LOUISIANA OFFICE OF STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

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TOPS Q&A

Does TOPS transfer within state colleges? For example, if a student attends Louisiana Tech for 2 quarters, could he/she transfer to LSU later and still use TOPS?

Yes, if they continue to meet retention requirements. Students switching between semester-based and quarter-based schools must contact LOSFA to ensure billing is submitted properly, and to ensure they meet TOPS retention requirements for full-time enrollment and earning 24 credit hours for the academic year.

Do you know approximately when students will learn if they are awarded a GO Grant? Will students see their GO Grant on a college award letter this spring?

Each school makes the final determination on GO Grant eligibility for its students. Once the school receives student FAFSA® data for accepted students, it can make that determination and prepare financial aid packages for students. GO Grant eligibility could appear on a student's fall and/or spring award package(s), but it depends on when the school receives the FAFSA ® data and is able to distribute the funding. It is typically around August when the schools have the funds and can award the funds to student accounts—most schools award for the fall and spring semesters at the same time. Funding is reallocated for students who are eligible for the funds in the fall and spring but end up not enrolling, so if a student does not get GO Grant funding initially, it does not mean that the student could not be awarded later.

Does the Financial Literacy course decrease the amount of required free electives (which right now is 3) or is this in addition to the other required courses?

Financial Literacy will be added as an additional category for the OPH TOPS Core Curriculum. It does not change the number of units for the TOPS Tech Jumpstart Curriculum.

When do you suggest students create a Student Hub account?

Students can create a Student Hub account using their LASECID once their school begins reporting grades in the Student Transcript System (STS) if parental consent has been granted for LOSFA to access their transcript records. Students are encouraged to set up a Student Hub account as soon as possible to track their progress toward earning a TOPS Award; however, it's critical to access the Hub their 12th-grade year as it provides an opportunity for them spot errors early on and work with our office to resolve them ahead of TOPS processing season.

Is there a required grade that the required financial literacy course has to be taken in?

No, for TOPS purposes, students must take the course prior to graduating from high school. You must contact the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) for additional information regarding a timeline for when students must have the financial literacy course completed.

Is there a required year that computer science needs to be taken in?

No, for TOPS purposes, the Core Curriculum does not identify which year the courses need to be taken. Courses taken to fulfill the TOPS Core Curriculum must be completed prior to high school graduation.

Where can we get a copy of the curriculum for the "new" Financial Literacy course?

You must contact LDOE for guidance or additional information regarding the curriculum for the Financial Literacy course.

Is a list of courses that will fulfill the computer science requirement available?

The list of courses that will fulfill the computer science requirement will be added to LOSFA's website and will be accessible in the Counselor's Resources Folder once available.

If a student takes the ACT this spring without science, will their composite score be acceptable for TOPS?

We do not know that at this time. Once we have more definite information, it will go out in the Counselor Connection, be available on our site, and be accessible in Counselor Resources.

When using Computer Science as a foreign language, can a student use one unit of Computer Science with a unit of a foreign language to satisfy the 2 units of foreign language requirement?

If a student chooses to use Computer Science to satisfy the foreign language requirement for TOPS, they must have two units of Computer Science. For example, they would not be able to have French 1 and 1 unit of Computer Science to cover the 2 units needed for foreign language. They would either need 2 French courses or 2 Ccmputer Science courses to satisfy the requirement.

FAFSA Scenarios Q&A:

I have a student who lives with their mother and stepfather. Her biological father passed away when she was two years old, and the stepfather never legally adopted the child. How would she file? Would she put that she lives with one legal parent?

The student would complete the FAFSA using her mom and stepfather as contributors. If they file taxes "married filing jointly," only the mom or the stepfather would need an FSA ID and would provide FTI (Federal Tax Information) on behalf of both contributors. If they file "married filing separately," both the mom and the stepfather would need an FSA ID to act as contributors on the student's FAFSA.