

Lottery Rules Overview

Important: Be sure to “Agree To” and “Submit” this document on PipelineMT once you’ve read and reviewed the contents. It is very important that you read the Lottery Rules Overview carefully each year, since rules and interpretations can change.

To help our students understand the basic rules of the Tennessee Educational Lottery Scholarship, we have developed a list of important information that you will need to know in order to remain eligible for the scholarship.

Quick Tips for Keeping Your Lottery Scholarship

- Aim for a 3.0 TELS GPA and maintain it.
- Enroll in at least one class every fall and spring semester.
- Don't drop or stop attending your classes.
- Be careful to take only the classes you need and to pass them the first time.
- Watch your calendar, to avoid reaching the 5-year limit.

General Statements

- Your lottery award is not official until the MTSU Financial Aid Office determines that you meet all requirements.
- You should file your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) no later than March 1 each year.
- You must meet federal Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) requirements to receive the lottery scholarship. [Information about SAP requirements](#)
- Your total financial aid cannot be more than your estimated costs or estimated need for the year. If your aid is more than what you can receive, your lottery scholarship may be reduced or canceled. [Information about Cost of Attendance \(COA\) budgets](#)
- You cannot receive the lottery scholarship if you are incarcerated or in a work or educational release facility.
- If you know that you are not eligible for the lottery scholarship, and receive an award, it is your responsibility to contact the MT One Stop and let them know. If MTSU discovers that an award was made in error, you may have to repay all of the lottery funds that you received since becoming ineligible.
- Lottery scholarship rules are created by the Tennessee state legislature and are administered by the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation (TSAC). Lottery rules and interpretations can be changed by the above organizations at any time. Please visit MTSU's [lottery scholarship website](#) several times each semester to check for changes.
- The information in this form is based on rules and interpretations as of April 2026.
- Legislative changes are typically made in the summer, and the state generally provides updated information in early fall.
- We strongly recommend that you check your MTSU email account often, so you don't miss important updates.

Enrollment Requirements

Enroll within 16 months after high school

- You must attend no later than 16 months after high school graduation or GED/HiSet completion.
- The sit out period typically ends when you attend a semester; regardless of whether you use the full 16-months or not.

Enroll every fall and spring semester

- To receive a lottery award, you must enroll at least half-time (6 hours) at an eligible college or university for every fall and spring semester.
- Your award amount will be reduced/prorated according to the number of hours you are enrolled in

each semester and your student classification type (Undergraduate or Graduate).

- Undergraduate Student Proration Award Schedule:
 - 100% = 12 or more hours (full time)
 - 75% = 9 to 11 hours (3/4 time)
 - 50% = 6 to 8 hours (1/2 time)
 - 0% = 0 to 5 hours (less than 1/2 time).
 - Students enrolled less than 1/2 time MAY be eligible to receive funds for semester dependent on reason why enrolled less than 1/2 time. You need to complete [Lottery Less Than Half-Time Exception Request form](#) for us to determine eligibility.
- Graduate Student Proration Award Schedule:
 - 100% = 9 or more hours (full time)
 - 75% = 7 to 8 hours (3/4 time)
 - 50% = 5 to 6 hours (1/2 time)
 - 0% = 0 to 4 hours (less than 1/2 time).
 - Students enrolled less than 1/2 time MAY be eligible to receive funds for semester dependent on reason why enrolled less than 1/2 time. You need to complete [Lottery Less Than Half-Time Exception Request form](#) for us to determine eligibility.
- If you are receiving the lottery scholarship under the provisional lottery rules, full-time enrollment (12+ hours for Undergraduate; 9+ hours for Graduate) is required for all fall and spring semesters. Please see the *GPA Requirement: Provisional Eligibility section below*.

