

Inclusive Postsecondary Education Grant Program

NEW

**REGULATIONS – 1700.
2023 - 2024 Award Year**



Effective Date – July 1, 2023

GSFC | Georgia Student
Finance Commission

2082 East Exchange Place
Tucker, Georgia 30084

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1702. Program Overview.

The Inclusive Postsecondary Education Grant (IPSE) program provides grant assistance to students with qualifying intellectual disabilities with the cost of an approved IPSE program. Students must be enrolled in an approved IPSE program at a participating University System of Georgia (USG) or Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) institution.

The Inclusive Postsecondary Education Grant (IPSE) was created beginning with the 2023-2024 Award Year (State Fiscal Year 2024). Subject to the amount of funds appropriated by the General Assembly and other available funding, the Georgia Student Finance Commission administers the IPSE Program in accordance with the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A.) § 20-3-494, et seq.

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1703. Definitions. (Electronic Link)

1704. General Eligibility Requirements.

1704.1. Citizenship.

1. A student must be a United States Citizen, born or naturalized, or an Eligible Non-Citizen according to the Federal Title IV Regulations, as of the first day of classes of the school term for which payment is sought.

1704.2. Georgia Residency.

1. A student attending a University System of Georgia (USG) institution who meets the Georgia Residency requirements of the Board of Regents (BOR) at the time of his or her high school graduation, must also meet such Georgia Residency requirements for 12 consecutive months immediately prior to the first day of classes of the school term for which the IPSE Grant is sought.
2. A student who does not meet the Georgia Residency requirements of the BOR at the time of high school graduation must meet such Georgia Residency requirements for 24 consecutive months immediately prior to the first day of classes of the school term for which the IPSE Grant is sought.
3. A student attending a Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) institution who meets the Georgia Residency requirements of the State Board of TCSG at the time of his or her high school graduation, must also meet such Georgia Residency requirements for 12 consecutive months immediately prior to the first day of classes of the school term for which the IPSE Grant is sought.
4. A student who does not meet the Georgia Residency requirements of the State Board of TCSG at the time of high school graduation, must meet such Georgia Residency requirements for 24 consecutive months immediately prior to the first day of classes of the school term for which the IPSE Grant is sought.

1704.3. Satisfactory Progress or Completion.

1. A student must complete the program coursework successfully as defined and certified by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution.

1704.4. Defaulted Loan or Refund Due.

1. An applicant must not be in default on a Federal Title IV or State of Georgia educational student loan or in any other way be in violation of Federal Title IV Programs Regulations or State of Georgia student financial aid program regulations.

1705. Program Specific Eligibility Requirements.

1705.1. Enrollment Status.

1. A student must meet the eligibility and enrollment criteria set by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution in their inclusive postsecondary education (IPSE) program.
2. Approved Eligible Postsecondary Institutions and their IPSE Programs:
 - a. Albany Technical College – LEAP Program
 - b. Columbus State University – GOALS Program
 - c. East Georgia State College – CHOICE Program
 - d. Georgia College and State University – GC THRIVE
 - e. Georgia Institute of Technology – EXCEL Program
 - f. Georgia Southern University – EAGLE Academy
 - g. Georgia State University – IDEAL Program
 - h. Kennesaw State University – Academy for Inclusive Learning & Social Growth
 - i. University of Georgia – Destination Dawgs

1705.2. Postsecondary Institution IPSE Program Requirements.

1. An Eligible Postsecondary Institution's approved IPSE program must:
 - a. Require that a participating student be enrolled in at least fifty (50) percent of courses with non-disabled peers;
 - b. Provide individual supports and services for the academic and social inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities in academic courses, extracurricular activities, and other aspects of the qualified postsecondary institution's regular postsecondary program;
 - c. Focus on academic enrichment, socialization, independent living skills, including self-advocacy skills;
 - d. Integrate work experiences and career skills that lead to gainful employment.
2. A USG or TCSG Eligible Postsecondary Institution requesting an IPSE program approval for the grant, must notify GSFC in writing, no later than March 1, prior to the fall term and/or fiscal year the program will be offered.
 - a. Changes to the approved ISPE Programs List must be approved in collaboration by GSFC, the Georgia Council of Developmental Disabilities (GCDD) and the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA) along with USG or TCSG depending on the institution's agency.

