

Tennessee HOPE Scholarship Retention Standards & Appeal Process

Students must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress AND Continuous Enrollment as outlined below to retain eligibility for Tennessee HOPE Scholarship.

Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards

Frequency of Review

Eligibility is reviewed at the end of the semester that the recipient completes 24 attempted hours (i.e., 24, 48, 72, 96, 120 benchmark hours). The review only includes all hours attempted after high school graduation.

GPA Standard – Tennessee Code Annotated & 49-4-911

The cumulative grade point average (GPA) must be as follows: (REMINDER: This calculation of the HOPE GPA is mandated by the state of Tennessee and may be different from your Lee GPA).

- 24 & 48 attempted hours - 2.75 cum GPA
- 72 & beyond attempted hours - 3.00 cum GPA OR
- 2.75-2.99 cum GPA and a 3.0 term GPA – this is called the ‘Provisional Track’ and you must be enrolled full-time in subsequent terms; your eligibility is reviewed at the end of each semester regardless of benchmark.

Maximum Usage Standard

A student may receive the HOPE Scholarship until the first of the following terminating events:

- Earning baccalaureate degree
- Five (5) years have passed from the date of initial enrollment at any postsecondary institution

Continuous Enrollment Standards

Students are encouraged to visit the Financial Aid Office prior to any change in enrollment status.

- At census date (defined as the 12th day of registration for Fall and Spring semester as published in the university catalog), the enrollment level (full-time, ¾-time, half-time, etc.) will be determined.
- Any recipient who is enrolled full-time (at census) and later **drops to part-time** must appeal for consideration of continued eligibility. The appeal must be submitted to the Financial Aid Office and will be reviewed by the Institutional Review Panel (IRP). Students are encouraged to appeal before or at the time of dropping below full-time. Appeals must be for documented personal hardship or medical reasons.
- Students who **withdraw** from the university must appeal for consideration of continued eligibility. The appeal must be submitted to the Financial Aid Office and will be reviewed by the Institutional Review Panel (IRP). Students are encouraged to appeal at the time of withdrawal but must appeal before eligibility can be determined for future semesters. Appeals must be for documented personal hardship or medical reasons.
- **Leave of Absence** – Students seeking a leave of absence must appeal for consideration of continued eligibility. The appeal must be submitted to the Financial Aid Office and will be reviewed by the Institutional Review Panel (IRP). Students are encouraged to appeal prior to taking a leave of absence (semester off); but must appeal before eligibility can be determined for future semesters. Allowable reasons may include, but are not limited to, illness of recipient, illness or death of immediate family member, extreme financial hardship of the student or student’s immediate family, to fulfill a religious commitment of all students of that faith, or other extraordinary circumstance.

GPA Review & Continuous Enrollment Appeal Process

GPA Standard Review Request

As per Tennessee Code Annotated Rule 1640-01-19-.28 the Institutional Review Panel (IRP) does not have the authority to decide on an appeal due to a low HOPE GPA. Regardless of the reason, a low HOPE GPA shall not be approved as set forth by the Tennessee legislature.

One-time regain option

Students with a low HOPE GPA can request review of eligibility after reaching the next benchmark (i.e., 24, 48, 72, 96, 120 benchmark hours).

One-time repeat course option

The student may solely use the one-time repeat provision separately from the regain provision. In such case, the student may elect to replace the grade of a class with the higher grade received from the repeated class.

Change of course grade

Students must notify the Financial Aid Office within 30 days of the change. The IRP will ensure the recalculated cumulative HOPE GPA meets eligibility criteria.

Continuous Enrollment Appeal

Students who are not eligible for TN HOPE due to not meeting the Continuous enrollment standard may submit an appeal to the Financial Aid Office – Institutional Review Panel (IRP). Acceptable reasons might include, but are not limited to:

- illness of recipient,
- illness or death of immediate family member,
- extreme financial hardship of the student or student' immediate family,
- to fulfill a religious commitment of all students of that faith,
- other extraordinary circumstance.

Students wishing to appeal for any reason (withdraw, drop below full-time or leave of absence) must submit an appeal to the Financial Aid Office. Students must provide a written explanation along with supporting documentation.

The Institutional Review Panel (IRP) will review appeals on a weekly basis (when needed) and send written notification of the decision. If approved, then eligibility is re-instated.

If the appeal is denied, the student may appeal to TSAC within 45 calendar days from the date on the IRP decision letter. For more details, visit TSAC's website at:

<https://www.tn.gov/content/tn/collegepays/money-for-college/tn-education-lottery-programs/tels-program-and-tn-promis-scholarship-appeals-and -exeptions.html>