2019-20 Program Guidelines Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program (TASSP)

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Student Financial Aid Programs
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

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TEXAS ARMED SERVICES SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Program Guidelines are intended to support institutions by highlighting requirements that appear in the Texas Education Code (TEC) and Title 19 of the Texas Administrative Code (TAC). When administering this program, institutions should always refer to the applicable statutes and rules. The information provided in this document is to be used solely as a resource and does not supersede the statute and/or rules for this program.

PROGRAM AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE (19 TAC, SECTION 22.163)

The Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program (TASSP) is authorized by TEC, Chapter 61, Subchapter A, Section 61.9771. Rules establishing procedures to administer the subchapter can be found in Title 19 of the TAC, Chapter 22, Subchapter I. The purpose of the TASSP is to encourage students to become members of the Texas Army National Guard, Texas Air National Guard, Texas State Guard, United States Coast Guard or United States Merchant Marine, or to become commissioned officers in any branch of the armed services of the United States.

ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS (19 TAC, SECTION 22.164)

Public institutions of higher education, as defined in TEC, Section 61.003, and private or independent institutions of higher education, as defined in TEC, Section 61.003(15), can participate.

ELIGIBILITY

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS (19 TAC, SECTION 22.166 & 22.167)

This year the governor, lieutenant governor, state senator or state representative have until **July 31, 2019** to appoint initial TASSP award candidates.

The governor and the lieutenant governor may each appoint two students and two alternates. Each state senator and state representative may appoint one student and one alternate.

TO RECEIVE AN APPOINTMENT, A STUDENT MUST MEET TWO OF THE FOUR CRITERIA:

- ✓ Be on track to graduate or graduated high school with the Distinguished Achievement Program (DAP), or the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program
- ✓ Have a high school grade point average GPA of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale
- ✓ Achieved a college readiness score on the SAT (1070) or ACT (23)
- ✓ Be ranked in the top one-third of the prospective high school graduating class

TO RECEIVE AN INITIAL AWARD, A STUDENT MUST:

- ✓ Be registered with Selective Service, or be exempt
- ✓ Be enrolled and in good standing in a Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC), or another undergraduate officer commissioning program, as certified by the institution
- ✓ Enter into a written agreement with the THECB to:
  1. Complete four years of ROTC training, or its equivalent if the institution awards ROTC credit for prior service in any branch of the US Armed Services or the Texas Army National Guard, Texas Air National Guard, US Coast Guard, or US Merchant Marine, or another undergraduate officer commissioning program
  2. Graduate no later than six years after the date first enrolled after receiving a high school diploma or General Educational Diploma (GED) or its equivalent
  3. No later than six months after graduation, enter into and provide the THECB with verification of:
     - A four-year commitment to be a member of the Texas Army National Guard, Texas Air National Guard, Texas State Guard, United States Coast Guard, or United States Merchant Marine; **OR**
     - A contract to serve as a commissioned officer in any branch of the armed services of the United States;
  4. Meet the physical examination and all prescreening requirements of the entity with which the student enters into a contract

✋ **STOP:** If a student fails to meet the requirements to initially receive a TASSP award or fails to complete the application process by October 15, the student forfeits the award. THECB will notify the legislative office of their nominee's change in eligibility so the legislator can submit an alternate student (See 19 TAC, Section 22.166(e)).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

TASSP APPLICATION PROCESS

- Students can identify a legislator by visiting, Who Represents Me.
- Submit a Texas Armed Services Scholarship Appointment Application to the governor's office, or call (512) 463-1828.
- To contact the lieutenant governor's office, a student can call (512) 463-0001.
  If selected, the student will receive a Notice of Selection letter.

⬇

LOAN CERTIFICATION

1. Once the student is enrolled in an eligible institution and ROTC program, the Notice of Selection letter must be provided to the financial aid office.

2. The financial aid office will certify the student's program eligibility with the THECB.

3. Once the THECB receives the institution's eligibility certification, the student will complete the TASSP application at Loans Online.

⬇

APPLICATION DEADLINE

Students must complete their TASSP online application by October 15, 2019.

RENEWAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS (19 TAC, SECTION 22.169)

TO RECEIVE A CONTINUATION AWARD, A STUDENT MUST:

- ✓ Maintain program satisfactory academic progress (SAP), as defined by the THECB
- ✓ Continue to be a member of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) or another undergraduate officer commissioning program
- ✓ Not have earned a baccalaureate degree or a cumulative total of 150 credit hours, including transferred hours, as verified by the student's institution of higher education.

🛑 STOP: Effective May 2018 (See 19 TAC, SECTION 22.170(b)), if the student fails to meet any of the conditions for continued eligibility, the student:
- Cannot regain award eligibility in a subsequent academic year
- Loses eligibility to receive any future awards
- Loses eligibility to have his or her existing loans forgiven

⚠️ **ALERT**

19 TAC, Section 22.169 (f)

REPLACEMENT AWARDS

Students who fail to meet the program eligibility requirements for a continuing award and who have not exhausted all of the eligible scholarships will be replaced. The "replacement" will be eligible for any remaining program scholarships. The total scholarships given to the initial award recipient and the replacement cannot exceed four awards. The THECB will contact the nominating official who initially appointed the award recipient and request a replacement. The appointed replacement will be notified of their award by the THECB and has **60 days** to notify their institution of their eligibility and complete their loan application; otherwise the award will be forfeited.

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP) (19 TAC, SECTION 22.169)

At the end of every academic year, a student must have completed 24 semester credit hours (SCH) and have a minimum 2.5 cumulative grade point average (GPA).

The chart below reflects the program SAP requirements which must be monitored to ensure compliance:

ACADEMIC YEAR	SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP) REQUIREMENTS	
END OF EVERY ACADEMIC YEAR	24 SCH in the most recent academic year	2.5 cumulative GPA on a 4-point scale for all coursework attempted

NOTE: Maximum for cumulative semester hours earned includes transfer hours, as verified by the institution.

AWARDING

The TASSP award maximum is determined and announced annually by the THECB. A student cannot receive a TASSP award for more than four of the six years that are allowed for a student to graduate. The award must be reduced by the amount paid to the student for being under contract with one of the branches of the armed services, if the combined total exceeds the student's total cost of attendance (COA) for that academic year (See 19 TAC, Section 22.165).

Institution Type	2019-20 Award Max
Public Institutions	$10,000
Private Institutions	$10,000

SELECTIVE SERVICE STATEMENT (19 TAC, SECTION 22.3)

In accordance with TEC, 51.9095, male students may not receive financial assistance without filing a **Selective Service Status Statement** with their institution or other entity granting or guaranteeing the assistance. Financial assistance includes grants, scholarships, loans or other assistance funded by state revenue, including federal funds or gifts and grants accepted by the state.

When is a statement NOT required?

A Selective Service Status Statement is not required when a student's registration is confirmed on the Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR). The confirmation on the ISIR will serve as the student's signed statement since the Department of Education validates registration directly with the Selective Service System (SSS) through a database match for male students who complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

When is a statement required?

• For a male student that completes a FAFSA but is flagged "not registered" on the ISIR, the institution must determine the student's status.

    o If the student is **registered**, the institution must collect the status statement and proof of registration which can be used for subsequent semesters.

    o If the student is **exempt**, the institution must collect the status statement and proof of exemption based on the student's circumstances. The institution can determine what additional documentation to collect to verify the exemption.

• For a male student that does not complete a FAFSA, the required status statement and back-up documentation must be collected by the institution to verify the current selective service status if the individual is applying for any state financial aid.

Required Statement of Selective Service Status

Are you currently registered for Selective Service, as required by federal law?

☐ Registered   ☐ Not Registered   ☐ Exempt
(Proof of registration required)   (Documentation required)

I, _____, hereby certify that the selective service status provided is true and correct. I understand that I must provide documentation, if requested by my institution, and that I may be required to complete a new statement for each academic year for continued eligibility.

_____   _____
Student Signature   Date

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FREQUENCY COLLECTING THE STATEMENT

If the student s status will NOT change, the statement and supporting documentation can be used for subsequent semesters (e.g., the individual entered the U.S. after the eligible age to register).

In the event the student s status could change, the statement must be collected each academic year until the male student is registered or determined exempt (e.g., student is under 18).

METHOD FOR COLLECTING THE STATEMENT

The institution has discretion to determine how to collect this required status statement, which can be done electronically or on paper (e.g., online form, signed award letter, etc.).

