



Connecticut
Community
Colleges

Education That Works For a Lifetime

Implementing the Academic Competitiveness Grant Program in the Banner Financial Aid System

August 2006

Introduction

As you know, on February 8, 2006 President Bush signed into law the Higher Education Reconciliation Act of 2005 (HERA). Among many provisions, the law establishes a new grant program effective July 1, 2006 for first and second year college students. All colleges participating in the Federal Pell Grant program must also participate in the Academic Competitiveness Grant (AC Grant) program.

This implementation guide will help users of the Banner Financial Aid System configure the proper validation tables and forms for their college. The Banner Financial Aid Team has already performed much of the administrative work necessary for your proper management of the AC Grant program. This guide will detail the setup work necessary at your college as well as provide all users with some operational guidance in the use of the new AC Grant reports, forms, and processes. As always, if you have any questions please contact User Support at SYS-BannerFinAidHelp@commnet.edu or telephone 860.244.7802.

Student Eligibility

An eligible student may receive an Academic Competitiveness Grant (AC Grant) of up to \$750 for the first academic year of study and up to \$1,300 for the second academic year of study. To be eligible for each academic year, a student must:

- Be a U.S. citizen;
- Be a Federal Pell Grant recipient;
- Be enrolled full-time in an associates degree program;
- Be enrolled in the first or second academic year of his or her program of study at a two-year or four-year degree-granting institution;
- Have completed 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);
- If a first-year student, not have been previously enrolled as a “regular student” (matriculated) in an undergraduate program while still a secondary school student; and
- If a second-year student, have at least a cumulative 3.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale for the first academic year.

Rigorous secondary school program of study

The Secretary of Education is recognizing the set of options identified below as rigorous secondary school programs of study for at least the next two academic years (2006-07 and 2007-08).

- ***Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses and test scores.***

A student may demonstrate that he or she has taken two AP or IB courses and received passing scores on the AP (3 or better) or IB (4 or better) tests.

- ***A set of courses similar to those required under the State Scholars Initiative.***
A student may demonstrate that he or she has completed a set of courses which includes four years of English; three years of Mathematics – including algebra 1 and a higher level class 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, physics); three years of social studies, and one year of a language other than English.
- ***The State Scholars Initiative requirements.***
A student may complete the courses required under the State Scholars Initiative (4 years English; 3 years Mathematics – algebra 1, geometry and algebra 2; 3 years Science – biology, chemistry, physics; 3.5 years Social Studies – chosen from U.S. history (1), world history (1), world geography (1), economics (0.5) or government (0.5); and 2 years World Language (same language). This program, supported by Congress, establishes a required set of courses that is patterned after the recommendations of the National Commission on Excellence in Education. High schools currently participating in the program are Wilbur Cross High School and Metropolitan Business High School, both in New Haven, and Danbury High School. For more information, visit <http://www.ctscholars.org/intro.htm>. (CT6001)
- ***For Connecticut Technical High School Graduates***
A specific set of courses “similar to those required under the State Scholars Initiative” AND achievement of standard on the corresponding National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) trade certification. (replaces the 1 year foreign language requirement). (CT0001)
- ***Dual-Enrollment Program Participants***
There are three major programs providing dual enrollment currently in the state: Early College Experience (UConn program), High School Partnership, and Tech Prep. Students must have completed a minimum of two courses in the "core curriculum" and receive a grade of 3.0 or better in each course. “Core curriculum” for our purposes means general education courses, e.g. English, Mathematics, Reading/Language Arts, Sciences, Foreign Languages, the Arts, History, Geography, Civics and Government, Economics. (CT0002)
- Students who are graduates of high schools in other states may meet the “rigorous secondary school program of study” for the respective state as determined by the Secretary of Education.
- Home-schooled students are eligible. Parents/Guardians must provide documentation as to completion of “rigorous program of study.”
- GED recipients are not eligible.