1706. Student Application Requirements.

1706.1. Application.

1. In order to be considered for the IPSE Grant, a student must complete one of the following application forms:
 - a. GSFAPP; or
 - b. Current year FAFSA.
 - i. A student who applies for the IPSE Grant by completing and submitting a FAFSA must complete and submit a new FAFSA for each Award Year.
2. In addition to one of these applications, an Eligible Postsecondary Institution may require students to complete the institution's application for student financial aid or other forms to provide supplemental information for the purpose of determining enrollment and eligibility.
3. Once a student has submitted a GSFAPP and it has been accepted on GSFC's system as a valid application, it will remain on GSFC's system as a valid application for 120 consecutive months following the application's approval date.
 - a. The student's application will remain valid during the 120 month period, regardless of whether or not an Eligible Postsecondary Institution submits an IPSE invoice to GSFC on behalf of the student during the 120 month period. Upon conclusion of the 120 month period, the student's application will expire.

1706.2. Application Deadline Date.

1. A student must file a GSFAPP or FAFSA on or before the last day of the school term or the student's withdrawal date, whichever occurs first, in order to be paid for that school term.
 - a. The last day of the school term is the last day of classes or exams for the Eligible Postsecondary Institution, whichever occurs later.
 - b. Supplemental documentation required by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution or GSFC to support or verify a student's application information may be submitted after the deadline without jeopardizing the student's eligibility.

1707. Award Requirements.

1707.1. Awards.

1. The IPSE Award Amount is equal to the current year standard undergraduate tuition amount, on a per hour basis, at the Eligible Postsecondary Institution in which the student is enrolled, up to a maximum of 15 credit hours per term.
 - a. Any approved changes to the state scholarship or grant award amounts become effective beginning with the Fall term.
 - b. Where the actual tuition rate charged for a course is less than the standard undergraduate rate, the IPSE Award shall not exceed the actual tuition rate charged.
2. An IPSE award may be applied toward the student's tuition, mandatory student fees and/or program fees.
3. The student cannot be refunded any portion of the IPSE Grant funds.

1707.2. Awards Per School Term.

1. The IPSE Grant is available to students for the standard school terms of Summer, Fall, and Spring semesters.
 - a. An Eligible Postsecondary Institution may combine mini-terms or modules to form the equivalent of a standard semester or quarter.
 - b. An Eligible Postsecondary Institution may offer Non-Standard Terms or Non-Terms, in which courses or modules are taken consecutively to form the equivalent of a standard semester or quarter. Regardless of the structure of an Eligible Postsecondary Institution's school terms, a student may be awarded IPSE funds for a maximum of three semesters per Award Year.

1707.3. Student Notification of Award.

1. An Eligible Postsecondary Institution must notify each IPSE Grant recipient of the amount of IPSE funds he or she is awarded for the Award Year and identify such funds as an IPSE Grant award.

1708. Invoicing Requirements.

1708.1. Submission of Invoices.

1. Invoices must be submitted through GSFC's online invoicing system, Scholarship Up-to-date Records for Electronic Reporting (SURFER), processed and approved by GSFC by the Invoicing Deadline Date as established by GSFC. Each invoice submitted by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution must include Enrolled-Hours, Paid-Hours, Learning Support, and the student's program of study information, when applicable to the program.
 - a. In the event invoices are submitted to GSFC by Eligible Postsecondary Institutions after the Invoicing Deadline Date for a school term, GSFC may issue a notice of failure to meet the Invoicing Deadline Date to the President and/or governing body of the Eligible Postsecondary Institution and the invoices may not be honored.
2. Eligible Postsecondary Institutions may submit IPSE Grant invoices to GSFC as early as 15 calendar days prior to the first day of classes for the school term.
3. Prior to the beginning of any award year and no later than June 30 of each year GSFC shall establish and publish the Invoicing Deadline Dates for each school term for the upcoming Award Year.
4. Invoices submitted after the Invoicing Deadline Date may be honored or paid if the failure to meet the date was because of:
 - a. The need for supplemental documentation required by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution or GSFC to support or verify a student's eligibility; or
 - b. Late grades, late completions, grade changes; or
 - c. Other adjustments made to the student's official academic transcript resulted in a change in eligibility, and the student met all other eligibility requirements prior to the deadline.
5. The President of GSFC has sole discretion in the determination of invoice deadlines and extensions. The decision of the President of GSFC shall be final.

