, a child under legal guardianship, or a stepchild of a:

(A) Veteran with a disability;

(B) Prisoner of war; or

(C) Person declared to be:

(i) Missing in action;

(ii) Killed in action; or

(iii) Killed on ordnance delivery.

(17) "Verification roster" means an alphabetical listing by an approved institution of higher education of all students receiving the award for a given academic term that is completed by the certifying official at an eligible institution of higher education; and

(18) "Veteran with a disability" means a person who has been awarded either:

(A) United States Armed Forces disability retirement benefits; or

(B) Special monthly compensation by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs for service-connected, one hundred percent (100%) total and permanent disability.

6 CAR § 409-103. Eligibility.

(a) Eligibility for the Arkansas Heroes Scholarship requires one (1) of the following:

(1) The student has been a legal Arkansas resident for at least one (1) year before submitting a scholarship application

(2) The student was born before the date of the death or disability of the Arkansas hero; or

(3) The Arkansas hero or the spouse of the Arkansas hero was pregnant with the student at the time of the death or disability of the Arkansas hero.

(b) In order for an adopted child to be eligible to receive a scholarship benefit:

(1) The adopted child is required to have been adopted before the date of the death or disability of the Arkansas hero; or

(2) The adopted child's adoption process is required to have begun before the date of the death or disability of the Arkansas hero.

(c) In order for a stepchild under nineteen (19) years of age to be eligible to receive a scholarship benefit, the stepchild under nineteen (19) years of age shall have:

(1) Been listed as a dependent on the federal and state income tax returns of the Arkansas hero in each of the five (5) income years immediately before the date of the death or disability of the Arkansas hero; and

(2) Received more than one-half (1/2) of his or her financial support from the Arkansas hero in each of the five (5) income years immediately before the date of the death or disability of the Arkansas hero.

(d) In order for a stepchild who is nineteen (19) years of age or older to be eligible to receive a scholarship benefit, the stepchild who is nineteen (19) years or older shall have:

(1) Been listed as a dependent on the federal and state income tax returns of the Arkansas hero in at least five (5) of the eight (8) income years immediately before the date of the death or disability of the Arkansas hero; and

(2) Received more than one-half (1/2) of his or her financial support from the Arkansas hero in at least five (5) of the eight (8) income years immediately before the date of the death or disability of the Arkansas hero.

(e) If a covered public employee, as defined in Arkansas Code § 21-5-701, or his or her heirs did not file for the available death or disability benefit but were otherwise eligible to receive the death or disability benefit within the time frame provided in Arkansas Code § 21-5-703, then the covered public employee's child or children who would have otherwise been eligible to receive the provided educational scholarship benefit under this section may individually file before his or her twenty-first birthday a claim to receive the provided educational scholarship benefit if:

(1) The student is considered a United States Armed Forces dependent as provided in Arkansas Code § 6-82-2503; or

(2) The student is a dependent of an Arkansas hero who suffered fatal injuries or wounds or became disabled as a result of injuries or wounds that occurred in the performance of a hazardous duty within the scope of his or her employment or that occurred en route to or returning from a location where a hazardous situation existed.

(f) Scholarship benefits may not accrue under this subpart to a person if the wound or injury suffered by an Arkansas hero is self-inflicted or if the death of an Arkansas hero is self-inflicted unless otherwise determined by the Arkansas State Claims Commission.

(g) Unless subsection (e) of this section is applicable, the Arkansas State Claims Commission shall award any scholarship benefit provided by this subpart at the same time that any death benefit or disability benefit is awarded by the commission under the provisions of Arkansas Code § 21-5-701 et seq.

6 CAR § 409-104. Eligibility Restrictions.

(a) A child shall not be entitled to receive benefits under this subpart during any semester or quarter when the child has reached twenty-six (26) years of age on or before the first day of the semester or quarter.

(b)(1) A spouse shall not be eligible to receive benefits under this subpart if he or she remarries.

(2) The benefits under this subpart shall cease at the end of the semester in which the spouse is currently enrolled at the time of the marriage.

6 CAR § 409-105. Applications.

(a) An eligible student shall apply to the Division of Higher Education for benefits under this subpart.

(b) A United States Armed Forces dependent shall:

(1) Apply for the Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance program, 38 U.S.C. § 3500 et seq., as it existed on January 1, 2025, with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs; and

(2) Provide the division with proof of:

(A) Acceptance into the Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance program; or

(B) Noneligibility for the Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance program following application.

(c) Except as provided under subsection (d) of this section, a dependent of an Arkansas hero, upon his or her being accepted for enrollment into any private, nonprofit institution of higher education in the State of Arkansas or a state-supported institution of higher education in the State of Arkansas, may obtain his or her first bachelor's

degree for so long as he or she is eligible with state assistance for tuition, fees, or other charges as provided under this part.

(d)(1) The state assistance under this subpart is limited to the tuition, fees, or other charges that exceed the amount of monetary benefits the dependent is eligible to receive from the Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance program during the months included in each semester in which the dependent is enrolled.

(2) If the dependent is not eligible for monetary benefits from the Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance program but is eligible for the benefits under this subpart, an eligible dependent shall be entitled to a total of eight (8) semesters, or the equivalent thereof, of scholarship awards without cost, exclusive of books, food, school supplies, materials, and dues or fees for extracurricular activities, at any state-supported institution of higher education or technical institute of his or her choice within this state.

(3) However, the state assistance awarded to a dependent attending a private, nonprofit institution of higher education in this state shall not exceed the maximum amount of state assistance awarded to dependents attending a state-supported institution of higher education in this state.

(e) Once a person qualifies as a dependent under this subpart, unless otherwise stated in this part, there shall be no situation such as the return of the parent or the reported death of the parent that will remove the dependent from the provisions or benefits of this subpart.

(f) An eligible recipient shall receive a scholarship for one (1) academic year, renewable for up to three (3) additional academic years if the recipient meets continuing eligibility criteria established by the division.

(g) In compliance with the division's scholarship stacking policy, a student's total financial aid package, which can include multiple scholarships, shall not exceed the recognized cost of attendance at a state-supported institution of higher education.

(h) In the event the number of students who qualify for a scholarship under this subpart during an academic year exceeds the amount of funds appropriated to the Higher Education Grants Fund Account for purposes of funding students who qualify for

scholarship under this subpart during the given academic year, the excess awards that qualify for distribution under this subpart shall be funded with any net proceeds from the state lottery remaining after the division allocates sufficient funding to award the following scholarships at levels equivalent to the awards made in the previous academic year:

(1) Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship, Arkansas Code § 6-85-201 et seq.; and

(2) Arkansas Workforce Challenge Scholarship, Arkansas Code § 6-85-301 et seq.

6 CAR § 409-106. Continued eligibility.

(a) To retain eligibility for a scholarship benefit under this subpart, a recipient shall:

(1) Maintain a minimum of a 2.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scholastic grading scale; and

(2) Meet any other continuing eligibility criteria established by the Division of Higher Education.

(b) If a recipient fails to meet eligibility criteria, he or she may apply for state assistance under this subpart a maximum of one (1) additional time once eligibility is reestablished.

(c)(1) Students currently eligible for the Military Dependent Scholarship under 6 CAR pt. 393 shall continue receiving a scholarship under those provisions unless:

(A) The student completes their bachelor degree or the equivalent of eight (8) academic semesters; or

(B) The student fails to maintain eligibility.

(2) The Military Dependent Scholarship Program shall sunset with the fall 2028 semester.

