

MASSACHUSETTS HIGH DEMAND SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Frequently Asked Questions

General Information

The Massachusetts High Demand Scholarship Program was established by the Legislature to encourage degree completion in high demand fields to address the workforce needs of the Commonwealth. The Scholarship supports students pursuing majors in these designated disciplines and showing high levels of commitment and academic achievement. The Massachusetts High Demand Scholarship is administered by the Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA), a division of the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education.

Scholarship Questions

Q: Am I eligible to apply for the Massachusetts High Demand Scholarship?

A: Students who meet the following criteria may apply for consideration for the 2024-2025 High Demand Scholarship:

- Physically reside in Massachusetts for at least one year, as of the start of the enrolled term, with an intent to remain in Massachusetts consistent with Board of Higher Education policy; and
- Have approved eligibility status as a “High School Completer,” per the Massachusetts tuition equity law, or be a U.S. Citizen, permanent legal resident, or non-citizen eligible under Title IV regulations.
- Have applied for financial aid using the standard Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- Be enrolled in an eligible program of study in a designated high need field at a public or independent Massachusetts institution.
- Not have received a prior bachelor’s degree or its equivalent
- Must demonstrate achieving and maintaining a minimum college-level GPA of 3.0 on coursework completed after high school graduation.

Q: How do I apply for the Massachusetts High Demand Scholarship?

A: The following steps are required to apply for the 2024-2025 High Demand Scholarship:

- File a current year FAFSA if you have not already done so
- Create an account on the [MASSAid Student Portal](#) (if you do not already have one)
- Complete the **High Demand Scholarship Application**, located under the “Grant/Scholarship Online Applications” tab, by the published deadline
- Upload an unofficial copy of your college transcript that **visibly includes your current major and current GPA**
 - OSFA reserves the right to request an official copy of an applicant’s transcript if it deems necessary

- If your major and GPA are not readily apparent on your uploaded, unofficial transcript, your application will not be processed.

Q: What transcript do I submit?

A: You should upload transcripts from your *current institution only*. Additional transcripts will add processing time to applications. **High school transcripts are not accepted.**

Q: I don't know the exact number of credits that I plan to take for the Fall and/or Spring semesters, although I know that I will be enrolled. What should I put on the application?

A: If you don't know the specific number of credits that you'll be taking for the Fall and/or Spring semesters, choose "12" credits for the semester if you plan on enrolling full-time for the semester, or "6" if you plan on enrolling at least half-time (but not full-time) for the semester. If you enter "0" credits for any given semester, you will **not be considered for funding** for that semester.

Q: I'm in the process of transferring to a new institution for the upcoming year. What transcript do I submit?

A: Students who are in the process of transferring to a new institution for the upcoming year may upload their most recent transcript from their previous institution if necessary (if grades and GPA are not yet represented on their current institution's transcript). After uploading this transcript from your previous institution, please email documentation of your enrollment in an eligible major at your current institution (such as an enrollment verification) to osfa-mhds@dhe.mass.edu. Applications for transfer students will be evaluated based on recent academic achievements at their most recent institution. If selected, and the transfer student does not achieve the required GPA at their current, they will forfeit the scholarship.

Q: I'm a current or recently graduated high school senior starting college in the upcoming year. Can I apply for this scholarship?

A: If you have been accepted into and enroll in an eligible high-need program of study, you can apply and be considered for High Demand Scholarship funding for your first year in college. Please keep in mind, however, that applications are reviewed and selected, in part, based on collegiate academic achievement and completed collegiate coursework. If you have not yet begun your college coursework, please upload documentation of your enrolled major and registered first semester coursework in lieu of your college transcript. Please do **NOT** upload a copy of your high school transcript, as that will not be considered.

Q: How do I know my application has been processed?

A: When your transcript and application have been reviewed for eligibility, your application status will be updated from "Ineligible – Transcript/GPA Not on File" to "Application Complete, Under Review." Applications and transcripts are manually reviewed. Your status will not update immediately upon upload of your transcript, it will update when your transcript is reviewed by OSFA. Please allow a minimum of **7 business days** for your transcript to be reviewed.

Q: What does "Application Complete, Under Review" mean?

A: "Application Complete, Under Review" means your application and transcript have been reviewed and it has been determined that you meet minimum eligibility requirements to be considered for the High Demand Scholarship. Your application is being considered when this status is displayed. The High Demand Scholarship is a competitive scholarship for which OSFA receives hundreds of applications per cycle, for which there is limited funding. All complete applications received before the deadline are reviewed before scholarship recipients are selected. *Students should not make financial plans regarding their education under the assumption that they will be awarded the High Demand Scholarship.*

Q: What does it mean if my status is something other than "Ineligible – Transcript/GPA Not on File" or "Application Complete, Under Review"?

A: If your status reads something other than "Ineligible – Transcript/GPA Not on File" after submitting your application, please click the ineligible reason for more information on how to resolve the discrepancy, if possible. Ineligible reasons other than "Transcript/GPA Not on File" will not be resolved by OSFA without appropriate action from the student and must be resolved prior to the application's closure for funding consideration.

If your status updates to something other than "Application Complete, Under Review", such as "Transcript Review Resulted in Ineligibility" or "GPA Not Met", it means you do not meet all eligibility requirements for the scholarship. You may be enrolled in an ineligible major, or your transcript may have indicated you do not meet the 3.0 college-level GPA requirement. You may reach out to OSFA for more detail on these statuses.

