



**Florida Department of Education
Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA)
Florida Guaranty Agency
March 2007 Regional Workshops**

ATTENDEE QUESTIONS & STATE PROGRAMS ANSWERS

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GENERAL TOPICS

1. If a student attends an out-of-state postsecondary institution (PSI) immediately after high school graduation, how will their grades and hours transfer upon returning to Florida to attend college?

Transferability of postsecondary coursework and Grade Point Average (GPA) from out-of-state schools is at the discretion of the Florida postsecondary institution where the student chooses to attend.

2. How far back does the requirement to refund OSFA for a student dropping courses extend? For example: If a student appeals grades from any year prior to the current academic year and the PSI allows him/her to drop (not withdraw) the courses, must the PSI refund OSFA?

Refunds to OSFA are dependent upon the institution refund policy as stated in OSFA Policy Manual. Therefore, a refund is due back to OSFA only if your institution allows a refund to the student and it includes state funds. The state would then require the state portion of the refund to be returned to OSFA.

The answer is no for the specific example cited. This is assuming that only courses were dropped, not withdrawn, from a full term, and no refunds were given to the student. In that case, then no refund to OSFA is required.

3. Regarding the 110% rule: Is it 110% of all attempted credits or 110% of the attempted credits for the student's current major?

For state programs Bright Futures (BF), Florida Student Assistance Grant (FSAG), and Scholarships for Children and Spouses of Deceased or Disabled Veterans (C/SDDV), students may be funded for up to 110% of all attempted disbursed hours required to complete the program in which the student is enrolled. If a student changes his or her major, the maximum total hours fundable is capped at 110% of the student's current

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major program hour requirement, but all previously disbursed hours continue to be included in the count of that new maximum.

4. Do postsecondary institutions have access via the State Student Financial Aid Database (SSFAD) to other postsecondary institutions' costs per credit hour for reporting "other hours enrolled"?

In the 2007-08 academic year, institutions reporting on the BF and C/SDDV programs will have access to this information for reporting "other hours enrolled" data via the Disbursement Eligibility Report (DER).

5. The student has a valid visa for term 1 and funds are disbursed. Between the end of term 1 and the beginning of term 2, the visa is invalidated. Does the student receive funding for term 2?

If the institution has information to determine that the student does not meet eligible visa criteria by the last day of drop/add for term 2, the student would be ineligible for a term 2 disbursement.

6. The student has a valid visa for term 1 and funds are disbursed. Term 2 funds are disbursed. The visa is invalidated and the student is no longer eligible. Does the student keep the funds for term 2?

If the institution did not have information to determine that the student did not meet eligible visa criteria by the last day of drop/add for term 2, the student would be eligible for a term 2 disbursement. The institution is not required to re-evaluate a student's eligibility status after the drop/add date for the purposes of changing eligibility determinations previously made.

7. If a student received state financial aid for term 1 during 2005-06, and currently got approval from the Registrar's Office to have his/her courses deleted with a refund for term 1 (thus, student will not be liable for any charges for that term in which courses are being deleted), does the institution have to return the funds back to OSFA for term 1 of 2005-06?

If all courses are deleted (the student withdraws) and the university refund policy is to give a full refund to the student, then the institution should return state funds back to OSFA.

8. Are students with "I-485 Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status" or "Applicant for Temporary Protected Status" eligible to receive BF?

The institution is responsible for determining students' residency and citizenship status [6A-20.003(13), F.A.C.] for financial aid eligibility. Residency/citizenship for financial aid is determined in the same manner as residency for tuition purposes per §1009.40, F.S. and 6A-10.044, F.A.C.

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9. If a student applies for permanent residency but approval is not granted until term 2, is the student eligible to receive state program funds for term 1 and term 2?

No. The student must be eligible at the beginning of each academic term in order to qualify for a BF award.

10. If a student appears on the Master Eligibility List (MEL), has OSFA made a determination of residency/citizenship regarding that student?

