

Prior law required the La. Student Financial Assistance Commission (LASFAC) to adopt guidelines and procedures permitting the commission to receive and consider an application for an initial TOPS award or for the continuation of an award that is received not later than 120 days after the final deadline established by the commission for receipt of such applications.

Specified that the time period of award eligibility for an award granted based upon a late application received not later than 60 days after the deadline, shall be reduced by one semester or an equivalent number of units at an institution which operates on other than a semester basis. Further required a reduction of two semesters (or equivalent units) of award eligibility if the application is received more than 60 days, but not later than 120 days, after the submission deadline.

New law retains prior law and additionally requires LASFAC to adopt guidelines and procedures permitting the commission, for the 2007-2008 academic year and thereafter, to receive and consider an application to return from an out-of-state college or university that is received after the final deadline for such applications, with the same reductions in award eligibility for any awards granted.

Prior law provided (notwithstanding any provision to the contrary), that any otherwise qualified student who enrolls as a first-time freshman in an out-of-state college or university may subsequently use his TOPS award at an eligible La. institution. Further specifies that the time period of award eligibility provided in prior law (eight semesters or equivalent units for institutions that operate on other than a semester basis) shall be reduced by an equivalent time period for each semester (or equivalent unit) that the student was enrolled in an out-of-state college or university.

Requires that the student meet each of the following conditions:

- (1) The student has been determined to meet the initial eligibility requirements established by law for a TOPS award.
- (2) The student enrolled as a first-time freshman in an out-of-state college or university in accordance with the timelines specified for enrollment in an eligible La. institution and the out-of-state college or university is accredited by a regional accrediting organization recognized by the U.S. Dept. of Education.
- (3) While enrolled in such an out-of-state college or university, the student met all requirements that would have been applicable to such student for continuation of the initial award if the student had enrolled in an eligible La. institution.
- (4) The student graduated from high school during the 2001-2002 school year or thereafter.

New law retains prior law and additionally provides that an otherwise qualified student who enrolls as a first-time freshman in an eligible college or university in La. in accordance with the specified timelines, who subsequently enrolls in an out-of-state college or university accredited by a regional accrediting organization recognized by the U.S. Dept. of Education, and then reenrolls in an eligible La. college or university during the 2009-2010 academic year or thereafter may use his TOPS award, with the appropriate reduction in the time period of award eligibility and having met all other conditions as provided in prior law.

Effective upon signature of the governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Amends R.S. 17:3048.1(C)(2)(g) and (W))