

## **2011-12 Bright Futures Updates Questions and Answers**

The 2011 Florida Legislative Session resulted in changes to the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program effective July 1, 2011, for the 2011-12 academic year. Please review the information below regarding frequently asked questions on recent and prior year Bright Futures legislative changes.

### **1. Is completion of a *Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)* required for Bright Futures eligibility?**

- Yes, beginning with 2011-12 Bright Futures award year, all students will be required to complete and submit an error free FAFSA prior to receiving their first award funding in an academic year.

### **2. Is community service required for Bright Futures eligibility?**

- Beginning with 2012 high school graduates, students who initially receive one of the three Bright Futures awards must have completed the required community service requirements for the specific award by high school graduation.
  - Florida Academic Scholars – 100 hours
  - Florida Medallion Scholars – 75 hours
  - Gold Seal Vocational Scholars – 30 hours

### **3. What are the Bright Futures award amounts for the 2011-12 academic year?**

- Bright Futures recipients will receive a fixed cost per credit hour award based on their
  - **Award Level**
    - Florida Academic Scholar (FAS), Florida Medallion Scholar (FMS), or Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholar (GSV),
  - **Institution Type**
    - 4-year, 2-year, or Vocational/Technical, and
  - **Credit Type**
    - Semester, quarter, or clock hour
- Students attending a public institution will not be paid the equivalent of tuition and fees; rather, they will be paid the established cost per credit hour award.
- Students attending a private institution will also be paid the established cost per credit hour award, not a full-time, three-quarter time, or half-time amount.
- See the 2011-12 award amounts on the Bright Futures website at [www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/SSFAD/bf/awardamt.htm](http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/SSFAD/bf/awardamt.htm).

### **4. Do Florida Academic Scholars (FAS) still receive a college-related expense allowance?**

- No. As of the 2009-10 academic year, the FAS college-related expense allowance is no longer available.

**5. Do Academic Top Scholars (ATS) still receive an annual award?**

- Yes. ATS recipients will continue to receive a per credit hour award in the 2011-12 award year.
- See the 2011-12 award amounts on the Bright Futures website at [www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/SSFAD/bf/awardamt.htm](http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/SSFAD/bf/awardamt.htm).

**6. Will Bright Futures recipients have to repay the cost for courses dropped or withdrawn?**

- Yes. Students are required to repay the cost of any Bright Futures funded course dropped or withdrawn unless an exception is granted by the financial aid office at their home postsecondary institution.
- Repayment to the financial aid office at the postsecondary institution attended for the cost of dropped or withdrawn courses is required to renew a Bright Futures award at the end of the spring term for a subsequent academic year.

**7. What happens when a student repays the cost of dropped/withdrawn hours?**

- When a student repays the postsecondary institution the cost of dropped/withdrawn hours, those hours are returned to that student's hours remaining for funding purposes.
  - For example: A student starts the term with 72 available Bright Futures hours and enrolls in 12 hours leaving a balance of 60 hours of future funding available. The student then drops/withdraws from 3 semester hours **and repays the cost of those 3 semester hours**. Those 3 semester hours are added back to the student's hours remaining for a total of 63 semester hours remaining. Since Bright Futures did not pay for those 3 semester hours, the student regains eligibility for future funding of those 3 hours.

**8. Did the renewal criteria change for Bright Future recipients?**

- Students who graduated from high school in 2008-09 and earlier, may still receive one restoration opportunity during their Bright Futures funded years.
- Beginning with the 2010-11 academic year, 2009-10 high school graduates and thereafter who do not meet the annual minimum renewal GPA requirement in **their first year of funding** will be permitted a **one-time** restoration. Students may attempt this one-time restoration opportunity the following summer or by the end of a renewal period (end of spring term).
- Beginning with the 2010-11 academic year, 2009-10 high school graduates and thereafter who do not meet the annual minimum renewal earned hours requirement in their first year of funding will be terminated from the scholarship.
- Students who do not meet the minimum earned hours requirement and/or fail to meet the minimum GPA requirement after their first year of funding will NOT be permitted a restoration opportunity.

- The 2009 Florida Legislature amended Section 1009.532 (1)(a), Florida Statutes, to require **full-time** students to earn at least 24 semester hours, or the equivalent in quarter or clock hours, to renew their awards (prorated for part-time students).
- Students who enroll **full-time** (12 or more semester hours in the fall and 12 or more semester hours in the spring) must earn **24 semester hours (or the equivalent in quarter or clock hours)** per academic year.
- Students are **NOT REQUIRED to enroll full-time** to receive Bright Futures funding. Students **MAY enroll part-time** and receive Bright Futures funding. Part-time students must enroll in a minimum of 6 semester hours per term (or the equivalent). Part-time students must earn the required number of hours for which they were funded. The chart below outlines credit hour requirements for students funded in 2009-10 and thereafter.