No. Although OSFA state programs collect self-reported residency information from students to evaluate for the José Martí Scholarship Challenge Grant Fund, the Rosewood Family Scholarship, C/SDDV, and the Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship, the institution is responsible for determining residency/citizenship prior to the disbursement of funds to the student each term.

11. Is there any pending legislation to create a more standardized process for determining residency?

The 2007 Florida Legislature has recommended several amendments to clarify certain residency clauses. At the end of the 2007 session, OSFA will provide a summary of the 2007 session.

12. Can a degree-seeking student at a Florida postsecondary institution receive state financial aid funding for courses taken at an out-of-state postsecondary institution?

Study abroad programs offered through public and private postsecondary institutions may be funded provided the process conforms to §1009.43, F.S. The student must be enrolled in your institution. The program of study must be offered or promoted by your institution as an integral part of the student's academic studies or as a program that would enhance the student's academic experience. The intent was to allow an institution to fund their own students if they enroll and pay their home institution yet attend off site (such as abroad etc). The intent does not include funding a student who goes abroad to a non-Florida school and then transfers coursework back to your school.

State-funded financial aid, including BF, may not be used at out-of-state postsecondary institutions. The only program that can be used at an out-of-state institution is the federal Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program. Florida postsecondary institutions with out-of-state branch campuses are not authorized to fund Florida residents with Florida financial aid if attending their out-of-state institution.

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13. On the Reconciliation Population report, the alpha sort should extend beyond the student's last name. The report needs to continue to sort by student's full first name.

The Reconciliation Population report currently sorts by social security number (SSN); however, the system can also currently sort by last name and then first name. Click on the [LAST, FIRST MI](#) link above the list of names to sort as suggested.

14. After the DER is submitted, we would like to have some type of report that shows the number of remaining terms of eligibility for each student.

Terms remaining can be found online at the student "Financial Aid Recipient History" screen for students disbursed at your institution.

15. In the past, postsecondary institutions could pull up seven student records at one time to disburse, now only one disbursement at a time can be made. Why was this change made?

In an effort to provide greater efficiency, OSFA now allows postsecondary institutions to view all of their student records instead of seven or one record at a time by selecting "Run Report Query" on SSFAD. Postsecondary institutions can also disburse funds to students by pre-filling term 2 for their decentralized programs and submit through batch.

16. If a student is currently attending one institution (i.e. FIU), but previously lost his/her state financial aid at another institution (i.e. MDC), which institution should the student submit his appeal to: the current institution or the institution where he/she lost the scholarship?

State financial aid students must request the financial aid office at the institution they were attending when the incident occurred to review their request for an appeal. In the example cited, the student would submit the appeal through MDC. The postsecondary institution will evaluate the student's appeal and make a recommendation to OSFA. Call OSFA toll-free at 1-888-827-2004 if there are issues.

BRIGHT FUTURES

17. Currently, there is a requirement for an audit each year of the BF program and every other year for the FSAG programs. For schools that have only a few students that receive these grants, the cost of paying for a yearly audit comes close to the amount of the funds received. This creates a great burden on already stressed budgets. Is there any hope of modifying the requirements to criteria based on award level?

Audit requirements for Bright Futures are set in §1009.53, F.S. and 6A-20.0021, F.A.C. Any changes to audit requirements must be made through the Florida Legislature.

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18. If a student is enrolled in his/her last semester for 12 credit hours, but only has 9 hours of BF eligibility remaining, will BF pay for the additional 3 semester hours?

No, BF will only pay for the eligible nine hours.

19. Regarding the BF extension-of-hours letter: Can the language of the letter be made more specific to better illustrate what type of programs the extension of hours is applicable and the specific requirements for eligibility of extension of hours? Many students think they can get additional hours without a valid reason.

The letter currently states that the specific requirements for extended hours relates only to the student's program of study at the institution in which the student is currently enrolled. The student's major must require more than 120 credit hours for the student to qualify for extended hours.

