

2026-27

# Bright Futures Student Handbook

Chapter 2: What You Need to Know Now  
That You Are Eligible



## Chapter 2: What You Need to Know Now That You Are Eligible

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The Bright Futures Scholarship Program is governed by the following statutes and rule.

|                               |                                          |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Florida Statutes              | <a href="#">s. 1009.53 – s. 1009.538</a> |
| State Board of Education Rule | <a href="#">6A-20.028</a>                |

**These requirements are subject to change with each legislative session.**

## College Notification

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Notification of a student's award will be made available to eligible postsecondary institution(s) via a secured internet directory of eligible students when a student's award status is official.

If the eligible Florida postsecondary institution the student plans to attend is different from the one listed on the student's Florida Financial Aid Application (FFAA), the student will need to update his or her institution online. This may be accomplished by logging into the online account and accessing the [Update Profile](#) screen or by calling Customer Service at 888-827-2004.

A list of eligible postsecondary institutions is available for viewing on the Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA) [website](#).

## Postsecondary Enrollment Requirements

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- Earn a standard Florida high school diploma or its equivalent.
- Be a Florida resident and a U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen, as determined by the student's postsecondary institution.
- Enroll as a degree- or certificate-seeking student at an eligible Florida postsecondary institution after high school graduation.
- Enroll for a minimum of six non-remedial semester hours (or the equivalent in quarter or clock hours) per term in a program of study by the end of the drop/add period.

*(A student who has fewer than six total hours remaining on his/her scholarship or needs fewer than six hours to complete the first associate or baccalaureate degree, may enroll and receive funding for less than six hours.)*

- If not funded in the academic year immediately following high school graduation, apply within five years of high school graduation to have the award reinstated.

*(Please refer to 'Reinstatement Requirement' section of Chapter 3 for more information regarding the reinstatement process.)*

## Length of the Scholarship Award

Bright Futures recipients who did not receive funding immediately following high school graduation must apply within five years after high school graduation to reinstate the award. A Florida Academic Scholar (FAS) or Florida Medallion Scholar (FMS) may receive funding for up to five years from high school graduation for a maximum of 120 semester hours (or equivalent) toward the completion of a certificate or a first baccalaureate degree. This also applies to students in 3/2 programs who are classified as an undergraduate. Extended hours of funding are available to FAS and FMS students enrolled in a single program of study requiring more than 120 hours by submitting the following application, “[Extended Hours Application](#).”

Please refer to the following table for program length specifications.

| Number of <u>FAS/FMS</u><br>Hours Funding Available | Number of <u>GSC/GSV</u><br>Hours Funding Available <sup>1</sup>                                                                                                | Duration of Funding<br>Available <sup>2</sup>    |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 100% of program of study                            | 100% of program of study, up to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 72 hours (<i>AS, AAS, CCC, or PSATV's</i>)</li><li>• 60 hours (<i>ATD's</i>)</li></ul> | Up to <b>5</b> years from high school graduation |

<sup>1</sup> Beginning with the 2016-17 high school graduates, students who earn a Gold Seal CAPE (GSC) award and attain an AS or AAS degree may receive an additional 60 hours of funding toward a qualifying BS or BAS degree program.

<sup>2</sup> If annual renewal requirements were not met due to a verifiable illness or other documented emergency (as reported by the postsecondary institution), an exception of one academic year to the renewal timeframe may be granted if a course of study is not completed after five academic years.

## Award Amounts

**Florida Academic Scholars (FAS)** will receive an award to cover 100% of tuition and applicable fees listed below when attending a public postsecondary institution. Students attending a nonpublic institution will receive a comparable amount as noted in the [Private Award Chart](#). FAS students can receive an award during the summer sessions to cover tuition and applicable fees.

**Florida Medallion Scholars (FMS)** will receive an award to cover 75% of tuition and applicable fees listed below when attending a public postsecondary institution. Students attending a nonpublic institution will receive a comparable amount as noted in the [Private Award Chart](#). FMS students can receive an award during the summer sessions to cover tuition and applicable fees. Students enrolled in an associate degree program at a Florida College System institution will receive an award to cover 100% of tuition and applicable fees.

The applicable fees for both FAS and FMS recipients include the activity and service fee, health fee, athletic fee, financial aid fee, capital improvement fee, campus access/transportation fee, technology fee, and tuition differential fee.

Other award recipients will receive a fixed cost per credit hour based on award level, institution type, and credit type as outlined in the table below.

| 2026-27 Bright Futures Scholarship<br>Per Hour Award Amounts                                                                |                   |         |                        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|---------|------------------------|
|                                                                                                                             | Credit Hour Award |         | Clock<br>Hour<br>Award |
|                                                                                                                             | Semester          | Quarter |                        |
| Gold Seal Vocational Scholars (GSV) & Gold Seal CAPE Scholars (GSC)                                                         |                   |         |                        |
| Career Certificate Program (PSAV)                                                                                           | \$39              | \$26    | \$1.30                 |
| Applied Technology Diploma Program (ATD)                                                                                    | \$39              | \$26    | \$1.30                 |
| Technical Degree Education Program<br>(AS, AAS, CCC)                                                                        | \$48              | \$32    | \$1.60                 |
| Bachelors of Science (BS)*<br>Bachelors of Applied Science (BAS)*                                                           | \$48              | \$32    |                        |
| * GSC recipients who earn a qualifying A.S. or A.A.S degree may receive an award toward a qualifying B.S. or B.A.S. degree. |                   |         |                        |

A disbursed FAS student in each district is awarded an additional per credit hour award for fall and spring. FAS students who attend in the fall following high school graduation are ranked on the product of their Bright Futures weighted GPA and their best college entrance exam score.

| 2026-27 Academic Top Scholars |          |         |        |
|-------------------------------|----------|---------|--------|
|                               | Semester | Quarter | Clock  |
| Per Hour Award Amounts        | \$44     | \$29    | \$1.47 |

## Scholarship Funding

Students do not receive funds directly from the Florida Department of Education. Bright Futures awards are calculated and disbursed by the financial aid office at the eligible Florida postsecondary institution where the student attends. Funds are disbursed after the end of the drop/add period each term.

