

EOP ELIGIBILITY

EOP ELIGIBILITY

The following is Chapter 3 of the General Plan and Guidelines for the Educational Opportunity Program of State University of New York, 1991-1994.

This section describes the criteria and conditions for a student's eligibility in the EOP program.

Should you need clarification or additional information you should contact the Director of Special Programs, the EOP Director or the Director of Financial Aid at your institution.

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION

Definition of Eligibility

Students supported by EOP allocations must meet minimum economic and educational eligibility criteria for admission. They must also have been residents of New York State for twelve months prior to their day of registration in college; are now a New York State resident who will be an undergraduate and who lived in New York State for the last two terms of high school; or were residents of New York State when they entered military service, Vista of the Peace Corps and re-established New York State residence within six months after release from service.

The eligibility standards set forth in this section apply only at the time of admission as a first-time freshman to a program. Once admitted, a student may continue to receive supportive services as needed, even if the family income rises above the current eligibility standards. However, a student's economic status shall be reviewed under a recognized needs analysis system each year and appropriate adjustments made in the student's financial aid package.

Each campus shall select its EOP students in accordance with this Educational Opportunity Program General Plan and Guidelines and its campus EOP General Plan. Academic eligibility statements filed with the Office of Special Programs are used to determine whether admissions requirements have been met, and changes in those eligibility statements must be reported to the Office of Special Programs prior to their utilization.

Each campus is expected to give priority to applicants from families characterized by historical, educational, economic and cultural disadvantage, which implies that either the family has endured long-term economic deprivation or that the student represents a population segment under-represented in higher education, or both. Families in this deprived status are generally characterized by inadequate schooling, little or no accumulation of assets and the inability to provide for more than the basic needs of family members.

Separation, divorce, or death of a wage earner in the calendar year prior to the academic year for which eligibility

being determined, and an accompanying decrease in family income below the EOP guidelines do not necessarily satisfy the historical disadvantage characteristic expected of EOP students. Educational Opportunity Program Directors must approve these cases after review and recommendation by the financial aid office. The EOP Director, in cooperation with the Director of Financial Aid, shall have the discretion of making a professional judgment as to whether a family is historically, economically and culturally disadvantaged in determining an applicant's admissibility to the Educational Opportunity Program. There shall be no discrimination in admission decisions based on race, age, creed, religion, marital status, national origin, color, sex or disability.

Economic Eligibility

A student is economically disadvantaged if he/she is a member of a household supported by one member thereof with a total annual income which does not exceed the applicable amount set forth in Table I; or of a household supported by more than one worker thereof, or a household in which one worker is the sole support of a one-parent family, if the total annual income of such household does not exceed the applicable amount set forth in the following table by more than \$2,500. For the purposes of this subdivision, the members of a household shall be determined by ascertaining the number of individuals living in the student's residence who are economically dependent on the income, as defined below, supporting the student.

Except as otherwise provided, income means all taxable and non-taxable funds which are received by the household for general use. Such funds may be delivered from such sources as wages, dividends, interest, social security, disability pensions, veterans benefits and unemployment benefits.

For purposes of this section, the following shall not constitute income: (1) funds received specifically for educational purposes from sources such as social security, veteran's cost of educational benefits, and educational grants from the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, and (2) Social Services or Public Assistance payments received through the Aid to Dependent Children, Home Relief and Family Day Care programs.

The income figures do not include the student's income unless he/she is the head of household or the second worker supporting the household. The income figures in Tables I, II and III apply to the student applicant's income only when he/she is an independent student as defined in Federal Regulations.

TABLE I

For students first entering college between July 1, 1992 and June 30, 1993.

Number of members in household (including head of household)	Total annual income in preceeding calendar year
1	\$ 8,850
2	14,800
3	16,900
4	21,050
5	24,900
6	29,300
7 or more	32,600 plus \$3,300 for each family member in excess of 7

TABLE II

For students first entering college between July 1, 1993 and June 30, 1994

Number of members in household (including head of household)	Total annual income in preceeding calendar year
1	\$ 9,450
2	15,450
3	17,750
4	22,100
5	26,150
6	30,750
7 or more	34,200 plus \$3,450 for each family member in excess of 7

TABLE III

For students first entering college on or after July 1, 1994.

Number of members in household (including head of household)	Total annual income in preceding calendar year
1	\$ 9,900
2	16,200
3	18,650
4	23,200
5	27,500
6	32,300
7 or more	35,950 plus \$3,650 for each family member in excess of 7

Reference to Tables I, II and III need not be made if the student falls into one of the following categories and documentation is on file:

- (a) a student's family receives Aid to Dependent Children, Home Relief, or Family Day Care Payments through a New York State or County Department of Social Services,
- (b) a student is living with foster parents who do not provide support for college and no money is provided by the natural parents, or
- (c) a student is a ward of the State of County.