20. For a Florida Medallion Scholars (FMS) award recipient, how does an institution report a student with a dual major where one major is an AA/AS or AAS degree and the second major is a vocational certificate?

When reporting on an associate program for a FMS student eligible for 100% tuition and fees at community colleges, any courses not eligible should be reported in the fields:

- Other hours enrolled
- Other hours type
- Other cost per credit hour

21. Ineligible BF students need to be removed from the eligibility page or reduce the eligible hours to zero.

A student who loses all eligibility during the academic year is assigned a "finished code" placed on his/her MEL record. Rather than delete a student from the annual record and lose current year data, PSIs can click on the "finished code" link for a listing of all codes. For example, finished code "U" represents those students no longer eligible due to using the maximum allowed hours.

22. Are visa students eligible to receive Bright Futures Scholarships?

Some visas are recognized as meeting the residency requirement for Bright Futures. The institution is responsible for determining students' residency and citizenship status [6A-20.003(13), F.A.C.] for financial aid eligibility. Residency/citizenship for financial aid is determined in the same manner as residency for tuition purposes per §1009.40, F.S. and 6A-10.044, F.A.C.

23. A few years back, I had a student who qualified for Bright Futures. He was here on his parents work visa (wasn't sure of exactly which visa) and the parents had no plans to stay in Florida after their visa expired. Is that student eligible for Bright Futures?

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The institution is responsible for determining students' residency and citizenship status [6A-20.003(13), F.A.C.] for financial aid eligibility. Residency/citizenship for financial aid is determined in the same manner as residency for tuition purposes per §1009.40, F.S. and 6A-10.044, F.A.C.

24. Can a student graduate from an out-of-state high school and be eligible for Bright Futures?

Yes, if the student is a Florida resident residing outside the state of Florida with a parent or guardian on an active military duty or public service assignment away from Florida. The student must meet program eligibility requirements, provide verification of the parent's military or public service assignment, and provide documentation of Florida residency status.

25. Are high school students participating in the “Dual Enrollment/Early Admissions” program eligible to receive Bright Futures?

A Bright Futures early admission student is a secondary student enrolled *full-time* in a postsecondary institution in postsecondary courses which are creditable toward the high school diploma and the associate or baccalaureate degree [§1007.271(7), F.S.]. However, an early admission student is no longer taking courses at the high school level. A student who qualifies for Bright Futures as early admission is eligible to earn a Bright Futures award if enrolled full-time as a degree-seeking student in the early admission program of an eligible postsecondary institution [§1009.531(1)(b), F.S.]. The student must also meet institutional eligibility requirements for the receipt of state aid.

A dual enrolled student is a secondary student enrolled in a postsecondary course(s) creditable toward high school completion and an associate or baccalaureate degree [§1007.271(1), F.S.]. A dual enrolled student is still attending their high school. A high school dual-enrolled student is not eligible for a Bright Futures.

26. If a student is eligible for Bright Futures and receives a Florida Prepaid College Plan, how are the funds applied and is the student eligible for refund?

When Bright Futures students have a Florida Prepaid College Plan, Bright Futures funds are applied to the institutional costs of education not covered by the Florida Prepaid College Plan. If there are scholarships funds remaining after all institutional costs of education have been paid to the institution, the student may receive the balance of funds from the institution

FSAG

27. Sometimes a postsecondary institution has difficulty disbursing FSAG because another postsecondary institution has disbursed already and is unresponsive to contacts.

If you experience problems contacting another institution regarding disbursement issues, you may call OSFA toll-free at 1-888-827-2004 to verify the contact information or request assistance.

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28. What are the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) FSAG cut-off amounts for 2007-08?

FSAG Public – 4110 FSAG Private – 6080 FSAG Postsecondary – 5542

CONTACT INFORMATION

If specific problems/issues such as edits or disbursements require assistance from OSFA, whom may we contact?

Contact the appropriate program director via e-mail or toll-free at 888-827-2004.

State Scholarships and Grant Program Director

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