

SOUTH DAKOTA OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP

The South Dakota Legislature authorized the Regents Scholarship Program in 2003 to allow South Dakota's most academically accomplished high school graduates to receive an affordable education at any university, college, or technical school in South Dakota that is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. In 2004, the Legislature renamed the scholarship the South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship and authorized funding from the state of South Dakota's Education Enhancement Trust Fund, beginning with high school graduating classes in 2004.

Scholarship Amounts

Starting Fall 2015*, the South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship provides \$6,500 over four years to a qualifying student who attends an eligible higher education institution in South Dakota. Recipients may participate in the South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship program for the equivalent of four academic years (eight consecutive fall and spring terms), or until attaining a baccalaureate degree. During each academic year, one-half of the annual scholarship award will be distributed at the beginning of the fall semester and the other half distributed at the beginning of the spring semester. ***NOTE:** *Students that entered the program prior to July 1, 2015 and are already receiving the scholarship will remain under the previous \$5,000 funding structure.*

Requirements:

The South Dakota Legislature established five requirements that all South Dakota high school graduates must meet in order to establish their initial eligibility in the Opportunity Scholarship program. These requirements specify that a requirement must:

1. Be a resident of South Dakota at time of high school graduation.
2. Have an ACT composite score of 24 or higher before the beginning of post-secondary education. If using a SAT score, the sum of the verbal and mathematics scores on the SAT must be at least 1090.
3. Complete high school course requirements with no final grade below a "C" (2.0 on a 4.0 scale) and a cumulative high school GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 (grade of "B") prior to graduation (Note: One unit of high school credit equals 1 year of instruction).
4. Effective for those students entering into post-secondary education for the first time on or after August 2013, the curriculum requirements specified in section 3 above are not required for any student who has received a composite score on the ACT of at least 28 and meets the ACT college readiness benchmarks scores equaling or exceeding 18 for English, 22 for Reading, 22 for Math, and 23 for science.
5. Attend a university, college, or technical school accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools and that provides instruction from a campus located in South Dakota.
6. Enter into the program within 5 years of high school graduation, or within 1 year of the student's release from active duty military service (if that release is within 5 years of the date of the student's high school graduation). Students seeking to transfer from a regionally accredited university, college, or technical school located outside of South Dakota may do so within two years following high school graduation and be eligible to receive partial award.

High School Course Requirements (To meet the curriculum requirements for the Opportunity Scholarship, all recipients must receive a "C" or higher on all coursework including):

- **4 units of English:** Courses with major emphasis upon grammar, composition, or literary analysis may be included to meet this requirement.
- **3 units of Social Studies:** Courses such as history, economics, sociology, geography, U.S. government, and similar courses.
- **4 units of Algebra or Higher Mathematics:** Courses such as algebra, geometry, trigonometry, or other advanced mathematics, as well as accelerated or honors mathematics [algebra] at the 8th grade, shall be

accepted. NOT INCLUDED are arithmetic, business, or consumer, or general mathematics or similar courses.

- **4 units of Science, including 3 units of approved laboratory science:** Courses in biology, chemistry, or physics in which at least one regular laboratory is scheduled each week. Qualifying physical science or earth science courses (with lab) shall be on a case-by-case basis.
- **1 unit of Fine Arts:** Courses in art, theatre, or music, as well as approved extracurricular activity.
- **2 units of either of the following or a combination of the two:**
 - **Approved Career and Technical Education Courses**
 - **Modern or Classical Language:** Includes American Sign Language; all units must be in the same language.
- **½ unit of Personal Finance or Economics**
- **½ unit of Physical Education**
- **½ unit of Health or Health Integration** (Students entering high school after July 2013)

Additional information on the South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship may be found at <https://sdos.sdbor.edu/>.