**DIVISION OF HIGHER EDUCATION RULES GOVERNING THE ARKANSAS
HEROES SCHOLARSHIP**

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Commenter Name and Organization (if applicable):

Comments: No public comments received.

Division Response: No substantive or non-substantive changes made.

RULES GOVERNING THE ARKANSAS FUTURE GRANT PROGRAM

In compliance with the Arkansas ACCESS Act of 2025 (Act 341 Sections 74-76), the Arkansas Division of Higher Education Rules Governing the Arkansas Future Grant Program are presented to the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) for final approval.

The following resolution is offered for the Board's consideration:

RESOLVED, That the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board reviews the rules presented in this agenda item for the Arkansas Future Grant Program to be administered by the Arkansas Division of Higher Education.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commissioner of the Arkansas Division of Higher Education or his designee is authorized to make technical changes and corrections, when necessary, in the program rules for the Arkansas Future Grant Program.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Arkansas Future Grant Program rules be approved for final approval.

Proposed Rulemaking

Title

Promulgated by:
Division of Higher Education

Title 6. Education

Chapter IV. Division of Higher Education, Department of Education

Subchapter B. Scholarships and Grants

Part 400. Rules Governing the Arkansas Future Grant Program

Subpart 1. Generally

6 CAR § 400-101. Policy statement.

(a) This part shall be known as the Division of Higher Education's "Rules Governing the Arkansas Future Grant Program".

(b) This part addresses the:

- (1) Student eligibility criteria;
- (2) Method for recipient selection;
- (3) Continuing eligibility requirements;
- (4) Procedures for making payments to an approved institution of higher education; and
- (5) Other administrative procedures necessary for operation of the program.

6 CAR § 400-102. Definitions.

As used in this part:

(1) "Approved institution of higher education" means an institution of higher education approved by the Division of Higher Education to participate in the Arkansas Future Grant Program that is:

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- (A) A state-supported two-year or four-year college or university;
- (B) A state-supported technical institute;
- (C) An approved state-supported school of nursing; or
- (D) A private, nonprofit two-year or four-year college or university;

(2) "Approved state-supported school of nursing" means a state-supported school of nursing with its primary headquarters located in Arkansas that:

- (A) Prepares students as registered nurses;
- (B) Grants nursing diplomas;
- (C) Is eligible to participate in the federal student aid programs of the Higher Education Act of 1965, 20 U.S.C. § 1070 et seq.;
- (D) Is approved by the Arkansas State Board of Nursing;
- (E) Has been approved by the Division of Higher Education as eligible to participate in the Arkansas Future Grant Program; and
- (F) Is not a two-year or four-year college or university;

(3) "Federal student financial assistance" means scholarships or grants awarded to a student as a result of:

- (A) An approved Free Application for Federal Student Aid, including without limitation a Pell Grant; or
- (B) The student's or other family member's service in the United States Armed Forces, including without limitation the Army National Guard or Air National Guard;

(4) "Private scholarship" means a scholarship or grant awarded by a private entity or donor;

(5) "Regional high-demand field" means any field of study identified as:

- (A) In demand by the Division of Workforce Services as published on its annual regional Projected Employment Opportunities List; or
- (B) In high demand by an approved institution of higher education and approved by the Division of Higher Education; and

(6) "State-supported student financial assistance" means a state-supported scholarship, grant, tuition waiver, or tuition reimbursement, funded with state funds or

net proceeds from the state lottery, awarded by:

(A) The Division of Higher Education; or

(B) A scholarship or grant awarded by an approved institution of higher education in this state, funded in whole or in part by state funds, including without limitation:

(i) Scholarships awarded on the basis of entrance exam scores or high school academic achievement;

(ii) Tuition waivers based on:

(a) Age;

(b) Military service;

(c) Occupation; or

(d) Other factors;

(iii) Performance scholarships for band, musical performing groups, arts, theater, forensics, and similar activities that are not awarded on the basis of entrance exam scores or high school academic achievement; and

(iv) Any other publicly-funded program under which students are not charged or are reimbursed by the approved institution of higher education for:

(a) Tuition;

(b) Fees;

(c) Books; or

(d) Other costs of attendance.

(7)(A) "Verification roster means" an alphabetical listing by institution of all persons receiving the award for a given academic term.

(B) The certifying official is responsible for completing the verification rosters each semester or trimester.

(C) The Division of Higher Education shall provide an electronic verification roster to the financial aid administrator for each semester or trimester as needed.

Subpart 2. Procedures

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6 CAR § 400-201. Eligibility requirements.

A student is eligible for an Arkansas Future Grant if the student is an Arkansas resident who meets one (1) of the following requirements:

(1) Has either:

(A) Graduated from an Arkansas:

(i) Public high school;

(ii) Private high school; or

(iii) Home school under Arkansas Code § 6-15-501 et seq.; or

(B) Received a high school equivalency diploma approved by the Division of Workforce Services; or

(2) Verifies that he or she has resided in Arkansas for the three (3) years immediately preceding application for the grant, and has either:

(A) Graduated from an out-of-state:

(i) Public high school;

(ii) Private high school; or

(iii) Home school recognized by another state; or

(B) Received a high school equivalency diploma approved by another state;

(3) Is enrolled part-time or full-time at an approved institution of higher education in a program of study that leads to an associate degree or a certification in a:

(A) Science, technology, engineering, accounting, finance, nursing, education, or mathematics field, including without limitation:

(i) Computer science;

(ii) Information technology;

(iii) Data analysis; or

(iv) Graphic design;

(B) Regional high-demand field; or

(C) State high-demand field; and

(4) Has completed and submitted to the United States Department of

Education a Free Application for Federal Student Aid or a subsequent application required by the United States Department of Education for federal financial aid.

6 CAR § 400-202. Continuing eligibility requirements.

A student may continue to be eligible until the student has:

- (1) Received the grant for ~~five (5) academic semesters~~ a maximum of seventy-five (75) course credit hours in which the student is enrolled;
- (2) Obtained an associate degree; or
- (3) Failed to maintain satisfactory academic progress, as determined by the approved institution of higher education in which the student is enrolled; ~~or~~
~~———— (4) Failed to complete the mentoring or community service requirements under 6 CAR § 400-205.~~

6 CAR § 400-203. Grant award amounts.

(a)(1) An Arkansas Future Grant shall be ~~in~~ distributed in:

(A) Accordance with the Division of Higher Education's stacking policy under Arkansas Code § 6-80-105; and

(B) ~~an~~An amount equal to the tuition, fees, and other charges incurred by a student who meets the requirements under 6 CAR § 400-201 and 6 CAR § 400-202 ~~to attend an approved institution of higher education, less the amount the student receives in~~:

- ~~———— (A) State-supported student financial assistance;~~
~~———— (B) Federal student financial assistance; and~~
~~———— (C) Private scholarships.~~

(2) If the approved institution of higher education in which the student is enrolled is a state-supported four-year institution of higher education or a private, nonprofit four-year institution of higher education, the total amount of tuition, fees, and other charges under subdivision (a)(1) of this section shall be calculated as the average cost of tuition, fees, and other charges at approved institutions of higher education that are state-supported two-year institutions of higher education or private, nonprofit two-

year institutions of higher education.

(b) The Division of Higher Education shall disburse the grant directly to the approved institution of higher education.

(c) The division shall award grants under this part in the order in which the division receives applications from eligible students and based on availability of funds, to include summer terms, semesters, quarters, or their equivalents, at the postsecondary institution in which the student is enrolled.

