

Student Eligibility Requirements

1. Students must have participated in one of the five programs in the NJ GEAR UP State Project in 7th grade and remain an active participant through 12th grade (as determined by the program directors) to be eligible for the NJ GEAR UP Scholarship.
2. Students must attend NJ, Title IV eligible, degree-granting institutions and be enrolled in an associate, bachelor's degree program. Students who enroll in an out-of-state institution at any time forfeit future eligibility for the NJ GEAR UP Scholarship.
3. All eligible graduating high school seniors must read and sign the Scholarship Eligibility and Responsibility form to show that the rules of the scholarship have been explained by the GEAR UP program staff and have been understood by the student and parent/guardian.
4. First-year students must submit a completed request for high school transcript form with their scholarship form to receive funding. Returning students must submit an unofficial transcript.
5. The NJ GEAR UP Scholarship may be renewed for a maximum of 8 semesters for 4-year degree programs or 4 semesters for 2-year degree programs.
6. The NJ GEAR UP Scholarship is only available for fall and spring semesters. No summer payments will be made.
7. Part-time NJ GEAR UP funding is available to students only after an initial full-time payment has been awarded.
8. Students must file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) in accordance with NJ FAFSA requirements to be considered for the NJ GEAR UP Scholarship. The deadline is June 1 for students who have received a Tuition Aid Grant (TAG) in the previous year. For all other applicants, the FAFSA deadline is October 1 for fall and spring terms or March 1 for spring term only.
9. Students must apply for the NJ GEAR UP Scholarship and enroll in an eligible institution no later than the second fall semester following high school graduation to remain eligible for the NJ GEAR UP Scholarship.
10. Students transferring from one NJ GEAR UP eligible institution to another NJ GEAR UP eligible institution remain eligible for the NJ GEAR UP funding.
11. NJ GEAR UP scholarships are contingent upon federal funding.
12. In order to maintain NJ GEAR UP scholarship eligibility after the initial year of enrollment, students must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress in accordance with EOF standards at the institutions they attend.
13. Students who do not enroll for two consecutive semesters without requesting a leave of absence will permanently lose eligibility for the NJ GEAR UP scholarship.

Leave of Absence/Deferment - Students may request a one-time leave of absence for a maximum of two consecutive semesters for study abroad programs, documented medical reasons, and extreme family hardship. Requests for a leave of absence/deferment are handled on a case-by-case basis. The request must be submitted to CHE, in writing, prior to the period for which the leave of absence/deferment is required. Supporting documentation from the institution must be included.
14. Students must be United States citizens or eligible non-citizens and must be residents of the State of New Jersey pursuant to guidelines established by HESAA.
15. CHE will address other issues on a case-by-case basis. Student appeals regarding the loss of NJ GEAR UP funding for any reason shall be resolved by CHE.

Updated 04/21/10
Director of Financial Aid Services, NJHESAA
Director of NJ GEAR UP, CHE

Administrative Requirements

1. The New Jersey Commission on Higher Education (CHE) has been designated as the lead agency for the New Jersey GEAR UP State Project and as such is the primary contact for inquiries, requests and communications from or on behalf of students, families and institutions relating to the award, disbursement and administration of the GEAR UP Scholarship.
2. The New Jersey Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA) has primary responsibility for informing students, parents, and guidance counselors about financial aid and is responsible for GEAR UP scholarship award administration.
3. Notification of award eligibility is made through GEAR UP student eligibility notices and institutional GEAR UP award rosters.
4. GEAR UP award rosters are forwarded by CHE for institutional certification of student enrollment to primary contacts designated by the institution. Enrollment certification is to be completed by the primary contact.
5. Each semester, GEAR UP funds are disbursed directly to institutions in the form of individual checks from GEAR UP's NJBEST account following approval from CHE.
6. Institutions must reconcile all debts owed to CHE before receiving additional funds.
7. GEAR UP student eligibility notices are sent to students identified as eligible by the GEAR UP Program Director. Copies of this notification will be forwarded to EOF and Financial Aid offices when a "first choice" college has been provided to CHE.
8. **GEAR UP funds can be used to replace EFC.** Thus, an overaward only occurs if a student is packaged over the Cost of Attendance. Excess funds are to be returned to CHE if the student is overawarded.
9. The maximum NJ GEAR UP scholarship is equal to the annual maximum Pell Grant.
10. Awards for part-time students should be reduced by no more than the percentage reduction in their enrollment status.
11. New Jersey GEAR UP scholarships are contingent upon federal funding. In the event that funds are restricted, GEAR UP scholarships will be awarded based on need. At such time that this is necessary, CHE will provide guidance based on GEAR UP regulations.
12. CHE will address other issues on a case-by-case basis. Student appeals regarding the loss of GEAR UP funding for any reason shall be resolved by CHE.

Updated 12/22/09
Director of Financial Aid Services, NJHESAA
Director of NJ GEAR UP, CHE
