

Academic Competitiveness Grant

Federal Academic Competitiveness Grants are awarded to students who can demonstrate that they completed a rigorous high school program of study before enrolling in college. Eligible students receive up to \$750 in their first year of college, and up to \$1,300 for the second year if they have a 3.0 grade point average their first year in college. This program is different from other need-based grant programs because students must demonstrate completion of a rigorous high school program of study.

What are the eligibility requirements?

To be eligible to receive an Academic Competitiveness Grant, students must, in part:

- be eligible to receive a Pell grant
- be enrolled in college at least half time
- have completed high school on or after January 1, 2005
- be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen
- demonstrate completion of a rigorous high school program of study as defined for the state in which they graduated from high school

How do students apply?

Students must complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. Recent high school graduates who submit the FAFSA and are eligible to receive a Pell grant must indicate on the FAFSA that they completed a rigorous program of study while in high school. Students should bring documentation of their completion of a rigorous high school program of study to the financial aid office at the college they plan to attend. There is no separate application for the Academic Competitiveness Grant.

How does a student demonstrate completion of a rigorous high school curriculum?

It is up to the student to bring appropriate high school transcripts and records from Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs to the college to which he or she is enrolling. The college's financial aid office will make the eligibility determination.

Are students entering their second year of college potentially eligible?

Yes, as long as they completed high school on or after January 1, 2005 and have a 3.0 grade point average in their first year of college.

Can home-schooled students qualify for Academic Competitiveness grants?

Yes, as long as a parent or guardian provides documentation of completion of a rigorous course of study.

Are high school students enrolled in college courses through the Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) program eligible?

Yes. Students who take college courses while still in high school are eligible, provided they meet the eligibility criteria above. Their college courses in core subjects can be applied to the criteria in Options 1 and 3. Students who receive a grade of "B" or better in both a PSEO math (algebra II or higher) and a science course (biology, chemistry or physics) can also qualify under Option 4.

Where can students find more information and answers about the Academic Competitiveness Grant?

The financial aid office at the college where the student is enrolled is the best place for answers to other questions about the grant and other financial aid programs. Information is also available online at www.studentaid.ed.gov.

Minnesota high school graduates who graduated in 2009 must show that they have completed **ONE** of the following options entirely to meet the rigorous course of study definition used for the Academic Competitiveness Grant. (Students who graduated before 2009 should visit www.studentaid.ed.gov for information on the previous programs.)

Option 1

- 4 years of English
- 3 years of math, including algebra I and a higher-level course such as algebra II, geometry or data analysis and statistics
- 3 years of science, including 1 year each of at least 2 of the following courses: biology, chemistry and physics
- 3 years of social studies
- 1 year of a foreign language other than English

Option 2

- Requires a minimum of 2 Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses in high school and a minimum passing score on the exams for those classes. Students must score 3 or higher on AP exams and 4 or higher on IB exams.

Option 3

- 4 years of language arts
- 3 years of math, including 1 year each of geometry and 2 years of algebra, 1 of which is intermediate or advanced algebra
- 3 years of science, including 1 year each of a biological and physical science
- 3 years of social studies
- 2 years of a single foreign language

Option 4 (applies only to students graduating from high school in 2007 or later)

- Minnesota Dual Credit Program: With a passing grade of 'B' or better, high school students taking BOTH a math course (algebra II level or higher) AND a science course (biology, chemistry, or physics) under the Postsecondary Enrollment Options program (PSEO) or the Concurrent Enrollment Program, worth a total of at least 6 college credits, shall meet the rigorous program of study requirements.
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