6 CAR § 400-204. Grant hold.

(a) The Division of Higher Education may approve a grant hold for a period of twenty-four (24) months or less.

(b) The reasons for a grant hold may include without limitation:

(1) A medical condition of the student or a member of the student's immediate family that, on the basis of a physician's good-faith judgment, necessitates the student or the student's immediate family member to be hospitalized or receive outpatient or home-based medical care or to recuperate until released by the attending physician;

(2) A personal or family emergency that requires the student to:

(A) Attend the funeral of an immediate family member; or

(B) Visit a relative of the student if the relative has a medical condition in which death is possible or imminent;

(3) Military service under Arkansas Code § 6-61-112; or

(4)(A) A commitment of twelve (12) to twenty-four (24) months for service in a national or international humanitarian project, sponsored by a nonprofit corporation organized with a charitable or educational purpose.

(B) The student's commitment shall be expressed in a written agreement with the nonprofit organization, including the terms of completion for the student's service on the related project.

(C) The division shall release a grant hold if the division determines that the student did not complete the commitment under the written agreement.

6 CAR § 400-205. Grant recipient responsibilities.

(a)~~(1)~~ A student who receives an Arkansas Future Grant shall enter into a written agreement with the Division of Higher Education to:

~~(1)(A) Receive monthly mentoring from a mentor from an organization determined by the Division of Higher Education.~~

~~—————(B) A mentor under subdivision (a)(1)(A) of this section shall:~~

~~—————(i) Receive annual mentoring training:~~

~~—————(a) Developed by the Division of Higher Education; and~~

~~—————(b) Provided by a local volunteer group approved by the Division of Higher Education; and~~

~~—————(ii) Certify to the Division of Higher Education that at least one (1) time each semester the mentor has provided mentoring services by telephone, email, or in person to each student he or she is mentoring;~~

~~(2)(A) Complete at least ten (10) hours of community service each semester the student receives a grant.~~

~~—————(B)(i) A student may select a community service project that meets requirements developed by the Division of Higher Education.~~

~~—————(ii) An approved institution of higher education may provide community services opportunities designed to benefit the approved institution of higher education community or the broader local community.~~

~~—————(C) A student shall certify his or her community service to the approved institution of higher education by the last regular day of the semester the student received the grant; and~~

~~—————(3)(A) Reside reside in this state for ~~three (3) consecutive years~~ six (6) months and be employed beginning within six (6) months after receiving an associate degree or a certification.~~

~~(B)(2)~~ The Division of Higher Education may defer the requirement under subdivision ~~(a)(3)(A)(a)(1)~~ of this section if:

~~(i)(A)~~ The Division of Higher Education, in consultation with the Division of Workforce Services, determines that there was no employment position

available that would reasonably enable the student to meet this requirement; or

~~(ii)(B)~~ Special circumstances as determined by the Division of Higher Education exist.

~~(E)(3)~~ After the period of deferral, the student shall begin or resume working in this state or become subject to repayment under subsection (b) of this section.

(b) The written agreement under subsection (a) of this section shall provide that the grant converts into a loan and the student shall repay the grant amount:

(1) On a pro rata basis at an interest rate and on a schedule as determined by the Division of Higher Education, for each year the student does not reside in this state for three (3) consecutive years, and become employed beginning within six (6) months after receiving an associate degree or a certification; or

(2) In its entirety at an interest rate and on a schedule as determined by the Division of Higher Education if the recipient does not comply with the written agreement under subsection (a) of this section.

(c)(1) It is the recipient's responsibility to notify the Division of Higher Education of any change in status within twenty-one (21) days.

(2) Failure to notify the Division of Higher Education of a change of status may affect future eligibility.

(3) Change of status will include:

(A) Change in name;

(B) Change in address; and

(C) Change in institution.

6 CAR § 400-206. Collection of loan.

(a)(1)(A) Accounts will be retained by the Financial Aid Division of the Division of Higher Education until the individual is no longer eligible for deferment, at which point the account will be turned over to a vendor for repayment.

(B) The student will:

(i) Be notified by mail that their account is being placed with a vendor

for collections; and

(ii) Receive a loan amortization schedule.

(2)(A) The account will remain with the vendor until repaid or one hundred twenty (120) days past due.

(B) Loan recipients who are determined by the Division of Higher Education to be one hundred twenty (120) days delinquent will be mailed their first letter of notification ten (10) days after the installment payment is due.

(C) If payment is not forthcoming within sixty (60) days from the original payment due date, a second letter of notification will be sent to the loan recipient declaring their account is delinquent and requesting that the account be immediately brought up to date.

(3) If the loan recipient has not responded within ninety (90) days from the original payment due date, the third and final letter of notification will be sent to the recipient informing them that the account will officially be in default if outstanding payments are not made within thirty (30) days.

(b) **Skip tracing mechanisms.** The Division of Higher Education will use the following steps to locate recipients if communications are returned as undelivered:

(1) Contact the Office of Motor Vehicle of the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration;

(2) Contact references listed on the recipient's application;

(3) Utilize telephone directory or check with directory assistance in the area of the recipient's last known address;

(4) Contact institutional offices (alumni office, admissions office, registrar's office, fraternity or sorority, and the department that the recipient majored in) at the campus where the recipient last attended;

(5) Contact creditors, such as credit card companies, credit bureaus, or GSL lender;

(6) Contact recipient's:

(A) Field of study;

(B) Professional organization;

- (C) Union; or
- (D) Licensing board;
- (7) Contact post office;
- (8) Contact utility companies; and
- (9) Contact Chamber of Commerce.

(c) Credit reporting agencies.

(1) Defaulted recipients will be reported to the following credit reporting agencies:

- (A) CSC Credit Reporting Services, Inc.;
- (B) TRW Credit Data; and
- (C) Trans Union Credit Reporting.

(2)(A) Forms for reporting defaulted loan recipients are located in the collections file.

(B) The Division of Higher Education will respond promptly to any inquiries it receives from credit reporting agencies concerning delinquent or defaulted loan recipients.

(d) **State income tax set-off.** By the authority of Acts 1993, No. 345, the Division of Higher Education has been included as a claimant agency for the setoff of debts against state tax refunds.

(e) Litigation.

(1) No sooner than thirty (30) days after sending the third letter of notification, the Division of Higher Education shall institute a civil suit against the recipient for repayment of the loan.

(2) Small claims courts will be used to satisfy debts of accounts up to three thousand dollars (\$3,000).

(3) If the account is over three thousand dollars and one cent (\$3,000.01), the Division of Higher Education must use circuit court.

(4) If the account is three thousand dollars and one cent (\$3,000.01) or above, the Division of Higher Education may choose to use small claims courts and waive the difference because of the expense involved in going to circuit court.

(5) If the Division of Higher Education chooses to waive the difference, it cannot later try to collect the difference.

(6) Forms to take the recipient to small claims court are requested from the recipient's county of residence.

(f) Write-offs.

(1) Arkansas Future Grants that convert to loans may be written off as uncollectible if the Division of Higher Education shows due diligence to satisfy the collection of the debt, and documents in the recipient's file that:

(A) The cost of litigation would exceed the likely recovery if litigation were commenced; or

(B) The recipient does not have the means to satisfy a judgment on the debt, or a substantial portion thereof.

(2) Proof of due diligence collection activities must be submitted to the Administrator of the Department of Finance and Administration and approval from the administrator must be received before Arkansas Future Grant loan accounts may be written off.