The institution determines if study abroad is covered by Bright Futures. The study must be approved by the institution and be a part of the student's program of study.

## Scholarship Restrictions/Limitations

- All hours are paid at the undergraduate level.
- No remedial course work is funded.
- Gold Seal awards (GSC/GSV) may only be used at postsecondary institutions that offer an applied technology diploma, technical degree education program (associate in science-A.S. or associate in applied science-A.A.S.), or a career certificate program. GSC recipients who earn a qualifying A.S. or A.A.S. degree may be funded for a qualifying B.S. or B.A.S. bachelor's degree.

## Summer Funding

Bright Futures awards are available for Florida Academic Scholars and Florida Medallion Scholars for the summer 2026 and summer 2027 terms.

## University of Florida Innovation Academy

Bright Futures awards are available for both Florida Academic Scholars and Florida Medallion Scholars enrolled in the spring/summer term at the University of Florida. This cohort of students is eligible to receive Bright Futures scholarship funding for the fall 2026 term for off-campus or online coursework, rather than on-campus coursework.

## Dropping or Withdrawing from Course(s) after Drop/Add

A student must reimburse the postsecondary institution for the cost of course(s) dropped or withdrawn after the initial drop/add period. The student will not be eligible to renew his/her Bright Futures award for any subsequent academic year until repayment or a satisfactory arrangement to reimburse the institution is made. After repayment, those hours are returned to the student's hours remaining for funding purposes.

Due to verifiable illness or emergency, a student may make an appeal to the home postsecondary institution for hours dropped or withdrawn after the last day of the drop/add period.

## Same-term Funding at Two Different Postsecondary Institutions

If a student plans to take coursework at a postsecondary institution other than the student's home postsecondary institution (where the student is enrolled as degree- or certificate-seeking), he/she must notify the financial aid office at his/her home institution. The home postsecondary institution is the one from which Bright Futures funds are disbursed and grades and hours reported for that term. Both the home postsecondary institution and the institution where the student is enrolled as a transient student must be eligible Bright Futures institutions. Transient courses must be approved by the home institution to receive funding.

## Use of the Scholarship for a Partial Academic Year

A student may choose to enroll and receive Bright Futures funding for only one term during the academic year. Renewal criteria includes the completion of a minimum of 12 semester hours (or the equivalent) per term funded for a full-time student or a prorated number of credit hours for a part-time student and the minimum institutional cumulative GPA requirement (see renewal requirements in Chapter 3).

## Transferring the Scholarship between Institutions

Awarded students may receive Bright Futures funding only at eligible Florida postsecondary institutions per term. A student may log in to access the online system or call OSFA Customer Service at 888-827-2004 to transfer the scholarship to another eligible Florida postsecondary institution. Transferring from one institution to another could affect a student's award. To receive timely disbursements, OSFA must be notified of institution changes by August 15 for Term 1 (fall), December 15 for Term 2 (spring), and February 15 for Term 3.

## Graduate School Funding

An FAS or FMS scholarship recipient, who graduates with a baccalaureate degree in seven or fewer semesters, or in 105 semester hours or fewer, may receive funding for one semester of graduate study, not to exceed 15 credit hours paid at the undergraduate rate. Graduate school funding must be used within the applicable scholarship length.

## Prohibition on the Awarding of Scholarships, Grants, and Other Aid

Per section 1009.8963, Florida Statutes, a student who promotes a domestic terrorist organization or a foreign terrorist organization whose designation as such has been published in the Florida Administrative Register in accordance with section 943.03102, Florida Statutes, during any term of enrollment, **may not be awarded any institutional or state grants, financial aid, scholarships, or tuition assistance** under this chapter. This language affects all state scholarship and grant programs under the purview of the Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA).

## Website Addresses

|                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Financial Aid Recipient History        | <a href="https://www.FloridaStudentFinancialAidsg.org">https://www.FloridaStudentFinancialAidsg.org</a>                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Eligible Postsecondary Institutions    | <a href="https://www.FloridaStudentFinancialAidsg.org/ReportPage.aspx?RData=RName=PSI%20Eligible%20List%26RFolderName=SSFAD/Administration">https://www.FloridaStudentFinancialAidsg.org/ReportPage.aspx?RData=RName=PSI Eligible List%26RFolderName=SSFAD/Administration</a> |
| Extended Hours Application             | <a href="https://www.FloridaStudentFinancialAidsg.org/pdf/BF_EXTHRS_Application.pdf">https://www.FloridaStudentFinancialAidsg.org/pdf/BF_EXTHRS_Application.pdf</a>                                                                                                           |
| Private Award Chart                    | <a href="https://www.FloridaStudentFinancialAidsg.org/PDF/BFPrivateAwards.pdf">https://www.FloridaStudentFinancialAidsg.org/PDF/BFPrivateAwards.pdf</a>                                                                                                                       |
| Secure Upload of Documentation to OSFA | <a href="https://fldoe.sharefile.com/r-r8992dcd99948c7a">https://fldoe.sharefile.com/r-r8992dcd99948c7a</a>                                                                                                                                                                   |

## OSFA Mailing Address

Florida Department of Education  
Office of Student Financial Assistance  
Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program  
325 West Gaines Street  
Suite 1344  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400

