



Frequently Asked Questions: Early Graduation Achievement Scholarship and Early Graduation Military Service Award

What is this scholarship?

New legislation passed under Minnesota Statutes, sections 120B.08 and 120B.09, allow an early graduate to request an Early Graduation Achievement Scholarship or Early Graduation Military Service Award. These are financial awards provided by the state to eligible students. During the 2011-2012 school year:

- Students who graduate one semester, two quarters, or two trimesters early are eligible for \$2,500.
- Students who graduate two semesters, four quarters, or three trimesters early are eligible for \$5,000.
- Students who graduate three or more semesters, six or more quarters, or five or more trimesters early are eligible for \$7,500.

The Achievement Scholarship must be used for postsecondary instruction. The Military Service Award is unrestricted.

Who is an early graduate?

An early graduate is defined as a public school student who graduates before his or her peers beginning in ninth grade.

Who is not an early graduate?

Some students that have chosen to accelerate their learning after beginning the ninth grade may not be eligible. For example, a student who participates in the summer term or after-school program at an ALC or other state-approved learning year program would need to graduate at least three quarters early to be eligible for a scholarship or military award because the summer term or after-school program would count as one quarter of enrollment. These students have accelerated their opportunity to graduate by participating in these optional programs. However, students who have chosen to accelerate their learning by accessing coursework outside Minnesota public education may still be eligible. For example, a student who elected to pay for coursework for which the enrolling school awarded credit but for which no state aid was generated may still be eligible.

Who is eligible to apply for the scholarship?

Only Minnesota public school students who graduate early are eligible for either an Achievement Scholarship or a Military Service Award. A student must be enrolled in a Minnesota public school as a public school student at the time of graduation. The student must have met all of the state and local graduation requirements, including GRAD assessments, to be considered a Minnesota public school graduate. The transcript provided to MDE must include the date the student first enrolled in 9th grade whether in a Minnesota public school or elsewhere to show that the student graduated prior to his or her peers. Peers are defined as students enrolled as 9th graders during the same school year that the applicant was first enrolled in 9th grade.

Can a student be enrolled in PSEO and still be eligible for the scholarship?

In order to be eligible for the scholarship, the student must have completed all requirements to graduate and no longer accessing public education. Once the student has graduated, they can no longer access PSEO. There may be circumstances when a student has taken PSEO courses prior to graduating early and this alone would not prohibit them from being eligible for the scholarship.

How does a student apply for the scholarship?

Applications are available on our website ([link here](#)) or through the high school counselor. Applications cannot be submitted until after the student has completed all high school coursework and assessments. After the application is submitted, it will be reviewed and the student will be notified of the award, if eligible.

How will a student know if they have been awarded a scholarship?

After a student submits their completed application, it will be reviewed. If the student is eligible, a Certificate of Eligibility will be mailed to the student. The Certificate of Eligibility will include the amount of the scholarship and instructions for how to request the scholarship dollars. If it is determined that the student is not eligible, a notification will also be sent to the student with an explanation of why the student was ineligible.

What is the timeline for processing applications and the checks being distributed?

Currently, payment is made directly to the student once they have provided the required documentation, specifically, proof of enrollment in a postsecondary institution, including a tuition bill for the scholarship program or documentation of their completion of military training for the military service award. Students will need to set up a State of Minnesota vendor account to be paid. Instructions to set up this account will be provided to the student with their notice of award.

When does the student receive the scholarship dollars once they have submitted the documentation of enrollment in a postsecondary institution or completion of military training?

The student would receive payment after documentation is submitted, they have created their account in our vendor system, and we process the payment. Allow 2-4 weeks for processing.

Can the scholarship dollars be paid to the parent of the eligible student?

No, the statute specifies that we must pay the student. The required vendor account must be under the student's name because it will be validated against the certificate of eligibility.

Are students limited to certain colleges or universities in order to receive the scholarship?

To be eligible for the Early Graduation Achievement Scholarship the student must enroll in a postsecondary institution that is accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. [Click here to view a searchable database of recognized schools from the U.S. Department of Education.](http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/Search.aspx) (<http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/Search.aspx>)

What if a student wants to use the scholarship funds to attend a 100% online college or university?

As long as it is accredited and recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as noted above, the student would be eligible to receive the scholarship.

Is there a deadline for students to use the scholarship money? What if they want to wait a year before enrolling in a college or university?

Currently there is no deadline for when they would use it.

Can local requirements be waived to accommodate early graduation?

The student must be a legitimate high school graduate, having met all local and state graduation requirements to be eligible.

How does a district handle state tests if a student graduates early?

A student must have passed all required state assessments to be considered a graduate. Depending on how early a student wants to graduate, pre-planning of when to take required assessments must be made in conjunction with the high school. There are grade level requirements as to when a student can first take the GRAD assessments.

Are students eligible to apply if they have taken advantage of acceleration public school programs (Learning Year Programs / ALCs)?

For purposes of this scholarship, LYP and ALC are one and the same. If a student participates in the optional portion of a learning year (e.g., ALC's) school year, that counts as a quarter of high school enrollment. Therefore, a student who participates in the summer prior to his/her senior year will need to graduate at least three quarters early to qualify for either the scholarship or the award.

Links to related Minnesota Statutes

[Click here to view Minnesota Statutes 124D.08 Early Graduation Achievement Scholarship Program](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=120B.08) (https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=120B.08)

[Click here to view Minnesota Statutes 124D.09 Early Graduation Military Service Award](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=120B.09) (https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=120B.09)

[Click here to view Minnesota Statutes 124D.07 Early Graduation](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=120B.07) (https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=120B.07)

Still have questions?

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