

ARKANSAS GOVERNOR'S SCHOLARS  
PROGRAM  
RULES AND REGULATIONS



ARKANSAS

HIGHER EDUCATION  
FINANCIAL AID

DEPARTMENT OF

# Arkansas Governor's Scholars Program

## RULES AND REGULATIONS

### RULE 1 – ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

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- I. The Arkansas Department of Higher Education shall administer the Governor's Scholars Program within the policies set by the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board. All formal communications shall be addressed to or signed by the Director of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education or his/her designee. The Governor's Scholars Advisory Council shall provide advice to the Department of Higher Education regarding the administration of the program.
- II. Governor's Scholars Program Advisory Council
  - A. The Governor's Scholars Program Advisory Council shall consist of ten members appointed by the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board for staggered two-year terms and shall represent the public and private sectors of post-secondary education and secondary schools.
  - B. The Governor's Scholars Program Advisory Council shall advise the Arkansas Department of Higher Education in the determination of guidelines and regulations for the administration of this program.
  - C. The Director of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education or his/her designee shall serve as presiding officer of the Governor's Scholars Program Advisory Council and shall ensure that staff services for the Council are provided.
- III. The final responsibility for selecting scholarship recipients shall rest with the Director of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education pursuant to the provisions of Act 59 of 1983, Act 176 of 1985, Act 951 of 1989, Acts 489 and 1269 of 1997, Act 1562 of 1999, Acts 1612 and 1761 of 2001, Acts 1014, 1241 and 2197 of 2005, Acts 274 and 1046 of 2007, Act 1218 of 2009 and subsequent legislation.
- IV. When functioning under Act 59 of 1983, Act 176 of 1985, Act 951 of 1989, Acts 189 and 230 of 1995, Acts 489 and 1269 of 1997, Act 1562 of 1999, Acts 1612 and 1761 of 2001, Acts 1014, 1241 and 2197 of 2005, Acts 274 and 1046 of 2007, Act 1218 of 2009 and subsequent legislation, the Arkansas Department of Higher Education shall follow the provisions of the Administrative Procedures Act.

## RULE 2 – SCHOLARSHIP ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

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### I. Eligibility Criteria

A student must meet the following requirements to be eligible to receive the Governor's Scholars Award.

- A. The applicant must be a citizen of the United States or a permanent resident alien.
- B. The applicant or one parent must be a bona fide resident of the State of Arkansas, as defined by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, for at least the six months prior to the application deadline. (Arkansas Annotated Code 6-60-210)
- C. The applicant must be eligible for admission as a full-time undergraduate student and declare intent to enroll in an eligible public or private college or university in Arkansas. An "undergraduate student" is defined as an individual who is enrolled in a post-secondary education program that leads to or is directly creditable toward the individual's first baccalaureate degree.
- D. The applicant must meet the minimum academic standards of a minimum high school grade point average of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale, or a minimum ACT composite score of 27, or a minimum SAT composite score of 1220, or be selected as a finalist in the National Merit Scholarship or National Achievement competition conducted by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation for Governor's Scholars candidacy.
- E. The applicant must demonstrate superior academic ability and leadership qualities.
- F. For students graduating after December 31, 2009, the applicant must demonstrate proficiency in the application of knowledge and skills in reading and writing literacy and mathematics by passing end-of-course examinations or by scoring at least a nineteen (19) on the applicable subscore of the ACT.
- G. The applicant must be a high school graduate. For Governor's Scholars, not Governor's Distinguished Scholars, the applicant must graduate from an Arkansas high school.

### II. Continued Eligibility

The Governor's Scholars scholarship shall be awarded for one academic year and renewed annually for up to three additional academic years provided the scholar maintains a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0

scale and completes and passes a minimum of at least twenty-seven (27) credit hours the first academic year and thirty (30) hours each academic year thereafter.

The Governor's Distinguished Scholars (as defined in Program Definitions) scholarship shall be awarded for one academic year and renewed annually for up to three additional academic years provided the scholar maintains a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.25 on a 4.0 scale and completes a minimum of at least twenty-seven (27) credit hours the first academic year and thirty (30) hours each academic year thereafter. Those Governor's Distinguished Scholars who fall below the 3.25 GPA but do maintain a grade point average of 3.0 or above, shall be eligible to receive \$4,000 per academic year in the remaining years of the scholarship period.

