

## Chapter 1

# Eligibility for TEACH Grants

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In addition to meeting the general federal student aid eligibility requirements covered in *Volume 1* of the *Federal Student Aid Handbook*, a student who wishes to receive a TEACH Grant must meet other requirements that are specific to the TEACH Grant Program. These include being enrolled in a TEACH Grant-eligible program at a school that participates in the TEACH Grant Program, meeting certain minimum grade point average or standardized test score requirements, receiving TEACH Grant counseling, and signing a TEACH Grant Agreement to Serve or Repay. We describe these requirements below and in *Chapter 2*.

## Enrollment in a TEACH Grant-eligible program at a TEACH Grant-eligible institution

To receive a TEACH Grant, a student must be enrolled in a TEACH Grant-eligible program at a TEACH Grant-eligible institution.

A TEACH Grant-eligible program is an eligible program (as described in *Volume 2, Chapter 2*) that is designed to prepare a student to teach in a high-need field (see below) and that leads to a bachelor's or master's degree or is a postbaccalaureate program (see below). A two-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward a bachelor's degree is considered a program that leads to a bachelor's degree.

Schools that participate in the TEACH Grant Program determine which programs to designate as TEACH Grant-eligible programs. An otherwise eligible student who received a TEACH Grant for enrollment in a program previously designated by the school as TEACH Grant-eligible may receive additional TEACH Grants to complete that program, even if that program is no longer considered a TEACH Grant-eligible program.

A TEACH Grant-eligible institution is an eligible institution (as described in *Volume 2*) that—

1. Provides a high-quality teacher preparation program at the bachelor's or master's degree level that meets certain requirements;
2. Provides a two-year program that is acceptable for full credit in a bachelor's degree teacher preparation program offered by an institution described in paragraph 1 of this definition, or that is acceptable for full credit in a bachelor's degree program in a high-need field at an institution described in paragraph 3 of this definition;
3. Offers a bachelor's degree that, in combination with other training or experience, prepares a student to teach in a high-need field and has entered into an agreement with an institution described in paragraphs 1 or 4 of this definition to provide courses necessary for its students to begin a career in teaching; or
4. Provides a post-baccalaureate program of study.

For more detail on the requirements for a school to be a TEACH Grant-eligible institution, refer to the regulatory definition cited below.

## High-need field

To satisfy the TEACH Grant Service obligation, a TEACH Grant recipient must teach in a high-need field. For purposes of the TEACH Grant program, high-need fields are:

- Bilingual education and English language acquisition;
- Foreign language;
- Mathematics;
- Reading specialist;
- Science (including, but not limited to, computer science); and
- Special education.

In addition to the fields listed above, high-need fields also include any other field listed as high-need in the Department's annual [Teacher Shortage Area Nationwide Listing](#) (also known as the "Nationwide List").

The Nationwide List includes fields that have been documented as high-need by the federal government, a state government, or a local educational agency. These high-need fields may be subject areas, geographic areas (for example, a particular county or counties within a state), or specific grade levels (for instance, elementary education) where it has been determined that there is a need for teachers. The Nationwide List is updated annually. For teaching in a high-need field listed in the Nationwide List to satisfy a TEACH Grant recipient's service obligation, that field must be listed in the Nationwide List for the state in which the grant recipient teaches:

- At the time the recipient begins teaching in that field, even if that field is later removed from the Nationwide List; or
- At the time the grant recipient signed the TEACH Grant Agreement to Serve or Repay or received a TEACH Grant, even if that field is no longer designated as high-need when the recipient begins teaching.

## Post-baccalaureate program

Except as noted below, a post-baccalaureate program is a program of instruction for students who have completed a bachelor's degree that:

- Does not lead to a graduate degree;
- Is treated as an undergraduate program for all Title IV purposes; and
- Consists of courses required by a state in order for a student to receive a professional certification or license that is a requirement for employment as an elementary or secondary school teacher in that state.

**Note:** A program does not qualify as a post-baccalaureate program if it is offered by a TEACH Grant-eligible institution offering a bachelor's degree in education.