(g) Nonpayment penalties. Loan recipients who fail to meet their repayment obligations may have added to their total obligation any costs for collection of the debt.

6 CAR § 400-207. Institutional responsibilities — College and university responsibilities.

(a) Administrative agreement.

(1) The chief executive officer of the eligible institution is responsible for appointing one (1) representative from the financial aid office to act as administrator of the Arkansas Future Grant Program and to receive all communications, forms, etc.

(2) This representative is responsible for verification, data, and compliance with all program rules.

(3) The institution must comply with all rules in order to maintain continued eligibility status.

(b) Disbursement records. The institution shall maintain information on the

student indicating disbursement of scholarship funds.

(c) Institutional verification.

(1)~~(A)~~ The institution shall provide certification of enrollment in an eligible program of study, and enrollment in courses that will meet satisfactory academic progress standards, as of the eleventh day of classes by completing a verification roster each semester after registration.

~~—————(B) The verification roster is an alphabetical listing by institution of all persons receiving the award for a given academic term.~~

~~—————(C) The certifying official is responsible for completing the verification rosters each semester or trimester.~~

~~—————(D) The Division of Higher Education shall provide electronic verification roster to the financial aid administrator for each semester or trimester as needed.~~

(2) The electronic verification roster shall be returned to the division by November 1 for the fall term and by March 15 for the spring term.

(3)(A) The division shall also provide electronic continuing eligibility rosters to the financial aid administrator before the end of the fall and spring term.

(B) The rosters shall be returned to the division no later than January 15 based on the fall semester and June 1 based on the spring semester to ensure that adequate time is provided to notify students of their status in the program.

(d) Deadlines for disbursement of funds.

(1) The deadline for disbursement of funds is no later than ten (10) days after receipt of funds.

(2) Any outstanding funds not disbursed by these dates must be returned to the division.

(3) For those students whose applications are received by the division too late to allow disbursement by these dates, disbursement will be made within ten (10) working days of receipt of the verification roster and electronic transfer of funds.

(e) Due diligence.

(1) The institution will exercise due diligence in providing complete, accurate, and timely information as requested by the division on any Arkansas Future Grant

recipient or former recipient.

(2) In addition, the institution will exercise due diligence in complying with all the rules of the Arkansas Future Grant Program.

(3) The division shall periodically review the institution's records concerning this program in an effort to exercise its due diligence requirements as a steward of state funds.

**DIVISION OF HIGHER EDUCATION RULES GOVERNING THE ARKANSAS
FUTURE GRANT PROGRAM
PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Commenter Name and Organization (if applicable):

Comments: No public comments received.

Division Response: No substantive or non-substantive changes made.

**RULES GOVERNING THE MILITARY DEPENDENTS' SCHOLARSHIP
PROGRAM**

In compliance with the Arkansas ACCESS Act of 2025 (Act 341 Section 79), the Arkansas Division of Higher Education Rules Governing the Military Dependents' Scholarship Program is sunsetting to be replaced by the Arkansas Heroes Scholarship. Therefore, these rules are presented to the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) for final approval.

The following resolution is offered for the Board's consideration:

RESOLVED, That the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board reviews the rules presented in this agenda item for the Military Dependents' Scholarship Program to be administered by the Arkansas Division of Higher Education.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commissioner of the Arkansas Division of Higher Education or his designee is authorized to make technical changes and corrections, when necessary, in the program rules for the Military Dependents' Scholarship Program.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Military Dependents' Scholarship Program rules be approved for final approval.

Proposed Rulemaking

Title

Promulgated by:
Division of Higher Education

Title 6. Education

Chapter IV. Division of Higher Education, Department of Education

Subchapter B. Scholarships and Grants

Part 393. Rules Governing the Military Dependents' Scholarship Program

Subpart 1. Generally

6 CAR § 393-101. Organization and structure.

(a)(1) The Division of Higher Education shall administer the Military Dependents' Scholarship Program within the policies set by the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

(2) All formal communications shall be addressed to or signed by the Director of the Division of Higher Education or his or her designee.

(b) The final responsibility for determining eligibility of scholarship recipients shall rest with the Commissioner of the Division of Higher Education pursuant to the provisions of Acts 1973, No. 188, Acts 2005, No. 2127, Acts 2007, No. 717, Acts 2009, No. 1216, and subsequent legislation.

(c) When functioning under Acts 1973, No. 188, Acts 2005, No. 2127, Acts 2007, No. 717, Acts 2009, No. 1216, and subsequent legislation, the division shall follow the provisions of the Arkansas Administrative Procedure Act, Arkansas Code § 25-15-201 et seq.

6 CAR § 393-102. Program definitions.

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The following definitions are used in the Military Dependents' Scholarship program:

(1) "Approved institution" means a private, nonprofit institution of higher education in Arkansas or state-supported institution of higher education or technical school located in Arkansas that is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, or has achieved candidacy status, and does not discriminate against applicants or employees on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, handicap, or national origin, consistent with the provisions of applicable state and federal laws;

(2) "Dependent child" means any child born or conceived, legally adopted, or under court-appointed legal guardianship, or the stepchild of a person who has been declared to be a prisoner of war or missing or killed in action, or killed on ordnance delivery, or a disabled veteran, and who meets the definition of dependent with regards to children established by the United States Department of Education;

(3) "Dependent spouse" means the legal spouse of a person who has been declared to be:

- (A) A prisoner of war;
- (B) Missing;
- (C) Killed in action;
- (D) Killed on ordnance delivery; or
- (E) A disabled veteran;

(4) "Disabled veteran" means a person who:

(A) Who has been declared by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to be one hundred percent (100%) totally and permanently disabled as a result of service-connected injuries or medical conditions;

(B) Who is currently receiving special monthly compensation for such; and

(C) Who:

(i) Was a resident of the State of Arkansas at the time that person entered the service of the United States Armed Forces; or

(ii) Is a current resident of Arkansas;

(5)(A) "Fees waived" means the inclusion of tuition at the in-state rate, room and board when provided in campus facilities, fees, or other charges incurred from the

approved institution.

(B) Nonreimbursable charges would include any penalty charges, including but not limited to:

(i) Parking tickets; or

(ii) Other penalty payments;

(6) "Full-time student" means an undergraduate student enrolled in at least twelve (12) semester credit hours, or the equivalent, per semester; and

(7) "Satisfactory progress" means undergraduate students must:

(A) Maintain a cumulative college grade point average of at least 2.0 on a 4.0 scale; and

(B) Make satisfactory progress toward a degree or certificate of completion, as defined by the institution.

