

Highest Ranking Graduate and Texas First Scholarship Guidance

The [Highest Ranking Graduate](#) (HRG) program awards the student graduating at the top of a high school class a tuition waiver for the student’s freshman year of college. The [Texas First Early High School Completion Program](#) and the [Texas First Scholarship Program](#) allow public high school students who demonstrate early readiness for college to graduate early from high school and receive a scholarship.

This resource is designed to distinguish between the two programs and address common questions. Additional information links are at the end of this document.

Question	Highest Ranking Graduate	Texas First Scholarship
<p>Who qualifies for the tuition waiver or scholarship?</p>	<p>The highest ranking graduate is a student who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is a Texas resident, nonresident, or foreign student; • Is a graduate from an accredited high school in the State of Texas* and • Has the highest rank in their high school based on school or district policy. <p>Districts and schools set their own policies to determine class rank and the highest ranking graduate. It is a local decision, and policies for determining class rank will vary.</p> <p>* Public and charter high schools accredited by TEA and private schools accredited by the Texas Private School Accreditation Commission (TEPSAC) or International Association for Learner Driven Schools (IALDS).</p>	<p>To qualify for a Texas First Scholarship, a student must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be a resident of Texas; • have graduated early from high school under the Texas First Early High School Completion Program as specified in 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §21.52; • have completed the verification process after graduation and received the certificate from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB); • be enrolled at an eligible institution, as outlined in 19 TAC §22.552 (relating to Eligible Institutions); • comply with Texas Education Code (TEC) §28.0256; and • meet applicable standards outlined in 19 TAC Chapter 22, Subchapter A (relating to General Provisions), including 19 TAC §22.3 (relating to Student Compliance with Selective Service Registration).
<p>Which institutions of higher education honor the award?</p>	<p>Texas public colleges, technical colleges, and universities may honor the HRG tuition waiver.</p>	<p>Texas public colleges, technical colleges, and universities are required to honor the Texas First Scholarship award.</p>

Question	Highest Ranking Graduate	Texas First Scholarship
How does the student obtain the funds for tuition?	A student's high school will provide the HRG with the tuition waiver document to provide to the institution of higher education (IHE). The IHE will waive the tuition fee. No direct funds are provided.	After a student graduates under the Texas First Early High School Completion Program, a high school administrator must complete the verification form (located through the THECB's Texas On-Course portal). Once the verification form has been processed by THECB, the student will receive an email certificate verifying the student's eligibility for the Texas First Scholarship. The student will present this certificate to the student's IHE financial aid office. The IHE will then process the scholarship.
How much is the award?	<p>The award is free tuition during both semesters of the first regular school year immediately following the student's high school graduation.</p> <p>Books, fees, supplies, and housing are not included in the waiver.</p>	<p>Students who graduate two or more semesters before their class receive a two-semester scholarship, not to exceed the equivalent of the amount of the TEXAS grant.</p> <p>Students who graduate one semester early receive a one-semester scholarship.</p> <p>The scholarship may include mandatory fees and other costs of attendance, including books and housing expenses.</p>
When does the award expire?	The free tuition is available during both semesters of the first regular school year immediately following the student's high school graduation. An exemption may be granted for any one of the first four regular sessions following the individual's graduation from high school by petitioning the institution's president.	The scholarship offer will expire at the end of the first academic year following a student's high school graduation.
Where does statute reference this program?	<p>Highest Ranking High School Graduates TEC §54.301</p> <p>Continued Receipt of Exemptions or Waivers Conditional TEC §54.2001</p>	<p>Texas First Scholarship Program TEC §56, Subchapter K-1</p> <p>Texas First Scholarship 19 TAC Part I, Chapter 22, Subchapter T (§22.550-22.556)</p>
Where can I find more information on the program?	Highest Ranking Graduate Program	The Texas First Program
Whom do I contact with additional questions?	Please submit a Help Desk ticket to TEA regarding the Highest Ranking Graduate program.	Please submit a Help Desk ticket to TEA's Curriculum department or contact the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board by emailing Suzanne Morales-Vale: suzanne.morales-vale@highered.texas.gov .

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Additional Questions

Question: Can a student receive both the Highest Ranking Graduate (HRG) waiver and the Texas First Scholarship?

Answer: The determination of the HRG is left to local discretion. Based on a school or district's policy, it may be possible for a student to qualify for the HRG and the Texas First Scholarship. Any questions regarding this should be directed to your high school administration.

Question: If a student has received both the HRG waiver and the Texas First Scholarship, is the Texas public college or university permitted to honor both?

Answer: Yes. Texas public colleges and universities may honor the HRG waiver and the Texas First Scholarship for a student.