For purposes of this section, an independent student is defined under one of the following two categories:

- 1) (a) A single undergraduate student with no dependents who has not been listed and will not be listed as an exemption for Federal income tax purposes by any person, except his or her spouse, for the calendar year in which aid is received and the two calendar years prior to the academic year for which aid is requested and demonstrates to EOP and financial aid administrators total self-sufficiency during the two calendar years preceding the academic year in which the initial award will be granted by demonstrating annual total resources (including all resources other than from parents) of at least \$4,000;
 - (b) A student who has legal dependents other than a spouse
 - (c) A student who is a married individual who declares that he/she will not be claimed as a dependent for income tax purposed by his/her parents or guardians for the calendar year in which participation in the opportunity program commences;
 - (d) A student who is a veteran of the armed forces of the United States;
 - (e) A student for whom an EOP and financial aid administrator have made a satisfactory, documented determination of independence by reason of other extraordinary circumstances.
- 2) A student who is an orphan or is a ward of the court.

A maximum of 15% of the students admitted to an Opportunity Program may come from families whose income exceeds the family income listed in the applicable Table when warranted by unusual and extenuating circumstances, documented by a disinterested, reliable party and judged appropriate by the EOP Director in cooperation with the financial aid officer. Supporting documents shall be on file at the institution before enrollment is permitted.

The following conditions may be considered:

1. Serious mismanagement of the family's income which results in little available funds to support the student's educational costs. Written verification must be obtained from a disinterested, reliable party such as a social worker, lawyer, clergyman, counselor, or judge, who is knowledgeable about the student's financial status.
2. A one-time income fluctuation in a family with a history of low income, due to such causes as insurance settlements and severance pay. Satisfactory evidence that a household's income in the calendar year prior to the calendar year used for determining the student's economic eligibility fell within the limits of the applicable household income scale shall be sufficient to establish the existence of a one-time fluctuation in household income, provided that there is satisfactory proof of a history of low income.
3. Families with long-term medical obligations such as maintenance of mentally or physically handicapped children.
4. Families which must maintain two households, one for the wage earner and one for dependents.
5. Families where the family contribution as computed from base year financial data by a United States Education Department approved needs analysis system indicates no contribution other than the minimum expectations from student income for independent students, or a zero parental contribution for dependent students.

A list of all students included as fifteen percent exceptions must be forwarded to the Office of Special Programs by October 15th of the Fall semester and within 30 days after the close of registration in any other semester of admission. The justification materials must be placed in accessible files in the campus financial aid office and the EOP Directors office.

Economic Documentation:

All eligibility criteria apply to the calendar year prior to the academic year of planned entry into college:

<u>Income Categories</u>	<u>Documentation</u>
1. Income from wages, tips, dividends interest, rental, business profits	1. IRS forms 1040, 1040A, 1040EZ or 4506
2. No income	2. IRS form 4506 or IRS letter 1722
3. Pension or Annuity	3. Letter from the agency stating applicable year's total award. (if not already reported on a tax return.
4. Social Security, Supplemental	4. Letter from the agency stating applicable year's total award for each member of the household.
5. Public Assistance, AFDC, ADC, Home Relief	5. Letter from the agency stating applicable year's total award and names of recipients.
6. Child Support	6. Signed affidavit, court order or student's financial aid form (FAF).
7. Alimony	7. Tax return, court order, signed affidavit or student's financial aid form (FAF).

Other factors bearing on economic eligibility, such as the presence of additional members in the household, must also be documented and verified through notarized statements, birth or marriage certificates or other appropriate official documents.

1

Zero household contribution will be documented by the need analysis output form from one of the United States Education Department's approved needs analysis systems.

Educational Eligibility

Enrollees must have graduated from an approved high school or have obtained a New York State High School Equivalency Diploma, or its equivalent, such as an Armed Forces Equivalency Diploma.

In the absence of a diploma, an applicant must be able to demonstrate a level of knowledge and academic ability equal to the level deemed essential (1) for entrance to the Educational Opportunity Program at the campus of enrollment, and (2) for completion of twenty-four credit hours held by the State Education Department to be evidence that the general equivalency diploma has been earned. (SED "Guidelines for the Granting of an Equivalency Diploma on the Basis of Earned College Credit" dated 7-28-72.)

