

# **FLORIDA BRIGHT FUTURES SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

and the

# **HOME-EDUCATED STUDENT**



Florida Department of Education (FDOE)  
Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA)  
Bright Futures Scholarship Program (BF)

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# BRIGHT FUTURES and the HOME-EDUCATED STUDENT

*All requirements are subject to change with each legislative session.*

## **Students who are home-educated in Florida can apply for Bright Futures scholarships.**

The Bright Futures home education requirements differ from public and private high school requirements, so home educators should ***plan ahead!*** Ninth grade is not too early to start planning for Bright Futures.

In addition to the general scholarship requirements described in Chapter One of the Bright Futures Student Handbook, home-educated students must meet three (and possibly four) criteria to qualify for the Bright Futures Academic or Medallion Scholar awards:

1. Be registered as a home-educated student with the county school district where the student lives during both grades 11 and 12.
2. Document service hours completed any time during high school and before graduation.
3. Meet home education test score requirements.
4. With lower test scores, students may qualify by documenting a minimum 3.0 weighted grade point average (GPA) on the Bright Futures 16 core academic credits (on official, FDOE-accepted transcripts – see College Entrance Exams (ACT or SAT) and Transcripts section below).

Note: Home-educated students are not eligible for the Gold Seal Vocational scholarship.

## **REGISTRATION**

Florida statutes require that home-educated students must be registered with their local school district during 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades to be eligible for Bright Futures. The school district will certify registration to FDOE online after the Florida Financial Aid Application (FFAA) is submitted during the student's senior year.

**If the student was not home-educated during grades 11 and 12**, but has the required official transcript of coursework, service hours and test scores, he/she may choose to apply as a Florida GED graduate. See the GED information in Chapter 1 of the Bright Futures Student Handbook for more information.

**If a student is enrolled at a private school**, be **certain** that the school is registered with the FDOE School Choice Office, (800) 447-1636 or [Florida School Choice.org](http://FloridaSchoolChoice.org). If the private school is not registered in Florida, the school cannot submit a transcript for Bright Futures evaluation.

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## SERVICE HOURS

Volunteer service can be performed at any time during high school, but the required hours must be completed by the date of high school graduation. At least 100 hours are required for the Florida Academic Scholars award; at least 75 hours are required for the Florida Medallion Scholars award. The following guidelines are provided for service hours:

- Supporting documentation for service hours **must be submitted to the home education office** at your local school district. The district will certify the service hours to FDOE after the Florida Financial Aid Application [FFAA] is submitted during the student's senior year.
- Service hours must be volunteer hours that do not benefit the student financially or materially (for example, a student cannot receive free tuition to a church summer camp in exchange for volunteer hours), or be service to family members (parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, and spouses, including all step relations).
- The agencies where the service hours were earned must provide documentation on the agency's letterhead of the number of hours and dates of service.
- Service hours for the home-educated student may be served with a wide variety of public service organizations. Examples of acceptable agencies include (but are not limited to) religious organizations, libraries, museums, nursing homes, animal shelters, food banks, homeless shelters, etc.

## COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMS (ACT or SAT)

Students may take the ACT or SAT tests through June 30th of their senior year. When registering for the exam, students must request test score reports be sent to at least one of Florida's state universities, state colleges, or public high schools. These scores will be sent to the FDOE test score repository and will be available for Bright Futures evaluations.

If a student takes the ACT or SAT multiple times, Bright Futures uses the highest subsection scores to create a best overall composite score. However, ACT and SAT scores are not mixed. There is no limit to the number of times a student may retake the exams. ACT scores of .5 or higher are rounded up; SAT scores do not require rounding.

**Minimum Required Test Scores** (for 2013-14 high school graduates and thereafter):

***NOTE: FOR BOTH EXAMS, THE REQUIRED TEST SCORES DO NOT INCLUDE THE WRITING PORTION.***

**For the Florida Academic Scholars (FAS) award:** A best combined score of 1290 SAT or 29 ACT.

**For the Florida Medallion Scholars (FMS) award – TWO WAYS to qualify:**

A best combined score of 1220 SAT or 27 ACT.