### **Bright Futures Credit Hour Renewal Requirements**

<b>Institution Term Type</b>	<b>Credit Hour Type</b>	<b>Hours Funded (per term)</b>	<b>Required Earned Hours (per term)</b>
<b>Semester</b>	Semester Hour	<b>12+ Hours</b> (Full-Time)	12
		<b>9-11 Hours</b> (Three-Quarter Time)	9
		<b>6-8 Hours</b> (Half-Time)	6
	Clock Hour	<b>360+ Hours</b> (Full-Time)	360
		<b>270-359 Hours</b> (Three-Quarter Time)	270
		<b>180-269 Hours</b> (Half-Time)	180
<b>Quarter</b>	Quarter Hour	<b>12+ Hours</b> (Full-Time)	12
		<b>9-11 Hours</b> (Three-Quarter Time)	9
		<b>6-8 Hours</b> (Half-Time)	6
	Clock Hour	<b>240+ Hours</b> (Full-Time)	240
		<b>180-239 Hours</b> (Three-Quarter Time)	180
		<b>120-179 Hours</b> (Half-Time)	120
<b>Quinmester</b>	Clock Hour	<b>180+ Hours</b> (Full-Time)	180
		<b>135-179 Hours</b> (Three-Quarter Time)	135
		<b>90-134 Hours</b> (Half-Time)	90

- Students are required to meet the minimum credit hour requirement for the academic year based on the terms funded.
  - For example, a student funded **full-time** (12+ hours) for **two terms** in a **semester hour** institution must earn a minimum of **24** semester hours and the required GPA to be eligible for renewal.
- Students with different enrollments (full-time, three-quarter time, or half-time) during an academic year must earn the required hours that correspond to their enrollment for each term.
  - For example, a student enrolled at a semester hour institution at **15** hours (full-time) for the fall term and **8** hours (half-time) for the spring term is required to earn a minimum total of **18** semester hours (12 hours for the fall term + 6 hours for the spring term) and the required GPA to be eligible for renewal.
  - A student funded for **two terms** at a **quarter hour** institution for 15 hours in the first term and 12 hours in the second term must earn a minimum total of **24** credit hours (12 hours for the first term + 12 hours for the second term) and the required GPA to be eligible for renewal.
  - A student funded for **240 clock hours** for only **one term** at a **quinmester** institution must earn **180 clock hours** and the required GPA to be eligible for renewal.

**9. Can students who lose their Bright Futures awards for not meeting the minimum credit hours restore their awards in a subsequent academic year?**

- For 2008-09 high school graduates and earlier, Bright Futures recipients who do not meet the new credit hour renewal requirements will have the one-time opportunity to restore their awards for a subsequent academic year.
- For 2009-10 high school graduates and thereafter who do not earn the required hours, their scholarships will be terminated.

**10. How long and how many hours of funding are available for FAS, FMS, and GSV recipients?**

Visit [Scholarship Length](#) on the Bright Futures website.

**11. Can Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars (GSV) still renew as Florida Medallion Scholars (FMS)?**

- No. The 2009 Florida Legislature amended Section 1009.536(4), Florida Statutes, by removing the provision which allows GSV recipients to renew as Florida Medallion Scholars. GSV students may receive funding for up to 90 semester hours.

**12. Does a postsecondary institution have to report all drop/withdrawal activity throughout the term, or just the net result of dropped/withdrawn hours at the end of the term?**

- Postsecondary institutions are required to reconcile each student's account within 30 days after the end of each academic term. Institutions are not required to update drop/withdrawal activity for students with multiple transactions throughout the term.
  - For example: A student is originally disbursed for 15 semester hours, then drops/withdraws from 3 hours, adds another 3 hours, and finally drops/withdraws from another 3 hours.

The institution can report the original D00 disbursement for 15 semester hours and one additional D04 disbursement for 12 hours by the end of the term rather than the original D00 disbursement and three subsequent adjustments.

**13. How are Drop/Withdrawal Repayment Exceptions handled in relation to Grade and Hours Appeals?**

- Both Drop/Withdrawal Repayment Exceptions and Grade and Hours Appeals are handled by the postsecondary institution in accordance with Section 1009.40 (1)(b)4, Florida Statutes, and the institution's policy.
- A Drop/Withdrawal Repayment Exception reported to OSFA on the Disbursement Eligibility Report (DER) may also be used to meet the Grade and Hours Appeal.
- OSFA reviews any recommendation for a Drop/Withdrawal Repayment Exception or Grade and Hours Appeal for approval.

**14. Is there a time limit for a student to repay the cost of dropped/withdrawal hours?**

- It is in the student's best interest to repay the cost of the dropped/withdrawn hours to the postsecondary institution prior to the end of the academic term in which the drop/withdrawal took place. The student will be ineligible to renew his/her Bright Futures award for any subsequent academic years until repayment or a satisfactory arrangement to reimburse the institution is made.

**15. Will a Bright Futures award fund graduate level classes?**

- FAS and FMS recipients who graduate with a baccalaureate degree earned in the 2010-11 academic year or thereafter, in seven or fewer semesters, or the equivalent, may receive funding for ONE semester of graduate study, not to exceed 15 credit hours paid at the undergraduate rate. Students should see their

financial aid advisors at the Florida institutions they plan to attend for graduate study.

**16. May a Bright Futures recipient take fewer than six credit hours during his/her last term enrolled, senior year?**

- A student who has fewer than six total hours remaining on the scholarship or needs fewer than six hours to complete up to the first baccalaureate degree, may enroll and receive funding for less than six hours.