## Definitions

### [34 CFR 686.2\(d\):](#)

- [high-need field](#)
- [post-baccalaureate program](#)
- [TEACH Grant-eligible institution](#)
- [TEACH Grant-eligible program](#)

## Teaching in a high-need field listed in the Nationwide List

### [34 CFR 686.12\(d\)](#)

## Academic eligibility requirements (grade point average or test score)

In general, students who wish to receive TEACH Grants must meet an academic standard. Specifically, they must either have a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.25 on a 4.0 scale (or the numeric equivalent; see below), or must have scored above the 75th percentile on at least one of the batteries from a nationally-normed standardized undergraduate, graduate, or post-baccalaureate admissions test (not a placement test). Note, however, that these requirements do not apply to certain students who are current or former teachers or retirees (see below).

If the GPA standard is used, for an undergraduate student in the first year of a TEACH Grant-eligible program eligibility is based on the student's final cumulative high school GPA upon graduation or the cumulative GPA for all classes the student has taken at the postsecondary school through the most recently completed payment period. After the first year, eligibility is based on the student's cumulative GPA through the most recently completed payment period.

For a graduate student, eligibility is based on the student's cumulative undergraduate GPA for the first payment period, and thereafter the student's cumulative graduate GPA through the most recently completed payment period.

For an undergraduate student in the first year of a program, you must confirm the student's high school GPA using documentation obtained directly from the cognizant authority, or documentation from the cognizant authority that is provided by the student. A cognizant authority includes, but is not limited to, a public or private secondary school, a local or state education agency (or other state agency) or, in the case of a home-schooled student, the student's parent or guardian. If the student provides the document but you have reason to question its accuracy, you must obtain documentation directly from the cognizant authority.

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## Academic standard

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[34 CFR 686.11\(a\)](#)

## Transfer students

If the GPA standard is used for a transfer student, you must determine the student's TEACH Grant eligibility for the first payment period in accordance with your academic policy, as described below.

If your school does not incorporate grades from coursework that it accepts upon transfer into a student's GPA at your school, then for the courses accepted upon transfer you must calculate the student's GPA for the first payment period using the grades the student earned in coursework you accept from any prior school. For all subsequent payment periods, you must apply your academic policy and not incorporate grades from coursework accepted upon transfer into the student's GPA at your school.

If your school incorporates grades from coursework it accepts upon transfer into a student's GPA at your school, you must use the grades assigned to the accepted coursework as the student's cumulative GPA to determine eligibility for the first payment period and all subsequent payment periods in accordance with your academic policy.

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## GPA for transfer students

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[34 CFR 686.11\(c\)](#)

## Numeric equivalent to traditional GPA

Schools that do not use a standard 4.0 GPA scale for a program must have an equivalency policy with a numeric scale for purposes of determining TEACH Grant eligibility. The policy must be in writing and must be made available to students upon request. The policy must clearly differentiate student performance to support a determination that a student has performed at a level commensurate with at least a 3.25 GPA on a 4.0 scale.

A grading policy that includes only "pass/fail," "satisfactory/unsatisfactory," or some other non-numeric assessment qualifies as a numeric equivalent to a traditional GPA only if it meets both of the requirements described below.

First, the school must demonstrate that the "pass" or "satisfactory" standard has the numeric equivalent of at least a 3.25

GPA on a 4.0 scale, or that a student's performance on tests and assignments yielded such a numeric equivalent.

Second, the school's policy is consistent with any other standards the school has developed for academic and other Title IV program purposes (e.g., graduate school applications, scholarship eligibility, and insurance certifications), to the extent that such standards distinguish between levels of student academic performance.

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## Numeric equivalent

[34 CFR 686.2\(d\)](#)

## Current or former teachers or retirees

Certain students are not required to meet the minimum GPA or standardized test score standards described above. Those requirements do not apply to a student who—

- Is a current teacher or retiree (see below) applying for a TEACH Grant to obtain a master's degree, or who is or was a teacher who is pursuing certification through a high-quality alternative certification route; and
- Is enrolled in a TEACH Grant-eligible program at a TEACH Grant-eligible institution during the period required for the completion of a master's degree.

For this purpose, a "retiree" is an individual who has decided to change their occupation for any reason and who has expertise, as determined by your school, in a high-need field.

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## Current or former teachers or retirees

[34 CFR 686.11\(b\)](#)

[34 CFR 686.2\(d\)](#) ("retiree" defined)