IDAPA 08 – STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Office of the State Board of Education

08.01.13 – Rules Governing the Opportunity Scholarship Program

Who does this rule apply to?
This rule applies to eligible students applying for the Idaho Opportunity Scholarship.

What is the purpose of this rule?
The purpose of this rule is to set out the application process, selection of scholarship recipient process, the scholarship awarding process, continuing eligibility requirements for students, and the responsibilities of eligible Idaho postsecondary education institutions participating in the program.

What is the legal authority for the agency to promulgate this rule?
This rule implements the following statutes passed by the Idaho Legislature:

State Board of Education:
- Section 33-105, Idaho Code – Rules – Executive Department

Scholarships:
- Section 33-4303, Idaho Code – Idaho Opportunity Scholarship
- Section 33-4304, Idaho Code – Scholarship Program Reporting Requirements

Who do I contact for more information on this rule?

Idaho State Board of Education
8:00 am – 5:00 pm (Mountain Time)
650 W. State Street
P.O. Box 83720
Boise, Idaho 83720-0037
Phone: (208) 334-2270
Fax: (208) 334-2632
Email: rules@edu.idaho.gov
https://boardofed.idaho.gov/

This rule chapter will be reviewed in compliance with Section 67-5292, Idaho Code, and in accordance with the 8-year rule review schedule linked here.

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000. LEGAL AUTHORITY.
Sections 33-105 and 33-4303, Idaho Code. (7-1-24)

001. SCOPE.
These rules constitute the requirements for the Opportunity Scholarship Program. (4-6-23)

002. -- 009. (RESERVED)

010. DEFINITIONS.

01. Adult Learner. An individual who: (4-6-23)

a. Is not currently enrolled in a postsecondary institution accredited by a body recognized by the State Board of Education; (4-6-23)

b. Has not attended more than two (2) courses at a postsecondary institution at any time during the twenty-four (24) month period immediately prior to application for the Opportunity Scholarship; and (4-6-23)

c. Has earned twenty-four (24) or more transferable credits from a postsecondary institution accredited by a body recognized by the State Board of Education. (4-6-23)

02. Grade Point Average (GPA). The average grade earned by a student, figured by dividing the grade points earned by the number of credits attempted. (4-6-23)

03. Graduation Plan. A plan developed by the postsecondary student in consultation with the postsecondary institution that identifies the certificate or degree the student is pursuing, the course and credit requirements necessary for earning the certificate or degree, the application of previously earned credits and credits granted through prior learning assessments, the estimated number of terms remaining to complete the certificate or degree and the proposed courses to be taken during each term. (4-6-23)

011. -- 100. (RESERVED)

101. ELIGIBILITY.

01. Academic Eligibility. To be eligible for an opportunity scholarship, an applicant must meet minimum academic eligibility criteria, as follows: (4-6-23)

a. A student who has not yet graduated from an eligible secondary school or its equivalent in the state of Idaho must have an unweighted minimum cumulative grade point of average of two point seven (2.7) or better on a scale of four point zero (4.0) to be eligible to apply for an opportunity scholarship. Cumulative grade point averages of more than one (1) decimal place shall be rounded to one (1) place. Home schooled students must provide a transcript of subjects taught and grades received signed by the parent or guardian of the student; or (4-6-23)

b. A student who has obtained a general equivalency diploma must have taken the ACT assessment and received a minimum composite score of twenty (20) or better, or the equivalent SAT assessment and received a one thousand ten (1,010) or better, to be academically eligible to apply for an opportunity scholarship; or (4-6-23)

c. A student currently enrolled in an eligible Idaho postsecondary educational institution must have a minimum cumulative grade point average of two point seven (2.7) or better on a scale of four point zero (4.0) at such institution in order to be academically eligible to apply for an opportunity scholarship. Cumulative grade point averages of more than one (1) decimal place shall be rounded to one (1) place. (4-6-23)

d. An Adult Learner must have a minimum cumulative grade point average of two point five (2.5) or higher on a scale of four point zero (4.0). Cumulative grade point averages of more than one (1) decimal place shall be rounded to one (1) decimal place. (4-6-23)

02. Financial Eligibility. The financial need of an applicant for an opportunity scholarship will be based upon the Student Aid Index, as identified by the free application for federal student aid (FAFSA) Submission Summary. (7-1-25)

03. Additional Eligibility Requirements. (4-6-23)

a. A student must not be in default on a student educational loan, or owe a repayment on a federal grant, and must be in good financial standing with the opportunity scholarship program. (4-6-23)

b. If a student has attempted or completed more than one hundred and twenty (120) postsecondary credits, then such student must identify a major, the required number of credits necessary for graduation in such major, and shall submit an academic transcript that contains all courses taken and all postsecondary credit received to the Board office. A student shall not be eligible for an opportunity scholarship if: (4-6-23)

i. The student has completed more than one hundred fifty percent (150%) of the courses and academic credit necessary to graduate in such major; or (4-6-23)

ii. Upon review of the student's academic transcript(s), the student cannot complete a degree/ certificate in the major identified within two (2) semesters based on normal academic course load unless a determination by the executive director or designee has been made that there are extenuating circumstances and the student has a plan approved by the executive director or designee outlining the courses that will be taken and the completion date of the degree or certificate. (4-6-23)