**OR**

A best combined score of 1170 SAT or 26 ACT and a weighted 3.0 GPA in the required 16 college preparatory credits, documented on OFFICIAL transcripts from any of the four sources listed below.

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## TRANSCRIPTS

Bright Futures does not accept parent-generated home-education transcripts. Bright Futures accepts only official transcripts from the following sources:

- Florida Virtual School
- Florida state or community colleges (for dual-enrollment coursework)
- Florida public high schools
- FDOE-registered private high schools (see the [School Choice](#) page on FDOE website)

Transcripts may be sent by mail or electronically.

- Paper transcripts must be sealed, official transcripts from the issuing school. Send to:  
Department of Education  
Bright Futures Program  
325 W. Gaines Street Suite 1314  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400  
Attn: Home Education
- Please refer to Chapter 1 of the Bright Futures Student Handbook for information concerning sending electronic transcripts.

The student must achieve a minimum 3.0 weighted GPA in the following 16 college preparatory academic credits:

- 4 English (3 must include substantial writing)
- 4 Mathematics (at or above the Algebra I level)
- 3 Natural Science (2 must include substantial lab)
- 3 Social Science
- 2 World Language (sequential, in same language)

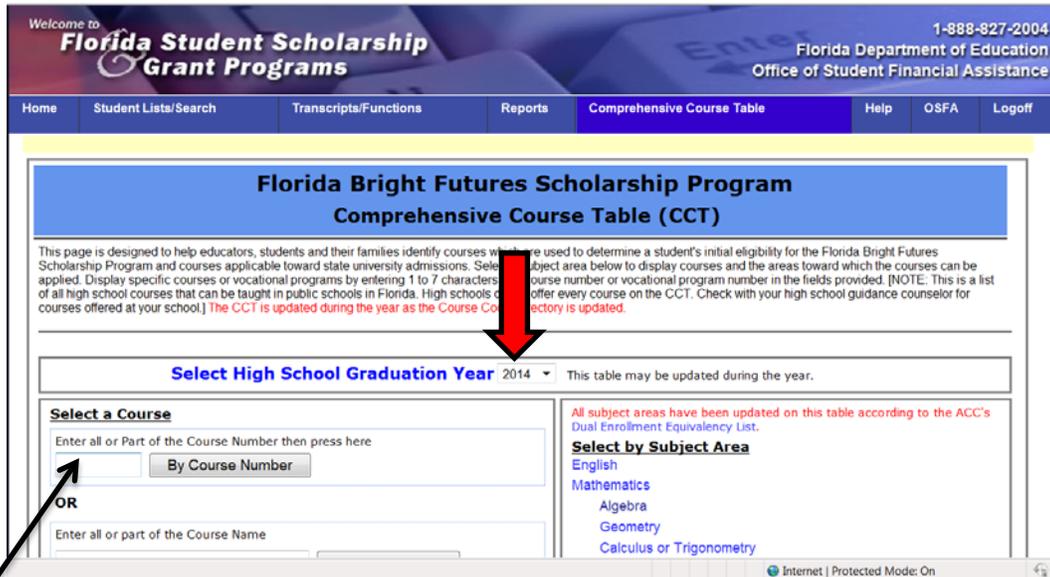
*The required coursework aligns with the State University System (SUS) admission requirements found in regulation 6.002.*

The student may use up to two additional, optional credits from courses in the academic areas listed above, or in AP, IB, or AICE fine arts courses, to raise the GPA if necessary. Non-academic courses such as Driver's Education, physical education, or music/drama are not included in the Bright Futures GPA calculation.

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## THE COMPREHENSIVE COURSE TABLE

To confirm if a particular state high school or dual enrollment course aligns with SUS admissions requirements, consult the [Comprehensive Course Table](#) on the DOE website. First, select the student's high school graduation year:



Enter the state's seven-digit high school course number, or the dual enrollment course number, to look up a course. A sample page of English classes from the CCT appears below.

