

## Section 8

**Policy:** Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG) and the National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent Grant (National SMART) [668.3](#) (Academic Year), [691.6](#) (Academic Year Progression), [691.81](#) (Fiscal Control and fund accounting), [691.2\(d\)](#), [691.62](#) (Annual Establishment of ACG/SMART Grant Maximum Scheduled Awards) [691.15](#), [691.16](#), [691.17](#) (Eligibility Requirements)

**Purpose:** This section covers the administration of the ACG and National SMART Grants.

**Scope:** **Specifically Address:**  
ACG and National SMART Grants Eligibility Requirements  
Calculating ACG and National SMART Grants  
Fiscal Control and fund accounting

**Responsibilities:**  
(Identify individuals and/or offices responsible for developing and updating this section)

FAA

**Definitions:**  
(Identify acronyms or definitions that will be used in this section)

See Appendix A

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**Resources available to assist in the development of a manual:**

- Complete Fiscal Assessment  
<http://ifap.ed.gov/qahome/qaassessments/fiscalmanagement.html>
- Complete Activity 2 in the Student Eligibility Assessment  
<http://ifap.ed.gov/qadocs/StudentEligibility/Activity2SE.doc>
- Review the [2009-10 FSA Handbook](#) (Volumes 1 and 3) for guidance related to the topics in this section

**Part 8.1****ACG and National SMART Eligibility Requirements**

This section is required  
 Regulation 691.15, 691.16,  
691.17

The following chart can assist you. Additional guidance for ACG/National SMART selection and continuing eligibility can be accessed by selecting the link:

<http://ifap.ed.gov/qadocs/StudentEligibility/Activity2SE.doc>

**Note: The College does not participate in the National SMART program.**

ACG Eligibility Requirements	National SMART Eligibility Requirements
<input type="checkbox"/> Federal Pell Recipient <input type="checkbox"/> Rigorous H.S. Program <input type="checkbox"/> 1st or 2nd year student <input type="checkbox"/> 3.0 cum. GPA end of first year	<input type="checkbox"/> Federal Pell Recipient <input type="checkbox"/> Eligible Major <input type="checkbox"/> 3rd , 4 <sup>th</sup> or 5 <sup>th</sup> year student <input type="checkbox"/> 3.0 cum. GPA end of each payment period

**Part 8.2****Calculating ACG and National SMART Grants**

This section is required  
 Regulation 668.3, 691.62,  
691.2(d); 691.6

Schools are required to package ACG/National SMART awards for eligible students. To assist in developing the awarding process, consider the following:

- Calculating ACG& National SMART Grants
- Academic year progression, general Requirements
- Academic year progression, basic principles
- Academic year progression, transfer students
- Alternative methods for determining weeks of instructional time
- Calculating a payment for a payment period
- Summer terms & other crossover payment periods

### Recalculations

When determining enrollment status for ACGs and National SMART Grants, you must use the same recalculation policy that you use for Pell for term-based programs. If you set a recalculation (census) date for enrollment status, it must be the same date as for Pell. For example, if your school sets a census date of 10 days into the term and a student drops below full-time on that date, then the student is not eligible for an ACG or National SMART Grant for that term.

## ACG/National SMART Checklist

- This form is helpful to ensure all requirements for ACG/National SMART are being followed at your school. This worksheet is available by clicking on this link:

<http://ifap.ed.gov/qadocs/StudentEligibility/Activity2SE.doc>

### ACG and National SMART

#### GENERAL REQUIREMENTS [691.15](#)

- School only awards ACG and National SMART to students who are U.S. citizens or eligible non-citizens, receiving Federal Pell Grant disbursement in the same award year, and enrolled at least half-time

#### PAYMENT PERIOD AND GRADE LEVEL PROGRESSION [691.63](#)

- School calculates payment period as defined in [691.63](#)
- Student may not progress to the next grade level (year) during a payment period. The student's payment for the payment period is from ACG or National SMART Grant scheduled award of the year being completed and is calculated based on the student's credit or clock hours for the payment period, and weeks of instructional time in the payment period

#### CORRESPONDENCE STUDY [691.66](#)

- School calculates the ACG or National SMART Grant for a payment period for a student in a program of study offered by correspondence courses without terms, but not including any residential component as outlined in [691.66](#)

