§ 1070a–1. Academic competitiveness grants

(a) Academic competitiveness grant program authorized

The Secretary shall award grants, in the amounts specified in subsection (d)(1), to eligible students to assist the eligible students in paying their college education expenses.

(b) Designation

A grant under this section—
   (1) for the first or second year of a program of undergraduate education shall be known as an “Academic Competitiveness Grant”; and
   (2) for the third, fourth, or fifth year of a program of undergraduate education shall be known as a “National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent Grant” or a “National SMART Grant”.

(c) Definition of eligible student

In this section the term “eligible student” means a student who, for the award year for which the determination of eligibility is made for a grant under this section—
   (1) is eligible for a Federal Pell Grant;
   (2) is enrolled or accepted for enrollment in an institution of higher education on not less than a half-time basis; and
   (3) in the case of a student enrolled or accepted for enrollment in—
      (A) the first year of a program of undergraduate education at a two- or four-year degree-granting institution of higher education (including a program of not less than one year for which the institution awards a certificate)—
         (i) has successfully completed, after January 1, 2006, a rigorous secondary school program of study that prepares students for college and is recognized as such by the State official designated for such recognition, or with respect to any private or home school, the school official designated for such recognition for such school, consistent with State law, which recognized program shall be reported to the Secretary; and
         (ii) has not been previously enrolled in a program of undergraduate education, except as part of a secondary school program of study;
      (B) the second year of a program of undergraduate education at a two- or four-year degree-granting institution of higher education (including a program of not less than two years for which the institution awards a certificate)—
         (i) (I) successfully completes, after January 1, 2005, but before July 1, 2009, a rigorous secondary school program of study established by a State or local educational agency and recognized as such by the Secretary; or
         (II) successfully completes, on or after July 1, 2009, a rigorous secondary school program of study that prepares students for college—
            (aa) that is recognized as such by the official designated for such recognition consistent with State law; and
(BB) about which the designated official has reported to the Secretary, at such time as the Secretary may reasonably require, in order to assist financial aid administrators to determine that the student is an eligible student under this section; or

(bb) that is recognized as such by the Secretary in regulations promulgated to carry out this section, as such regulations were in effect on May 6, 2008; and

(ii) has obtained a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 (or the equivalent as determined under regulations prescribed by the Secretary) at the end of the first year of such program of undergraduate education;

(C) the third or fourth year of a program of undergraduate education at a four-year degree-granting institution of higher education—

(i) is certified by the institution to be pursuing a major in—

(I) the physical, life, or computer sciences, mathematics, technology, or engineering (as determined by the Secretary pursuant to regulations); or

(II) a critical foreign language; and

(ii) has obtained a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 (or the equivalent as determined under regulations prescribed by the Secretary) in the coursework required for the major described in clause (i);

(D) the third or fourth year of a program of undergraduate education at an institution of higher education (as defined in section 1001 (a) of this title), is attending an institution that demonstrates, to the satisfaction of the Secretary, that the institution—

(i) offers a single liberal arts curriculum leading to a baccalaureate degree, under which students are not permitted by the institution to declare a major in a particular subject area, and the student—

(I) (aa) studies, in such years, a subject described in subparagraph (C)(i) that is at least equal to the requirements for an academic major at an institution of higher education that offers a baccalaureate degree in such subject, as certified by an appropriate official from the institution; and

(bb) has obtained a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 (or the equivalent as determined under regulations prescribed by the Secretary) in the relevant coursework; or

(II) is required, as part of the student’s degree program, to undertake a rigorous course of study in mathematics, biology, chemistry, and physics, which consists of at least—

(aa) 4 years of study in mathematics; and

(bb) 3 years of study in the sciences, with a laboratory component in each of those years; and

(ii) offered such curriculum prior to February 8, 2006; or

(E) the fifth year of a program of undergraduate education that requires 5 full years of coursework, as certified by the appropriate official of the degree-granting institution of higher education, for which a baccalaureate degree is awarded by a degree-granting institution of higher education—

(i) is certified by the institution of higher education to be pursuing a major in—

(I) the physical, life, or computer sciences, mathematics, technology, or engineering (as determined by the Secretary pursuant to regulations); or

(II) a critical foreign language; and

(ii) has obtained a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 (or the equivalent, as determined under regulations prescribed by the Secretary) in the coursework required for the major described in clause (i).
(d) Grant award

(1) Amounts

(A) In general

The Secretary shall award a grant under this section in the amount of—

(i) $750 for an eligible student under subsection (c)(3)(A);
(ii) $1,300 for an eligible student under subsection (c)(3)(B);
(iii) $4,000 for an eligible student under subparagraph (C) or (D) of subsection (c)(3),
for each of the two years described in such subparagraphs; or
(iv) $4,000 for an eligible student under subsection (c)(3)(E).

(B) Limitation; ratable reduction

Notwithstanding subparagraph (A)—

(i) in any case in which a student attends an institution of higher education on less than
a full-time basis, the amount of the grant that such student may receive shall be reduced
in the same manner as a Federal Pell Grant is reduced under section 1070a (b)(2)(B) of
this title;
(ii) the amount of such grant, in combination with the Federal Pell Grant assistance and
other student financial assistance available to such student, shall not exceed the student’s
cost of attendance;
(iii) if the amount made available under subsection (e) for any fiscal year is less than the
amount required to be provided grants to all eligible students in the amounts determined
under subparagraph (A) and clause (i) of this subparagraph, then the amount of the grant
to each eligible student shall be ratably reduced; and
(iv) if additional amounts are appropriated for any such fiscal year, such reduced amounts
shall be increased on the same basis as they were reduced.

