



Tab 16

Revisions to the A+ Program Administrative Rule

Coordinating Board for Higher Education
September 11, 2019

BACKGROUND

House Bill 604 (2019) is an omnibus education bill that, in part, modifies the A+ Scholarship statute (Section 160.545, RSMo) to allow reimbursement of dual credit and dual enrollment coursework for students attending designated A+ high schools. The General Assembly passed this bill during the 2019 legislative session and Governor Parson signed it on July 11, 2019. The A+ administrative rule, 6 CSR 10-2.190, must be revised as a result of this legislation.

CURRENT STATUS

The statute was revised to ensure its provisions apply to both traditional postsecondary A+ students and the newly eligible dual credit/dual enrollment high school students. As a result, certain requirements have changed for postsecondary students.

Previously, students had to attend at an A+ designated high school for any three years prior to graduation and to graduate from an A+ high school to be eligible for the scholarship. To allow high school students to receive payments applying to dual credit or dual enrollment courses beginning in their junior year, that requirement was revised. Students must now attend an A+ designated high school for at least two years to be eligible for either a postsecondary or dual credit/dual enrollment award. A corresponding change is proposed in the attached rule amendment.

In addition, prior to the revision students were required to have earned a minimal grade while in high school. The statute was silent on the required postsecondary grade point average. However, current departmental policy requires a 2.5 cumulative grade point average, to be verified on the schedule (semester or annual) established in the institution's policy. To accommodate the dual credit/dual enrollment students, that provision was amended to require that students earn a minimal grade while in high school or through the semester immediately before taking the course for which reimbursement is sought. As a result, of this change, the department proposes amending its policy to require grade point average verification at the end of each semester.

The newly revised statute requires students to graduate from an A+ high school to be eligible not only for a postsecondary A+ award but also for a dual credit or dual enrollment award. Further revision is expected during the 2020 legislative session to allow students to be eligible for dual credit or dual enrollment prior to high school graduation. Since that revision has not yet occurred, for now the proposed revisions to the A+ administrative rule focus only on the provisions outlined above that apply to postsecondary students.

NEXT STEPS

The department will initiate the Secretary of State's rulemaking process upon the Coordinating Board's approval of the proposed amendments. In addition, the department will work with the State Student Financial Aid Committee to draft further administrative rule amendments to address the dual credit/dual enrollment statutory provisions.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend that the Coordinating Board direct the Commissioner of Higher Education to take all actions necessary to ensure the attached proposed amendments as described above become effective as soon as possible.

ATTACHMENT

- Proposed A+ Scholarship Program Rule Amendments (6 CSR 10-2.190)

Tab 16 Attachment Proposed A+ Scholarship Rule Amendments

6 CSR 10-2.190 A+ Scholarship Program

PURPOSE: This rule sets forth the policies of the Coordinating Board for Higher Education regarding institutional and student eligibility for student financial assistance under the A+ Scholarship program.

(3) Eligibility Policy.

(A) To qualify for A+ tuition reimbursement, an initial recipient must meet the following criteria:

1. Attend an A+ designated high school or high schools for at least ~~three (3)~~ **two (2)** years prior to graduation and graduate from an A+ designated high school. Enrollment during the ~~three (3)~~ **two (2)** years in which the student was in attendance at one (1) or more A+ designated high schools must total a minimum of eighty percent (80%) of the instructional days required by the high school from which the student graduates. Interruptions in enrollment cumulatively totaling no more than twenty percent (20%) of instructional days in the ~~three (3)~~ **two (2)** years in which the student was in attendance at one (1) or more A+ designated high schools may occur consecutively or intermittently;
2. Make a good faith effort to first secure all available federal sources of funding that could be applied to the A+ Scholarship reimbursement;
3. Be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident;
4. Enter into a written agreement with the A+ designated high school prior to high school graduation;
5. Graduate from an A+ designated high school with an overall grade point average of at least two and one-half (2.5) on a four-point (4.0) scale, or the equivalent on another scale;
6. Have at least a ninety-five percent (95%) attendance record overall for grades nine through twelve (9–12);
7. Have performed fifty (50) hours of unpaid tutoring or mentoring, of which up to twenty-five percent (25%) may include job shadowing, prior to high school graduation, except—
 - A. When there are circumstances beyond a student's control, the high school may extend the time period for completing this requirement on a case-by-case basis, not to exceed six (6) months beyond high school graduation;
8. Beginning with the high school senior class of 2015, meet one (1) of the following indicators of college preparedness, unless the A+ school district has met all of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's requirements for waiver of the Algebra I end-of-course exam for the recipient:
 - A. Have achieved a score of proficient or advanced on the official Algebra I end-of-course exam, or a higher level DESE approved end-of-course exam in the field of mathematics; or
 - B. Meet other criteria established by the CBHE. The CBHE will develop these criteria in consultation with participating A+ institutions and A+ designated high schools and may revise these criteria annually;
9. Have maintained a record of good citizenship and avoidance of the unlawful use of drugs and/or alcohol while in grades nine through twelve (9–12). Student participation in the Constitution Project of Missouri may be included in a student's record of good citizenship in accordance with the A+ designated high school's policy;
10. Be admitted as a regular student, enroll in an eligible program, and attend on a full-time basis a participating institution, except that students in the following circumstances may be enrolled less than full time:
 - A. The student is enrolled in all of the available hours applicable to the student's program of study in a given term;
 - B. The student is participating in a required internship; or
 - C. The student is enrolled in prerequisite courses that do not require full-time enrollment;
11. Not be enrolled or intend to use the award to enroll in a course of study leading to a degree in theology or divinity;