RETENTION SCHEDULE

The status statement and all documentation must be retained in the student's record and be made available if requested during a program review or audit. Each status statement collected must be retained with the student s records for 7 years after the date of completion for the applicable award period (See TAC, Section 22.4(a)(2)(A)).

REPROCESSED ISIRS

If the student s most recent ISIR transaction has been reprocessed by the Central Processing System (CPS) and the registration with SSS was confirmed, the institution does not need to collect the status statement or any documentation.
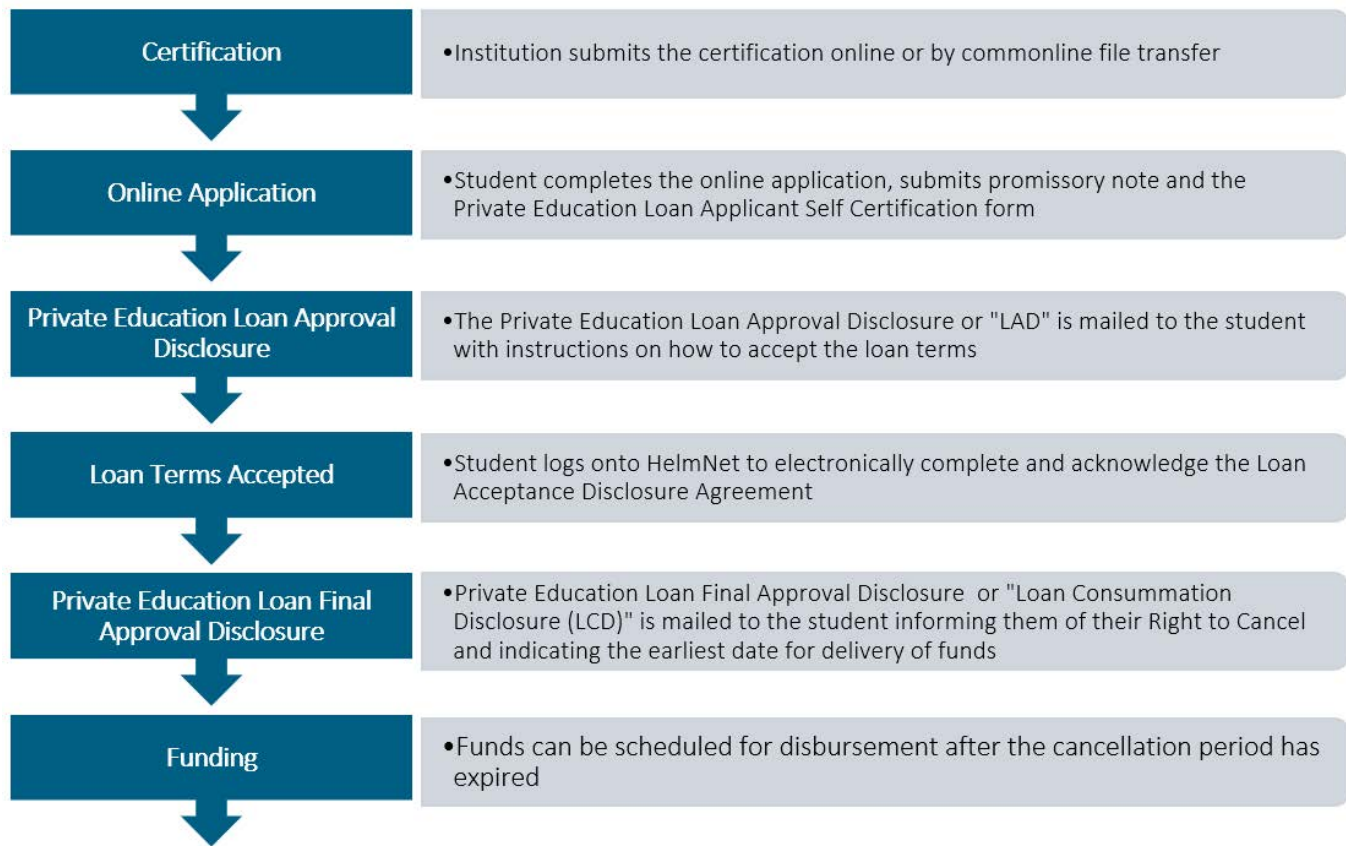
PROCESSING FUNDS

CERTIFYING FUNDS

Institutions have until October 1, 2019 to certify TASSP applications. Funds will not be disbursed until the promissory note is signed by the borrower. Financial Aid Administrator can certify TASSAP awards using the following two methods:

- Certify the loan through the HelmNet loan portal; **OR**
- Submit a **Commonline Loan Certification File** using the MOVEit DMZ secure file transfer portal.