Refer to the column headed **FAS/FMS** (Florida Academic Scholars/Florida Medallion Scholars). This column indicates whether a course is **Core** (accepted as meeting SUS admissions standards) or **Not core** (not accepted) for Bright Futures credit. Other columns allow you to confirm if a course is weighted (**Wghtd**), how many high school credits (**Max Credits**) the course carries, and what other courses are considered duplicates (**Dup Crse**). Click on the column headers for links to more information.

Course Number	Course Title	Subject Area	Max Credits	Effective Years	Wghtd	FAS/FMS	IB	AICE	4YR/GSV	3YR/GSV	Voc Crse	Dup Crse	SUS Admissn
1001300	ENG SKL I	EN	1.00	1988 - 2012	N	N	N	N	C	C	N	EN1	N
1001310	ENG I	EN	1.00	1990 - 2012	N	C	N	N	C	C	N	EN1	C
1001320	ENG HON I	EN	1.00	1990 - 2012	Y	C	N	N	C	C	N	EN1	C
1001330	ENG SKL II	EN	1.00	1990 - 2012	N	N	N	N	C	C	N	EN2	N
1001340	ENG II	EN	1.00	1990 - 2012	N	C	N	N	C	C	N	EN2	C
1001350	ENG HON II	EN	1.00	1990 - 2012	Y	C	N	N	C	C	N	EN2	C
1001360	ENG SKL III	EN	1.00	1990 - 2012	N	N	N	N	C	C	N	EN3	N
1001370	ENG III	EN	1.00	1990 - 2012	N	C	N	N	C	C	N	EN3	C
1001380	ENG HON III	EN	1.00	1990 - 2012	Y	C	N	N	C	C	N	EN3	C
1001390	ENG SKL IV	EN	1.00	1990 - 2012	N	N	N	N	C	C	N	EN4	N

For additional information regarding the GPA calculation, please refer to Chapter I of the Bright Futures Student Handbook.

# **BRIGHT FUTURES and the HOME-EDUCATED STUDENT**

## **EVALUATIONS FOR INITIAL SCHOLARSHIP ELIGIBILITY**

- Bright Futures applicants are evaluated for scholarship eligibility by August of each year.
- Students must have completed a Florida Financial Aid Application (FFAA) between December 1<sup>st</sup> and August 31<sup>st</sup> of their senior year in high school in order to receive an evaluation.
- The online award notification will be available in August.

## **MID-YEAR GRADUATION**

Home-educated students may choose to graduate in the middle of an academic year (between September 1<sup>st</sup> and January 31<sup>st</sup>) and, if eligible, begin receiving Bright Futures funding in the spring semester. Mid-year graduates must submit the Florida Financial Aid Application by August 31<sup>st</sup>, BEFORE they graduate. The mid-year deadline to take the ACT or SAT is January 31<sup>st</sup>.

If the student's plans change and he/she does not graduate by January 31<sup>st</sup>, the student must complete a new FFAA after December 1<sup>st</sup> of the senior year. Please refer to Chapter 1 of the Bright Futures Student Handbook for more information for mid-year graduates.

## **CHECKING AWARD STATUS**

Keep the User ID and PIN received after completion of the FFAA. **WRITE IT DOWN AND KEEP IT SAFE!** With this User ID, and following the instructions provided online, a student can edit his/her financial aid application, check eligibility status, read any notifications sent from FDOE, and monitor the use of scholarship funds throughout his/her college career.

NOTE: When completing the FFAA, the student indicates what college he/she is planning to attend. IF THIS CHANGES, log back into the FFAA and update the name of the new institution. The institution listed on the FFAA is the one that will be notified of the student's scholarship award.

**YOUR USER ID: KNOW IT, USE IT, BE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR STATE FINANCIAL AID!**

For more information, contact Bright Futures toll-free at (888) 827-2004.