

## **Title 10: Education Institutions and Agencies**

### **Part 616: Upgrading Priority Skills for Key Industry Learning and Labor Mississippi Grant Program (UPSKILL) Rules and Regulations**

#### **Chapter 1: Upgrading Priority Skills for Key Industry Learning and Labor Mississippi Grant Program (UPSKILL) Rules and Regulations**

*Rule 1.1 Upgrading Priority Skills for Key Industry Learning and Labor Mississippi Grant Program (UPSKILL) Rules and Regulations.* These Rules and Regulations are subject to change by the Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board.

#### **I. GENERAL ELIGIBILITY**

- A. The applicant must be a United States citizen or a lawful, permanent resident.
- B. The applicant must be a current legal resident of Mississippi and have been a resident for at least two (2) years prior to application. Resident status for purposes of receiving UPSKILL 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.
- C. The applicant must have a high school diploma, GED, or the equivalent.
- D. The applicant must be enrolled or accepted for enrollment at least half-time in an eligible certificate or associate degree program at an eligible Mississippi community or junior college.
- E. The applicant must be at least 24 years of age.
- F. The applicant must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the Mississippi Aid Application (MAAPP) and submit all required supporting documents by the established deadlines.
- G. The applicant must meet any other general requirements for admission and continuation at the student's eligible institution of choice.

#### **II. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

- A. First-time applicants must:
  - 1. Complete the Mississippi Aid Application (MAAPP) online at [www.msfinancialaid.org](http://www.msfinancialaid.org) on or before September 15 during the fall of the aid year for which the student is seeking assistance.

2. By the document deadline of October 15 of the fall of the aid year for which the student is seeking assistance:
  - a) Submit two forms of documentation of legal Mississippi residency for two (2) years. Acceptable forms of residency documentation are listed in the General Administration Rules and Regulations and published online at [www.msfinancialaid.org](http://www.msfinancialaid.org).
  - b) Fully complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) including the verification process if the student is selected for verification and accept all available federal grant aid.
  - c) Submit any additional documents requested for the purpose of resolving conflicting information.
3. Be enrolled or accepted for enrollment at least half-time in an eligible program at an eligible Mississippi community or junior college. Evidence of enrollment will be automatically provided to the Board by the attending institution.
4. Be 24 years of age as of January 1 of the second year of the aid year for which the student is seeking assistance. For example, a student seeking assistance for the 2026-27 aid year must have been born on or before January 1, 2003.

**B. Renewal Applicants Must:**

1. Complete a renewal Mississippi Aid Application (MAAPP) online at [www.msfinancialaid.org](http://www.msfinancialaid.org) on or before September 15 during the fall of the aid year for which the student is seeking assistance.
2. By the document deadline of October 15 of the fall of the aid year for which the student is seeking assistance:
  - a) Fully complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) including the verification process if the student is selected for verification and accept all available federal grant aid.
  - b) Submit any additional documents requested for the purpose of resolving conflicting information.
3. Make satisfactory academic progress toward a certificate or degree as certified by the registrar of the attending institution at the end of each semester or term during which the applicant received state funds.

### **III. LENGTH AND AMOUNT OF AWARD**

- A. The annual award amount for the UPSKILL Grant will be equal to the student's total cost of tuition and required fees less all other grant aid plus a stipend of Five Hundred Dollars (\$500) for books and materials. For students enrolled less than full-time, the annual stipend will be prorated based on the student's enrollment intensity as reported by the attending institution.
- B. A maximum cumulative award amount is not established; however, a recipient may only receive the UPSKILL Grant for the time required to complete one (1) certificate or one (1) associate degree.
- C. The UPSKILL Grant can be combined with grant aid from federal, institutional, private, or other sources. No other grant aid should be reduced or supplanted by the UPSKILL Grant. However, in no case shall the UPSKILL Grant be combined with other grant aid to exceed the student's allowable Cost of Attendance. If an overaward occurs, the UPSKILL Grant will be reduced.
- D. All awards are dependent upon the availability of funds. Selection of recipients shall be based on a first-come, first-served basis of all eligible applicants; however, priority consideration shall be given to persons previously receiving awards under the UPSKILL Grant program.
- E. Payment of UPSKILL Grants shall be disbursed directly to the attending institution.
- F. If a recipient transfers from one eligible Mississippi institution to another, the award will be transferable, provided the student remains in an eligible program and meets all continuing eligibility requirements.

#### **IV. LOSS OF ELIGIBILITY**

- A. Failure to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress will result in cancellation of the recipient's eligibility for the UPSKILL Grant.
- B. Failure to maintain at least half-time enrollment in an eligible program will result in cancellation of the recipient's eligibility for the UPSKILL Grant. However, the student may file an appeal for reconsideration with the Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid and may be granted an exception for cause.

#### **V. ELIGIBLE PROGRAMS**

- A. Accelerate Mississippi shall annually provide a list of eligible programs based on priority sectors and occupations to the Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid which shall use the list to determine the eligibility of applicants.

- B. Students receiving the UPSKILL Grant may continue to receive the grant through program completion even if the program no longer qualifies as an eligible program if the student remains continuously enrolled and maintains satisfactory academic progress.

## **VI. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTICIPATING ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS**

- A. To qualify as an eligible institution for the UPSKILL Grant program, Mississippi community and junior colleges must sign an annual participation agreement and commit to providing the following support services to UPSKILL Grant recipients:
  - 1. Assign an advisor or success coach to contact each grant recipient a minimum of three (3) times per term to assist with enrollment, financial aid, career planning, or other topics as needed to support program continuation and completion.
  - 2. Enroll each recipient in Mississippi Works.
  - 3. Provide career integration by creating program maps aligning eligible programs with careers and connect grant recipients to paid practicums or apprenticeships where possible.
  - 4. Identify alternative funding sources, such as Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds, to connect UPSKILL participants with up to Two Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$250.00) per term per grant recipient in emergency aid, childcare stipends or transportation assistance (bus vouchers or gas cards).
  - 5. When possible, offer flexible program delivery, such as evening, weekend, and online program participation.
  - 6. Utilize data and early alert systems to support recipients.
- B. To assist with the determination of award amounts, program evaluation, and required reporting, participating eligible institutions must report to the Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid each term:
  - 1. Student cost of attendance;
  - 2. Federal grants received;
  - 3. Institutional grants received;
  - 4. Other grants received;
  - 5. Loans received;

6. Work Study received;
  7. Degree/credential earned; and
  8. Program Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code
- C. Eligible participating institutions agree to participate in an annual program review to be conducted by the Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid.

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