

## Returning from an Out of State College or University

### Q-1. Can I enroll for the first time as a full-time student at an out-of-state postsecondary institution and still qualify for TOPS?

- A. Yes. If you enrolled for the first time as a full-time student no later than the semester immediately following the first anniversary of your graduation from high school in an out-of-state postsecondary institution accredited by a regional accrediting organization recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and thereafter returned to Louisiana and enrolled as a full-time student in an eligible college or university, you may be eligible for TOPS. You must have met all the requirements for an award at the time of graduation from high school and met the requirements for continuation of the award while enrolled in an out-of-state college or university. If you did not enroll full-time, maintain continuous enrollment, or earn 24 hours during the academic year(s) you were enrolled out of state due to circumstances beyond your immediate control, you may apply for an exception to any or all of these requirements. A Request for Exception form with instructions describing the documentation required can be found on the LOSFA Web site at (<https://mylosfa.la.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Exception-Request-Form4.pdf>) or obtained directly from LOSFA or by emailing [custserv@la.gov](mailto:custserv@la.gov).

If you did enroll at a regionally accredited out-of-state college or university, you must apply for a TOPS award by doing all of the following:

1. Submit a FAFSA or, if you can demonstrate that you do not qualify for federal grant aid (Pell Grant) and do not want any other federal aid such as student loans, a TOPS On-Line Application no later than July 1 immediately following the academic year in which you enroll during a regular semester, quarter or term in an eligible Louisiana institution or no later than 60 days after the July 1<sup>st</sup> deadline (Your award will be reduced by one semester.), or 61 days but no later than 120 days after the July 1<sup>st</sup> deadline (Your award will be reduced by two semesters.). (You are not considered to have returned to Louisiana if you enroll only in a summer session, quarter, term, or intersession.); and
2. Submit the TOPS *Application to Return from an Out-of-State College* no later than July 1 immediately following the academic year in which you enroll during a regular semester, quarter, or term in an eligible Louisiana institution for a full award. LOSFA will accept your application if it is received no later than 60 days after the July 1<sup>st</sup> deadline, but your award will be reduced by one semester; or 61 days but no later than 120 days after the July 1<sup>st</sup> deadline, but your award will be reduced by two semesters. You should submit your Application with your official out-of-state transcript(s). You are not considered to have returned to Louisiana if you enroll only in a summer session, quarter, term, or intersession. The form is available on the LOSFA Web site at (<https://mylosfa.la.gov/students-parents/scholarships-grants/tops/tops-forms/>); and
3. Submit all supporting documentation, including an official **final** transcript for each out-of-state college or university attended. The transcripts must show each semester you attended an out-of-state college or university and include all hours attempted and/or earned. Submit all of your supporting documents with the TOPS Application to Return from an Out-of-State College. If it is not possible to submit all documentation at the time you submit the application before your July 1 deadline, submit the supporting documents so that they are received no later than **January 15<sup>th</sup>** immediately following the July 1 deadline.

4. If you will require an exception to the requirements to enroll full-time, maintain continuous enrollment, or earn 24 hours during the academic year while you were enrolled out-of-state, you should submit your Request for Exception form along with all supporting documentation at the time you submit your *Application to Return from an Out-of-State College*. You can find the TOPS Request for Exception Form with instructions describing the various circumstances that qualify for an exception and the documentation required on the LOSFA Web site at <https://mylosfa.la.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Exception-Request-Form4.pdf> or you can send an email to LOSFA at [custserv@la.gov](mailto:custserv@la.gov).

**If your Application is not received by the July 1 deadline or during the 120 days after the deadline and/or the supporting documents, including the official final transcripts, are not received by the applicable deadline, the Application will be denied and you will permanently lose your TOPS award. There are no extensions or exceptions to these deadlines.**

Your TOPS period of eligibility will be reduced by one semester for each semester that you enrolled as a full-time student in the out-of-state college or university. If you enroll as a full-time student while out-of-state and subsequently enroll as a part time student, you will be ineligible for a TOPS award unless you request and are granted an exception. See below.

You must enroll in a Louisiana college or university no later than the next semester or term, excluding summer sessions and intersessions, immediately following the last semester that you were enrolled in the out-of-state college or university, unless granted an exception for cause. You can find the TOPS Request for Exception Form with instructions describing the various circumstances that qualify for an exception and the documentation required on the LOSFA Web site at <https://mylosfa.la.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Exception-Request-Form4.pdf> or you can send an email to LOSFA at [custserv@la.gov](mailto:custserv@la.gov).

**Q-2. Can my TOPS award be reinstated if I enroll for the first time as a full-time student at an eligible Louisiana college and then enroll at an out-of-state college?**

- A. Yes. If you were determined eligible for a TOPS award and enrolled by the deadline in an eligible Louisiana college, and then you enrolled full-time during a regular semester, quarter or term at an out-of-state college accredited by a regional accrediting organization recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, and then returned to Louisiana and enrolled in an eligible Louisiana college during a regular semester, quarter or term, you may be eligible for reinstatement of your TOPS award. You are not considered to have enrolled in an out-of-state college if you enrolled only in a summer session, quarter, term, or intersession. You must have met all the requirements for continuation of your award while enrolled in an out-of-state college or university. If you did not enroll full-time, maintain continuous enrollment, or earn 24 hours during the academic year due to circumstances beyond your immediate control, you may apply for an exception to the requirement. You can download a Request for Exception form with instructions describing the documentation required from LOSFA's Web site at (<https://mylosfa.la.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Exception-Request-Form4.pdf>), obtain the form directly LOSFA, or email [custserv@la.gov](mailto:custserv@la.gov).

**Q-3. If I enroll part time in an out-of-state college after I graduate from high school and then enroll in an eligible Louisiana college by the semester immediately following the one year anniversary of my high school graduation, do I have to submit an Application to Return from an Out-of-State College?**

- A. No. You are not required to submit the Application to Return from an Out-of-State School because you were not enrolled full-time. **However, you must provide an official final transcript from your out-of-state college to determine your cumulative grade point average.**

**WARNING:** If you fail to enroll as a full-time student in either the out-of-state college or in an eligible Louisiana college by the semester immediately following the one year anniversary of your high school graduation, you will be ineligible for a TOPS award unless you were unable to enroll due to a circumstance that is not within your immediate control and you request and are granted an exception to the initial enrollment requirement. You can download a Request for Exception form with instructions describing the documentation required from LOSFA's Web site at (<https://mylosfa.la.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Exception-Request-Form4.pdf>), obtain the form directly from LOSFA, or email [custserv@la.gov](mailto:custserv@la.gov).