



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How many hours do I have to earn to keep TOPS?

A: You must earn 24 hours each academic year (the academic year is defined as fall, winter intersession, spring, and spring intersession).

Q: I did not earn 24 hours during the academic year. Can I go to summer school to make the hours up?

A: No, hours earned during summer school do not count for TOPS

Q: Can I drop to part time and still keep TOPS?

A: You must remain a full time student (12 hours) through the 14th class day. It is **strongly** recommended that TOPS recipients contact the Office of Student Aid and Scholarships before dropping to part time or resigning in order to discuss the effects on their TOPS award.

Q: I am a freshman and have credit from Advance Placement (AP), CLEP exams, or standardized test scores. Do these hours count towards my required 24 hours?

A: No, these hours DO NOT count towards your TOPS hours.

Q: Can I use Independent Study to complete my required hours?

A: Yes, Independent Study may be used to satisfy TOPS requirements, but the course(s) must be completed and your final grade recorded during the academic year. Independent study hours do not show up until the course is completed, therefore you still must be enrolled full time up to the 14th class day.

Q: I enrolled in enough hours, but was unable to complete a course and failed or earned an incomplete. Will these hours still count?

A: No, you must earn a minimum grade of a “D” or better.

Q: If I do not enroll full time and/or do not earn the required 24 hours, what happens to my TOPS award?

A: Your award will be permanently cancelled unless you are granted an exception to due to extenuating circumstances.

Q: If I have to sit out a semester, can I keep TOPS when I return to school?

A: Students must apply to be considered for an exception to the requirements to enroll full time, to maintain full-time enrollment, and/or to earn the required hours. Contact the Office of Student Aid and Scholarships if you have extenuating circumstances that may qualify you for an exception.

Q: What GPA do I have to earn to keep TOPS?

A: You must make **steady academic progress**, which is defined as a minimum **2.0 cumulative GPA** at the end of EVERY semester (including summer and all intersessions). Students receiving the **TOPS Opportunity Award** must earn a minimum **2.3 cumulative GPA** at the end of the first academic year and a minimum **2.5 cumulative GPA** at the end of each subsequent academic year. Students receiving the **TOPS Performance and Honors Award** must earn a minimum **3.0 cumulative GPA** at the end of each academic year to retain the stipend that accompanies that award type.

Q: I had a 1.95 GPA at the end of the fall semester. Why was my award suspended for the spring semester if the GPA is only checked at the end of the spring semester?

A: You must maintain Steady Academic Progress, which means that you must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.00 at the end of each semester. If you do not maintain Steady Academic Progress, your award will be suspended.

Q: Do GPAs round up?

A: There is no rounding up of a cumulative GPA for TOPS. (ie, a 2.29 will not round up the required 2.3)

Q: I have the Performance or Honors award, but did not maintain a 3.0 cumulative GPA. What happens to my award?

A: You will drop down to the Opportunity Award, provided you did meet the required GPA for that award. You can **never** regain the additional stipend that accompanies that Performance or Honors award.

Q: I have the Performance or Honors award, but did not maintain a 3.0 cumulative GPA and I do not meet the qualifications for the Opportunity Award. What happens to my award?

A: Your TOPS will be suspended until you can raise your GPA to the level required for the Opportunity Award. You have **2 years** to regain the required GPA. If after 2 years you fail to regain the required GPA, your TOPS will be permanently cancelled. **During periods of suspension, all continuation requirements must be met to qualify for reinstatement of the award.**

Q: I have the opportunity award but did not meet the GPA requirements. What happens to my award?

A: Your TOPS will be suspended until you can raise your GPA to the level required for the Opportunity Award. You have **2 years** to regain the required GPA. If after 2 years you fail to regain the required GPA, your TOPS will be permanently cancelled. **During periods of suspension, all continuation requirements must be met to qualify for reinstatement of the award.**

Q: I plan on taking coursework at another university. Will those grades affect TOPS?

A: YES. Your cumulative GPA is based on coursework attempted at all institutions attended.

Q: How many semesters does TOPS cover?

A: You may receive TOPS for up to 8 semesters.

Q: Will TOPS pay for me to attend summer school?

A: TOPS will **ONLY** pay for summer school if you are enrolled in a **Qualified Summer Session**. A Qualified Summer Session is one which your institution certifies that:

- The summer session is required by your degree program for graduation, or
- You will graduate in the summer session, or
- The courses taken during the summer session are required by your degree program and are only offered during the summer session, or
- Beginning with the **summer of 2010**, you have earned at least 60 hours.

In order for TOPS to pay for a summer session, you must have been enrolled as a full time student in a semester during the preceding academic year.

TOPS payment for a Qualified Summer Session will **expend one full semester of TOPS eligibility**. Performance and Honors award recipients will receive their stipends during a Qualified Summer Session.

Q: I am a graduating senior in my last semester. Do I have to be enrolled full time?

A: Graduating seniors only need to enroll in the remaining number of hours needed to complete their undergraduate degree.

Q: Will TOPS pay for me to pursue a second undergraduate degree?

A: No. If you successfully complete an academic undergraduate degree and have remaining TOPS eligibility, you **CANNOT** use the remaining eligibility to pursue a second academic undergraduate degree.

Q: Will TOPS pay for graduate or professional school?

A: Yes. If you completed an undergraduate degree without exhausting all 8 semesters of eligibility, you may receive the period of eligibility remaining if you enroll in an eligible graduate or professional school no later than the fall semester following the one year anniversary of completion of your undergraduate degree and have met the requirements for continuation of your award.

Contact Information:

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