An academic year consists of regular fall, winter, spring and first and second summer terms. Those recipients who complete their baccalaureate degree in less than four years may use the scholarship for postgraduate studies at any approved Arkansas higher education institution or at institutions located out of state and educating Arkansas residents in dentistry, optometry, veterinary medicine, podiatry, chiropractic, or osteopathy under agreement with the Board of Control for Southern Regional Education. In no instance, may the scholarship term exceed four academic years. The scholarship shall be terminated if the scholar fails to complete a baccalaureate degree within five years from initial college entrance.

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### RULE 3 – APPLICATION PROCESS

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#### I. Application

Application for the Governor's Scholars Program originates through the eligible student's individual initiative. The Arkansas Department of Higher Education shall provide an online Governor's Scholars application and will mail applications to individuals upon request.

The Governor's Scholars application shall be completed by the applicant. Specific instructions are included with the application. Applicants may withdraw from consideration for the program only through a letter from a parent or guardian that states the reason for withdrawing.

#### II. Submission of Applications

Any interested student planning to enroll in an eligible public or private college or university in Arkansas may apply.

#### III. Application Deadline

The Arkansas Department of Higher Education shall establish the deadline

for receipt of applications for the Governor's Scholars Program each year. The deadline date shall be clearly printed on the application for the Governor's Scholars Program and in the instructions, which accompany each application.

All applications and supporting documentation must be received by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education by the established deadline date in order to be considered for Governor's Scholars candidacy. It is the responsibility of the individual applicant to ensure that the application is received by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education by the deadline date.

#### IV. Amount of Scholarship

Those students who are awarded the Governor's Distinguished Scholarship shall receive an award, which when combined with the \$4,000 Governor's Scholars award equals the lesser of (a) ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) per year OR (b) tuition, room and board, and mandatory fees charged by the approved Arkansas public or private institution of higher education.

The Governor's Scholars amount awarded to each recipient shall be \$4,000 per year.

As authorized by Act 1269 of 1997, recipients who complete a baccalaureate degree in three years or less may receive a fourth-year award if they enroll in a postgraduate program at an approved institution. In no case, however, will the recipient receive a larger scholarship than he or she received as an undergraduate Governor's Scholar. For students who qualify for a postgraduate award by completing a bachelor's degree in three years or less and enrolling in a postgraduate program at an approved institution, the remaining term of the Governor's Scholars award will be either the same amount received in the last undergraduate year or the cost of tuition and mandatory fees for the postgraduate program at an approved institution, whichever is less. The Governor's Scholarship term will never exceed four academic years.

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### RULE 4 – SCHOLARSHIP SELECTION CRITERIA

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#### I. Selection Criteria

The Governor's Scholars selection criteria consist of value points for academic achievement and leadership including: ACT or SAT score, selection as a National Merit or National Achievement Finalist as conducted by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation, high school grade point average, rank in high school class, and leadership in school, community, and/or employment activities. Value points assigned to each selection criterion are weighted as follows:

ACT, SAT Score, National Merit Finalist, or National Achievement Finalist as conducted by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation -----	45%
Rank in Class -----	10%
Grade Point Average -----	35%
Leadership-----	10%

ACT scores will be accepted only if they are from tests taken on national test dates or are administered under special conditions approved by ACT and scored by ACT. Only test scores earned by December 31 prior to the application deadline will receive consideration.

Students who score a composite 32 or above on the ACT or a combined 1410 or above on the SAT and who achieve a 3.50 cumulative high school grade point average on a 4.00 scale in addition to the 32 or 1410 will be eligible to be designated as Governor's Distinguished Scholars. Students who are designated as National Merit Finalists or National Achievement Finalists are also eligible to be named Governor's Distinguished Scholars.

The Arkansas Department of Higher Education has the authority to alter the weight assigned to the individual criterion to more appropriately meet the needs of the state as determined by the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

High school counselors or principals shall supply high school records to include ACT or SAT examination scores. The principal or counselor will verify the accuracy of the scores. ACT or SAT examinations may be taken more than one time. The highest composite score from any one examination shall be used. Grade point averages are computed based on academic courses only, as defined in program definitions.

The eligible student receiving the highest point total from each county, but who does not meet the criteria for the Governor's Distinguished Scholarship, shall be awarded that county's Governor's Scholars Award. All students who exhibit extraordinary academic ability as defined in the program definitions shall receive the Governor's Distinguished Scholar award provided the total number of such awards does not exceed the maximum number specified in paragraph IIA below. Preference will be given to students who plan to enter college at the beginning of the academic year immediately following their last year of high school attendance.