6 CAR § 393-103. Scholarship eligibility criteria.

(a) To be eligible for the Military Dependents' Scholarship, an applicant must meet the following conditions:

(1) The student's parent or spouse must have been declared to be a disabled veteran, prisoner of war, missing in action, killed in action, or killed on ordnance delivery during the course of active military duty after January 1, 1960;

(2) The student's parent or spouse must have been a resident of the State of Arkansas at the time he or she entered service in the United States Armed Services, or whose official residence is currently within the State of Arkansas;

(3) The dependent child or spouse of a person declared to be a prisoner of war or missing or killed in action, or a person killed on ordnance delivery, or a disabled veteran must be a current resident of Arkansas;

(4) The student must qualify as the dependent of a disabled veteran, prisoner of war or a person declared to be missing or killed in action, or killed on ordnance delivery by meeting one (1) of the following criteria:

(A) The student is the legal spouse of a person declared to be a prisoner of war, missing or killed in action, killed on ordnance delivery, or a person declared to

be a disabled veteran;

(B) The dependent child must be the biological child of the parent who was declared to be a prisoner of war or missing or killed in action, killed on ordnance delivery, or a disabled veteran;

(C) The dependent child is legally adopted or in legal custody of the guardian who was declared to be:

- (i) A prisoner of war;
- (ii) Missing;
- (iii) Killed in action;
- (iv) Killed on ordnance delivery; or
- (v) A disabled veteran; or

(D) The dependent child is the stepchild of the parent who was declared to be:

- (i) A prisoner of war;
- (ii) Missing;
- (iii) Killed in action;
- (iv) Killed on ordnance delivery; or
- (v) A disabled veteran;

(5) The dependent child must meet the United States Department of Education's definition of "dependent" with regards to children;

(6) A stepchild must have:

(A) Been listed as a dependent on the federal and state income tax returns in each of the five (5) income tax years immediately prior to the death or total and permanent disability; and

(B) Received more than one-half (1/2) his or her financial support;

(7) The applicant must apply for the Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance program, Chapter 35 of Title 38 of the United States Code, with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs;

(8) The applicant must be enrolled or accepted for enrollment as a full-time student in any private, nonprofit institution of higher education in Arkansas or state-

supported institution of higher education in Arkansas;

(9) The applicant must be an undergraduate student seeking an:

- (A) Associate degree;
- (B) Baccalaureate degree; or
- (C) Certificate of completion; and

(10)(A) The applicant must apply for the scholarship prior to the published deadline in order to receive the scholarship.

(B) Reimbursement can only be made for the year in which the student is currently enrolled and has made application.

(b) Once a person qualifies as an eligible student under the terms of the program, there shall be no situation, such as the return of a parent or spouse, or the reported death of a parent or spouse, that will remove the dependent from the benefits of this program.

(c) An eligible recipient shall receive a scholarship for one (1) academic year, renewable for up to three (3) additional academic years for a total of eight (8) semesters, if the recipient meets the following continuing eligibility criteria established by the Division of Higher Education:

(1) The student must maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.0 on a 4.0 scale;

(2) The student is making satisfactory progress toward a degree or certificate of completion; and

(3) The student is enrolled in at least twelve (12) semester hours or the equivalent per term and completes twenty-four (24) semester hours, or the equivalent, per academic year.

(d) For purposes of scholarship payments, “academic semester” includes summer terms, semesters, quarters, or their equivalent at the postsecondary institution in which the student is enrolled.

6 CAR § 393-104. Application process.

(a) Brochures are mailed by the Division of Higher Education to counselors and

principals at public and private Arkansas high schools.

(b)(1) Brochures are mailed by the division to financial aid officers at private, nonprofit institutions of higher education and state-supported institutions of higher education in the state.

(2) The institutional financial aid officer is responsible for ensuring that eligible students are made aware of the Military Dependents' Scholarship Program and its benefits.

(c) Applications will be made available on the division's website.

(d)(1) The division shall establish the deadline for receipt of applications.

(2) The deadline date shall be clearly printed on the application.

(e) Scholarship applicants shall submit to the division the following documentation as it applies to the applicant:

(1) Military Dependents' Scholarship application;

(2)(A) A death certificate or other documentation certifying the death of the parent or spouse.

(B) A death as a result of injuries received while serving in the armed forces is only covered if the death occurred while on active duty;

(3) A report of casualty from the appropriate branch of the United States Armed Services or a copy of the veteran's DD214 form;

(4) Documentation from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs citing service-connected, one-hundred-percent total and permanent disability;

(5) A copy of the application and statement of acceptance or denial of the federal program for dependents of veterans, Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance program;

(6) A copy of Survivors' and Dependents' Education Assistance program benefits statement showing the amount of educational assistance allowed for each term;

(7) A copy of legal adoption or court appointed legal guardianship for a dependent child;

(8) A copy of birth certificate, if a dependent child; and

(9) A copy of marriage license, if a spouse.

6 CAR § 393-105. Award process.

(a)(1) Applications and supporting documentation will be reviewed for completeness and to determine whether the applicant meets all the eligibility requirements.

(2) Applicants will be notified within thirty (30) days of the status of their application.

(b) Eligible students will receive an award notice, which contains:

- (1) The conditions of the award;
- (2) The requirements for continued eligibility;
- (3) An explanation of the benefits; and
- (4) The student's responsibilities.

(c)(1) The institution will also receive an award notice, which contains the:

- (A) Student's name and social security number;
- (B) Award limits;
- (C) Conditions of the award;
- (D) Verification process; and
- (E) Payment process.

(2) The institution will be required to complete a reimbursement form listing all charges covered by this program.

(d) The institution will be responsible for verifying the student's continued eligibility each semester.

(e) The award will be renewed annually provided the student satisfies the continued eligibility requirements as defined by the Division of Higher Education in 6 CAR § 393-103.

(f) Reimbursement can only be made for the year in which the student is currently enrolled and has made application.

6 CAR § 393-106. Scholarship payment policies.

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(a)(1) The scholarship will pay that portion of charges that exceeds the amount of the Survivors' and Dependents' Education Assistance program educational assistance allowance or the full amount if the recipient is ineligible for the Survivors' and Dependents' Education Assistance program, but is eligible for the MDS.

(2) Reimbursement is limited to the cost of tuition at the in-state rate, mandatory fees, and a room and meal plan when provided in campus facilities from such institution or school.

(3) The amount reimbursed for the room shall not exceed the usual and custom amounts charged by the institution as for similar scholarship programs.

(b)(1) Payment on behalf of the scholarship recipient will be made directly to the recipient's institution.

(2) The Division of Higher Education will reimburse the institution at the beginning of each semester for approved charges covered by this program upon receipt of the reimbursement form, and verification of the charges.

(3) Reimbursement can only be made for the year in which the student is currently enrolled and has made application.

(c) The division will pay the institution for the award covered by this program upon receipt of the reimbursement form, and verification of the charges.

(d)(1) A recipient who has received a Military Dependents' Scholarship may transfer to another eligible institution after providing written notification of the change of status to the division by:

(A) October 1 for a fall term;

(B) February 1 for a winter or spring term; and

(C) June 1 for a summer term.

(2) Failure to notify the division of the transfer by the deadline will disqualify the student for waiver of tuition and fees at the institution to which he or she has transferred.

(e)(1) Recipients may withdraw from the Military Dependents' Scholarship Program upon written notification to, and approval by, the division.

(2) The petition shall give the reason for withdrawal and will be supported with

documentation.

(3) Recipients who withdraw from school and fail to notify the division by October 1 for the fall term, February 1 for the winter and/or spring terms, and June 1 for the summer terms will not be eligible for a tuition waiver for that semester.

(4) The recipient may receive the tuition waiver if he or she can demonstrate that extraordinary circumstances prevented him or her from notifying the division.

(f)(1) The award will be permanently revoked if the recipient fails to enroll full-time and the division receives neither written notification of transfer to another eligible institution, nor a petition for withdrawal by the recipient by:

(A) October 1 for the fall term;

(B) February 1 for the winter/spring terms; and

(C) June 1 for the summer terms.

(2) At the discretion of the division, the award will not be revoked if the division determines that extraordinary circumstances prevented the student from notifying the division by the required dates.