102. -- 201. (RESERVED)

202. APPLICATION PROCESS.

01. Applications. An eligible student must complete and submit the opportunity scholarship program application to the Board electronically on or before the deadline set by the executive director each year. Adult Learner applications will be processed and awarded on a monthly basis up to the application deadline. An applicant without electronic capabilities may request a waiver of this requirement and, if granted, submit an application on the form established by the Board through the United States Postal Service that must be postmarked not later than the applicable application deadline. The FAFSA must be completed on or prior to the application deadline unless federal delays prohibit an applicant from completing the FAFSA prior to the deadline. (7-1-24)

02. Announcement of Award. Announcement of the award of initial scholarships will be made no later than June 1 of each year, with awards to be effective at the beginning of the first full term of the next fiscal year. Announcements must clearly state the award is part of the state's scholarship program and is funded through state appropriated funds. Additional award announcements may be made after this date based on the availability of funds. (7-1-25)

03. Communication with State Officials. Applicants must respond by the date specified to any communication from officials of the opportunity scholarship program. Failure to respond within the time period specified will result in cancellation of the scholarship unless extenuating circumstances are involved and approved by the executive director or designee. (4-6-23)

203. -- 299. (RESERVED)

300. SELECTION OF SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS.

01. Selection Process. Scholarship awards will be based on the availability of scholarship program funds. Opportunity scholarships will be awarded to applicants, based on ranking and priority, in accordance with the following criteria: (4-6-23)

a. Eligible students shall be selected based on ranking criteria that assigns seventy percent (70%) to financial eligibility, and thirty percent (30%) to academic eligibility. In the event that this weighted score results in a tie, an eligible student who submitted an application to the Board earlier in time will be assigned a higher rank. (4-6-23)

b. Notwithstanding Subsection 300.01.a. of these rules, the priority for the selection of recipients of opportunity scholarship awards shall be to scholarship recipients who received an opportunity scholarship award during the previous fiscal year, and have met all of the continuing eligibility requirements provided in these rules.

(4-6-23)

02. Monetary Value of the Opportunity Scholarship. (4-6-23)

a. The monetary value of the opportunity scholarship award to a student shall be based on the educational costs for attending an eligible Idaho postsecondary educational institution, less the following: (4-6-23)

i. The amount of the assigned student responsibility, established by the Board annually; (4-6-23)

ii. The amount of federal grant aid, as identified by the FAFSA Submission Summary if known at the time of award determination; (7-1-24)

iii. The amount of other financial aid awarded the student, from private or other sources that is known at the time of award determination. (4-6-23)

iv. The eligible maximum award amount for Adult Learners enrolled in less than twenty-four (24) credit hours along with the requirements outlined in Subsection 302.01, or its equivalent in an academic year will be prorated as follows: (7-1-25)

(1) Enrolled in six (6) to eight (8) credits or its equivalent per term - fifty percent (50%) of the maximum; (4-6-23)

(2) Enrolled in nine (9) to eleven (11) credits or its equivalent per term - seventy-five percent (75%) of the maximum; and (4-6-23)

(3) Enrolled in twelve (12) or more credits or its equivalent per term - one hundred percent (100%) of the maximum. (4-6-23)

b. The amount of an opportunity scholarship award to an individual student shall not exceed the actual cost of tuition and fees at the institution the student attends or will attend, or if the student attends or will attend an Idaho private postsecondary educational institution, the average tuition at Idaho's public four (4) year postsecondary educational institutions. (4-6-23)

c. The Board may determine monetary value without the FAFSA Submission Summary if the delay is due only to federal delay and may modify any final award or payment upon receipt of the FAFSA Submission Summary. (7-1-24)

301. OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP AWARD.

01. Payment. Payment of opportunity scholarship awards will be made in the name of the recipient and will be sent to a designated official at the eligible Idaho postsecondary educational institution in which the recipient is enrolled. The official must transmit the payment to the recipient within a reasonable time following receipt of the payment. (4-6-23)

02. Duration. Scholarships will be awarded on an annual basis and payments will correspond to academic terms, semesters, quarters, or equivalent units. In no instance will the entire amount of a scholarship be paid in advance to, or on behalf of, a scholarship recipient. The scholarship may cover up to four (4) educational years, or eight (8) semesters or equivalent for attendance at an eligible Idaho postsecondary educational institution. Awards are contingent on annual appropriations by the legislature and continued eligibility of the student. (4-6-23)