## II. Awarding Scholarships

### A. Number of Governor's Scholars and Governor's Distinguished Scholars Awards

One Governor's Scholars award shall be made to a student in each of Arkansas' seventy-five (75) counties. Those applicants selected as county winners are selected according to their county of residence, not by the county where the winner attends high school.

If a county awardee declines the award, the Arkansas Department of Higher Education shall offer the scholarship to the applicant with the next highest point total from that county. Non-Arkansas resident students who attend high school out-of-state, but are eligible due to one parent being a bona fide resident of the state of Arkansas shall compete in the pool for the Governor's Distinguished Scholars award.

If sufficient funding is available, up to three hundred (300) new Governor's Distinguished Scholars awards may be awarded each year. If there are more than three hundred (300) applicants who meet the criteria for award of the Governor's Distinguished Scholarship, awards will be made in accordance with the selection criteria in Rule 4, Paragraph I above. In this case, if an awardee declines the scholarship, then the award may be offered to the applicant with the next highest point total who meets the Governor's Distinguished Scholar criteria.

B. Notification of Awards

Applicants chosen as Governor's Scholars and Distinguished Scholars shall receive an award packet, which includes an award notice, an acceptance form and an information sheet. The acceptance form includes the student's name, address, social security number, first institutional choice as indicated on the application, and scholarship identification number. The information sheet explains disbursement procedures and conditions of the Arkansas Governor's Scholars Award.

C. Acceptance of Awards

The acceptance of the Governor's Scholars Award is accomplished by signing and returning to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education the acceptance form included in the award packet by the date indicated on the acceptance form. The date by which the acceptance must be returned to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education will be no less than two (2) weeks from the date notices are printed. If the Arkansas Department of Higher Education does not receive the signed acceptance form by the date indicated on the acceptance form, the student will not receive the Arkansas Governor's Scholars Award. The Governor's Scholars Award shall then be offered to the applicant selected in accordance with the procedures in Paragraph II. A. above.

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**RULE 5 – SCHOLARSHIP PAYMENT POLICIES**

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I. Limitations of Payment

A. Payment of Scholarships

Funds will be disbursed to the approved institution of the Governor's

Scholars choice by state warrant. After verification of full-time enrollment, the institution shall disburse the Governor's Scholars Award to the student according to the individual institution's disbursement procedures. Disbursement of the Governor's Scholars award shall correspond with the institution's academic terms (semesters, trimesters, quarters, or equivalent time periods). In no instance may the entire amount of the award for an educational year be paid to or on behalf of the student in advance.

B. Transfer to Another Institution of Higher Education

A student who receives a Governor's Scholars Award may transfer to another eligible Arkansas institution of higher education, provided the recipient notifies the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, in writing, of the change of institution by October 1 for the fall term, and by February 1 for the winter and/or spring terms. Failure to notify the Arkansas Department of Higher Education by the specified deadlines shall result in the loss of the Governor's Scholars award for the term in question.

C. Governor's Scholars Program Withdrawal Policy

Applicants may withdraw from consideration for the program only through a letter from a parent or guardian, which states the reason for withdrawing. Withdrawal from the Governor's Scholars Program—for no longer than one year—may be allowed upon written petition by the individual Governor's Scholar to, and approval by, the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. Such petition must include the reasons for the temporary withdrawal, effective term of withdrawal, and anticipated reinstatement into the program. Failure to petition the Arkansas Department of Education for a temporary withdrawal shall result in the loss of the Governor's Scholars award for the term in question. Failure to petition the Arkansas Department of Higher Education for a temporary withdrawal for two consecutive terms shall result in permanent termination from the program. A petition for temporary withdrawal from the Governor's Scholars Program must be received by October 1 for a fall term, and by February 1 for a winter or spring term. Failure to enroll as a full-time student in an eligible Arkansas college or university after completion of a one-year temporary withdrawal will result in the permanent termination from the program.

D. Renewal of Governor's Scholars Award

Governor's Scholars must complete and pass at least twenty-seven (27) credit hours the first academic year and thirty (30) hours each academic year thereafter, or the equivalent, while maintaining a minimum 3.0 cumulative college grade point average on a 4.0 scale. Students must notify their respective registrars and pay for an official transcript to be sent directly by the institution to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education if requested to do so. Should the Governor's Scholars Award be



terminated due to failure to maintain these minimum academic standards, the award shall not be reinstated for a later term.

