LOUISIANA OFFICE OF STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

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ELIGIBLE POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

Q-1. Can I use TOPS at any postsecondary school?

A. No. TOPS can only be used at an "eligible institution" (Louisiana public postsecondary schools and independent colleges or universities in the state that are accredited by an institutional accrediting organization recognized by the U.S. Department of Education that are members of the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (LAICU), accredited out-of-state private colleges that are specifically designed to accommodate deaf and hard-of-hearing students at which the majority of the students are deaf and hard of hearing, and certain Louisiana cosmetology and proprietary schools.)

Eligible LAICU schools are: Centenary College, Dillard University, Louisiana College, Loyola University, New Orleans Theological Seminary, Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University (formerly Our Lady of the Lake College), The University of Holy Cross (formerly Our Lady of Holy Cross College), St. Joseph Seminary College, Tulane Medical Center, Tulane University and Xavier University.

If you qualify for any TOPS Award, you may also use the award at the following schools:

- Any school with a valid and current certificate of registration issued by the Louisiana State Board of Cosmetology that is accredited by an accrediting organization recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, or
- Any proprietary school with a valid and current license issued by the Louisiana Board of Regents that is accredited by an accrediting organization recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

Q-2. If I want to pursue a program of study that is not offered in Louisiana, can I use TOPS in another state?

A. No. TOPS is not portable to other states, except when used at accredited out-of-state private colleges that are specifically designed to accommodate deaf and hard-of-hearing students at which the majority of the students are deaf and hard of hearing.

The TOPS award cannot be used to enroll in an out-of-state college through the **Academic Common Market.** The Academic Common Market, which is administered in Louisiana by the Board of Regents, allows a student whose major is not offered in Louisiana to pay in-state tuition at a school in the next adjoining southern state which offers the major. Contact the Louisiana Board of Regents for additional information or visit the Board of Regent's Web site at www.regents.la.gov.

Q-3. If I want to study at an out-of-state college or university, can I return to Louisiana and use my TOPS award?

A. Yes. See the Q&A document on Returning from an Out of State School.

Q-4. What is an eligible out-of-state college or university?

A. The out-of-state college or university must be accredited by an accrediting organization recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. The organizations currently recognized can be found at

https://www2.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/accreditation_pg6.html#RegionalInstitutional.

Q-5. Can TOPS ever be used at an out-of-state college?

A. Yes. Students can use the TOPS Opportunity, Performance and Honors awards at accredited out-of-state private colleges that are specifically designed to accommodate deaf and hard-of-hearing students at which the majority of the students are deaf and hard of hearing.

Q-6. Can I use my TOPS award at John Melvin University in Crowley, LA?

A. No. John Melvin University is currently not an accredited institution. TOPS can only be used at an "eligible institution" (Louisiana public postsecondary schools and independent colleges or universities in the state that are accredited by an institutional accrediting organization recognized by the U.S. Department of Education that are members of the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (LAICU), accredited out-of-state private colleges that are specifically designed to accommodate deaf and hard-of-hearing students at which the majority of the students are deaf and hard of hearing, and certain Louisiana cosmetology and proprietary schools.)

Q-7. If I attend John Melvin University and then transfer to an "eligible institution," will I still be able to use my TOPS award?

A. It depends. You can enroll at John Melvin University in the fall and/or spring immediately following your high school graduation; However, you would need to transfer to an eligible postsecondary institution as a full-time student no later than the first college semester following the first anniversary of the date you graduated from high school. As an example, May 2022 high school graduates would have until the fall semester of 2023 to enroll as a first time, full-time student.