Q: What if my status says "Student Not MA Resident" or "Parent Not MA Resident?"

A: All state financial aid programs require that students meet Massachusetts residency requirements, i.e. students must have been a permanent, legal resident of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for at least one year prior to the opening of the academic year. Students assessed as dependents by the FAFSA are considered residents of the state in which their parents reside. If you believe this status is in error, information on how to resolve the discrepancy (including acceptable documentation for submission) can be accessed by clicking on the ineligible status.

Q: Does every eligible student that applies for the scholarship receive funding?

A: The Massachusetts High Demand Scholarship generates a high level of interest from qualified students, resulting in a large applicant pool for limited funds. Due to the number of applications, we are not able to award every eligible student. *Students should not make financial plans regarding their education under the assumption that they will be awarded the High Demand Scholarship.*

Q: If selected, what is the value of the scholarship I will receive?

A: Award value is determined by enrollment status (i.e. full-time or part-time) and institution type (community college, state university, or UMass). **Maximum** award values may be viewed on the High Demand Scholarship [website](#). OSFA may adjust these values. Final award values will be determined upon review of the pool of qualified applicants and the annual budget appropriation for the High Demand Scholarship.

Q: Do I have to re-apply each year?

A: Students must complete a full application for each year they wish to be considered for funding. Being selected one year **does not** guarantee or entitle an applicant funding in future years.

Q: How are recipients selected?

A: OSFA reviews each applicant’s application and transcript to ensure minimum eligibility requirements are met. Upon the conclusion of the application period, all completed applications (application form and transcript) are reviewed and evaluated holistically, based on multiple selection criteria. Applications may be reviewed considering the following criteria: academic achievement and potential for excellence in the declared discipline, commitment to the eligible major as evidenced by completed coursework and major declaration timeline, and demonstrated financial need*. OSFA strives to award students across a diversity of grade levels and majors, in proportion to the workforce needs in Massachusetts.

*The Massachusetts High Demand Scholarship is not a primarily need-based scholarship. Demonstrated financial need is a component of the evaluation process, along with academic merit.

Q: How will I know if I have been selected?

A: Students selected to receive the scholarship will receive notification by email. Selection status may also be viewed in the MASSAid Student Portal.

Q: If selected, how and when will I receive my scholarship funds?

A: If selected, your institution is required to certify your eligibility (i.e., your school must confirm to OSFA that you continue to meet all eligibility requirements). Once certified, funds will be disbursed directly to your institution to be applied to your account. Contact your financial aid counselor for further information on how the award fits into your specific financial aid package.

Q: Is there anything I can do to increase the value of my award?

A: Award values are set based on enrollment status (full- or part-time) and institution type. There is not an opportunity for students to individually appeal for additional funds.

Q: How can I improve my application for future application cycles?

A: Continue to maintain enrollment in an eligible major and demonstrate strong academic achievement, particularly in major-related coursework.

Q: Is the High Demand Scholarship offered every academic year?

A: The Massachusetts High Demand Scholarship is offered annually contingent on appropriations in the Massachusetts state budget.

MASSAid Student Portal Questions

Q: I am trying to create a MASSAid Student Portal Account. When I enter my information, I receive an error message stating my SSN, DOB, and Name do not match. The information I have entered is correct. What is the problem?

A: The following issues may be triggering the SSN/DOB/Name Mismatch error:

- You do not have a FAFSA on file and/or your FAFSA indicated a state of permanent residency other than Massachusetts. In this case, the error message does not necessarily mean that your information is incorrect, rather that the MASSAid system has no record to match your information to. OSFA receives FAFSA information only for students who indicate Massachusetts as their state of permanent residency on the FAFSA. Without a FAFSA on file with OSFA, you will not be able to create a MASSAid Account. If you have recently filed your FAFSA, please allow up to 72 hours after processing for OSFA to receive the information.
- There has been an issue or mismatch with your information at the federal level. Please log into your FAFSA account to resolve the issue.
- You have recently legally changed your name, and your FAFSA was filed under your previous information. Please utilize the information you filed your most recent FAFSA with to create your MASSAid Account. You may contact OSFA at 617-391-6070 for further information on updating your MASSAid Account to reflect your new name.
- A browser issue is triggering the issue. MASSAid functions best in Microsoft Edge. Students also tend to have success in Google Chrome. Please try a different browser or device (utilizing a desktop or laptop computer, as opposed to a mobile device, may also help), and/or clear your cache, and/or restart your device, to see if that resolves the issue.

Q: The MASSAid Student Portal says I already have an account, but I can't remember my login information.

A: There is a "Forget Username" option on the Student Portal login page that students may utilize if they do not remember their username. Similarly, there is a "Forgot Password" option as well. Please be sure to check your spam/junk folder for these emails after utilizing these features.

Q: I created a MASSAid Student Portal account with an email address I no longer have access to, so I can't retrieve my username/password.

A: Please contact OSFA so we can delete your old account and you can create a new one.

Q: How do I file a FAFSA?

A: You can file a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>. If you need further assistance filing a FAFSA, please contact the financial aid office at your institution, or OSFA.