LOAN PROCESS FLOW

Below is the loan process flow that occurs when a borrower completes a TASSP application:

Certification	• Institution submits the certification online or by commonline file transfer
Online Application	• Student completes the online application, submits promissory note and the Private Education Loan Applicant Self Certification form
Private Education Loan Approval Disclosure	• The Private Education Loan Approval Disclosure or "LAD" is mailed to the student with instructions on how to accept the loan terms
Loan Terms Accepted	• Student logs onto HelmNet to electronically complete and acknowledge the Loan Acceptance Disclosure Agreement
Private Education Loan Final Approval Disclosure	• Private Education Loan Final Approval Disclosure or "Loan Consummation Disclosure (LCD)" is mailed to the student informing them of their Right to Cancel and indicating the earliest date for delivery of funds
Funding	• Funds can be scheduled for disbursement after the cancellation period has expired

The earliest a loan can be disbursed is 11 business days after the LCD is mailed to borrower.

Day 1 LCD mailed to borrower.	**+ 3 Days** Reasonable Delivery Time.	**+ 4 Days** Right to Cancel Period Midnight of the 7th day after date mailed.	**+ 3 Days** Funds delivered in 3 business days.

RETURNING PROGRAM FUNDS

A [Return of Funds Form (RFF)](#) must be submitted and approved before any funds are returned to the THECB. This form is available on the Student Financial Aid Programs Information Webpage under **Online Resources**.

> 🛑 **STOP: TIMELY DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS** (19 TAC, Section 22.2)
>
> - Institutions have 3 business days after receiving the funds to apply the funds to a student's account.
> - Institutions have 6 business days after receiving the funds to return undisbursed funds.
> - Institutions have 45 calendar days from the date a student becomes ineligible to return disbursed funds.
> - Institutions have 120 calendar days to return funds after a student has notified the institution of a decision to cancel the award.

REQUESTING LOAN CHANGES

⚠️ **ALERT NEW: REQUIRED CONTACT US INQUIRY INFORMATION**

To ensure inquiries are routed correctly, the following steps must be completed:

- **Received From:** Select Institution
- **Institution:** Enter the Institution's Full Name
- **Contact Reason:** Select **Financial Aid Question** (regardless of the inquiry reason)

Enter the following information in the Description box:

- HelmNet Loan portal ID
- Commonline Unique ID #: (16 Characters)
- Student's first name, last name, and middle initial
- Last four digits of the student's SSN

Provide a detailed explanation of the change needed:

- **Unclear request:** "Please update the loan disbursement to 04-01-2019".
- **Clear request:** "Please update loan disbursement #1 from 01-15-2019 to 04-01-2019".

Student Financial Aid Programs Information (SFAP) Webpage

INSTITUTIONAL TOLL-FREE NUMBER: 1-844-792-2640

ONLINE INQUIRIES: CONTACT US (select "Financial Aid Question" option under contact reason)

The Financial Aid Services Department is unavailable every third Thursday in the morning to allow for a monthly staff meeting.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Contact Us

*An asterisk * by the field indicates a required field!*

Received From*	INSTITUTION
Institution	College of Higher Educations
Contact Reason*	*Financial Aid Question
Description*	*3740 characters left*

HelmNet ID: 00XXXXX00LastAA

Commonline unique ID #: 123456123456123

Student, Student, S
SSN:0011

Student was initially enrolled in 4hr for spring currently enrolled for 12hr

Please do NOT include your full Social Security Number inside the issue description. If you have a question about the status of a new loan application, accounts in repayment, or deferments, please use the last four digits of your SSN instead.

