

# OKLAHOMA HIGHER LEARNING ACCESS PROGRAM

## Information for Financial Aid Officers

**General Description of Program:** The Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program (OHLAP) provides scholarships equivalent to all or part of tuition expenses for students who complete the program's requirements while in high school. The scholarships may be used at accredited public and private colleges and for certain programs/courses offered at public career technology centers. Students enrolled in the eighth, ninth and tenth grade, whose family income does not exceed \$50,000, may enroll in the program. Once enrolled, the student must complete a specified 17-unit high school core curriculum, achieve a minimum 2.5 cumulative GPA in both the required core and for all high school coursework, attend school regularly, and refrain from substance abuse and criminal/delinquent acts.

### Who is eligible for an OHLAP scholarship?

- Only students certified by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) as having completed the high school requirements for OHLAP are eligible for the OHLAP scholarship. High school officials are responsible for documenting to the OSRHE that students have completed the program. Eligibility is ultimately determined by the OSRHE.
- Institutions must verify the eligibility of an OHLAP student with the OSRHE. No scholarship payments will be made to the institution by the OSRHE unless the student is officially on record as completing the program.

### College Requirements for OHLAP students

- Students must begin postsecondary education within three years of graduating from high school. Once a student begins postsecondary education, he/she is eligible for benefits for a maximum of five consecutive years or a bachelor degree, whichever comes first. The student's five-year expiration date is noted on the eligibility list. If the student receives his/her bachelor degree prior to the expiration date, their eligibility ends upon completion of the degree.
- OHLAP students must meet the regular admission requirements for the institution they plan to attend. OHLAP students admitted to an institution by special admission standards are not eligible for the OHLAP scholarship their first semester of enrollment. Completion of the OHLAP requirements does not guarantee admission to an institution of higher education.
- OHLAP students are strongly encouraged to apply for financial aid at the institution in which they enroll to assist with other costs they will incur.
- The OHLAP scholarship will NOT be available for the first summer college semester immediately following high school graduation. Since official OHLAP eligibility is not determined until high school graduation, we do not have time to process scholarships for the first summer semester. The first scholarships will be available for the fall semester. However, once the student is officially verified in our system, he/she may use the OHLAP scholarship in summer semesters of later years.
- OHLAP students must maintain good academic standing in college to remain eligible for benefits. "Good academic standing" at public colleges and universities is defined by the

OSRHE retention standards policy (OSRHE Admission Policy). In short, the policy requires students to achieve at least a 1.7 GPA during his/her first 30 semester credit hours and maintain a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA after 30 semester credit hours are completed. Students attending a private institution or public career technology center shall maintain good academic standing according to the standards of the institution or school in which they are enrolled.

- OHLAP awards will not cover courses taken in excess of the requirements for completion of a baccalaureate (undergraduate) degree program.
- OHLAP can be used for correspondence courses and for courses taken through Continuing Education. However, all students should go through the financial aid and/or bursar's office for payment processing.
- Legislation passed during the 1997 legislative session authorizes the State Regents to set a maximum limit on the number of courses/credit hours to which the OHLAP scholarship will apply. [At this time, a limit has not been set.]

#### **How will the college/university know that a student is eligible to receive OHLAP?**

- **It is the responsibility of the student to notify the institution's financial aid office that he/she is eligible for the OHLAP scholarship.** Students will receive an award letter from the State Regents' office after their final paperwork has been evaluated and approved.
- The OHLAP office will also make available a list of eligible students on the Onenet server. The first list is available July 1 following the student's high school graduation. This list is updated periodically and notification is sent through the OASFAA listserv. (For more information regarding the listserv, please contact the OHLAP office.) Due to the smaller number of students at the career technology centers and the proprietary schools, please contact the OHLAP office for confirmation of students' eligibility either by phone or by email at ohlapinfo@osrhe.edu.

#### **How is the scholarship amount determined?**

- The OHLAP scholarship is not a pre-set amount; the scholarship amount depends upon the type of institution attended and the number of hours in which the student enrolls. The OHLAP award is calculated on the resident tuition cost only; it does not include the cost of other required fees, room and board expenses, books, or other costs related to college attendance.
- **Oklahoma Public Colleges and Universities:** The OHLAP award will equal the resident tuition at Oklahoma public colleges and universities. It does not include the cost of other required fees such as student activity fees, facility fees, library fees, special or remedial course fees, parking fees, etc. The final amount awarded to each student will vary depending on the tuition rates in effect at the time, the type of institution attended, and the number of credit hours in which the student is enrolled.

