

## **GEAR UP MISSISSIPPI SCHOLARSHIP ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

These Rules and Regulations are subject to change by the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning. The number of awards depends upon the availability of funds and the number of eligible applicants. Awards will be on a first-come, first-served basis; however, priority consideration will be given to all renewals who continue to meet the eligibility requirements.

### **SECTION I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION, HISTORY AND PURPOSE**

The scholarship is related to a U.S. Department of Education entitled Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs awarded to the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning. The award period for the grant is September 18, 2002 through September 17, 2007. The purpose of the grant is to provide counseling, mentoring, tutoring, and other support services to participating students. The GEAR UP Mississippi Scholarship, hereafter known as the GEAR UP MS Scholarship, will be first awarded in the fall of 2008.

Students who complete the GEAR UP MS program requirements may be eligible to receive scholarships and/or financial aid assistance to attend college in Mississippi. The GEAR UP MS scholarship will be awarded based upon each candidate's eligibility for the Federal Pell Grant, successful achievement of criteria in the GEAR UP program, and the availability of GEAR UP funds. The applicant must also meet specific academic requirements, residency requirements, financial need criteria, as well as other requirements set forth in these rules and regulations, during the regular academic year. The annual award amount varies for the GEAR UP MS Scholarship, since it is awarded after other financial assistance has been awarded, including Federal Pell Grant, scholarship/gift aid and prior to the certification of any federal loan application or federal work study.

A maximum cumulative award amount is not established; however, a recipient may only receive this scholarship for 10 semesters or 15 trimesters or the granting of the first degree whichever comes first. The GEAR UP SCHOLARSHIP is not available for summer school. There is no repayment of this SCHOLARSHIP if eligibility is lost.

The Office of State Student Financial Aid will abide by the determination of the attending institution or community/junior college regarding grade point average, enrollment status, dependency status, need and special circumstances.

### **SECTION II. INITIAL APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

This section addresses eligibility requirements for those students who are first-time-in-college applicants. When making initial application for the scholarship, these students **must** meet non-academic and academic requirements as follows:

#### **A. Non-academic requirements:**

1. Be a United States citizen or eligible non-citizen and registered with the Selective

- Service, if required.
2. Is less than 22 years old at the time of the first scholarship award;
  3. Participated in GEAR UP MS in the 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grades;
  4. Is a **Mississippi resident**;
  5. Have a custodial parent or guardian who is a **resident of Mississippi**;
  6. Have no criminal record, except for misdemeanor traffic violations;
  7. Be accepted for enrollment as a **full-time** undergraduate student at an eligible Mississippi public or non public institution of higher learning pursuing a first baccalaureate degree or a **full-time** undergraduate student at an eligible Mississippi public or non public community/junior college pursuing a first associate degree;
  8. File the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA); Must demonstrate financial need and be eligible for and receive a **Federal Pell Grant; Priority consideration will be given to those students demonstrating the greatest need.**
  9. Be in compliance with the terms of federal and other state aid programs.
  10. When the Gear Up Grant is added to a student's award package, the total award package will not exceed the institution's cost of attendance or some other limitation established by the institution which may be less than the cost of attendance. If an over award occurs, the Grant will be reduced;
  11. Must not be receiving a **tuition and required fees** waiver or **tuition required fees** award from another state financial aid source including, but not limited to, the Mississippi Eminent Scholars Grant, the Higher Education Legislative Plan for Needy Students, the Mississippi Law Enforcement Officers and Firemen Scholarship Program, the Southeast Asia POW/MIA Scholarship Program or the Critical Needs Teacher Loan/Scholarship;
  12. Must not have earned a first associate or a first bachelors degree or it's equivalent.

B. Academic requirements:

1. Receives a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent on or after January 1, 2008 from a participating GEAR UP school;
2. Have a minimum 2.50 cumulative grade point average for all course work attempted in grades 9 through 12;
3. Have a composite score on the American College Test of at least eighteen (18); however, students with a higher ACT score will be given priority consideration.  
**Note:** Residual Test Scores are not acceptable. Scores must come from National Testing.
4. Successfully completed the following fifteen and one-half (15 ½) units of high school course work (grades 9 through 12) which constitutes a **core curriculum** and meets standards for admission to the desired Mississippi public or non public institution of higher learning or Mississippi public or non public community/junior college. The core curriculum is defined as: **English (4 units)** English I, English II, English III, English IV; **Mathematics (3 units)** Algebra I, Algebra II, & Geometry, A fourth course in high level mathematics is highly recommended, **Science (3 units; however, 2 units must be laboratory based)** Biology, Advanced Biology, Chemistry, Advanced Chemistry, Physics, and Advanced Physics or other science course with comparable content and rigor, One unit from a Physical Science course with content at a level that may serve as an introduction to Physics and Chemistry may be used;

**Social Studies (3 units)** United States History (1 Unit), World History (1 unit) with substantial geography component; Government (½ unit) or Geography (½ unit); **Other Advanced Electives - suggested but not required (2 units)** Foreign Language; World Geography; 4<sup>th</sup> year laboratory-based science; or 4<sup>th</sup> year mathematics **One unit must be Foreign Language or World Geography;** **Computer Applications (½ unit)** The course should include the use of application packages such as word processing and spread sheets. The course should also include basis computer terminology and hardware operation.

