



# Cal Grant Grade Point Average (GPA) Questions and Answers for Colleges

## Who should file a GPA with the Commission?

The Commission urges schools to submit GPAs for all students who may qualify for Cal Grants. Colleges may submit high school GPAs, college GPAs, and reestablished GPAs for their students and applicants (only California Community Colleges may submit reestablished GPAs). Colleges should also advise first-year students who do not have a Cal Grant to fill out the FAFSA and submit a high school GPA. First-year college students can be considered for the Entitlement Cal Grant during that first year after high school graduation.

## How may GPAs be submitted?

The most efficient way to submit GPAs is the Commission's College GPA Collection System, available through WebGrants. The WebGrants GPA function provides immediate feedback regarding GPAs that have been accepted and identifies errors in the upload. When the online GPA function is used, GPAs are certified electronically, eliminating the need to fax or mail a Verification Form.

If you don't currently have access to WebGrants or the GPA functions, contact the CSAC Technology Helpdesk.

## Who calculates Cal Grant GPAs and how are they calculated?

California law and regulations do not specify that a particular school official must calculate GPAs and complete the verification certifications. This is intentional to give schools latitude and flexibility. Most frequently, an official in the office responsible for maintaining student transcripts and records would calculate and submit GPAs. Upon occasion, counselors, financial aid advisors or others may complete verification certifications.

## Calculating High School GPAs

Colleges may verify high school GPAs, but note that the calculation of the Cal Grant GPA may differ from the one used for admissions purposes.

A high school GPA is calculated on a 4.00 scale computed to two decimal places, rounded to the nearest hundredth. The high school GPA must include all coursework for the sophomore year, the summer following the sophomore year, the junior year, and the summer following the junior year.

For high school graduates who apply after the senior year, a high school GPA includes senior year coursework. In both cases, grades from physical education, Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) and remedial courses must be excluded. GPAs shall only include the most recent grade for any course repeated by a student. Failing grades for courses that have not been retaken must be included. Remedial coursework is defined as any course that is not counted toward high school graduation.

## Calculating College and Community College GPAs

The GPA must be calculated on the basis of all completed college work, excluding nontransferable units and courses not counted in calculation for admission to a California public institution of higher education that grants a baccalaureate degree.

"All college work completed" means all coursework for which grades are known to the reporting official, and which are accepted for credit at the school reporting the GPA, regardless of the grade received.

College GPAs or community college GPAs may only be calculated for students who have earned or received at least 24 semester units, or its equivalent, regardless of the grade received.

Reestablished GPAs may be calculated for students who have earned at least 16, but less than 24 semester units, or the equivalent, at a community college.

"Nontransferable units" and "courses not counted in computation for admission to a California public institution of higher education that grants a baccalaureate degree" are defined for postsecondary institutions as follows:

- ◆ For purposes of calculating a college GPA by a postsecondary institution that grants a baccalaureate

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degree: “Nontransferable units” and “courses not counted in the computation for admission to a California public institution of higher education that grants a baccalaureate degree” are those courses which do not earn credit for a baccalaureate degree at the reporting institution.

- ◆ For purposes of calculating a college GPA by a postsecondary institution that grants an associate degree: “Nontransferable units” and “courses not counted in the computation for admission to a California public institution of higher education that grants a baccalaureate degree” are those courses which do not earn credit for an associate degree at the reporting institution.
- ◆ For purposes of computing a college GPA by a postsecondary institution that does not grant a baccalaureate degree or an associate degree: “Nontransferable units” are those units which are not used in satisfying requirements for earning a baccalaureate degree from a California public institution of higher education that grants such a degree. “Courses not counted in the computation for admission to a California public institution of higher education that grants a baccalaureate degree” are any for which the earned grade is not used in the computation of a GPA in determining admission eligibility, whether or not units earned for the course are transferable to such an institution.
- ◆ For purposes of calculating a community college GPA: “Nontransferable units” and “courses not counted in the computation for admission to a California public institution of higher education that grants a baccalaureate degree” means all courses except “Associate Degree Credit Courses” as defined by Title 5, Chapter 6, Article 1, Section 55002(a) of the California Code of Regulations.

### When should test scores (GED, ACT or SAT) be submitted in lieu of a GPA?

An applicant who does not have a GPA, or whose GPA is more than 5 years old, may submit the results from the General Educational Development test (GED), the American College Test (ACT) or the SAT Reasoning Test (SAT I) to be considered for a Cal Grant.

A high school student who does not attend a high school accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) or other recognized accreditation organization, or that does not have a University of

California-approved course list, must submit a GED, ACT, or SAT I test score to be considered for a Cal Grant award.

For those students who do not have a GPA or high school graduation date, the Commission will use the GED test date or the California High School Proficiency Examination (CHSPE) test date as equivalent to the date of high school graduation. However, the Commission will not accept results from the CHSPE in lieu of a GPA.

If a test score will be submitted in lieu of a verified GPA, the student must take the test early enough to submit the results on or before the March 2nd or September 2nd postmark deadlines required by California statute. A GPA Verification Form with the student’s Social Security number and signature must be attached when submitting test scores to ensure that students are considered in the award process.

### When should schools submit GPAs?

For the March 2nd deadline, the Commission begins accepting GPAs in September and urges schools to report GPA verifications as soon as possible.

### When will recipients be notified?

The Commission will begin notifying students of their Entitlement awards in mid-March. The timing of these notifications is driven by:

- ◆ Delivery to the Commission of College Cost information for all participating Cal Grant schools; and,
- ◆ The Commission’s receipt of an electronic file from the federal processor of the FAFSA; and,
- ◆ Receipt of a verified GPA for the student.

Competitive award notifications are e-mailed in late April for the March 2nd deadline and early October for the September 2nd deadline.