12. Not have a criminal record preventing receipt of federal Title IV student financial aid;

13. Meet the institution's definition of satisfactory academic progress as determined by the participating institution's policies as applied to other students at the participating institution receiving assistance under federal Title IV student financial aid programs, with the exception of cumulative grade point average (CGPA). The student must achieve a minimum CGPA of two (2.0) on a four-point (4.0) scale, or the equivalent on another scale, at the end of the fall semester for semester-based programs, or at the end of the initial payment period for non-semester based programs. The calculation of CGPA shall be based on the participating institution's policies as applied to other students in similar circumstances; and

14. For students that receive a positive net disbursement in a given term, maintain eligibility by meeting the following course completion standards. A course is considered complete if the student earns a standard grade for the course, including a failing grade but excluding a grade at withdrawal prior to completion:

A. Complete a minimum of twelve (12) semester credit hours in the fall or spring semester, six (6) credit hours in the summer term, or the equivalent, for students enrolled full-time in an eligible credit hour program. Students unable to satisfy the statutory minimum requirements for full-time status under the federal Title IV student financial aid programs as a result of a disability as defined by Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act must complete a minimum of six (6) credit hours, or the equivalent, in any term;

B. Complete a minimum of ninety (90) percent of the clock hours required for the federal payment period, for students enrolled full-time in an eligible clock hour program; or

C. Complete all of the hours in which the student is enrolled in a given term, for students enrolled less than full-time in accordance with subparagraphs (3)(A)10.A.–C. of this rule.

(B) To qualify for tuition reimbursement under the A+ Scholarship program, a renewal recipient must meet the following criteria:

1. Be admitted as a regular student, enroll in an eligible program, and attend on a full-time basis a participating institution, except that students in the following circumstances may be enrolled less than full time:

A. The student is enrolled in all of the available hours applicable to the student's program of study in a given term;

B. The student is participating in a required internship; or

C. The student is enrolled in prerequisite courses that do not require full-time enrollment;

2. Meet the institution's definition of satisfactory academic progress as determined by the participating institution's policies as applied to other students at the participating institution receiving assistance under federal Title IV student financial aid programs, with the exception of cumulative grade point average (CGPA). The student must achieve a minimum CGPA of two and one-half (2.5) on a four-point (4.0) scale, or the equivalent on another scale. The calculation of CGPA shall be based on the participating institution's policies as applied to other students in similar circumstances. **The renewal recipient must have met these satisfactory academic progress and CGPA requirements through the term immediately before the term in which reimbursement is sought.**

3. For students that receive a positive net disbursement in a given term, maintain eligibility by meeting the following course completion standards. A course is considered complete if the student earns a standard grade for the course, including a failing grade but excluding a grade at withdrawal prior to completion:

A. Complete a minimum of twelve (12) semester credit hours in the fall or spring semester, six (6) credit hours in the summer term, or the equivalent, for students enrolled full-time in a credit hour program. Students unable to satisfy the statutory minimum requirements for full-time status under the federal Title IV student financial aid programs as a result of a disability as defined by Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act must complete a minimum of six (6) credit hours, or the equivalent, in any term;

B. Complete a minimum of ninety (90) percent of the clock hours required for the federal payment period, for students enrolled full-time in a clock hour program; or

C. Complete all of the hours in which the student is enrolled in a given term, for students enrolled less than full-time in accordance with subparagraphs (3)(A)10.A.–C. of this rule; and

4. Make a good-faith effort to secure all federal sources of funding that could be applied to tuition before the award is disbursed, but no later than the deadline established by the CBHE.

(C) The department will review written appeals of its eligibility policy in the following circumstances:

1. The student failed to make a good-faith effort to secure all federal sources of funding that could be applied to tuition; or

2. The student failed to meet the grade point average requirement as a result of a documented medical reason.