Maintain your enrollment status

- Changing your enrollment status, failing to attend classes, or withdrawing from all classes after the CensusDate may result in the **permanent** loss of your lottery scholarship eligibility.
- Your enrollment is measured each fall and spring semester at the Census Date, or 14 days after classes start. The Census Date for the summer semester varies.
- Undergraduate Students:
 - If you are full-time at Census, you must finish the semester with at least 12 earned credit hours.
 - If you are part-time at Census, you must finish the semester with at least 6 earned credit hours.
 - If you are less than part-time at Census, you must finish the semester with at least 1 earned credit hours
- Graduate Students:
 - If you are full-time at Census, you must finish the semester with at least 9 earned credit hours.
 - If you are part-time at Census, you must finish the semester with at least 5 earned credit hours.
 - If you are less than part-time at Census, you must finish the semester with at least 1 earned credit hours
- Class attendance is monitored, according to federal and institutional policies.
- If you *never attend* or *stop attending* a class before the Census Date, you may be required to repay some or all of the lottery scholarship for the semester.
- Failure to meet attendance requirements will result in a grade of FA, which does not count in your earned hours for the semester. This may result in a change of enrollment status and loss of eligibility.

Coursework toward Program of Study (CPoS)

- Lottery Scholarships will only pay for coursework that apply toward a student's program of study.
- Only courses required for a student's degree completion will be eligible to receive Lottery funds.
- Taking courses that are not required to complete your degree will result in a student receiving less or no lottery funds.
- If a student is enrolled in 15 hours, but only 9 hours are in the course program of study, the student will receive a prorated portion of their scholarship.
- All attempted hours will be applied toward the Lottery benchmark. So, if a student takes 12 hours but only 9 hours apply toward the program of study, the student will only be paid for 9 hours, but all 12

hours will count toward the benchmark for determining continuing eligibility.

GPA Requirements

- The GPA and attempted hours used to determine continuing lottery eligibility may not match your MTSU GPA and attempted hours; TSAC requires that schools monitor your GPA differently for lottery purposes.
- You should check your lottery GPA and attempted hours through Pipeline MT frequently to determine your progress. In Pipeline MT, click on the “Financial Aid” tab, then on “View TELS Eligibility”.
- You must have a cumulative lottery GPA of at least 2.75 after 24 and 48 attempted lottery hours, and a 3.00 or higher after 72, 96 or any subsequent multiple of 24 attempted hour
- If you fail to meet the lottery GPA requirement at a benchmark, this is considered a loss of the award.
- If you lose the lottery award due to GPA, you have the ability to regain the award at a future benchmark. Please see the *Regaining Your Lottery Award* section below.
- If you receive the Merit Supplement, but lose the lottery award due to GPA, you will permanently lose the supplement.
- Failure to meet attendance requirements will result in a grade of FA, which counts as an F in your GPA. This may result in an unsatisfactory GPA and loss of the award.
- Grade changes or added courses can affect your lottery GPA negatively. Please see the *Grade Changes* section below for more details.
- Any credits gained through dual-enrollment, AP credit, or other test credits do not count in your lottery GPA.
- If you believe your dual-enrollment, AP, or other test credits are included in your lottery statistics, please contact the MT One Stop for assistance.

Repeated Courses

- All classes taken after high school graduation count in your lottery GPA, including repeated classes.
- You may exercise a **one-time only Repeat Option** to exclude the grade of one (1) repeated course from your lottery GPA.
- You must request the use of your Repeat Option by submitting a [Repeat Option Request Form](#) at least 6 weeks before the semester you expect to receive the lottery scholarship.

Regaining Your Lottery Award

- You may use a **one-time only Regain Option** to regain eligibility for the lottery award, if you lose the scholarship due to GPA but meet the GPA requirement at a future bracket and continue to meet all other continuing eligibility criteria for each semester.
- You must submit a [Regain Option Request Form](#) at least 6 weeks before the semester you expect to regain eligibility for the lottery scholarship.
- If you receive the Merit Supplement, and regain your lottery scholarship at a future bracket, you will not receive future supplement awards.

