

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 408. Rules Governing Access to Acceleration Scholarship Program

Subpart 1. Generally

6 CAR § 408.101. Creation.

(a) This part shall be known as the Division of Higher Education's Rules Governing the Access to Acceleration Scholarship Program.

6 CAR § 408.102. 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:

(A) Is approved by the Division of Higher Education to participate in the Access to Acceleration Scholarship Program; and

(B) Is a:

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

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(ii) 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; and

(iii) Approved by the division to offer concurrent credit courses;

(3)(A) "Concurrent credit course" means a course as defined in § 6-16-1202.

(B) "Concurrent credit course" does not include a program that is operated or sponsored by a third party;

(4)(A) "Dual enrollment course" means an enrollment program allowing high school students to take college-level courses for college credit at approved institutions of higher education.

(B) High schools may give students course credit upon completion of the dual enrollment course;

(5) "Eligible student" means a student enrolled in grade nine (9), grade ten (10), grade eleven (11), or grade twelve (12) at a public high school or home school in Arkansas;

(6) "Third party" means a person or entity that does not receive disbursement directly from the division, including a subcontractor of the institution; and

(7) "Verification rosters" 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.

6 CAR § 408.103. Eligibility.

(a) A student is eligible to be awarded a scholarship under this part for an academic semester or academic year during which the student is enrolled in a concurrent credit course if, pursuant to Arkansas Code § 6-16-1204(a)(5), the student:

(1) Is admitted to an institution of higher education; and

(2) Meets all of the prerequisites for the course in which he or she is enrolled.

(b) Scholarship funds shall not be used for:

(1) Courses at a vocational center that are reimbursable under Arkansas Code § 6-51-305; or

(2) A concurrent credit course that may be funded under Arkansas Code § 6-18-2506.

(c)(1) Scholarship funds may be used for dual enrollment courses to the same extent as concurrent credit courses.

(2) Disbursement of funds for dual enrollment courses shall be governed by an agreement between the institution of higher education and the eligible student.

6 CAR § 408.104. Continuing eligibility.

(a) To maintain eligibility for an Access to Acceleration Scholarship under this part, a recipient shall:

(1) Continue to meet the relevant eligibility requirements of this part while a recipient of a scholarship under this part;

_____ (2)(A) Meet the satisfactory academic progress standards required to receive other financial aid at the approved institution of higher education where the recipient is enrolled, as determined by the Division of Higher Education in conjunction with the institution of higher education where the recipient is enrolled.

_____ (B)(i) A recipient who does not successfully complete any credit hours toward degree completion in a semester in which he or she received a scholarship under this part immediately forfeits the remainder of the scholarship award for that academic year.

_____ (ii) The division shall notify the recipient of the loss of eligibility under this subdivision.

_____ (C) By accepting scholarship funds under this part, the receiving institution certifies that students will be enrolled in courses that will meet satisfactory academic progress standards leading toward a certificate, an associate degree, a nursing diploma, a baccalaureate degree, or a graduate-level or professional degree;

_____ (3) Earn a postsecondary grade point average of 2.5 or higher on a 4.0 scale at an approved institution of higher education;

(4) Enroll in courses that lead toward an associate degree or baccalaureate degree or graduate-level or professional degree; and

(5) Meet any other continuing eligibility criteria established by the division.

(b)(1) A student recipient who loses eligibility for a scholarship may apply to receive the scholarship for one course the next semester to meet continuing eligibility requirements.

(2) A recipient under subdivision (b)(1) of this section who fails to meet continuing eligibility requirements loses eligibility for the scholarship for one (1) semester before being able to reapply.

(c) If a recipient is subject to losing a scholarship under this section due to a catastrophic event experienced by the recipient or a family member of the recipient, the division may waive the requirements of this section and determine the appropriate requirements for the recipient to either retain or regain the scholarship.

6 CAR § 408.105. Distribution—Award Amounts.

(a) If funds are available, the Division of Higher Education shall award an Access to Acceleration Scholarship to all eligible students who meet the requirements under this part in the order in which the rosters are received.

(b)(1) The division shall distribute scholarships from the funds available in an equal amount to every approved institution of higher education that has enrolled a student eligible to receive a scholarship under this part.

(2) A scholarship awarded to a student who is eligible under this part shall be awarded in the amount of sixty-five dollars (\$65) per concurrent credit course hour in which the eligible student is enrolled, for a maximum of fifteen (15) concurrent credit course hours per semester.

(3) The maximum scholarship amount a student may be awarded in an academic year, including summer semesters, shall not exceed two thousand dollars (\$2,000).

(4)(A) Institutions of higher education and school districts shall not charge a public school student or the student's parent or guardian for tuition, fees, or materials for participation in concurrent credit courses, if the student is eligible under this part.

(B) If a student enrolls in more than the maximum fifteen (15) credits allowed under this section, pursuant to Arkansas Code § 6-16-1204 excess costs may be satisfied by one of the following:

(i) Funding from the school district where a student is enrolled;

(ii) Other consideration agreed to by the public school district or open-enrollment public charter school and institution of higher education; and

(iii) Any other available sources as determined by the division.

(C) A student or a student's parent or guardian shall not be responsible for tuition, fees, or materials for participation in a concurrent credit course.

(5) Institutions of higher education may charge students participating in dual enrollment courses.

(c)(1) A state-supported two-year or four-year institution of higher education may offer a reduced tuition rate for concurrent credit courses offered by the state-supported institution of higher education to eligible students under this part.

(2) The reduction in tuition under subdivision (c)(1) of this section shall not be considered an institutional scholarship.

6 CAR § 408.106. Responsibilities of Institutions of Higher Education.

(a)(1) The chief executive officer of an approved institution of higher education shall appoint one (1) representative from the financial aid office to act as administrator of the Access to Acceleration Scholarship Program and to receive all communications, forms, etc.

(2) This representative is responsible for verification, data, and compliance with this part.

(b) The approved institution of higher education shall maintain information on the student indicating disbursement of scholarship funds.

(c)(1) The approved institution of higher education shall provide certification of 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.

(2) Verifications rosters must be submitted to the Division of Higher Education by October 1 each fall semester, March 1 each spring semester, and at the date specified by the division for the summer semester.

(d)(1) The deadline for the division to disburse funds shall be no later than ten (10) days after receipt of funds and any outstanding funds that are not disbursed by this deadline shall be returned to the division.

(2) For students whose applications are received by the division too late to allow disbursement by the deadline, disbursement will be made within ten (10) working days of receipt of the verification roster and electronic transfer of funds to the approved institution of higher education.

(e) Approved institutions of higher education shall exercise due diligence in providing complete, accurate, and timely information as requested by the division on any scholarship recipient or former scholarship recipient.