

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION

May 24, 2006

Dual Enrollment Questions

The Department has received numerous questions about the Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG) program and how it relates to students enrolled in dual enrollment programs. In an effort to clarify student eligibility for these grants, the Department provides the following information to interested parties.

Academic Competitiveness Grant Eligibility for Dually Enrolled Students

Question: In establishing the ACG program, Congress restricted eligibility for students to receive a first year ACG grant to a student who “has not been previously enrolled in a program of undergraduate education”. See §401A(c)(3)(A)(ii) of the Higher Education Act. (HEA) Does a student who participated in a dual enrollment program, where the student took college level classes while still enrolled in high school, meet the condition of “has not been previously enrolled in a program of undergraduate education” and therefore qualify as eligible for an ACG?

Response: This restriction does not apply where a student enrolled in one or more college level undergraduate courses while still in high school, as long as the student was not admitted into a formal program of study at the postsecondary education institution. Under the Federal student aid programs, a formal program of study is defined as one that leads to a degree, certificate or other postsecondary education credential. The term used by the Department and by most institutional financial aid administrators to identify the status of this type of student is as a "regular student" of the postsecondary education institution.

In general, we would not consider a student who attends a postsecondary education institution to complete his or her high school diploma requirements to have been enrolled as a “regular student” at the postsecondary institution. Most dual enrollment students are not admitted as “regular students” enrolled in a program of study to obtain a degree, certificate or other postsecondary education credential. Those students are not disqualified from eligibility for Academic Competitiveness Grants simply by virtue of their participation in dual enrollment programs.

Eligible for First-Year ACG	Not Eligible for First-Year ACG
<p>A student who, while in high school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• took one or more undergraduate courses BUT• was not formally admitted as a “regular student” by the postsecondary education institution. <p>A “regular student” is one who “is enrolled or accepted for enrollment at an institution for the purpose of obtaining a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential offered by that institution.” 34 CFR §600.2.</p>	<p>A student who, while in high school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• had been formally admitted as a “regular student” by the postsecondary education institution. <p>A “regular student” is one who “is enrolled or accepted for enrollment at an institution for the purpose of obtaining a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential offered by that institution.” 34 CFR §600.2.</p>

Dual Enrollment Programs as Eligible Rigorous Secondary School Programs of Study

Question: Under the authorizing legislation for the ACG program, a state may submit a secondary school program of study for recognition by the Secretary as a “rigorous secondary school program of study.” Can a State submit a program of dual enrollment for consideration by the Secretary?

Response: The Secretary will consider for recognition as a rigorous secondary school program of study a submission by a state of a program that consists, in whole or in part, of courses that are part of a dual enrollment program where a student still enrolled in high school takes college courses. However, the program must be one that is substantial in terms of both the number of courses in the program and their rigor. Also, consistent with the response to the previous question, a dual enrollment program where the students were actually admitted as “regular students” to the postsecondary education institution would not qualify.