GPA Requirements: Provisional Eligibility

- You may be eligible for provisional lottery status if you reach the 72-hour benchmark or a later benchmark, have a lottery GPA of 2.75 to 2.99, and a semester GPA of 3.00 or greater.
- If you reach the 72-hour benchmark or a later benchmark, do not meet the regular lottery GPA requirement of 3.00, but do meet the provisional eligibility requirements stated above, you may *retain* your lottery award under the provisional lottery rules.
- If you lost your lottery award due to GPA at a prior benchmark, do not have the required 3.00 lottery GPA at the point you reach the 72-hour or later benchmark, but do meet the provisional lottery rules stated above at the 72-hour or later benchmark, you may *regain* your lottery award under the provisional rules.
- You will continue to receive the full lottery scholarship as long as you are otherwise eligible while in provisional status. However, your GPA will be checked after every semester.

- You must enroll **full-time** every fall and spring semester while in a provisional status.
- You must earn a **semester GPA of at least 3.00** to establish eligibility for the next semester while in a provisional status.
- If you are in a provisional status and enroll part-time in the summer, eligibility will be determined by either your spring or your summer semester GPA, depending on whether you reach a benchmark hour bracket at the end of the term. We recommend that you earn a GPA of at least 3.00 for both spring and summer for this reason.
- You will remain in a provisional status if you continue to meet the enrollment and GPA requirements (2.75-2.99 cumulative lottery GPA, 3.00 semester GPA) for provisional eligibility.
- You may be able to return to regular status (rather than provisional status) if you reach a 3.00 cumulative lottery GPA at a future benchmark.
- If you are in a provisional status, have already used your one-time-only Regain Option, and enroll part-time for a fall or spring semester, you will permanently lose eligibility for the scholarship.
- If you are in a provisional status, have already used your one-time-only Regain Option, and fail to meet the 3.00 semester GPA requirement, you will permanently lose eligibility for the scholarship.

GPA Requirements: Incomplete Grades

- An incomplete grade can adversely affect your lottery scholarship.
- If you have an incomplete grade your lottery scholarship will be put on hold until you submit a [Lottery Grade Change Form](#) to let us know that the correct grade has been posted.
- Depending on when the incomplete grade is resolved, you may be eligible for a retroactive award.
- An incomplete must be resolved quickly. If the incomplete is not changed to a grade by the deadline set by the professor or the Records Office the incomplete will generally revert to an F, which may affect eligibility for the lottery scholarship and could result in ineligibility for a prior-semester scholarship.
- Please see the *Grade Changes* section below for information about how to report a grade change.

Time Limits

- You may receive the Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship for up to 5 years from the date of your initial enrollment; OR
- You complete an advanced degree program (i.e. Masters or Doctoral). Completion of baccalaureate degree is no longer a terminating event.

Transferring to or from MTSU

- If you attend an eligible Tennessee school after high school graduation (such as MTSU), and then transfer to an out-of-state college or university, you will **permanently** lose eligibility for the lottery scholarship.
- If awarded a lottery scholarship at MTSU and this applies to you, please contact the MT One Stop immediately.
- If you are transferring to MTSU, you must submit an online [Transfer Notification Form](#) to request review of your lottery status. Please log-in to Pipeline MT to complete the online form.
- This form is required of all transfer students prior to receiving a lottery award.
- If you fail to submit the form, and if MTSU later determines that you were ineligible for a scholarship which was applied to your account, you are responsible for repaying the award in full.
- Not every college or university is considered an eligible school for lottery purposes by TSAC. This typically includes both in-state and out-of-state colleges and universities that are not regionally accredited and vocational schools other than Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology.
- If you were eligible for the Lottery Scholarship at the point you graduated high school but attended an eligible out-of-state college or university after high school graduation, you may be eligible to receive the lottery scholarship.
- You must meet all continuing requirements to be eligible. For example, the Scholarship Office must

confirm that you have had continuous enrollment and have not changed your enrollment status for any fall or spring semester at the previous institution.

- If you are initially eligible for the Lottery Scholarship but attend an ineligible institution such as a school that is not regionally accredited or a vocational school other than a Tennessee College of Applied Technology, you will lose eligibility for the lottery scholarship **permanently**.
- If you are initially eligible for the Lottery Scholarship but attend a Tennessee College of Applied Technology AND complete a diploma program, you may be eligible for a lottery scholarship if you transfer to an eligible school such as MTSU within three years. If you receive a Wilder-Naifeh Technical Skills Grant at the TCAT, the Wilder-Naifeh funds and TCAT courses will not count against your lottery scholarship eligibility in any way.

