



Publication Date: May 4, 2020
DCL ID: 2021-01

Subject: 2020-2021 (FY 2021) State Scholarship, Grant and Loan Program Regulations
Invoicing and Extension Request Deadlines

Dear Colleague:

The following is information regarding the 2020-2021 (FY 2021) State Scholarship, Grant and Loan Program Regulations (Program Regulations), the program award amounts and the deadline for term and year-end invoicing and extension requests.

2020-2021 State Program Regulations

The Georgia Student Finance Commission (GSFC) and the Georgia Student Finance Authority (GSFA) Boards approved the 2020-2021 Program Regulations at their May 1, 2020 Board meeting. The Program Regulations are effective July 1, 2020. The 2020 – 2021 Program Regulations and an executive summary will be posted at gsfc.org by May 8, 2020. Additionally, a link to the Program Regulations can also be found at GAfutures.org under “Shortcuts.”

In addition to the changes made to the Program Regulations for clarity, listed below is an overview of the regulatory changes that affect high schools and postsecondary institutions as they administer state program requirements.

Program Award Amounts

Due to the current suspended status of the Georgia Legislative Session, a State Budget Appropriations Bill has not yet been passed and all state program award amounts effective July 1, 2020 (FY 2021) are not determined. The award amounts listed in the 2020-2021 Program Regulations are the amounts from FY 2020 and are not official award amounts. As soon as GSFC has official award amounts an additional Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) containing the 2020-2021 award charts and program regulations revisions (as needed) will be released. We recognize the impact this may have on students and institutions and appreciate the patience.

Dual Enrollment Program

Governor Kemp signed HB 444 into law on April 28, 2020. An overview of the Dual Enrollment Program regulations for FY 2021 include:

- Eligibility of courses – Core academic areas English, math, science, social studies, and world (foreign) languages categories which qualify for the high school HOPE Scholarship eligibility and Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) courses aligned with GaDOE career clusters and pathways
 - Courses in the fine arts, health, physical education and college survival or prep areas are no longer eligible for funding. The Courses Directory has been updated.
- Grade Level Eligibility – Ninth graders are no longer eligible for Dual Enrollment funding. Eligibility for 10th graders depends on their status. Eleventh and twelfth graders are eligible for participation at any participating postsecondary institution and enroll in any approved core or CTAE courses.
- A Funding Cap is implemented effective Summer term 2020. New students will have 30 semester/45 quarter hours Funding Cap. Continuing students with 18 semester/27 quarter or less hours prior to Summer term 2020 are subject the 30 semester/45 quarter hour Funding Cap. Students with 19 semester/29 quarter or more hours prior to Summer term 2020 have an additional 12 semester/18 quarter hours.
- Effective Summer term 2020, retaking a course is no longer eligible for funding and after withdrawing from 2 courses a student is no longer eligible for Dual Enrollment funding.
- Public School students pursuing high school graduation option B during Spring term 2020 are not subject to a Funding Cap.

Additional Program Regulations

- The GSFAPPS expiration has been revised to allow for the application to be valid for 10 years versus the previous seven-year length.
- The REACH Program continues to have provisions subject to available funding:
 - The number of students Participating School Systems may select and the proportionate share of funding required to be provided are based on available funds. School Systems will be notified annually of the approved funds in the Annual Student Selection Approval form.
- Promissory Notes for the Student Access Loan and all Service Cancelable Loan Programs no longer have a Notary requirement.
- GSFC may conduct Compliance Reviews of Eligible High Schools, Home Study programs in addition to Eligible Postsecondary Institutions participating in the Dual Enrollment program.

Temporary Regulations changes due to the COVID-19 Emergency for the graduating Class of 2020

HOPE and Zell Miller Scholarships - Unaccredited home study completers and graduates of non-eligible high schools unable to sit for the ACT or SAT due to the cancellation of test dates since March 2020 are given the opportunity to test through December 30, 2020. Upon earning a qualifying test score of 75th Percentile or 93rd Percentile, may be retroactively awarded the HOPE Scholarship or Zell Miller Scholarship respectfully.