(g)(1) Recipients who are members of the Arkansas National Guard or Armed Forces Reserve units who are called to active duty for reasons other than regular unit training and are unable to complete the current term will not be penalized.

(2) They will be placed in deferred status until six (6) months after release from active duty.

(h)(1) Acts 1999, No. 1180, states that students who receive scholarships from public funds may not use those funds in a financial aid package to exceed the federally recognized cost of attendance at the institution where the student enrolls.

(2) The institution must follow division policy in repaying public funds in the amount exceeding the total cost of attendance for any student who receives public funds in a financial aid package above the cost of attendance.

(i) The state assistance awarded to a dependent attending a private, nonprofit institution of higher education in this state shall not exceed the amount of state assistance awarded to dependents attending state-supported institutions of higher education.

6 CAR § 393-107. Institutional responsibilities.

(a)(1) The chief executive officer of the state-supported institution of higher education is responsible for appointing one (1) representative from the financial aid office to act as administrator of the Military Dependents' Scholarship Program and to receive all communications and forms issued by the Division of Higher Education.

(2) This representative is responsible for:

- (A) Completing all forms;
- (B) Verification of data; and
- (C) Complying with all program rules.

(3) The institution must comply with these responsibilities in order to maintain continued eligibility status.

(b)(1) The institution shall provide verification to the division at the close of each term concerning the student's name and continuing eligibility.

(2) This is accomplished using the verification form issued by the division.

(3) Reimbursement to the institution will be made after the institution has completed the verification form and the reimbursement form and returned them to the division.

(c)(1) Institutions will be responsible for exercising all reasonable efforts to identify students eligible for the program.

(2) Reimbursement can only be made for the year in which the student is currently enrolled and has made application.

(d)(1) The deadline for disbursement of funds is no later than ten (10) days after written receipt of funds.

(2) Any outstanding funds not disbursed must be returned to the division.

(e)(1) It is the institution's responsibility to notify the division of the names of persons owing a refund, the date of the withdrawal, and the refund amount.

(2) This information should be placed on the institution's verification roster before returning it to the division.

(f)(1) The institution will exercise due diligence in providing complete, accurate,

and timely information as requested by the division on any scholarship recipient.

(2) In addition, the institution will exercise due diligence in complying with all the rules of the Military Dependents' Scholarship program.

6 CAR § 393-108. Recipient responsibilities.

(a) It is the recipient's responsibility to notify the Division of Higher Education, in writing, of any change in status within twenty-one (21) days.

(b) This includes:

- (1) Changes in name;
- (2) Change in address;
- (3) Change in institution;
- (4) Change in full-time status; or
- (5) Withdrawal from an institution.

(c) Failure to notify the division of any change in status may affect future eligibility.

6 CAR § 393-109. Sunset.

(a)(1) Beginning with the 2025-2026 academic year, the Arkansas Heroes Scholarship shall replace the Military Dependent's Scholarship Program for new applicants.

(A) Students currently receiving a scholarship pursuant to this part shall continue receiving the scholarship unless:

- (i) The student completes their degree; or
- (ii) The student fails to maintain eligibility.

(2) The provisions of this part shall sunset before the fall 2028 semester begins.

**DIVISION OF HIGHER EDUCATION RULES GOVERNING THE MILITARY
DEPENDENTS' SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Commenter Name and Organization (if applicable):

Comments: No public comments received.

Division Response: No substantive or non-substantive changes made.

RULES GOVERNING THE ARKANSAS DIRECT ADMISSIONS PROGRAM

In compliance with the Arkansas ACCESS Act of 2025 (Act 341 Section 48, p. 63), the Arkansas Division of Higher Education Rules Governing the Arkansas Direct Admissions Program are presented to the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) for final approval.

The following resolution is offered for the Board's consideration:

RESOLVED, That the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board reviews the rules presented in this agenda item for the Arkansas Direct Admissions Program to be administered by the Arkansas Division of Higher Education.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commissioner of the Arkansas Division of Higher Education or his designee is authorized to make technical changes and corrections, when necessary, in the program rules for the Arkansas Direct Admissions Program.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Arkansas Direct Admissions Program rules be approved for final approval.

Proposed Rulemaking

Title

Promulgated by: Arkansas Division of Higher Education

Title 6. Education

Chapter IV. Division of Higher Education, Department of Education

Subchapter A. Generally

Part 376. Arkansas Direct Admissions Program

Subpart 1. Generally

6 CAR § 376-101. Definitions.

As used in this part:

(1) "Application requirements" means the forms, payments, or activities that are required to be completed by a student to apply to a state-supported institution of higher education as set by each participating institution;

(2) "Eligible student" means a student who resides in Arkansas and attends a public or private accredited high school that has agreed to participate in the Arkansas Direct Admissions Program;

(3) "Enrollment requirements" means the forms, payments, or activities that are required to be completed by a student to enroll in a state-supported institution of higher education as set by each participating institution;

(4) "Participating institution" means a state-supported institution of higher education, community college, or technical college within Arkansas that uses the Arkansas Direct Admissions Program;

(5) "Participating public school" means:

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(A) A public high school within a traditional public school district that is accredited by the State Board of Education;

(B) An open-enrollment public charter school organized as a high school that is authorized by the charter authorizing panel; and

(C) A private high school that is accredited by:

(i) The Arkansas Nonpublic School Accrediting Association, Inc., or its successor; or

(ii) Another accrediting association recognized by the state board;

(6) “Provisional admissions criteria” means the minimum academic requirements that a student is required to meet to receive a provisional admissions offer from a participating institution; and

(7)(A) “Provisional admissions offer” means a determination that a student meets admissions criteria.

(B) “Provisional admissions offer” does not mean acceptance to a participating institution.

6 CAR § 376-102. Implementation.

(a) There is established the Arkansas Direct Admissions Program.

(b) The program shall:

(1) Begin implementation with the high school graduating class of 2026-2027;

(2) Establish:

(A) Provisional admissions criteria, including without limitation:

(i) Grade point average;

(ii) Assessment scores; and

(iii) Course completion.

(B) Eligibility requirements for participating institutions that include without limitation:

(i) Application requirements; and

(ii) Enrollment requirements.

(C) Eligibility requirements for participating public schools;

(3) Require the collection of student academic information to determine provisional admissions offers;

(4) Include a common application portal for eligible students to participate in the program that may include without limitation:

(A) Information about participating institutions;

(B) Communication of provisional admissions offers to participating students; and

(C) Information about available financial aid; and

(5) Include a plan to conduct outreach to eligible students to provide the eligible students with information regarding the operation of the program.

(c) This section shall not prevent a student who does not qualify for a provisional admissions offer from applying for enrollment in a participating institution through the participating institution's existing admissions process.

6 CAR § 376-103. Duties of public school districts and open-enrollment public charter schools.

(a) A public school district or open-enrollment public charter school may opt to participate in the Arkansas Direct Admissions Program.

(b) A participating public school shall provide student data to the Division of Higher Education that includes without limitation:

(1) Grade point average;

(2) Assessment scores; and

(3) Course completion.

(c)(1) Each public school district and open-enrollment public charter school shall inform all students about participation in the Arkansas Direct Admissions Program.

(2) A public school district or open-enrollment public charter school shall not actively discourage or prohibit an eligible student from participating in the Arkansas Direct Admissions Program.

6 CAR § 376-104. Common application portal.

(a) The common application portal for eligible students to participate in the program shall be known as the AR A.C.C.E.S.S. Portal.