#### GPA [691.15](#)

- School ensures students have a GPA of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, or numeric equivalent (see below for specific requirements for each program)
- School's grading scale clearly differentiates student performance to determine the equivalent of at least a 3.0 GPA
- If school uses alternatives to standard numeric grading, the school has developed and applied an academically defensible equivalency policy
- School's equivalency policy is in writing, available to students upon request, and consistent with the school's other standards (both academic and Title IV)

### ACG

#### GPA specific requirements for ACG [691.15](#)

- School ensures that student maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher (on a 4.0 scale) or the equivalent (at the end of the first year)
- For a student who transfers hours of at least 1 academic year but less than 2, the school calculates GPA using grades for courses accepted toward student's ACG-eligible program
- For a student who transfers hours comprising less than 1 academic year, the school uses grades for all coursework accepted into an ACG eligible program and grades for coursework earned at prior school

### National SMART

#### GPA specific requirements for National SMART [691.15](#)

- School ensures that students maintain a cumulative GPA through the most recently completed payment period of 3.0 or higher (on a 4.0 scale) or the equivalent
- School ensures that for the third year, students must complete their second year of the eligible program in order to receive third year disbursement
- School ensures that for the fourth year, students must complete their third year of the eligible program in order to receive fourth year disbursement
- School ensures that for the fifth year, students must complete their fourth year of the eligible program in order to receive fifth year disbursement (eligible program must be five years in length)

School uses one of two methods for transfer students

- Transfer Grades not incorporated
- Transfer grades incorporated

**ACG****Successful Completion of a Rigorous Program [691.15](#)**

- School ensures that ACG students complete rigorous program and receive high school diploma (or certification of secondary education for home-schooled students) – For year 1 ACG completion was after January 1, 2006; for year 2 ACG completion was after January 1, 2005
- School documents a student’s successful completion of a rigorous program and receipt of high school diploma (or certification of completing home-schooling) from a cognizant authority)
- School attempts to document student’s successful completion of rigorous secondary school program of student for any student who self-certifies on FAFSA or otherwise self-identifies to school

**Recognition of Rigorous Program [691.16](#). The school can recognize any of the following programs as rigorous:**

- Programs that are advanced or honors secondary programs established by States and in existence for the 2004-2005 or later school years, as identified by the Secretary
- Any secondary school program in which a student successfully completes at a minimum the following courses: four years of English; three years of mathematics, including Algebra I and a higher-level class such as algebra II, geometry, or data analysis and statistics; three years of science, including one year of at least two of the following courses: biology, chemistry and physics; three years of social studies; one year of language other than English
- A secondary school program identified by a State-level partnership that is recognized by the State Scholars Initiative of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE)
- Any secondary school program for a student who completes at least two courses from an International Baccalaureate Diploma Program sponsored by the International Baccalaureate Organization, Geneva, Switzerland, and receives a score of “4” or higher on the examinations for at least two of those courses.
- Any secondary school program for a student who completes at least two Advanced Placement courses and receives a score of “3” or higher on the College Board’s Advanced Placement Program Exams for at least two of those courses.
- Any rigorous programs submitted by States and recognized by the Secretary as rigorous after January 1, 2005, but before July 1, 2009

**National SMART****Eligible Major [691.17](#)**

- School ensures that the student is enrolled in an eligible major

**Documentation of Eligible Majors [691.15](#); [DCL GEN-07-09](#)**

- School documents a student’s eligible major as well as progress in the eligible program and major (school must have written documentation that student is progressing in their major)
- School maintains documentation of a student’s declared major or in the case of a student’s intent to declare a major, the school receives written declaration of intent provided by student timely enough for school to determine that it still correctly reflects student’s stated intent (Note: if the student is enrolled in a qualifying liberal arts curriculum as a major, there is no requirement to declare a major)
- School ensures that National SMART students enroll in courses necessary both to complete degree program and fulfill eligible major requirements

**ACG**  
Eligible Program – as defined in [668.8](#)

- Program leads to an associate’s degree or a bachelor’s degree, is an undergraduate program at least one academic year in length leading to a certificate, is at least a two-academic year program acceptable for full credit toward a bachelor’s degree, or is a graduate degree program that includes at least three years of undergraduate education. The institution must be a degree granting institution