03. Eligibility. If a student receives an opportunity scholarship payment and it is later determined that the student did not meet all of the Opportunity Scholarship Program eligibility requirements, then the student is considered in overpayment status, and must return program funds in accordance with the eligible Idaho postsecondary educational institution's refund policy. (4-6-23)

302. CONTINUING ELIGIBILITY.

01. Requirements. For an eligible student that has previously received an opportunity scholarship award to renew such award for the next year, the eligible student shall maintain progress towards on-time degree completion so that such student is on schedule to obtain an associate degree within two (2) years or a baccalaureate degree within four (4) years from the time such student initially received an opportunity scholarship award. All students may use the summer term to meet the annual credit accumulation requirements. (7-1-25)

02. Renewal Application. In order to be considered for a continuing scholarship for each succeeding year, a scholarship recipient must complete a renewal application by March 1. (7-1-25)

03. Academic Progress. To remain eligible for renewal of an opportunity scholarship, the scholarship recipient must have maintained a minimum cumulative grade point average of two point seven (2.7) on a scale of four point zero (4.0), and must be maintaining satisfactory academic progress toward their identified postsecondary credential as determined by the institution they are enrolled in. Students receiving an Opportunity Scholarship award as an Adult Learner must make satisfactory progress on their graduation plan established with the eligible institution at the time of admission. (4-6-23)

04. Eligibility Following Interruption of Continuous Enrollment. A scholarship recipient whose continuous enrollment is interrupted for more than four (4) months but less than two (2) years for any reason but who intends to re-enroll in an eligible Idaho postsecondary educational institution must file a letter of intent to withdraw no later than thirty (30) days prior to the first day of the academic term of the discontinued attendance to the Office of the State Board of Education. Failure to do so may result in forfeiture of the scholarship. The Board's Executive Director or designee will review each request for interruption and notify the individual of approval or denial of the request. In addition, the individual must file a statement with the Board declaring intent to re-enroll as a full-time undergraduate student in an academic or career technical program in an eligible Idaho postsecondary educational institution for the succeeding academic year no later than thirty (30) days prior to the first day of the academic term in which the individual intends to re-enroll within two (2) years of the approval of the request to withdraw. Failure to do so will result in forfeiture of the scholarship unless an extension has been granted. An extension of interruption of continuous enrollment period may be granted for eligible students due to military service in the United States armed forces, medical circumstances, or other circumstances approved by the executive director. All requests for extension must be made thirty (30) days prior to the start of the succeeding academic year. (4-6-23)

303. -- 399. (RESERVED)

400. RESPONSIBILITIES OF ELIGIBLE IDAHO POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

01. Statements of Continuing Eligibility. An eligible Idaho postsecondary educational institution participating in this Opportunity Scholarship Program must submit statements of continuing student eligibility to the Board by the 30th day after the end of the spring semester or equivalent term. Such statements must include verification that the scholarship recipient is still enrolled, is meeting the continued eligibility requirements as described in Section 302.01, and has not exceeded the award eligibility terms. (7-1-25)

02. Other Requirements. An eligible Idaho postsecondary educational institution must: (4-6-23)

a. Be eligible to participate in Federal Title IV financial aid programs, and must supply documentation to the Board verifying this eligibility, and prompt notification regarding any changes in this status; (4-6-23)

b. Have the necessary administrative computing capability to administer the Opportunity Scholarship Program on its campus, and electronically report student data records to the Board; (4-6-23)

c. Provide data on student enrollment and federal, state, and private financial aid for students to the Board within set timelines, and (4-6-23)

d. Agree to permit periodic Opportunity Scholarship Program audits to verify compliance with Idaho law and these rules related to the program. (4-6-23)

03. Adult Learner Evaluation. Part of the adult learner evaluation process is that an eligible institution will work with the student to develop a graduation plan for the program they are entering that includes estimated completion dates. (7-1-25)

401. -- 500. (RESERVED)

501. APPEALS.
An opportunity scholarship applicant or recipient adversely affected by a decision made under provisions of these rules may file a written appeal detailing the basis of the appeal within thirty (30) days following notice of the decision. Decisions based on specific requirements established in Idaho Code or these rules may not be appealed. The appeal must be submitted to the executive director of the Board. The office of the board shall acknowledge receipt of the appeal within seven (7) days. The executive director of the Board may or may not agree to review the action, or may appoint a subcommittee of three (3) persons to hear the appeal, including at least one (1) financial aid administrator at an eligible postsecondary educational institution in Idaho. (4-6-23)

01. Board Decision. The decision of the Board is final, binding, and ends all administrative remedies, unless otherwise specifically provided by the Board. The Board will inform the opportunity scholarship applicant or recipient in writing of the decision of the Board. (4-6-23)

502. -- 999. (RESERVED)