REPAYMENT

FORGIVENESS REQUIREMENTS (19 TAC, SECTION 22.170)

A TASSP award is eligible for forgiveness if the student meets the terms of the TASSP agreement and submits a TASSP Annual Certification Form. To qualify for TASSP loan forgiveness, a student must agree to the following terms:

- Complete four years of ROTC training, or its equivalent (if the institution awards ROTC credit for prior service in any branch of the US Armed Services or the Texas Army National Guard, Texas Air National Guard, US Coast Guard, or US Merchant Marine, or another undergraduate officer commissioning program),
- Graduate from college no later than six years after the date first enrolled after receiving a high school diploma or General Educational Diploma (GED) or its equivalent, and
- No later than six months after college graduation, enter into:
  - A four-year commitment to be a member of the Texas Army National Guard, Texas Air National Guard, Texas State Guard, United States Coast Guard, or United States Merchant Marine; **OR**
  - A contract to serve as a commissioned officer in any branch of the armed services of the United States;

If a student requires a temporary leave of absence from the institution and/or the ROTC or another undergraduate officer commissioning program for personal reasons or to provide service for the Texas Army National Guard, Texas Air National Guard, Texas State Guard, United States Coast Guard, or United States Merchant Marine for fewer than twelve months, the THECB may agree to **not convert** the scholarship award to a loan during that time.

- If a student is required to provide more than twelve months of service, the THECB can grant that student additional time to meet the graduation and service requirements specified in the TASSP agreement.

CONVERSION OF THE SCHOLARSHIP TO A LOAN (19 TAC, SECTION 22.170)

If a student fails to meet the TASSP continuation award or forgiveness requirements, the scholarship will be converted to a loan. The student will have a 6-month grace after the scholarship becomes a loan before repayment begins; however, interest begins to accrue on the date the scholarship is converted to a loan. The TASSP loan has a 15-year repayment period, and a required minimum monthly payment of $100, or an amount required to repay the loan within 15 years, whichever is greater. The TASSP interest rate will be the same rate charged for a College Access Loan at the time the funds were disbursed. If a past due payment amount is not received within 20 days of the scheduled due date, a past due penalty of 5 percent of the scheduled monthly payment or five dollars, whichever is less, will be charged.

Note: Students experiencing a medical disability, or any type of financial hardship can apply for postponed or reduced payments and cancellation (medical disability only) of their TASSP loan by submitting a General Postponement Request.

⚠️ **ALERT NEW: ANNUAL STUDENT LOAN DEBT DISCLOSURE** (19 TAC, SECTION 21.45)

All participating institutions must provide students with a letter, in an electronic format, estimating each student's total loan obligations, at least once a year. The purpose of this letter is to provide students with timely information on their education loan debt so they can make informed decisions about student loan borrowing.

Student loan debt disclosures must include:
- All education loan debt from the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS), as well as information that the institution may reasonably collect from its own records.
- Any estimates of the unpaid amount of state, federal, and other education loans obtained by the student (if reasonably available to the institution); the types of education loans must be identified for each total included.
- *An estimate of the total payoff amount or a range for that amount, including principal and interest.
- *An estimate of monthly repayment amount, including principal and interest.

*At a minimum, institutions shall provide this information based on a 10-year repayment plan.

NOTE: This guidance may change based on recent legislative activity; any necessary updates will be provided accordingly.

APPENDIX 1: QUICK REFERENCES

CONTACT FINANCIAL AID SERVICES	
By phone: (844) 792-2640	
Contact us by completing an online inquiry form and select "Financial Aid Question" as the Contact Reason.	
OTHER RESOURCES FOR INSTITUTIONS	
General program information for institutions	Student Financial Aid Programs Information Webpage
General loan information	HHloans
Higher Education Loan Management System (HelmNet)	HelmNet Student Loan Portal
Texas Program Statutes	Texas Education Code
Texas Program Rules	Texas Administrative Code
Information concerning programs, procedures, allocations, and other topics will be communicated to institutions through the GovDelivery system. To receive these communications, interested individuals must subscribe.	GovDelivery
Federal Selective Service Requirement Guide	Who Must Register Chart
AVAILABLE FORMS	
Directors of Financial Aid must submit a form to add, update or remove a user's access to state financial aid web portals through the THECB.	System Authorization Form
A form is required when returning funds for all state grant, scholarship, Educational Aide Exemption, and loan program funds.	Grants and Special Programs Online Return of Funds Form Loan Programs Online Return of Funds Form
CALENDAR	
Institutional Calendar	