Governor's Distinguished Scholars must successfully complete and pass at least twenty-seven (27) credit hours the first academic year and thirty (30) hours each academic year thereafter, or the equivalent while maintaining a minimum 3.25 cumulative college grade point average on a 4.0 scale. Should the Governor's Distinguished Scholars Award be terminated due to failure to maintain these minimum academic standards, the award shall not be reinstated for a later term. Those Governor's Distinguished Scholars who maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or above, but less than 3.25 on a 4.0 scale, will receive \$4,000 per academic year, instead of the higher Governor's Distinguished Scholarship amount.

E. Cancellation of the Governor's Scholars Award and Governor's Distinguished Scholar Award

1. The Governor's Scholars Award and the Governor's Distinguished Scholar Award shall be terminated for any one of the following reasons:
  - a. Failure to maintain a minimum 3.0 cumulative college grade point average (Governor's Scholars) or a minimum 3.25 cumulative college grade point average (Governor's Distinguished Scholars) on a 4.0 scale and successfully complete and pass a minimum of at least twenty-seven (27) credit hours the first academic year and thirty (30) hours each academic year thereafter;
  - b. Failure to complete a baccalaureate degree within five years from initial college entrance; or
  - c. Failure to petition the Arkansas Department of Higher Education for a temporary withdrawal for two consecutive academic terms; or
  - d. Failure to enroll as a full time student in an eligible Arkansas college or university after a one-year temporary withdrawal.
2. Failure by the Governor's Scholar to provide written notification to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education of a change in status (such as a transfer to another eligible institution, change in address, change in name, etc.) before appropriate deadline dates shall result in cancellation of the Governor's Scholars award for the term in question.

F. Refunds and Overpayments

If a Governor's Scholar withdraws from an eligible institution, and under the refund policy of that institution the student is entitled to a refund of any tuition, fees, or other charges, the institution shall pay the refund amount in question to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education.

Act 1180 of 1999 states that students who receive scholarships from public funds may not use those funds in a financial aid package to exceed the recognized cost of attendance at the institution where the student enrolls. The institution must follow ADHE policy in repaying public funds in the amount exceeding the total cost of attendance for any student who receives public funds in a financial aid package above the cost of attendance.

G. Military Service

Governor's Scholar recipients who are members of the Arkansas National Guard or Armed Forces Reserve units who are called to active duty for reasons other than regular unit training and are unable to complete the current term shall be allowed to repeat the missed term without loss of scholarship credit. In addition, these recipients shall be placed in deferred status until six months after release from active duty, at which time they must be re-enrolled in an approved Arkansas institution.

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## RULE 6 – INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

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I. Higher Education Institution Responsibilities

A. Administrative Agreement

The chief executive officer of the eligible institution is responsible for appointing one representative from the financial aid office to act as administrator of the Arkansas Governor's Scholars Program and to receive all communications, forms, etc. This representative is responsible for Governor's Scholars disbursement, completion of all forms and rosters, verification of data, and compliance with all Governor's Scholars Program rules and regulations. The institution must comply with the following responsibilities in order to maintain continued eligibility status.

B. Disbursement Records

The institution shall maintain information on the student indicating disbursement of Governor's Scholars funds.

C. Institutional Information Sheet

The administrator is responsible for designating a certifying official

responsible for certifying full-time enrollment and a disbursing official responsible for the disbursement of Governor's Scholars Program funds.

D. Institutional Verification

The institution shall provide certification to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education each semester after registration, giving the names of the Governor's Scholars who are officially enrolled as full-time students as of the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> class day of enrollment. This information is reported on a verification roster. The person responsible for verification of full-time enrollment is the registrar or a member of the registrar's staff. The certifying official is responsible for completing the verification roster twice a year for those schools on the semester system and three times a year for those schools on the quarter system. The verification roster shall be mailed to the Financial Aid Administrator prior to registration for the semester or quarter. The completed and signed Governor's Scholars verification roster shall be returned to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education by the dates specified on the roster. The verification roster is an alphabetical listing by institution of all persons receiving a Governor's Scholars award for a given academic term. Students who are not enrolled full-time in the current term shall not receive Governor's Scholars funds for that term.

E. Deadlines for Disbursement of Funds

All funds must be disbursed within ten days of written receipt of funds. Any outstanding funds not disbursed by these dates must be returned within ten days to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education.

F. Refund Policy

It is the institution's responsibility to notify the Arkansas Department of Higher Education of the name of the person who withdrew, the date of the withdrawal, and the refund amount. This information shall be placed on the institution's verification roster before the roster is returned to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. The institution shall be responsible for the refund amount and shall pay that amount to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education.