Zell Miller Scholarship - Eligible high school graduates and accredited home study completers unable to sit for the ACT or SAT due to the cancellation of test dates since March 2020 are given the opportunity to test through December 30, 2020. Students with a qualifying GPA and rigor credits may be awarded HOPE Scholarship initially. Upon earning a qualifying test score, may be retroactively awarded Zell Miller Scholarship.

Student Access Loan (SAL) - Eligible high school graduates and accredited home study completers since March 14, 2020 with an eligible Zell Miller Scholarship GPA and rigor credits, without the required test score may apply for a SAL (subject to available funding) for the Fall term 2020 only totaling the difference between HOPE Scholarship award and Zell Miller Scholarship award at their postsecondary institution.

If the student submits a Zell Miller Scholarship eligible ACT or SAT test score by December 30, 2020, the SAL may be canceled.

Georgia's 10th grade students wishing to enroll in core courses through the Dual Enrollment funding Program and unable to sit for the ACT or SAT due to the cancellation of test dates since March 2020 are given the opportunity to test through December 30, 2020. Upon earning a qualifying test score, and meeting other program requirements, affected students may be retroactively awarded Dual Enrollment funding for Summer or Fall 2020 terms.

FY 2021 (Upcoming Fiscal Year) Invoicing

The FY 2021 Invoicing and Extension Request deadline chart is now available. As in the past, the Program Regulations require that all invoices for a term be fully submitted, processed, and approved for payment by the invoicing term deadlines.

FY 2020 Invoicing and Extension Request Deadlines

As in the past, the Program Regulations require that all invoices for a term be fully submitted, processed, and approved for payment by the invoicing term deadline. Spring term 2020 invoices are due June 8, 2020. A postsecondary institution needing an extension to process current fiscal year invoices beyond June 8 must submit a request for extension to GSFC by June 8. The FY 2020 Invoicing and Extension Request deadline chart is available for reference.

The request for extension must include the reason an extension is needed, program(s), number of invoices, and the approximate total dollar amount of the invoices to be submitted. Extensions for the current fiscal year's invoices may be granted through June 22, 2020.

The Program Regulations require postsecondary institutions to complete a year-end reconciliation of each state program for which funds were received for the year and submit a year-end reconciliation form by July 15.

Prior Year Invoices

Invoices for prior fiscal years will not be paid except under certain extraordinary and narrowly defined circumstances. The Program Regulations allow an invoice to be paid after the year-end invoicing only if failure to meet the deadline was due to the need for supplemental documentation including, but not limited to, information required for the student's college admission (e.g., proof of citizenship or residency), late grades, grade changes or other adjustments made to the student's official academic transcript that result in a change to a student's eligibility. A postsecondary institution needing to submit a prior year's invoice(s) must email the Originations and Disbursements Department at oandd@gsfc.org, with the invoice, student information, and the reason for missing the deadline (e.g., the documentation that became available after the deadline, as noted above).

If a postsecondary institution needs to submit an invoice or increase the award amount on an existing invoice after the year-end reconciliation, the director of financial aid must submit a written request to Senior Manager, Originations and Disbursements, David Jones at davidj@gsfc.org, including the following:

1. The reason for the prior year late invoice request
2. The individual invoice information
3. The total dollar amount of the invoices

If the requests for the invoices to be paid after the year-end reconciliation total more than ½ percent of the total amount disbursed to the postsecondary institution for the corresponding program in the current fiscal year, the institution's president must submit a written request to Benita Jorgensen, Vice President, Financial Aid Operations at benita@gsfc.org, including the following:

1. The reason for the prior year invoice request
2. The number of invoices
3. The total dollar amount of the invoices to be submitted
4. A corrective action plan outlining measures that will be taken in the future to meet the published invoicing deadlines which shall include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - a. Staff and/or system changes implemented that ensure timely submission of invoices
 - b. Dates and content of training to prepare staff for timely submission of invoices
 - c. Supplemental documentation relating to delays

If you have questions relating to regulations, deadlines, or eligibility, please contact Pennie Strong, Vice President, Program Administration, by email: pennies@gsfc.org or phone: 770.724.9014.

Sincerely,



Andy Parsons
Interim President