A. State Operated Colleges

The basic criteria for determining educational eligibility at the four year colleges and university centers are:

1. non-admissability under the college's normally applied admission standard for matriculation status to the college or the applicant's desired degree program; and
2. identified potential for successful completion of an academic program at the college.

The four year colleges, university centers and agricultural and technology colleges most commonly use the high school average rank in high school graduating class and the results of a standard test (ACT or SAT) to judge admission. Cutoff scores for acceptance through regular admissions are to be indicated in each campus General Plan. However, applications may be judged on criteria such as the number of academic subjects studied in high school, the type of high school diploma or certificate received, location of high school, daily attendance patterns, age, responsibilities at home, counselor's recommendation, art/athletic ability and other "special" talent or circumstances. When applicants cannot be admitted through regular admissions by the application of these multiple criteria, they become educationally eligible for the Educational Opportunity Program. Students completing a course of study at an Educational Opportunity Center

are educationally disadvantaged. Proper documentation of the decision is to be filed in the applicant's folder.

It is difficult to choose potentially successful students from applicants with poor academic histories. Colleges are encouraged to supplement usually employed measures of college success by using interviews, written statements from qualified observers, special talent indices (art, music, writing ability, etc.), diagnostic test results, and other records to determine the applicant's motivational level and need for supportive services.

B. Community Colleges

The community colleges are most generally "open door" colleges. Residents of the sponsorship area are usually assured the opportunity to begin study regardless of academic background. The colleges' curricula range from developmental studies programs to two-year degree programs. Admission criteria may vary by program.

Educational eligibility for EOP may be based upon the following criteria:

1. Failure to meet criteria for the major of choice
2. Results of locally administered tests
3. Lack of high school diploma or GED
4. Low high school average and class rank as defined in the local campus General Plan
5. Recommendation by the college for developmental course work
6. Receipt of remedial preparation from alternative programs such as EOC, Upward Bound, Adult Learning Centers and similar programs
7. Other indicators of academic deficiency as defined by the local campus policy in the campus General Plan.
8. Each campus General Plan must contain criteria for determining admission to EOP. This plan must be approved by the Office of Special Programs. Determination of EOP status should be made as early as possible so that students may benefit from supportive services and financial aid.

C. Transfer Eligibility

Transfer applicants may be supported from EOP resources if they:

1. Are transferring from an accredited college in New York State and are receiving academic/financial support services funded under legislation applicable to EOP/HEOP/SEEK or College Discovery Programs;
2. Are now New York State residents who were enrolled in EOP-type programs, which have similar requirements for admission, in other states. Documentation of their participation must be submitted to and approved by the Office of Special Programs prior to admission as EOP students;
3. Were enrolled in a course of study at a college outside New York State which was traditionally served under-prepared students, and were educationally and economically disadvantaged at the time of admission. Eligibility must be documented by a statement from the college verifying that the student was both educationally and economically disadvantaged at time of entrance. This documentation must be forwarded to the Office of Special Programs for review and approval;
4. Were admitted to a New York State college under the Full Opportunity Provision if the college does not have an Educational Opportunity Program. Documentation of their economic and educational eligibility for admission must be submitted to the admitting college prior to admission as EOP students.

Part-time Study

Educational Opportunity Program support is primarily for students enrolled for full-time study, but circumstances may indicate that part-time study is advisable. Entering freshman requests for part-time study must be approved by the Office of Special Programs. The use of EOP funds to support part-time enrollment with financial aid, as determined by need, is authorized for EOP students whose full-time enrollment has been interrupted, but whose course loads consist of six (6) credits or the equivalent. Minimum part-time enrollment is six degree credits or the equivalent. Students should be encouraged to return to full-time study as soon as circumstances permit. After two semesters, the case must be forwarded to the Office of Special Programs for review.

Graduating seniors requiring less than a full-time load are exempt from this requirement. At community colleges, Educational Opportunity Program financial aid rosters must indicate part-time students.

Period of Eligibility

Because EOP students may progress more slowly toward the completion of their degrees, the period of EOP eligibility exceeds the normal length of the degree program in which the student is enrolled.

A full-time student enrolled in a two-year degree program is allowed six semesters or its equivalent number of trimesters, quarters or other units of opportunity eligibility. A full-time student enrolled in a four-year baccalaureate program is allowed ten semesters or its equivalent, and a student enrolled in a five-year program is allowed twelve semesters or the equivalent of EOP eligibility.

Part-time student eligibility is an exception as EOP encourages full-time study. However, in the event that full-time study is temporarily interrupted, a student taking less than 9 credit hours shall be considered to have used half a semester of eligibility. The above periods of eligibility are in addition to up to two terms of STAP, where applicable.