G. Continuing Eligibility

It is the responsibility of each institution to complete annually the Continuing Eligibility roster. This roster shall be mailed to all institutions that have a Governor's Scholar enrolled. The Continuing Eligibility roster shall be returned to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education by the date specified on the roster. The person responsible for completing the Continuing Eligibility roster is the Financial Aid Administrator. The Continuing Eligibility roster is an alphabetical listing by institution of all

persons receiving a Governor's Scholars award that attended that institution for the academic year immediately preceding receipt of the Continuing Eligibility roster. The certifying official must complete the roster by providing the number of hours completed for the previous academic year and the cumulative grade point average achieved for each student listed.

H. Due Diligence

The institution shall exercise due diligence in providing complete, accurate, and timely information as requested by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education for any Governor's Scholar or former Governor's Scholar. In addition, the institution shall exercise due diligence in complying with all the rules and regulations of the Arkansas Governor's Scholars Program. The Arkansas Department of Higher Education shall periodically review the institution's records concerning the Governor's Scholars Program in an effort to exercise its due diligence requirements as a steward of State of Arkansas funds.

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## RULE 7 – GOVERNOR'S SCHOLARS RESPONSIBILITIES

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I. Governor's Scholars' Responsibility of Notification

It is the Governor's Scholars' responsibility to notify the Arkansas Department of Higher Education of any change in status within twenty-one days of occurrence. This shall include:

- Change in name
- Change in residence
- Change in institution attending
- Change in full-time status (twelve college credit hours, or its equivalent per semester for the first semester and fifteen credit hours, or its equivalent, for every semester thereafter)

Failure to notify the Arkansas Department of Higher Education of any of the above changes within twenty-one days of occurrence shall adversely affect participation in the Governor's Scholars Program.

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## RULE 8 – PROGRAM DEFINITIONS

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The following definitions are used in the Governor's Scholars Program:

*ACADEMIC ABILITY*

The intellectual standing of the student as determined by examining the Governor's Scholarship applicant's high school records, competitive examination scores, and

demonstrated leadership capabilities.

*EXTRAORDINARY ACADEMIC ABILITY*

Achievement of a composite score of 32 or above on the ACT or combined 1410 score or above on the SAT and achievement of a high school core curriculum grade point average of 3.5 or above on a 4.0 scale; or

Selection as a finalist in either the National Merit Scholarship competition or the National Achievement Scholarship competition conducted by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation.

*ACADEMIC COURSES*

All courses completed in high school in the areas of mathematics, English, science, social science and foreign languages.

*APPROVED INSTITUTION*

A public or private college or university located in Arkansas which:

- is dedicated to educational purposes;
- is accredited by an accrediting agency certified and recognized by the United States Department of Education or the division of Agency Evaluation and Institutional Accreditation, or gives satisfactory assurance that it has the potential for accreditation and is making progress which, if continued, will result in its achieving accreditation;
- does not discriminate in the admission of students on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, handicap, or national origin consistent with the provisions of applicable state and federal laws; and
- subscribes to the principles of academic freedom;
- OR is an out-of-state institution educating Arkansas residents in dentistry, optometry, veterinary medicine, podiatry, chiropractic, or osteopathy under agreement with the Board of Control for Southern Regional Education at which students enroll in a postgraduate program.
- Complies with Act 1014 of 2005 regarding providing written, signed eight (8) semester course of study required for a bachelor's degree to incoming freshmen.

*Governor's Distinguished Scholars*

Applicants who meet the definition of extraordinary academic ability stated above.

*END OF COURSE EXAMINATION*

Those examinations as defined in ACA 6-15-419(4).

*U.S. CITIZEN*

The student must be either a United States citizen or a permanent resident alien. If the student is not a United States citizen, but a permanent resident alien, the student must attach a copy of the permanent resident alien form I-151, I-551, I-94, or G-641 to the application.

*FULL-TIME STUDENT*

A student who is enrolled in at least twelve (12) semester credit hours the first semester and 15 credit hours thereafter, or the equivalent, per semester. Those students in their eighth semester on the Governor's Scholarship or Governor's Distinguished Scholarship AND are set to graduate following that eighth semester shall be exempt from the fifteen (15) credit hour requirement.

*UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT*

A student who is enrolled in a postsecondary education program which leads to or is directly creditable toward the individual's first baccalaureate degree