Information About Special Situations

Appeals for special circumstances

- You may be eligible for a leave of absence to complete an internship or co-op which has been approved by your academic department.
- You must submit a signed statement by the academic department.
- **Please Note:** Internships which are not required or encouraged by the academic department are not eligible for a leave of absence. Please contact the MT One Stop for information about your options if you plan to participate in an ineligible internship.
- You may file a Lottery Appeal if you fail to meet the enrollment requirements, withdraw from all your classes, or fail to enroll for a required semester due to extenuating personal or medical circumstances. Please complete the following form on our website: [Tennessee Lottery Appeal Form](#). MTSU may reinstate your eligibility based on the content of your appeal, and the quality of your supporting documentation. [Information about the appeal process](#).
- You may not appeal loss of the lottery award due to insufficient GPA at a benchmark.

Summer Lottery Scholarships

- Entering freshmen who graduate from an eligible high school, complete high school through a Tennessee home school program, or obtain a GED/HiSET may qualify for an award prior to the Fall semester at an eligible postsecondary institution following graduation so long as student meets the academic eligibility requirements for entering freshmen and enrolls in an eligible postsecondary program of study in pursuit of an associate or baccalaureate degree.
- You must enroll at least half-time to be eligible for a summer award.
- Students under provisional lottery rules are allowed to enroll part-time in the summer only; full-time enrollment is always required for fall and spring semesters while under provisional lottery.
- The scholarship will be prorated based on your enrollment status, as noted in the Enrollment section above.
- Summer lottery scholarship procedures vary by year. [Please refer to the lottery section of the scholarships page of the MTSU website for more information](#).

Grade Changes or Additions

- If you have a grade change after grades have been posted, you must notify us by submitting a [Grade Change Notification Form](#).
- Grade changes may include (but are not limited to) a change from one letter grade to another (such as a C to an A), a change from a letter grade to a non-letter grade (such as a D to a Withdraw), or a change from a non-letter grade to a letter grade (such as an Incomplete to a B).
- If you transfer in one or more grades after eligibility has been determined for the current or upcoming term, you must notify us by submitting an online [Transfer Notification Form](#) (even if you are pursuing a degree at MTSU). Such courses may include (but are not limited to) a summer course at another school or a semester that was not already included on a previous Transfer Notification Form.
- If the grade change negatively affects your eligibility status, you may be responsible for repaying a

scholarship you already received; if the grade change affects your eligibility positively, you may be eligible for retroactive awards for one or more semesters within the current academic year.

- If you fail to notify us of a grade change or addition, and if we later determine that you were ineligible for a scholarship which was applied to your account before the grade change or addition occurred, you will be responsible for repaying the award in full.

Study Abroad Program

- Lottery rules vary for study abroad programs because of enrollment and grading issues. If you choose to participate in a study abroad program, you will be provided with more information.

Exceptions for Military Service

- The state allows certain exceptions for military personnel and their families in regard to the lottery scholarship enrollment and residency rules. If your spouse, parent, child, or you are in active military duty, basic training, or employment with the Department of Defense, visit the [Non-traditional and Military Students \(and families\) webpage](#); the “Military dependents” and “Military students” sections include helpful information about the military exceptions.

Non-Traditional Lottery Recipients

- If you qualify for the lottery scholarship as a non-traditional student, you must meet all continuing eligibility requirements noted above.
- Additionally, you (and your spouse, if married) must have an Adjusted Gross Income of \$36,000 or less on the FAFSA to maintain eligibility.
- You may receive the Hope Scholarship until the first of the following terminating events:
 - Completion of an advanced degree program (i.e. Masters or Doctoral). Completion of baccalaureate degree is no longer a terminating event; OR
 - 5 years have passed since the student enrolled in an eligible postsecondary institution as a nontraditional student.
 - If a student received a HOPE Scholarship as a traditional age student before returning as a nontraditional student, the number of years as a previous recipient of the HOPE Scholarship is not included in the 5-year time limitation as a nontraditional student.