1708.2. Payment of Invoices.

1. IPSE Grant funds are paid to Eligible Postsecondary Institutions by electronic transfer of funds on behalf of eligible students each school term, upon submission to GSFC of an IPSE Grant invoice.
2. Upon receipt of IPSE Grant payments from GSFC, the Eligible Postsecondary Institution must credit the amount of payment on behalf of an eligible student to the student's direct program cost.

1709. Return of Funds Requirements.

1709.1. Calculation of Refund Amounts.

1. If the student officially withdraws, drops out, drops hours, is expelled, or otherwise fails to complete a period of Enrollment, a portion of such refund may need to be returned to the IPSE program.
 - a. A student is ineligible for IPSE funds for coursework from which he or she totally withdrew if, as a result, such coursework does not appear on the student's academic transcript as a "W," or any other code or identification for such a withdrawal.
2. If applicable, the Eligible Postsecondary Institution must first apply the Federal Title IV return of funds policy for any federal aid the student may have received.
 - a. To determine the refund due, the Eligible Postsecondary Institution must then apply the institution's refund policy, which may or may not be identical to the Federal Title IV return of funds policy, to the student's IPSE award amount.
3. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution must determine the amount, if any, of the refund due back to the IPSE Program. The amount of the IPSE award not determined to be owed back to the IPSE Program is retained by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution to cover the institution's cost for the portion of the school term that the student was enrolled.
 - a. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution must adjust the student's invoice to the new award amount remaining after the refund is calculated within 45 calendar days of the determination.
 - b. If the Eligible Postsecondary Institution has sufficient funds on hand to return to GSFC the refund owed to the IPSE Program, it should return the funds within 45 calendar days of the refund determination. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution would then collect the refund amount from the student.
 - c. The student should not be reported with a refund due status to GSFC since the funds have been repaid to GSFC.
4. If the Eligible Postsecondary Institution does not have sufficient funds on hand to return to GSFC the refund owed to the IPSE Program, the student is considered to have a refund due to GSFC and the Eligible Postsecondary Institution must report the student to GSFC with a refund due status.

1710. Reconciliation Requirements.

1710.1. Fiscal Year End Reconciliation.

1. In addition to the Term-Reconciliations, the Eligible Postsecondary Institution must conduct the Fiscal Year End Reconciliation through GSFC's online invoicing system, Scholarship Up-to-date Records for Electronic Reporting (SURFER).
 - a. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution must conduct a complete student-by-student Fiscal Year End Reconciliation with GSFC that includes:
 - i. Submission of a reconciliation certification form by July 15, immediately following the completion of the Fiscal Year for each State Program verifying accuracy of each invoice submitted by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution with respect to Enrolled-Hours, Paid-Hours, Learning Support, and the student's program of study information, when applicable to the program; and
 - ii. Return to GSFC any funds not utilized according to the Fiscal Year End Reconciliation by August 15 after the beginning of the new Fiscal Year.
 - b. GSFC will not issue any state scholarship or grant funds for the Fall term until the previous Fiscal Year End Reconciliation process is complete.
 - c. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution must have a procedure in place to ensure that the state scholarship and grant funds do not go to an unintended third party (i.e., state, postsecondary institution).

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1711. Records Retention Requirements.