Establishing the New Funds for Academic Competitiveness Grants

We created separate fund codes for each year of the Academic Competitiveness Grant program. The new fund codes are associated with the new Banner ACG federal fund IDs on the Fund Base Data Form (RFRBASE). The new code is also included in the Federal Fund ID Table (RFFIID) as required data. Additional required data was delivered for new records in the Federal Rules Table (RPIFEDR). This data controls eligible class years, full-time enrollment requirements, and the maximum grant by program and class year. You may award the new AC Grant funds like any other non-Pell fund. You can award them manually or include them in auto-packaging rules.

You will note these 2 new funds in your college's RFRBASE form. We have adopted a common coding and naming practice for all colleges:

xACG1 – AC Grant for first-year students

xACG2 – AC Grant for second-year students

In addition, we have already arranged the finance detail codes for each fund for every college.

The screenshot shows the Banner/PROD - Connecticut Community College System RFRBASE form. The window title is "Banner/PROD - Connecticut Community College System" and the address bar shows "Capital Community College Fund Base Data RFRBASE 7.5.1 (PROD) [G_TBRADHAM] - Thursday August 24, 2006". The form displays a table with the following columns: Fund Code, Description, Accounts Receivable Detail, Fund Source, Fund Type, Federal Fund ID, Print Order, and Message Number. The row for fund code "GCAPMI" is highlighted in green.

Fund Code	Description	Accounts Receivable Detail	Fund Source	Fund Type	Federal Fund ID	Print Order	Message Number
GACG1	Academic Competitiveness Grant	GSC1	FDRL	GRNT	ACG	25	1
GACG2	Academic Competitiveness Grant	GSC2	FDRL	GRNT	ACG	26	1
GARTH	Arthur Bank's Scholarship	GS02	PRIV	GRNT		220	1
GBVH	BVH Scholarship	GS03	PRIV	SCHL		110	1
GCAP	Capital Scholarship	GS04	PRIV	SCHL		230	
GCAPCS	CT Aid to Pub Comm Srv		STAT	WORK		44	1
GCAPGT	State CAP Grant	GGCP	STAT	GRNT	GTIV	40	1
GCAPMI	CT Aid to Pub Stud Gr/Min	GGCM	STAT	GRNT	GTIV	45	1
GCAPWS	State Work Study		STAT	WORK		61	1
GCCG	Capital Community Grant	GGIN	INST	GRNT		30	1
GFSEOG	Federal SEOG Grant	GGSG	FDRL	GRNT	SEOG	50	1
GFWS	Federal Work Study		FDRL	WORK	CWS	60	1
GGHF	Htfd Found for Pub Giving	GGHF	PRIV	SCHL		135	
GGMK	E. Stewart McKirdy EC Schol	GGMK	INST	SCHL		139	
GHIGS	Hartford Insurance Group Schol	GS05	PRIV	SCHL		120	1
GJGMS	Judge Graham Memorial Schol	GS06	PRIV	SCHL		130	1
GLATIN	Latino Scholarship		PRIV	GRNT		85	1
GLORD	Lord Scholarship	GS07	PRIV	SCHL		140	1
GMART	Martin L. King Scholarship	GS08	PRIV	SCHL		200	
GMASS	Mass. Mutual Foundation Schol.	GS09	PRIV	SCHL		150	
GMATS	MaryAnn Tarasuk Mem Schol.	GS10	PRIV	SCHL		160	
GMISC	Miscellaneous Scholarship	GS11	PRIV	SCHL		240	

At the bottom of the window, there is a status bar showing "Fund Code." and "Record: 8/?".

Fund Management Form (RFRMGMT)

Each college must complete the setup for each new fund on the RFRMGMT form using the recommended settings below:

Aid Year – 0607

Fund Code – xACG1 (Academic Competitiveness Grant)

Fund Tab

Base Fund section - data is already populated with data previously entered on RFRBASE.