TELS for Advanced Degrees (i.e. Masters or Doctoral) Effective Fall 2023

- If you received a baccalaureate degree from an eligible Tennessee institution on-or-after July 1, 2023, you received either the traditional or non-traditional HOPE Lottery Scholarships for at least 1 semester, if you have not already reached your maximum 5 year Lottery program completion limit, AND if you are enrolled in an eligible advanced degree program (i.e. Masters or Doctoral), you may continue to receive your Lottery Scholarships until 1 of the following events occurs:
 - The student reaches the maximum 5-year TELS program completion limit, OR
 - The student completes an advanced degree program (i.e. Masters or Doctoral). Completion of baccalaureate degree is no longer a terminating event.
- You must enroll in the next immediate required Fall or Spring semester after graduating with their baccalaureate degree to maintain TELS continuing eligibility. Failure to do so will result in a total and permanent loss of TELS eligibility; however, if student has a valid and documentable circumstance, they may appeal the loss. For more information on filing an appeal, please [visit: https://www.mtsu.edu/financial-aid/appeals.php#lottery](https://www.mtsu.edu/financial-aid/appeals.php#lottery).
- You will not receive a TELS award for courses attempted towards a certificate (undergraduate or graduate) program OR on a 2nd baccalaureate degree. For lottery purposes, these programs are NOT considered advanced degrees.
- An Advanced degree (i.e. Masters or Doctoral) TELS recipient must maintain their enrollment status each Fall and Spring semester. (For example, a graduate student receiving a full-time award must remain enrolled in at least 9 hours through the end of the semester. A graduate student receiving a part-time award must remain enrolled in at least 5 hours through the end of the semester.)

- A student who withdraws or stops attending and drops below the required number of hours will lose eligibility for all future semesters and may be required to repay all or some of the current semester awards.
- Your TELS award will be based on the enrollment hours per semester that apply towards your eligible program of study.
- Student must be enrolled at least ½ time to be eligible to receive TELS funds for the semester:
 - Full-Time Award: Enrolled in 9 or more CPOS (Coursework towards Program of Study) hours
 - ¾ Time Award: Enrolled in 7-8 CPOS hours
 - ½ Time Award: Enrolled in 5-6 CPOS hours
 - Less than ½ Time Award: Enrolled in 1-4 CPOS hours.
 - Students enrolled less than ½ time MAY be eligible to receive funds for semester dependent on reason why enrolled less than ½ time. You would need to complete [Lottery Less Than Half-Time Exception Request form](#) for us to determine eligibility.

Enrolled Less than Half-Time

- If you are unable to enroll part-time in courses that pertain to your program of study due to one of the following three (3) circumstances, an exception may be considered and granted by the MTSU Financial Aid and Scholarships Office to allow for a reduced award:
 1. If you are enrolled less than half time due to anticipated graduation in the semester, OR
 2. If availability of course work in your program of study is limited to less than half time for the applicable semester, OR
 3. If your MTSU academic department limited your enrollment requirement to less than half time for the applicable semester, please review the [Lottery Less Than Half-Time Exception Request form](#) to see if you may qualify for a prorated Lottery award.

For More Information: You may find additional information about the Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship Program through the [Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation \(TSAC\)](#) or [MTSU](#) webpages or by contacting the MT One Stop.

Middle Tennessee State University does not discriminate against students, employees, or applicants for admission or employment on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, status as a protected veteran, genetic information, or any other legally protected class with respect to all employment, programs, and activities sponsored by MTSU. The Assistant to the President for Civil Rights Compliance has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies and can be reached at Cope Administration Building 116, 1301 East Main Street, Murfreesboro, TN 37132; Christy.Sigler@mtsu.edu; or 615-898-2185. Also see crc.mtsu.edu.

We strongly recommend that you print (or save on your computer) a copy of this information for your records and refer to it periodically to ensure that you remember how to retain your lottery scholarship. We additionally recommend that you check your MTSU email account periodically for any updates, as legislative changes are typically made in the summer and the state generally provides updated information in early fall.