1711.1. Length of Retention.

1. An Eligible Postsecondary Institution shall maintain accurate records, books, documents, and other evidence concerning the IPSE Program, including, but not limited to individual student files for whichever is longer:
 - a. Three years after the Award Year in which the aid was awarded; or
 - b. For such other period as required by an applicable statute, rule, or regulation; or
 - c. Such other time as requested in writing by GSFC.
2. An Eligible Postsecondary Institution may be required to retain student records involved in a Compliance Review, audit, or investigation for more than the three-year retention period.
 - a. If the three-year retention period expires before the issue in question is resolved, the Eligible Postsecondary Institution must continue to retain all associated records until resolution is reached.

1711.2. Documentation.

1. Documentation contained within an individual student's file or record, which supports the original determination of a student's eligibility, must be retained by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution and available for review by GSFC on the Eligible Postsecondary Institution's campus, located within the State of Georgia, for at least three calendar years after the most recent Award Year for which the student received funds.
2. Eligible Postsecondary Institutions are permitted to maintain these documents in an imaged media format. The imaged media format must be capable of reproducing an accurate, legible, and complete copy of the original document.
 - a. Such documentation may include, but is not limited to, copies of permanent resident alien cards, Georgia state income tax returns, student financial aid applications or academic transcripts from previous institutions.
 - i. Documentation regarding a student's eligibility is not limited to files, records, and other information received and maintained by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution.
 - ii. Documentation supporting a student's eligibility that is received and maintained by the institution's admissions office, registrar's office, business office, and other administrative operations must be available to GSFC for the purpose of Compliance Reviews.

3. It is the Eligible Postsecondary Institution's responsibility to resolve any inconsistencies or conflicting information within a student's records, prior to awarding or disbursing IPSE funds to the student.

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1712. Administrative Reviews and Exceptions.

1712.1. Administrative Reviews.

1. The IPSE regulations are applied to each student considered for such funds by appropriate officials of Eligible Postsecondary Institutions and by the administrative staff of GSFC.
2. If a student believes a rule or regulation was incorrectly applied in his or her case, the student has the right to file a request for an Administrative Review with GSFC.
3. In order for a request for an Administrative Review to be considered, the student must submit a written request for an Administrative Review to GSFC's office within 45 calendar days of receiving notice of denial. If additional information is requested from the student, it must be provided within the time frame specified by GSFC.
 - a. GSFC will review the case and determine whether the rule or regulation was applied correctly and notify the student and the Eligible Postsecondary Institution of the determination.
 - b. GSFC decides a case based only on documentation provided by the student, rather than a personal presentation.

1712.2. Exceptions.

1. No requests for Exceptions to the IPSE regulations will be considered, reviewed, or granted under any circumstances.

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1713. Compliance Reviews.

1713.1. Compliance Review Policy.

1. GSFC shall conduct Compliance Reviews of Eligible Postsecondary Institutions in order to assess institutional administration of the program and compliance with the program's regulations. Compliance Reviews shall be conducted in accordance with GSFC's *Compliance Review Process and Procedures* document, which is available at GSFC.georgia.gov, under *Information for School Compliance*.

1713.2. Compliance Review Process.

1. GSFC selects a sampling of the Eligible Postsecondary Institution's recipients for the Award Year under review, and the Eligible Postsecondary Institution's files and records for the sample are examined to assure compliance. Records which document and support a student's eligibility must be available for review at the Georgia campus of the Eligible Postsecondary Institution.

1713.3. Institutional Repayment.

1. If a recipient is determined to be ineligible for payment, the Eligible Postsecondary Institution may be required to repay to GSFC the funds awarded to the recipient.
2. If evidence, not available at the time of awarding, indicates that a student should not have received IPSE funds, then all future IPSE awards must be canceled.
 - a. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution is held harmless by GSFC, if the student's file is appropriately documented with available evidence and it is determined by GSFC that the Eligible Postsecondary Institution was not at fault.
 - b. Evidence is considered unavailable at the time of awarding if it is not available in the student's institutional files (i.e., financial aid, admissions, registrar, etc.).
3. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution must notify the student and GSFC of a refund due.
4. The student will be ineligible to receive additional state aid from GSFC until the refund is paid in full.
5. If GSFC determines the student's file is not adequately documented, the Eligible Postsecondary Institution may be responsible for the repayment.