Aid Year Specific section –

Budget Allocated	999,999,999.00
Over Commitment Percent	100

Packaging Tab

Award Maximum	750.00
Award Minimum	0
Offer Status	OFRD
Accept Status	ACPT
Decline Status	DECL
Automatic Packaging	Y
Automatic Scheduling	Y
Automatic Acceptance	Y

The following indicators must remain unchecked:

- Override Need
- Override Need to Cost of Attendance
- Override Satisfactory Academic Progress
- Override Requirement
- Replace EFC

Reduce Need	Y
Loan Process	N
Need Analysis	Y
Award Letter	Y
Equity Fund	Y
Count for NCAA	N
Web Accept Flag	Y

The following fields must be left blank:

Rebate Fee Percentage
Loan Fee Percentage
Interest Rate
Direct Loan Indicator
Electronic Loan Indicator
Manual Loan Indicator
Self Help Reduction Percentage
LMS Loan Fund
Alternative Loan Program Type

Round Award 001
Round Schedule RD=Round Dollars
Memo Credit Offered
Disburse System

Disbursement Tab

If Disbursement Load Code > Than Packaging Load Code	N = No Disbursement
Payment Percent for $\frac{3}{4}$ Load	0
Payment Percent for $\frac{1}{2}$ Load	0
Payment Percent for $< \frac{1}{2}$ Load	0
Change Load During Term	A
Use Attending Hours	N
Use Disb. Enrollment Edits for Memo	N
Recoup When Award Reduced	Y
If Ineligible Before Cut off Date	B = Backout Disbursements
If Ineligible After Cut off Date	D = Disregard

The following indicators must remain unchecked:

If Selected for Verification but is Not Complete
Override General Tracking Requirements
Create Promissory Note Tracking Requirements when Accepted

The Disbursement Locks, Fund Comments, Budget, Detail Code Rules, Tracking and Messages Tabs are all left blank.

Copy Tab

Aid Year 0607
Fund Code xACG2
Press the Copy button.

All xACG1 RFRMGMT data has now been copied to the xACG2 fund in RFRMGMT.

Very Important!!! You must change the xACG2 Award Maximum amount.

Confirm that you are still in the xACG2 fund.

Packaging Tab

Award Maximum 1300.00

SAVE

Your set-up is now complete.

Identifying Potential Recipients of AC Grants

The U.S. Department of Education has indicated that they will inform colleges of a student's potential eligibility through comment codes on the ISIR record once the student has completed the self-certification process. Colleges must review all ISIR records to determine if the student may be eligible to receive an AC Grant.

Comment code 271 will be listed on the ISIR for all potential AC Grant recipients:

The financial aid administrator at your college will determine if you are eligible for an ACG. All follow-up information about your grant eligibility will come from the financial aid office at your college.

This comment code is being included on all the traditional ISIR files and various ISIR message classes. It is also included on the new IGAA07OP message class ISIRS that are CPS-pushed and reflect a student's self-certification on the Department's website. We have modified our evening dataload process to accommodate this new message class.

AC Grant Eligibility Report

To assist colleges in the identification and evaluation of students who have self-certified as AC Grant eligible, we have created a new process and report. The AC Grant Eligibility Report (RWRACG01) is available both to financial aid staff and the college

official responsible for certifying that students have completed a rigorous secondary school program of study.

The RWRACG01 process/report identifies financial aid applicants with the 271 comment code on the most current ISIR record. The report lists each student's name and Banner ID. The report also examines each student's eligibility by assessing the student's personal and financial aid data. If a student is eligible for the AC Grant, a "Y" appears in the Eligible column; if not, an "N" will appear. If a student is not eligible, the reason(s) are printed alongside in the "Reasons" column.

Students who meet all the eligibility criteria for a grant but have not yet been evaluated as to whether or not they completed a rigorous secondary school program will have an "N" and a Reason Code of "Rigorous Program." In this manner both the financial aid office and the rigorous program evaluation official can identify students quickly.

Students who have already been awarded an AC Grant for the current award year will not appear on the report. Also, students who are evaluated as not meeting the rigorous program standard will fall off the report.

