

**LOUISIANA STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE COMMISSION
OFFICE OF STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

***Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS)
Bulletin***

TOPS BULLETIN NUMBER:	T2020-2
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DISTRIBUTION:	College and University Financial Aid Offices and Registrars, LAICU Financial Aid Offices and Registrars, and Louisiana Community and Technical College System Personnel
TOPICS:	Pass/Fail Implications on Students Eligibility for TOPS

A Pass or Fail grading system will have numerous implications for TOPS continuing eligibility requirements. GPAs are required to determine if a student meets TOPS continuing eligibility requirements. The GPA requirements are different for Opportunity, Performance, and Honors award recipients. However, there is no numeric value assigned to Pass grades, but Fail Grades receive 0 quality points, thereby negatively impacting a student's GPA. Therefore, students whose GPAs did not satisfy continuing eligibility requirements after Fall 2019 will be negatively affected. These students run the risk of having their TOPS award suspended, cancelled or potentially losing their Performance/Honors stipend.

Changing the grading system to Pass or Fail may result in, but is not limited to, the following scenarios:

- **Scenario 1: TOPS Suspension**
 - A TOPS Opportunity recipient has a 2.25 GPA at the end of Fall 2019:
 - This student must have earned at least 24 hours and a 2.3 cumulative grade point average to continue receiving the award. Under a Pass or Fail grading system, there is no numeric value assigned to Pass grades, but Fail Grades receive 0 quality points. Therefore, this student's award will be suspended because the student did not have the opportunity to earn the 2.3 cumulative grade point average by the end of the Academic year under a Pass or Fail grading system.
- **Scenario 2: TOPS Cancellation**
 - A student who is at the end of a two year TOPS award suspension earns all Pass grades:
 - Since there is no numeric value assigned to Pass grades, the Pass grades will not boost the student's GPA. This student's award will be canceled at the end of the Academic Year because the student did not have the opportunity to improve his/her GPA under the Pass or Fail grading system. The student will be unable to regain the TOPS award.

- **Scenario 3:** Student loses TOPS Honors stipend
 - A TOPS Honors award recipient has a 2.9 GPA at the end of Fall 2019:
 - The Honors Award requires the student to earn 24 hours during the academic year along with a 3.0 cumulative grade point average. Since there is no numeric value assigned to Pass grades, the student will be unable to improve his/her GPA with the Pass grades. Therefore, the student will be unable to keep the Honors Award. The student's award will be decreased to the Opportunity Award.

In addition to TOPS continuing eligibility GPA concerns, changing to a Pass or Fail grading system will also affect grade conversion for TOPS eligible students who transfer to and from your institution.

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. We will update schools, students, and parents as soon as there is any change to this requirement.

Questions? Please e-mail custserv@la.gov.