



ACG & SMART Grant

Do You Meet the Requirements?

Academic Competitiveness Grants (ACG) and National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent (SMART) Grants are federal grants created to better prepare students for college by encouraging them to take challenging high school courses, and to continue their academic success in high demand college majors such as science, mathematics, technology, engineering and certain foreign languages. The following information will provide you with details on both the ACG and SMART Grant programs. Please note that the ACG and SMART Grant will be discontinued after the 2010-2011 academic year.

What Are the **Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG)** Eligibility Requirements?

Academic Competitiveness Grants are available to students who take challenging classes in high school and who meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen
- Be a Federal Pell Grant recipient for the same award year
- Complete a rigorous secondary school program of study (after January 1, 2006, if a first-year student, and after January 1, 2005, if a second-year student)
- Receive a high school diploma or certificate of completion if home-schooled
- Enroll at least half time in the first or second year of an undergraduate degree or certificate program at a two-year or four-year degree-granting institution
- Be a first-year student who was previously admitted to an ACG-eligible undergraduate program while in high school qualifies if he/ she was above compulsory school attendance age upon admission
- Be a second-year student with a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale at the end of the first academic year

What are the Award Amounts?

Eligible recipients will be awarded:

- Up to \$750 for eligible first-year students
- Up to \$1,300 for eligible second-year students

Recognized Rigorous Programs of Study a.k.a Challenging High School Classes

In addition to the eligibility requirements, high school graduates must have completed one of the following three options with passing grades, in order to qualify for the ACG:

Option 1.

To qualify for this option, students must have passing grades in the following courses:

- Four years of English
- Three years of math (including Algebra I and a higher level course such as Algebra II, geometry, or data analysis and statistics)
- Three years of science (including one year each of at least two of the following courses: biology, chemistry and physics)
- Three years of social studies
- One year of a language other than English

Option 2.

To qualify for this option, students are required to take a minimum of two Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses while in high school and achieve a minimum passing score on the exams for those classes. Students must score 3 or higher on AP exams and 4 or higher on IB exams.



Option 3.

Option 3 is similar to option 1 which was previously described, but offers some flexibility in fulfilling certain coursework requirements for students who graduated from an Iowa high school.

- Four years of English
- Three years of math (3 years includes, but is not limited to, the following selection or comparable courses: Algebra I, Algebra II, geometry, integrated math I, integrated math II, integrated math III, trigonometry, pre-calculus, calculus, statistics)
- Three years of science (3 years includes, but is not limited to, the following selection or comparable courses: biology, chemistry, physics, anatomy/physiology, earth/space science, astronomy, general science, environmental studies, integrated sciences)
- Three years of social studies
- One year of foreign language OR three courses in a career and technical sequence

Students who graduated from high school in a state other than Iowa can check the rigorous programs of study for their state at www2.ed.gov/admins/finaid/about/ac-smart/state-programs.html.

Are Home-Schooled Students Eligible?

Yes, as long as the student meets all eligibility requirements and has fulfilled the rigorous coursework requirements of either option 1 or option 2 listed on the prior page. The student's parent(s) or guardian(s) must provide the college or university with certification of high school completion and also provide documentation that the student completed the rigorous program requirements. This documentation may include a transcript (or equivalent) or a detailed course description listing secondary school courses completed by the student.

How Do I Apply?

Complete and submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as soon as possible after January 1 of your senior year of high school. If you complete the FAFSA online (www.fafsa.gov), you will have the opportunity to answer questions that will help determine your ACG eligibility.

If you submit a paper FAFSA you will need to call the Federal Student Aid Information Center at **1-800-4FED-AID** to determine your ACG eligibility.

What Are the SMART Grant Requirements?

National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent Grants (SMART Grants) are available to students who pursue college majors that are in high demand, such as math, science, technology, engineering and critical foreign languages* and who meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen
- Be a Federal Pell Grant recipient
- Enroll at least half time in the third or fourth year of an eligible undergraduate degree program, or the fifth year of an undergraduate degree program that requires five years of coursework
- Major in physical, life or computer science, engineering, mathematics, technology, or a critical foreign language
- Have at least a cumulative 3.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale at the end of each term

* A list of eligible foreign language majors is available on our website at <http://www.iowacollegeaid.gov/docs/file/EligibleMajors.pdf>.

What are the Award Amounts?

Eligible recipients will be awarded:

- Up to \$4,000 for each of their third, fourth, or if applicable, fifth years of study in an eligible undergraduate degree program

What Majors Qualify for SMART Grants?

A listing of majors that qualify for the SMART Grant program is available on our website at <http://www.iowacollegeaid.gov/docs/file/EligibleMajors.pdf>, or you can contact your college or university financial aid office.

How Do I Apply?

Complete and submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as soon as possible after January 1. If you meet all of the requirements and have submitted your FAFSA, please contact the financial aid office at your college or university to identify yourself as a potentially eligible student for the SMART Grant program.

Your Financial Aid Connection

If you still have questions after reviewing this guide, or if you would like more information on planning, preparing and paying for college, please call us. We will connect you to the information and resources you need to make college a success! You may reach us at:

Phone: 877-272-4456
Email: info@iowacollegeaid.gov
Website: www.IowaCollegeAid.gov