The RWRACG01 process/report is run as all Banner jobs through the job submission control form (GJAPCTL). There are 2 simple parameters. Parameter 1 is the aid year (0607) and parameter 2 allows you to also request a Common Separated File (CSV) layout as well as the traditional PDF report output. The CSV file contains data not in the PDF report such as the student mailing address, e-mail address, and telephone number. The CSV file will open in Microsoft Excel.

A sample of the PDF report follows on the next page.

Name	Banner Id	Eligible	Reason
Grant, Pella	@11111111	Y	
Turner, Fred	@01112222	Y	
Currici, Charlie	@33333333	N	H.S. Grad Date Rigorous Program
Fin, Aida	@22222222	N	H.S. Grad Date/Yr in College Rigorous Program
Learner, Lilly	@12345678	N	No Pell Citizenship Rigorous Program
Student, Sally	@56789101	N	Not in Degree Program Rigorous Program

Awarding the Academic Competitiveness Grant

The hard-coded Award Validation process verifies that the student has a Pell award for the aid year with an offer amount greater than 0. The process also verifies that the student is a U.S. citizen and is in the first or second year of his program. The Banner Year in College field on the Need Analysis Form (RNANAXX) is used for this purpose. As with all our financial aid programs, Banner Year in College is determined by the student's earned credits. Students with less than 30 credits are classified as freshman or first-year students. Students with 30 or more credits are classified as sophomore or second-year students. Upon record creation, a review is done of the student's academic standing, and a database trigger inserts the proper code in the Banner Year in College field.

The verification of a student completing a rigorous secondary school program only needs to be completed once for a student. It is a requirement that a college document and retain the material used in determining the eligible type of rigorous program completed by the student.

Applicant High School Data Form (ROAHSDT)

A new form – the Applicant High School Data Form (ROAHSDT) - maintains the necessary information for determining the student's eligibility for the completion of a rigorous secondary school program. Financial aid staffs have query access only to this form. Only the college official responsible for certifying a student's completion of the rigorous program requirements may modify this form. Only one of the criteria for a rigorous program must be met for the student to be eligible. The Award Validation process verifies that at least one of the requirements has been met.

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "Banner/PROD - Connecticut Community College System". The address bar indicates the URL is "Banner/PROD - Connecticut Community College System - \\Remote, 128-bit SSL/TLS.". The browser's address bar shows the page title: "Capital Community College Applicant High School Data ROAHSDT 7.5.1 (PROD) [G_TBRADHAM] - Thursday August 24, 2006".

The form content includes:

- ID:
- Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate Courses:
- Required Courses Similar to State Scholars Initiative:
- State Recognized Program of Study:
- State of Student's High School Graduation:
- Student's High School Graduation Date:

At the bottom of the browser window, there is a status bar with the text: "ID; Press LIST for Name/ID search, DUP ITEM for Alternate ID Search. Record: 1/1 | | | | | <OSC>".

The criteria have been defined on the ROAHSDT form as follows:

Field 1: Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate Courses

Field 2: Required Courses Similar to State Scholars Initiative

Field 3: State Recognized Program of Study

For field 3, a State Recognized Program of Study, the user is presented with a new Banner form – the State Advanced/Honors Program Codes (RPISAH). This validation table is maintained by SunGard HE and includes all of the state-approved rigorous programs from throughout the country. Of particular interest to us in Connecticut are the 3 approved state programs:

- Connecticut Technical High School System Program (CT0001)
- Connecticut Dual Enrollment Program (CT0002)
- Connecticut State Scholars Initiative Requirements (CT6001)