(b)(1) Eligible students may utilize the application portal to apply to participating institutions.

(2) A student may submit up to five (5) applications in an academic year at no cost.

**DIVISION OF HIGHER EDUCATION RULES GOVERNING THE ARKANSAS
DIRECT ADMISSIONS PROGRAM**

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Commenter Name and Organization (if applicable):

Comments: No public comments received.

Division Response: No substantive or non-substantive changes made.

**RULES GOVERNING THE STUDENT UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH
FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM**

In compliance with Arkansas Code §6-61-236, the Arkansas Division of Higher Education Rules Governing the Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship Program are presented to the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) for final approval.

The following resolution is offered for the Board's consideration:

RESOLVED, That the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board reviews the rules presented in this agenda item for the Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship Program to be administered by the Arkansas Division of Higher Education.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commissioner of the Arkansas Division of Higher Education or his designee is authorized to make technical changes and corrections, when necessary, in the program rules for the Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship Program.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship Program rules be approved for final approval.

Proposed Rulemaking

Title

Promulgated by:
Division of Higher Education

Title 6. Education

Chapter IV. Division of Higher Education, Department of Education

Subchapter B. Scholarships and Grants

Part 396. Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship Program Rules

Subpart 1. Generally

6 CAR § 396-101. Purpose.

The purpose of the Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) Program is to support the continued development of undergraduate academic research efforts at state-supported ~~colleges and universities~~ institutions of higher education.

6 CAR § 396-102. Definitions.

As used in this part:

(1) “Approved institution” means a ~~public-supported state-supported~~ or private, nonprofit postsecondary institution with its primary headquarters located in Arkansas that is eligible to receive Title IV federal student aid funds;

(2)(A) “Citizen” means a person who is a United States citizen or a permanent resident alien.

(B) If the recipient is not a United States citizen but a permanent resident alien, the recipient must attach a copy of the permanent resident alien ~~card form, I 551,~~ or I 94 to the application;

(3) “Eligible applicant” means any applicant who meets the eligibility criteria

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established in 6 CAR § 396-104;

(4) “Fellowship” means an amount of money given to a student for a specified period that allows him or her to study and research a subject;

(5) “Full-time student” means a student enrolled in twelve (12) semester credit hours or its equivalent per semester;

(6) “Institutional match” means the amount of funds institution must match for a student’s stipend;

(7) “Mentor” means a tenured or full-time faculty member;

(8) “Mentor cost” means any salary, fringe benefits, materials, supplies, and travel costs awarded to the mentor associated with mentoring the student;

(9) “Semester” means a spring, summer, or fall term;

(10) “Student stipend” means an amount of money awarded to the student to conduct his or her research;

(11) “Student travel” means costs incurred by a student to present the results of his or her research at a state or national conference or to attend a meeting of experts in his or her discipline; and

(12)(A) “SURF Selection Panel” means a panel of faculty or administrators of Arkansas public or private institutions of higher education who have earned a Ph.D. or terminal degree in the discipline being reviewed.

(B) Other reviewers will be considered who have earned a Ph.D. or terminal degree in the discipline to be reviewed and who have an affiliation with an Arkansas public or private institution of higher education or an education-related entity.

6 CAR § 396-103. Organization and structure.

(a)(1) The Division of Higher Education shall administer the Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) within the policies set by the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

(2) All formal communications shall be addressed to or signed by the Commissioner of the Division of Higher Education or his or her designee.

(3) The SURF Selection Panel shall select recipients for awards.

(b)(1) The SURF Selection Panel shall consist of faculty or administrators at an Arkansas public or private institution of higher education who have earned a Ph.D. or terminal degree in the discipline to be reviewed.

(2) Other panel members will be considered who have earned a Ph.D. or terminal degree in the discipline to be reviewed and who have an affiliation with an Arkansas public or private institution of higher education or an education-related entity.

(3) The ~~commissioner~~ Commissioner of the Division of Higher Education or his or her designee shall serve as presiding officer of the SURF Selection Panel.

(c)(1) The focus of the Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship is the continued development of undergraduate academic research efforts at Arkansas's public and private institutions of higher education and to provide funding to encourage students to conduct in-depth research projects in specific fields of study under the tutelage of a tenured or full-time faculty member.

(2) The program is designed to assist all students throughout the state.

(d) The commissioner has the final responsibility for selecting fellowship recipients subject to the provisions of Arkansas Code § 6-61-236 and this part.

6 CAR § 396-104. Fellowship eligibility criteria.

(a) An applicant must meet the following requirements to be eligible to receive the Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship:

(1) The applicant must be a citizen of the United States or a permanent resident alien;

(2) The applicant shall be enrolled in an approved Arkansas institution of higher education as a full-time student as defined by the Division of Higher Education;

(3)(A) The applicant must be enrolled in a program of study that leads to or is creditable towards a baccalaureate degree.

(B) These programs include baccalaureate and associate degree programs;

(4) The applicant must have completed at least thirty (30) semester credit hours before funds are awarded;

(5) The applicant must have a minimum cumulative 3.25 grade point average;
and

(6) The applicant must have a tenured or full-time faculty member to serve as his or her mentor.

(b) A student may compete for additional years but cannot receive more than three
(3) academic years of funding.

6 CAR § 396-105. Application process.

(a) The Division of Higher Education will disseminate the Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship announcement through workshops, meetings, press releases, division newsletters, the division's website, and by other appropriate methods.

(b) Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship announcements will be emailed to:

- (1) Presidents and chancellors of institutions of higher education;
- (2) Chief Academic Officers;
- (3) Directors of Research and sponsored programs;
- (4) Previous SURF panel members and mentors; and
- (5) Faculty, administrators, and other interested persons.

(c)(1) Students must submit an application for the Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship to the division.

(2) The division shall provide an application form on its website and to any individual upon request.

(3) The applicant must complete and submit the Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship application to be considered for the fellowship.

(d) Any interested student who meets the eligibility criteria in 6 CAR § 396-104 may apply.

(e)(1) ~~The division shall establish the deadline for receipt of applications each year.~~
The deadline for applications to be submitted to the division is November 1 each year.

(2) The deadline date shall be clearly printed on the application and website.

(3)(A) All applications and supporting documentation must be postmarked or emailed by the established deadline date in order to be considered.

(B) It is the responsibility of the individual applicant to ensure that the application is postmarked or emailed by the deadline date.

(4) If any deadline date occurs on a weekend or holiday, the deadline will be extended to the following business day.

(f) The SURF Selection Panel shall read and score applications.

(g)(1) SURF Selection Panel members shall meet with the division to make recommendations for SURF awards based upon the selection criteria listed in 6 CAR § 396-106.

(2) The SURF Selection Panel is divided into two (2) groups to represent STEM disciplines and non-STEM disciplines.

(3)(A) Each group will make recommendations for applicants from the respective disciplines.

(B) Subject to appropriations, the SURF Selection Panel will award sixty percent (60%) of the funds to STEM applicants and forty percent (40%) of the funds to non-STEM applicants.

(C) Should there not be enough qualified applicants in the STEM or non-STEM group to make recommendations for awards, funds can be shifted from one group to another until all funds are exhausted.

(h) The amount of the fellowship awarded to each recipient shall be as follows:

(1)(A) Up to one thousand two hundred fifty dollars (\$1,250) for a student stipend.

