

The Mississippi Office of State Student Financial Aid is happy to announce that beginning with the 2003/2004 academic year our application is now an on-line application. Students may visit our web site and complete the on-line application and receive an immediate confirmation that they were successful in completing the application, and that our office will receive the data within 48 hours. Once we receive an electronic application our system is set up to begin the tracking process on the applicant. Based upon certain data provided, the system determines the necessary supporting documentation needed prior to an award being made. The system will then generate letters to the applicants requesting this information. Once the documents are received and entered into the system an award is made.

We require the National ACT score; therefore, we are on a data exchange with ACT to collect this information eliminating the need for the applicant to provide our office with a paper copy.

We are able to receive an electronic grade file from the high schools providing us with the Grade Point Average (GPA) on all high school seniors which we use to determine initial eligibility.

For those renewal students (students currently receiving state funds) we are able to receive grade and enrollment information from the colleges/universities to determine continuing eligibility which eliminates the need for college transcripts to be provided at the end of each enrollment period.

We currently interface with the U.S. Department of Education for the collection of the Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR) data, which is used in conjunction with two of our state funded programs.

While we are not quite to the point of EFT, we are able to provide the colleges/universities with an electronic roster of those students for whom awards have been made. This is done on a weekly basis and this allows schools to credit those student's accounts in anticipation of funds being received by the school within two weeks.

Our goal for the future is the ability for students to check the progress of their on-line award, as well as, the tracking of any needed documents.

#2. The Mississippi Office of State Student Financial Aid administers one need-based program. For those students that qualify for both the need based and the merit-based award we allow the student to decide which program will best fit their needs.

#3. Fortunately, the changes in state and federal tax policies have not affected our state aid policies.