State	Program Code	Description	COD Program Code	Effective From Year	Effective To Year
AL	AL0001	Alabama Advanced Academic Endorsement	01	2007	9999
AL	AL0002	High Schools That Work Award of Educational Achievement	01	2007	9999
AR	AR0001	Arkansas Academic Challenge Core Curriculum	01	2007	9999
AR	AR0002	Arkansas Coursework Option	01	2007	9999
AR	AR6001	Arkansas State Scholars Initiative Requirements	01	2007	9999
AZ	AZ0001	Arizona Dual Credit Coursework Program	01	2007	9999
AZ	AZ6001	Arizona State Scholars Initiative Requirements	01	2007	9999
CA	CA0001	California Golden State Seal Merit Diploma	01	2007	9999
CA	CA0002	California A-G Requirements	01	2007	9999
CO	CO0001	Colorado Higher Education Admission Requirements (HEAR)	01	2007	9999
CO	CO6001	Colorado State Scholars Initiative Requirements	01	2007	9999
CT	CT0001	Connecticut Technical High School System Program	01	2007	9999
CT	CT0002	Connecticut Dual Enrollment Program	01	2007	9999
CT	CT6001	Connecticut State Scholars Initiative Requirements	01	2007	9999
DD	DD0001	Department of Defense Education Activity	01	2007	9999
DE	DE0001	Delaware Distinguished Achievement Diploma	01	2007	9999
DE	DE0002	Delaware Coursework Requirements	01	2007	9999
DE	DE0003	High Schools That Work Award of Educational Achievement	01	2007	9999
FL	FL0001	Florida Bright Futures Program	01	2007	9999
GA	GA0001	Georgia College Preparatory with Distinction Diploma	01	2007	9999
HI	HI0001	High Schools That Work Award of Educational Achievement	01	2007	9999
IA	IA0001	Iowa Coursework Requirements	01	2007	9999

The State code for the approved Advanced or Honors Program

Record: 1/? | ... | <OSC>

The rigorous program certification official will use this form to document the evaluation s/he has conducted of the material submitted by the student as evidence of completion of a rigorous secondary school program of study. For fields 1 & 2, we suggest answering each with a Yes or No response. For field 3, either leave blank or enter the proper code & program from the RPISAH table.

Eligible High School Date of Graduation

To be eligible for the AC Grant, a student must have completed 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. The Award Validation process checks the student's high school graduation date to determine the student's eligibility.

The Applicant High School Data Form (ROAHSDT) is also used to collect the student's date of high school graduation as well as the state of the high school. Rather than populate this form manually, we decided to populate these two fields from data already in the Banner system and stored in student data tables. We ran a batch process earlier this month to update these fields for all students with a financial aid record. As new financial aid records are created, a database trigger will input data in these fields from the appropriate student tables. If a change in data occurs in the student tables, yet another database trigger will update these two fields on ROAHSDT.

To maintain synchronization between the data in the student tables and the financial aid tables for these fields, we strongly suggest users not modify these fields on ROAHSDT manually, but rather refer the student to the appropriate college admissions or records office to update the data in the student tables. Once the data is corrected, the database trigger will update ROAHSDT.

Grade Point Average Requirement

To be eligible for a 2nd year AC Grant, a student must have a 3.0 grade point average (on a 4.0 scale) at the end of the first year in college. To assist colleges in the award process, we have created a fund awarding rule on RORRULE for each college for the xACG2 fund. For consistency, we have used our Inclusive GPA – the same GPA used to determine academic progress compliance – for this award rule. You will not be able to award a 2nd year AC Grant to a student with a GPA less than 3.0.

Disbursing the AC Grant

We have hard-coded disbursement edits into the Banner system so that the following criteria must be met before an AC Grant will disburse to a student's account:

- Pell Eligibility. This edit verifies that the student has a Pell Grant award paid for the term being disbursed.
- U.S. Citizen
- Enrolled Full-time
- GPA of 3.0 for 2nd year AC Grant
- Rigorous Program certification
- Enrollment in degree program

Electronic Statements of Account

Beginning July 29, 2006, Electronic Statements of Account files (ESOA) for the AC Grant program were sent to colleges' SAIG mailbox. The ESOAs will be generated when funding levels change for a college in the AC Grant program.

We have modified our customized COD import process RWPCODI to allow you to load the ESOA reports received for the AC Grant program. The new message class for the AC Grant program is AGAS07OP. The data imported from these files is displayed on the Detailed Summary of Account Form (REIDSOA) as well as the Summary Form (REISSOA). A new tab format has been added to segregate Pell and AC Grant data.