(B) If a student is awarded a fellowship for only a spring or fall semester, the student stipend shall not exceed six hundred twenty-five dollars (\$625);

(i) If a student is awarded a fellowship for the spring semester through the summer semester, the student stipend shall not exceed six hundred twenty-five dollars (\$625).

(2) Up to seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750) for student travel;

(3) Up to seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750) for a mentor award; and

(4) Up to one thousand two hundred fifty dollars (\$1,250) for the institution match.

(i) The maximum award shall not exceed four thousand dollars (\$4,000).

(j)(1) The division shall notify each eligible applicant of his or her award.

(2) The award notice shall include the student's name, address, faculty mentor's name, institution, and the actual amount the student is eligible to receive.

(3) The award notice shall explain the division's disbursement procedures and conditions as detailed in 6 CAR § 396-107.

(k) The division shall notify the appropriate faculty and administration at each institution and the SURF Panel of SURF awardees.

(l) The division shall notify applicants who are determined to be ineligible and provide the reason for ineligibility.

(m) Once each applicant has accepted his or her SURF award and all funds are exhausted, the division shall notify all remaining eligible applicants that all funds have been awarded via a "no award" notice.

6 CAR § 396-106. Fellowship selection criteria.

(a) All proposals will be reviewed by the Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship Selection Panel that is selected by the Division of Higher Education.

(b) The SURF Selection Panel will use the following scale to grade the selection criteria found in the table at Appendix A (the selection criteria), one (1) being the best score and nine (9) being the worst score:

(1) 1 – Superior: Extraordinary and needs little to no revision, improvement, or both;

(2) 2 – Excellent: Easily addressable issues and needs little revision, improvement, or both;

(3) 3 – Above Average: Has strong quality and would benefit from revision, improvement, or both;

(4) 4 – Good: Has slightly above average quality and needs some revision, improvement, or both;

(5) 5 – Average: Has average quality and needs revision, improvement, or both;

(6) 6 – Fair: Has slightly below average quality and needs revision, improvement, or both;

(7) 7 – Below Average: Has weak quality and requires revision, improvement, or both;

(8) 8 – Minimal: Multiple issues and severely requires revision, improvement, or both; and

(9) 9 – Poor: Not recommended for funding or consideration.

(c)(1) The SURF Selection Panel shall meet and make recommendation for students to be awarded a fellowship based upon the selection criteria.

(2) Recommendation of awards shall be made until all funds are exhausted.

(3) The SURF Panel shall also select alternates to be awarded in the event a student does not accept his or her SURF award.

(d) The Commissioner of the Division of Higher Education, or his or her designee, has the final responsibility for selecting fellowship recipients.

6 CAR § 396-107. Fellowship payment procedures.

(a)(1) The Division of Higher Education shall disburse fellowship funds to the institution designated on the student's application.

(2) The division shall send funds to the appropriate administrative staff at the institution via electronic funds transfer or state warrant.

(3)(A) The division will also send an award roster and receipt confirmation to the appropriate institution.

(B) The award roster lists the students to be awarded and the disbursement amounts.

~~(C) The receipt confirmation should be signed by the disbursement officer and returned to the division.~~

(4) The institution will disburse the grant funds to the student according to the institution's disbursement procedures.

(b) Fellowships shall be terminated for a recipient's:

(1) Failure to maintain at least a 3.25 cumulative grade point average on a

4.00 scale;

(2) Failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress as defined by the institution; and

(3) Failure to conduct the research for which the fellowship was awarded.

(c)(1) The recipient is responsible for notifying the division in writing of any change in status, i.e., change of address, email, transfer of research to another mentor, etc.

(2) A recipient's failure to provide written notification may result in the cancellation of the fellowship for that term.

(d)(1) Recipients who are members of the Arkansas National Guard or reserve components of the United States Armed Forces units who are called to active duty for reasons other than regular unit training and are unable to complete the current term will be allowed to repeat the missed term.

(2) Those recipients shall be placed in deferred status until six (6) months after release from active duty, at which time they must be reenrolled and continue research with the same mentor.

(e) If the recipient of a fellowship withdraws, drops out, is expelled, falls below the minimum standards in 6 CAR § 396-104, or does not conduct the research for which the fellowship award was received, the fellowship award for that semester shall be refunded to the division.

6 CAR § 396-108. Institutional responsibilities.

(a)(1) The chief executive officer of the eligible institution is responsible for designating one (1) institutional representative to act as administrator of the Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship and to receive all communications, forms, and the like for that institution.

(2) This representative is responsible for verification, data, and compliance with all law and Division of Higher Education rules related to the program.

(3) The institution must comply with all law and rules in order to maintain continued eligibility status.

(b) Each authorizing institutional official certifies, by signing the program

application, that the applicant has met all conditions of the fellowship eligibility criteria in 6 CAR § 396-104.

(c) The institution shall maintain information on the student indicating disbursement of fellowship funds.

(d) The institution shall provide certification of full-time enrollment as of the close of business on the eleventh day of classes.

(e) The institution must comply with OMB Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards in 2 C.F.R. § 200 ~~Circular A-21, Cost Principles for Educational Institutions, and OMB Circular A-110, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and other Non-Profit Organizations, when managing fellowship funds.~~

(f) Each institution shall establish a separate account for each student awarded a SURF fellowship.

(g) The appropriate faculty head of the academic discipline for which a recipient is conducting research under the fellowship is responsible for ensuring that the student and mentor are conducting research as set forth in the fellowship application submitted to the division.

(h)(1) Funds shall be disbursed to students and mentors in accordance with the institution's disbursement procedures according to OMB Circular A-21 and OMB Circular A-110.

(2) Any outstanding funds not disbursed by the end of the semester must be returned to the division within fifteen (15) days of the semester's end.

(3) The institutional representative is responsible for issuing a refund under 6 CAR § 396-107(e) to the division within fifteen (15) days of the semester's end.

(i) Each institution shall exercise due diligence in providing complete, accurate, and timely information as requested by the division on any fellowship recipient or former recipient.

(j) The division shall periodically review the program.

6 CAR § 396-109. Fellowship recipient's responsibilities.

(a)(1) It is the recipient's responsibility to notify the Division of Higher Education in writing of any change in status, i.e., change of address, email, transfer of research to another mentor, etc.

(2) Failure to provide written notification may result in the cancellation of the fellowship for that term.

(b) A fellowship recipient shall not change the purpose for his or her research project.

(c) Each fellowship recipient shall submit a one-page abstract on the findings of his or her research upon completion of the project to the division as follows:

(1) By May 1 for a spring term project completion;

(2) By August 1 for a summer term project completion; and

(3) By December 1 for a fall term project completion.

(d)(1) Fellowship recipients are required to present the findings of their research at a state or national conference in their discipline or attend a meeting of experts in their discipline as directed by their mentor.

(2) Failure by a fellowship recipient to comply with any of the above may result in forfeiture of his or her SURF fellowship funds.

~~Appendix A. Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship Selection Criteria~~

~~Link:~~

~~<https://CodeOfARRules.arkansas.gov/docs/CARCodeAppendices/Appendices/322/6CARpt.396AppendixA.pdf>~~

Appendix A. Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship Selection Criteria

Link:

<https://CodeOfARRules.arkansas.gov/docs/CARCodeAppendices/Appendices/322/6CARpt.396AppendixA.pdf>

**DIVISION OF HIGHER EDUCATION RULES GOVERNING THE STUDENT
UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM**

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Commenter Name and Organization (if applicable):

Comments: No public comments received.

Division Response: No substantive or non-substantive changes made.