

Title 10: Education Institutions and Agencies

Part 613: Mississippi Eminent Scholars Grant (MESG)

Part 613 Chapter 1: Mississippi Eminent Scholars Grant (MESG) Rules and Regulations

Rule 1.1 Mississippi Eminent Scholars Grant (MESG) Rules and Regulations. These Rules and Regulations are subject to change by the Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board (Postsecondary Board). All eligible students shall receive a Mississippi Eminent Scholars Grant (MESG) award; however, the amount of each MESG award depends upon the availability of funds as authorized by the State Legislature.

I. GENERAL ELIGIBILITY

- A. The applicant must be a current legal resident of Mississippi. Resident status for purposes of receiving MESG under this act shall be determined in the same manner as resident status for tuition purposes as set forth in Sections 37-103-1 through 37-103-29, of Ms. Code Ann., with the exception of Section 37-103-17.
- B. The applicant must be continuously enrolled (not less than two semesters or three trimesters in each successive academic year) full-time (minimum 15 semester hours or 9 trimester hours) at the undergraduate level at one (1) eligible institution in the State of Mississippi.
- C. The applicant must meet one of the following sets of academic criteria:
 1. Graduated from high school or earned the equivalent in high school subjects acceptable for credit toward a diploma, as verified by the institution before disbursement of awards, with a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale based on the high school's grading system and certified by the high school counselor or other authorized school official, and scored an ACT composite score of 29 or higher from a national test or tests taken prior to being enrolled as a first-time college student. In lieu of ACT scores, students may submit equivalent SAT scores according to the official ACT/SAT concordance tables in publication at the time of the test in question; or
 2. Attended a home education program during grade levels 9 through 12 and scored an ACT composite score of 29 or higher from a national test or tests taken prior to being enrolled as a first-time college student. In lieu of ACT scores, students may submit equivalent SAT scores according to the official ACT/SAT concordance tables in publication at the time of the test in question; or
 3. Graduated from high school or earned the equivalent in high school subjects acceptable for credit toward a diploma, as verified by the

institution before disbursement of awards, with a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale based on the high school's grading system and certified by the high school counselor or other authorized school official, and was recognized as a semifinalist or finalist by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation or the National Achievement Scholarship Program.

- D. The applicant must enroll as a first-time college student in Mississippi.
 - 1. A "first-time in college" student is any student who has earned fewer than 12 hours of postsecondary academic credit.
 - a) Postsecondary academic credit earned prior to or during the summer immediately subsequent to receiving a high school diploma, or earned while dually enrolled in secondary and postsecondary educational institutions, or while enrolled in the early admission program of a postsecondary institution shall not be considered when determining if a student is a "first-time in college" student.
 - b) Postsecondary academic credit granted by an institution for Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses completed in high school shall not be considered when determining if a student is a "first-time in college" student.
 - 2. A student may enroll as a first-time college student *in Mississippi* as long as the student has earned no more than 36 hours of postsecondary academic credit out of state before enrolling in a Mississippi institution. The eligibility of such applicants will be determined in the same manner as "first-time in college" applicants, except that these students shall be required to have maintained the equivalent of a 3.5 cumulative grade point average on a 4.0 scale for all college work attempted, as certified by the attending institution.
- E. The applicant must complete an initial application for state financial aid before the expiration of the third school year succeeding the year of his or her high school graduation and must complete an application on or before September 15 during the fall of the aid year for which the student is seeking assistance.
- F. The applicant must not currently be in default on a Federal or State educational loan or owe a repayment on a Federal or State grant.
- G. The applicant must meet any other general requirements for admission and student financial aid at the student's eligible institution of choice.

II. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

A. First-time applicants must:

1. Complete an initial application online at www.mississippi.edu/financialaid before the expiration of the third school year succeeding the year of his or her high school graduation and on or before September 15 during the fall of the aid year for which the student is seeking assistance.
2. Submit two forms of documentation of current legal residency by the document deadline of October 15. Acceptable forms of residency documentation are listed in the General Administration Rules and Regulations and published online at www.mississippi.edu/financialaid.
3. Submit by the document deadline of October 15:
 - a) Proof of graduation from high school or proof of earning the equivalent in high school subjects acceptable for credit toward a diploma, as verified by the institution before disbursement of awards, with a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale based on the high school's grading system and certified by the high school counselor or other authorized school official, and proof of an ACT composite score of 29 or higher from a national test or tests. In lieu of ACT scores, students may submit equivalent SAT scores according to the official ACT/SAT concordance tables in publication at the time of the test in question; or
 - b) Proof of attendance at a home education program during grade levels 9 through 12 and proof of an ACT composite score of 29 or higher from a national test or tests. In lieu of ACT scores, students may submit equivalent SAT scores according to the official ACT/SAT concordance tables in publication at the time of the test in question; or
 - c) Proof of graduation from high school or proof of earning the equivalent in high school subjects acceptable for credit toward a diploma, as verified by the institution before disbursement of awards, with a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale based on the high school's grading system and certified by the high school counselor or other authorized school official, and proof of recognition as a semifinalist or finalist by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation or the National Achievement Scholarship Program.

- d) Proof of a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale on at least 12, but no more than 36, hours of postsecondary education credit, as certified by the attending institution and proof of an ACT composite score of 29 or higher from a national test or tests taken before the student became a first-time college student. In lieu of ACT scores, students may submit equivalent SAT scores according to the official ACT/SAT concordance tables in publication at the time of the test in question, or proof of recognition as a semifinalist or finalist by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation or the National Achievement Scholarship Program will be accepted in lieu of the ACT.
4. Be enrolled full-time (minimum 15 semester hours or 9 trimester hours) at the undergraduate level at one (1) eligible institution in the State of Mississippi. Evidence of enrollment will be automatically provided to the Postsecondary Board by the attending institution.
- B. Renewal applicants must:
1. Complete an application online at www.mississippi.edu/financialaid by the deadline date of September 15 during the fall of the aid year for which the student is seeking assistance.
 2. Maintain current legal residency status in the State of Mississippi.
 3. Maintain continuous, full-time enrollment at one (1) eligible institution in the State of Mississippi for not less than two semesters or three trimesters in each successive academic year, unless granted an exception for cause.
 - a) Full-time enrollment consists of a minimum 15 semester hours or 9 trimester hours at the undergraduate level. Evidence of enrollment will be automatically provided to the Postsecondary Board by the attending institution, unless requested from the applicant.
 - b) If a student drops below full-time status during a semester or trimester of the academic year and is not granted an exception for cause by the administering agency, no refund will be required for that term; however, that student is ineligible to receive funds during the following semester or trimester of full-time enrollment of the regular academic year.
 4. Maintain satisfactory academic progress toward a degree with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale, as certified by the registrar, based on that institution's calculation, at the end of each semester, trimester, or term of the regular academic year.

III. LENGTH AND AMOUNT OF AWARD

- A. No student may receive MESG for longer than the equivalent semesters or trimesters required to complete one (1) certificate, and/or one (1) associate, and/or (1) bachelor degree per institution, not to exceed eight (8) semesters or twelve (12) trimesters.
- B. For all eligible students, the MESG award amount is the amount of tuition and mandatory fees at the institution of attendance, not to exceed Twenty-five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500.00) per academic year (to be divided equally between each semester/trimester).
- C. All awards are dependent on the availability of funds and are subject to proration.
- D. A student may receive MESG, unless receipt of the award will cause the student's financial aid package to exceed the institution's established Cost of Attendance for the student. In such cases, the institution should reduce or cancel the award to ensure the student receives the maximum award without exceeding the Cost of Attendance. Undergraduate grant awards will be offered to individual applicants through the single undergraduate grant program that offers the applicant the largest award.
- E. Payment of MESG awards shall be disbursed directly to the postsecondary institution and applied first to tuition.
- F. If a recipient transfers from one eligible Mississippi institution to another, the award will be transferable, provided the student applies for the grant and is otherwise eligible.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann.* § 37-106-31.