Examples of a semester award at public institutions:

Type of <u>Public Institution</u>	2003-04 <u>Tuition Rate</u> <sup>(1)</sup>		Hours <u>Enrolled</u> <sup>(2)</sup>		OHLAP Semester <u>Award</u>
Comprehensive Univ.	\$82.00 per credit hr.	X	15	=	\$1,230.00
Regional University	\$65.00 per credit hr.	X	15	=	\$975.00
Two-Year College	\$40.00 per credit hr.	X	15	=	\$600.00
Technical Branch (2 yr.)	\$55.00 per credit hr.	X	15	=	\$825.00

<sup>(1)</sup>Some comprehensive and regional universities have both lower and upper division tuition rates; a sample lower division rate is shown. Tuition rates are subject to change and may be higher or lower at different institutions.

<sup>(2)</sup>Enrollment in 12-15 semester credit hours per fall or spring semester is considered full-time enrollment. While students are not required to take a certain number of credit hours each semester, students will need to take 12-15 credit hours per semester to complete a bachelor's degree within the five-year time period allowed.

- Oklahoma Independent/Private Colleges and Universities: The OHLAP award will cover a portion of the tuition at accredited independent/private colleges or universities in Oklahoma. The amount awarded to a student attending an independent/private institution will be equivalent to the amount the student would have received if the student had attended a comparable public institution. Comparability is determined by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

Examples of a semester award at independent/private institutions:

Type of <u>Independent Institution</u>	Independent Tuition <u>Rate</u> <sup>1</sup>	OHLAP Award <u>Rate</u> <sup>2</sup>		Hours <u>Enrolled</u> <sup>3</sup>		OHLAP Semester <u>Award</u>
Comp. Univ.	\$300 / hr.	\$85.60 / hr.	X	15	=	\$1,284.00
Regional Univ.	\$300 / hr.	\$65.00/ hr.	X	15	=	\$975.00

<sup>1</sup>The tuition rates shown here are for example only. Actual tuition rates may be higher or lower, and will vary by institution.

<sup>2</sup>At comprehensive and regional universities, the OHLAP award is the average of the upper and lower division rates at public institutions.

<sup>3</sup>Enrollment in 12-15 semester credit hours per fall or spring semester is considered full-time enrollment. While students are not required to take a certain number of credit hours each semester, students will need to take 12-15 credit hours per semester to complete a bachelor's degree within the five-year time period allowed.

- Public Career Technology Programs: The OHLAP award will pay a portion of the tuition cost for certain public technology programs or courses offered through “**cooperative agreements**” between public technology centers and Oklahoma public colleges or universities. [The award is limited to an amount equivalent to tuition at a public two-year college.] A “cooperative agreement” means certain courses or programs may be taken at the public technology centers that qualify for college credit from a public two-year college.

However, not all programs or courses at public technology centers qualify for college credit. The student should check with the public technology center he/she plans to attend.

### **How is OHLAP applied?**

- OHLAP is a cash scholarship. It is calculated based on the amount of tuition, however it does not have to be applied to tuition if the student has a tuition-only scholarship or waiver. OHLAP can be used with other forms of financial aid.
- Primary need-based grants, such as Pell and the Oklahoma Tuition Aid Grant (OTAG), will be applied toward the student's cost of attendance before the OHLAP award is applied.
- **Overaward Policy.** An OHLAP student may not receive more financial aid than his/her cost of attending an Oklahoma postsecondary education program, as determined by the institution in which the student is enrolled. The cost of attendance should be consistent with regulations for federal Title IV student financial aid programs. If necessary, a student's OHLAP award will be reduced so that the student's total financial aid equals the cost of attendance.

### **Availability of Scholarship Funds**

- There is no limit on the number of OHLAP awards other than the amount of funds available in the OHLAP Trust Fund and the number of eligible students. However, if at any time there are not enough funds to pay all eligible students, the State Regents are directed by law to use the following priorities to award scholarships:
  1. OHLAP students who have previously received the scholarship shall receive the award first; \* and
  2. OHLAP students eligible to receive the award for the first time shall receive the award second. \*

\* If funds are not sufficient for all eligible students within the priority category, distribution of the available funds will be based on current financial need.

### **How will OHLAP scholarship funds be paid to institutions?**

- At the completion of the drop/add period each semester (OSRHE Policy II-2-33), institutions must submit a claim to the OSRHE which contains the following information on each eligible OHLAP student:
  1. Name
  2. Social security number
  3. Number of credit hours in which enrolled
  4. OHLAP tuition rate applied (this may be two separate calculations for public colleges with lower and upper general enrollment fee rates)
  5. Total OHLAP scholarship amount claimed for student (#3 X #4, unless there is an overaward situation)
- Upon receipt of the claim from the institution, the OSRHE will verify the claim and make payment to the institution.

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