### **SECTION III: RENEWAL APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

To maintain continued eligibility for the GEAR UP MS Scholarship once enrolled in college, a student must **reapply annually** and meet **all** of the following requirements:

- A. Make academic progress toward a degree, **earning not less than the minimum number of hours of credit** required for **full-time** standing each semester or trimester requiring such enrollment. Full time is defined as 12 credit hours each semester or 9 credit hours each trimester.
- B. Maintain continuous enrollment at a Mississippi public or non public institution of higher learning or Mississippi public or non public community/junior college as a full time undergraduate student (excluding summer sessions) for not less than two (2) semesters or three (3) trimesters in each successive **academic year**, unless granted an **exception for cause** by the Office of State Student Financial Aid.
- C. Have a minimum cumulative grade point average of at least 2.50 calculated on a 4.0 scale at the end of the first **academic year** and thereafter maintain such a **cumulative grade point average** as **evaluated at the end of each academic year**.
- E. Have no criminal record, except for misdemeanor traffic violations.
- F. Must demonstrate financial need and be eligible for and receive a Federal Pell Grant.
- G. File the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) annually.
- H. Continue to maintain **Mississippi residency**.
- I. Be in compliance with the terms of federal and other state aid programs.
- J. Must not have exceeded maximum length of eligibility

### **SECTION IV: AMOUNT AND LENGTH OF GRANT**

The maximum length of eligibility shall not exceed ten semesters or fifteen trimester or degree completion which ever comes first. Factors which may affect the amount of a scholarship are as follows:

- A. Availability of funds during the period of 2008-2014;
- B. Number of eligible applicants;
- C. Demonstrated financial need after all other grant/gift and scholarship aid (including Federal Pell Grant) has been applied, and prior to the awarding of a federal loan or work study;
- D. The minimum amount of the scholarship for each fiscal year shall not be less than the lesser of 75% of the average cost of attendance for students in 4-year programs of study at public institutions of higher education **or** the maximum Federal Pell Grant award funded for the award year in which the scholarship will be awarded.
- E. The minimum amount of the scholarship for each fiscal year shall not be less than the lesser of 75% of the average cost of attendance for students in 2-year programs of study at public institutions of higher education **or** the maximum Federal Pell Grant award funded for the award year in which the scholarship will be awarded.
- F. The annual award amount for the GEAR UP MS Scholarship for the cost of attendance at a Mississippi non-public two year or four year institution shall not exceed the average tuition and fees charges required by all the two and four year public institutions of higher education;
- G. In no case shall any student receive any combination of student financial aid and scholarship that would exceed applicant's demonstrated financial need;
- H. Changes in federal or state requirements.

#### **SECTION V: LOSS OF GEAR UP MS SCHOLARSHIP ELIGIBILITY**

- A. Failure to maintain academic eligibility and/or full time enrollment (other than withdrawal) will result in cancellation of the recipient's eligibility for the GEAR UP MS Scholarship.
- B. Withdrawal from school will result in cancellation of the recipient's eligibility for the GEAR UP MS Scholarship; however, the student may file an appeal for reconsideration with the Office of State Student Financial Aid and may be granted an **exception for cause**.

#### **SECTION VI: NOTIFICATION OF STUDENT APPLICANTS**

- A. If applicant must provide additional information, he/she should respond in writing by the specified deadline.
- B. Award letters will be mailed to eligible applicants by August 1.

- C. All applicants are notified whether eligible or not.

## **SECTION VII: ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES**

Universities, colleges and community/junior colleges will report certain data about applicants/recipients including, but not limited to:

### A. Reporting of enrollment and GPA:

1. Confirmation that award recipients are enrolled full time each semester or trimester is to be certified by the attending institution on the **enrollment verification report (EVR)** no later than the established date for the fall, winter and spring periods of enrollment.
2. Confirmation of the continuing eligibility of award recipients at the completion of each academic year (ending after each spring semester or trimester) including the following:
  - a. Total number of hours earned during the specific academic year (excluding summer).
  - b. Cumulative grade point average.
3. Notify the Office of State Student Financial Aid if an award recipient fails to enroll or subsequently withdraws.
4. Maintain records for the period specified by law to enable program auditors to verify the institution's compliance with the policies of the Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid.

### B. Cost of Attendance

1. To prevent the student's total financial assistance award from exceeding the institution's cost of attendance or some other limitation established by the institution which may be less than the cost of attendance, the institution may reduce the amount of tuition to be paid by the scholarship and refund the balance no later than the established date for refunds by the Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid;
2. Annually, the Office of State Student Financial Aid will review the tuition and required fees schedule of all institutions and community/junior colleges to authorize reimbursement of those fees which are in addition to the basic course enrollment charges.