(2) Limitations

(A) No grants for previous credit

The Secretary may not award a grant under this section to any student for any year of a program
of undergraduate education for which the student received credit before February 8, 2006.

(B) Number of grants

The Secretary may not award more than one grant to a student described in subsection (c)(3)
for each year of study described in such subsection.

(3) Calculation of grant payments

An institution of higher education shall make payments of a grant awarded under this section in
the same manner, using the same payment periods, as such institution makes payments for Federal
Pell Grants under section 1070a of this title.

(e) Funding

(1) Authorization and appropriation of funds

There are authorized to be appropriated, and there are appropriated, out of any money in the
Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for the Department of Education to carry out this section—

(A) $790,000,000 for fiscal year 2006;
(B) $850,000,000 for fiscal year 2007;
(C) $920,000,000 for fiscal year 2008;
(D) $960,000,000 for fiscal year 2009; and
(E) $1,010,000,000 for fiscal year 2010.

(2) Availability of funds
Funds made available under paragraph (1) for a fiscal year shall remain available for the succeeding fiscal year.

(f) Recognition of programs of study

The Secretary shall recognize not less than one rigorous secondary school program of study in each State under subparagraphs (A) and (B) of subsection (c)(3) for the purpose of determining student eligibility under such subsection.

(g) Sunset provision

The authority to make grants under this section shall expire at the end of award year 2010–2011.
“(bb) that is recognized as such by the Secretary in regulations promulgated to carry out this section, as such regulations were in effect on May 6, 2008; and”.

See Effective Date of 2008 Amendment notes below.


Subsec. (c)(3)(B). Pub. L. 110–227, § 10(a)(3)(C)(iii)(I), in introductory provisions, substituted “year of a program of undergraduate education at a two- or four-year degree-granting institution of higher education (including a program of not less than two years for which the institution awards a certificate)” for “year of a program of undergraduate education at a two- or four-year degree-granting institution of higher education”.

Subsec. (c)(3)(B)(i). Pub. L. 110–315, § 402(a)(1)(A)(ii), added cl. (i) and struck out former cl. (i) which read as follows: “has successfully completed, after January 1, 2005, a rigorous secondary school program of study established by a State or local educational agency and recognized as such by the Secretary; and”.


Subsec. (c)(3)(C)(i)(II). Pub. L. 110–227, § 10(a)(3)(C)(iv)(II), added subcl. (II) and struck out former subcl. (II) which read as follows: “a foreign language that the Secretary, in consultation with the Director of National Intelligence, determines is critical to the national security of the United States; and”.


Subsec. (d)(1)(A). Pub. L. 110–227, § 10(a)(4)(A)(ii), inserted heading, substituted “subsection (c) or (D) of subsection (c)(3), for each of the two years described in such subparagraphs; or” for “subsection (c)(3)(C).” in cl. (iii), and added cl. (iv).

Subsec. (d)(1)(B). Pub. L. 110–227, § 10(a)(4)(A)(ii), inserted heading, added cl. (i), and redesignated former cls. (i) to (iii) as (ii) to (iv), respectively.

Subsec. (d)(2), (3). Pub. L. 110–227, § 10(a)(4)(B), (C), added paras. (2) and (3) and struck out former par. (2). Prior to amendment, text read as follows: “The Secretary shall not award a grant under this section—

“(A) to any student for an academic year of a program of undergraduate education described in subparagraph (A), (B), or (C) of subsection (c)(3) for which the student received credit before February 8, 2006; or

“(B) to any student for more than—

“(i) one academic year under subsection (c)(3)(A); or

“(ii) one academic year under subsection (c)(3)(B); or

“(iii) two academic years under subsection (c)(3)(C).”

Subsec. (e)(2). Pub. L. 110–315, § 402(a)(1)(B), amended par. (2) generally. Prior to amendment, text read as follows: “If, at the end of a fiscal year, the funds available for awarding grants under this section exceed the amount necessary to make such grants in the amounts authorized by subsection (d), then all of the excess funds shall remain available for awarding grants under this section during the subsequent fiscal year.” See Effective Date of 2008 Amendment notes below.

Pub. L. 110–227, § 10(a)(5), added par. (2) and struck out former par. (2), as amended by Pub. L. 110–315, § 402(a)(1)(B). Prior to amendment, text read as follows: “If, at the end of a fiscal year, the funds available for awarding grants under this section exceed the amount necessary to make such grants in the amounts authorized by subsection (d), then all of the excess funds shall remain available for awarding grants under this section during the subsequent fiscal year.” See Effective Date of 2008 Amendment notes below.

Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 110–227, § 10(a)(6), substituted “not less than one” for “at least one” and “subparagraphs (A) and (B) of subsection (c)(3)” for “subsection (c)(3)(A) and (B)”.

Subsec. (g). Pub. L. 110–227, § 10(a)(7), substituted “award” for “academic”.

Effective Date of 2008 Amendment


Effective Date

Section effective July 1, 2006, except as otherwise provided, see section 8001(c) of Pub. L. 109–171, set out as an Effective Date of 2006 Amendment note under section 1002 of this title.