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TOPS Continuation Requirements for Spring 2020 Due to COVID-19

2 and 4 year Schools

Reports are that schools will be offering all courses on-line and/or modified learning so that students can complete the semester. It is recognized that some students will not be able to complete the semester on-line or with modified learning. Some institutions will be offering alternate methods of completing coursework during the spring semester of 2020 and some will not. As a result, LOSFA is developing two new academic standing codes for institutions to use to report a student's inability to complete the semester under these circumstances, depending on whether a contingency to on-line and/or modified learning was made available.

For schools that **DO HAVE** a contingency plan for those students who are unable to complete the semester on-line due to lack of technology, they must report that they do have such a plan to LOSFA.

- If a student is still unable to complete the semester even with the contingency plan offered, the institution must report that information to LOSFA as well. A new academic standing code will be implemented for institutions to report the information, and it will be provided as soon as programming is complete.

For schools that **DO NOT HAVE** such a contingency plan and they allow the students to withdraw based on a documented lack of technology, they must report that information to LOSFA. A different academic standing code will be developed for institutions to report the information, and it will be provided as soon as programming is complete.

Proprietary and Cosmetology Schools

TOPS payments for the spring term will be made in the following circumstances:

- The school is open and operating normally; OR
- The school was open and a student was enrolled as of March 1 AND
 - the school is temporarily closing and has a documented plan for providing some form of educational classes to students, whether on-line, by correspondence, or by some other means; OR
 - the school is providing students with a temporary leave of absence within the term but will allow the students to return and complete the term

For all other circumstances which result in a student's withdrawal from school, students will continue to use the normal Request for Exceptions process. These include, but are not limited to, temporary disability, exceptional educational opportunity, physical or substance abuse rehabilitation, military service, etc.

Programming will be complete by April 6th. Detailed instructions, including how to submit the plan/no plan responses as well as the codes will be issued via Bulletin early next week.

CORONAVIRUS QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Is there anything I need to do guarantee my TOPS award is not cancelled?

If you were unable to maintain continuous enrollment due to steps taken to mitigate the spread of the Coronavirus and you were studying abroad or were scheduled to study abroad, your school will report this information to LOSFA when submitting your grades or when reporting that you resigned from all courses. An exception will automatically be granted.

What if all my classes were converted to on-line and/or modified classes and I can't attend them because I don't have access to the internet from home?

If you were unable to maintain continuous enrollment due to the Coronavirus, your school will report this information to LOSFA when submitting your grades or when reporting that you resigned from all courses. An exception will automatically be granted.

Do I lose a semester of TOPS because I had to withdraw?

It depends on whether your school issues a TOPS refund. Your school will determine whether it will issue a TOPS refund or any other type of refund.

What happens if my school issues a full TOPS refund?

If your school issues a full refund, you will receive credit for a full semester of TOPS funding as if you had never utilized the affected semester.

What happens if my school only issues a partial refund?

If your school provides a partial refund, you will receive credit for the portion of the TOPS award amount that is refunded. Credit for this portion will be available after you've exhausted your 8th semester or equivalent terms on TOPS.

How do I find out if my school issued a TOPS refund?

You will receive an email from LOSFA at the most recent email address in LOSFA's records. To verify that we have the correct email address for you, register for a Student Hub account at <https://mylosfa.la.gov/applications/student-hub/>. You will also be able to check your Student Hub account to see if your school provided a partial or full refund of your TOPS Award.

My school will not issue a refund. What does this mean for me?

If your school does not issue a refund, your TOPS eligibility will be reduced by one semester or term as it would have if you had remained enrolled throughout the semester.

Will my daughter, who is a senior still qualify to get more TOPS if her score can increase on the June test? That was why we signed up for the April test.

As you know, ACT has postponed the April National test to June, and the TOPS law provides that graduating seniors must achieve a qualifying score no later than the April National ACT Test date. The Board of Regents will be asking the Legislature to take legislative action to make an exception to this

provision in light of developments relating to COVID-19, including allowing a student to qualify with a June test date without receiving a one-semester reduction in their eligibility period. We will update schools, students, and parents as soon as there is any change to this requirement.

THIS DOCUMENT WILL BE UPDATED AS MORE INFORMATION BECOMES AVAILABLE