**Duration of student eligibility [691.6](#)**

- Student only eligible to receive up to one ACG Scheduled Award while enrolled as a first-year student and one ACG Scheduled Award while enrolled as a second-year student
- Student may not receive more than two ACG Scheduled Awards during the student’s eligible undergraduate education in all eligible programs

**National SMART**  
Eligible Program – as defined in [668.8](#)

- Program leads to a bachelor’s degree in an eligible major or is a graduate degree program in an eligible major that includes at least three years of undergraduate education. The institution must be a degree granting institution

If the program is a five-year program:

- Requires at least five full undergraduate years, as certified by an appropriate institutional official in accordance with the institution’s policies and procedures and documented in the institution’s records
- Contains not less than 24 semester hours, 36 quarter credits, or 900 clock hours in each year of the program, including the fifth year
- Is not a program that is a qualifying liberal arts curriculum identified as an eligible major under [691.17\(b\)](#)

**Duration of student eligibility [691.6](#)**

- Student only eligible to receive up to one National SMART Scheduled Award while enrolled as a third-year student, one National SMART Scheduled Award while enrolled as a fourth-year student, and, in the case of a National SMART Grant-eligible program with five full years of coursework, one National SMART Grant Scheduled Award while enrolled as a fifth-year student
- Student may not receive more than three National SMART Scheduled Awards during the student’s eligible undergraduate education in all eligible programs

ADMISSION OFFICE PROCEDURES FOR RECORDING  
ACADEMIC COMPETITIVE GRANT (ACG)  
PRO-ACTIVE METHOD

1. Upon receipt of a high school transcript, look at the **Graduation Year**. If the graduation date is **2006 or after** the student may be entitled to an ACG Grant.
2. Use the following criteria, established by the Federal Government, to determine if a student may be eligible for (ACG):
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Graduated with an Advanced or Honor diploma.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Completed the courses required under the State Scholars Initiative requirements.

Courses	Years
English (4 years required) English 1, English 2, English 3, English 4	4
Mathematics (3 years required including Algebra 1 and a higher level math class such as Geometry, Algebra 2, Geometry or Data Analysis and Statistics.)	3
Science (3 years required including at least one year each of two of the following: Biology, Chemistry, Physics.)	3
Social Studies (3 years required) Chosen from U.S. History, World History, World Geography, Economics, Government.	3
Languages (1 year required of a language other than English)	1

\_\_\_\_\_ Completed with passing scores at least two Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses and test scores.

IF ELIGIBLE, GO TO STEP 3

3. Update Admission Record Maintenance file.
  - a. Under HS/GED - The "H" for high school diploma should be entered.
  - b. Verify the **Graduation Year - 2006 or after.**
  - c. Type in the appropriate code for [Diploma].

ACAD	Academic Endorsement
ADV	Advanced
ABIP	Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate
HON	Honors
SSI	State Scholars Initiative

4. Scan high school transcript because financial aid will need a copy for verification purposes.
5. Request that Computer Services print report of all potential recipients and submit to FA Office.
6. FA Office is responsible for awarding ACG to eligible students.

#### RE-ACTIVE METHOD

1. Student completes Free Aid for Federal Student (FAFSA) and indicates that they are eligible for ACG; FA Office reviews the student's admissions record for ACG eligibility.
2. If the student's admission record does not already indicate ACG eligibility, the student may complete an Academic Competitiveness Grant Form provided by the FA Office.

3. The form is submitted to the FA Office and forwarded to the Admissions Office. The Admissions Office then completes the transcript evaluation. See Steps 2 -5 Proactive Method.

Second year recipients are evaluated by the FA Office, checking the GPA requirement prior to approving the award.

1. Student must still be in ACG eligible program of study
2. Student must complete at least 24 semester credit hours to progress to the 2<sup>nd</sup> year ACG
3. If a transfer student, the transfer credit hours are counted in determining academic year progression for the ACG eligible program of study.

**Part 8.3**

**Fiscal Control and Funding Accounting**

This section is required.  
Regulation [691.81](#)

Procedures that outline and follow provisions for maintaining general fiscal records as outlined in [34 CFR 691.81](#) and [34 CFR 668.24\(b\)](#).

**Please ensure that you have developed Fiscal procedures for this section. The Fiscal procedures that should be included are outlined in Section 1.5 of this guide. You may want to include a reference to that section of the guide to show that your Fiscal Control and funding accounting procedures are in place for ACG and National SMART.**

See Section 1.5.