+Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA)
TOPS Processing Quick Reference Guide
For Submitting Payment Requests

> **PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS PRIOR TO SUBMITTING**
> **TOPS PAYMENT REQUESTS TO AVOID DELAYS IN PROCESSING.**

- **Online Information:** Use the resources available. Routinely check on-line for TOPS Payment Rosters and TOPS Error Rosters to prevent delays in correcting errors.

- **Pre-Census Day Billings**: **DO NOT** submit billings before the 15th class day. **They will be DELETED.**

- **Full-Time Verification**: Students must be Full Time following the 14th class day to receive TOPS payment. Therefore, the earliest LOSFA will except Payment Requests will be the 15th class day.
    - Students considered below Full Time may pick up additional hours later in the semester, as permitted, making themselves Full Time and eligible for TOPS payment.
    - Correspondence courses do not count towards full-time enrollment.

- **First Time, Full-Time Certification:**
    - Necessary for students delaying full-time enrollment BEYOND the FALL semester immediately following the date of High School Graduation; and
    - BEFORE a payment can be made, a TOPS Payment Request reflecting $0.00 and an 'FT' Academic Standing MUST be submitted for the applicable semester. The actual request for payment MUST be submitted separately; and
    - By submitting 'FT', the school certifies that the student has NOT enrolled full time in a previous semester/term at any other institution.

- **TOPS Disposition (Status) and Term of Eligibility**: Verify that the student's 'Disposition' (aka Status) reflects eligibility and the term payment is being requested is reflected in 'Eligible Payment Terms Not Paid' (aka Only Term Eligible/OTE). If eligibility is not reflected, payment will reject. ****NOTE: *This information can be found on the student's 'Eligibility' screen or TOPS Master/Student Rosters.***

- **Bachelor's Degree Received (Disposition 041)**: Students who have received a Bachelor's degree with terms of payment eligibility remaining will have a Disposition (Status) of 041. Those enrolled Full Time in a **Graduate or Professional School** by the FALL semester following the one-year anniversary of receiving their degree (2nd Fall) are eligible for TOPS payment. Payment requests **MUST reflect a 'GP'** (Post-Graduate) Academic Standing. ****NOTE***: *The student's account will not reflect an 'Eligible Payment Term Not Paid' until **AFTER** a 'GP' payment posts.*

- **Professional Students**: Payment requests must reflect a 'PS' (Professional Student) Academic Standing, unless a Bachelor's Degree has been earned (use 'GP').
    - **LAICU Schools – Students with or without a Bachelor's Degree may NOT receive an award payment exceeding the school's approved TOPS Award amount (weighted average).**

- **Dual Billing**: Students enrolled Part Time at two schools, but are enrolled in a combined total of no less than 12 hours may receive TOPS payment at both schools.
    - The maximum Award TOPS will pay will be based on the highest approved amount between the schools. Therefore, the combined payments cannot exceed that amount.
    - Each school will need to coordinate with the other to confirm hours of enrollment. The following formula must be used by each school when determining an eligible TOPS award amount:
        - Hours enrolled ÷ 12 hours (full time) = %
        - % x school's approved TOPS amount = Eligible TOPS payment
    - Each school MUST code their billing with a **'DB'** (dual payment) **Academic Standing**.
    - If a student is enrolled full time at one school, only that school can receive TOPS payment.

- **Proportional Billing Due to Reduced Enrollment:** Students approved for Reduced Enrollment may be eligible for a proportional TOPS award provided they are classified as ELIGIBLE PART TIME (i.e. Program Full Time) or are granted an exception by LOSFA due to PERMANENT DISABILITY.
  - The following formula must be used in determining the eligible TOPS award amount:
    - Hours enrolled ÷ 12 hours (full time) = %
    - % x school's approved TOPS amount = Eligible TOPS payment

- **Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT):** Institutions seeking faster and more secure transmittal of funds should consider EFT. Funds are available a week earlier than by check. You can also avoid the loss of a TOPS check and the delay involved in reissuing it. Contact **SGAR@La.Gov** for directions in initiating this service.

- **Refunds**: Refunds must promptly be sent to LOSFA as errors are discovered. Delays may prevent students receiving credit at another school, creating a hardship. Refunds should be sent as follows:
  - **Payable to:**   LOSFA
  - **Mailing address:**   LOSFA, P. O. Box 91202, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-9202
  - **Include the following**: TOPS Program, Student <u>Name</u>, LOSFA ID, <u>Semester</u>, <u>Reason</u>

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- **<u>TOPS Award (Tuition) Amount</u>**: Verify the correct amount for the Term/Year being requested. (e.g. Full-Time, as opposed to Program full time, aka eligible part time).

- **<u>Stipend Payment Requests</u>**: For Performance and Honors award level, requests for TOPS Award and Stipend must be submitted together. Otherwise, the request may reject.

- **<u>National Guard Tuition Waiver</u>**: Payment requests should reflect an 'NG' Academic Standing. The award amount is $300.00. Additionally, those awarded Performance or Honors levels should have their stipend doubled.

Performance ---- $400.00	Honors ---- $800.00

- **<u>Program Type</u>**: The program type reported should be **based on a student's program of study** and **NOT** the student's TOPS award level.

A - ACADEMIC program	T - TECHNICAL (Non-Academic) program

  - Determined by student's program of study on the 15th class day (Census Day), **OR** at the point the student becomes full time following the 14th day.
  - Must report the SAME code when submitting grades at the end of the semester, even if the student changes Major or Program of Study later in the semester.

- **<u>ACADEMIC STANDING Codes for TOPS Payment Requests:</u>**

00	Continuous Enrollment
11	Accelerated – ***Must be approved by LOSFA***
DB	Dual Billed Student – Maximum payable amount will be based on the school with the highest approved TOPS award amount.
EP*	Eligible Part Time (program full time) – Eligibility determined by school.
FT*	First Time Full Time (anywhere) – Confirmed and coded by school.
GP	Post-Graduate – Submit with award amount
LF*	Less than Full Time
NG	Eligible for National Guard Stipend – Submit with award amount
OA*	Over-Awarded – Determined and coded by school.
PS	Professional Student – Submit with award amount
ST	Transfer from Semester Organization *(to Term Organization)*
TS	Transfer to Semester Organization *(from Term Organization*
* Contact SGAR@LA.GOV to remove.	