

Overview of the HOPE GPA Calculation Process

There are 3 major stages in the Transcript Exchange HOPE GPA Calculation Process:

1. Upload and Release of Transcript Data to Georgia Student Finance Commission through the Professional Center at <https://procenter.gacollege411.org/default.aspx>
- 2.. Data Analysis
3. The Feedback Loop

Each of these stages will be discussed below.

1. Upload and Release of Transcript Data to Georgia Student Finance Commission through the Professional Center for Live Processing

GSFC has been processing transcript data since February 19, 2007. If you have not uploaded and released your transcripts to GSFC since we went live on February 19, 2007, please do so as soon as possible. Preliminary processing is important because it allows us to work out the problems in your data now, rather than in June during final processing. GSFC has stopped preliminary processing for 2010 and is preparing for final processing. Final HOPE GPA processing begins May 15, 2010.

2. Data Analysis

Once GSFC receives your transcripts for preliminary processing, you will be contacted by a representative to let you know of your status. Most schools will be in Data Analysis when they first upload their transcripts. During Data Analysis, GSFC will work with the school to correct issues in its data before GSFC will calculate GPAs. The purpose of the Data Analysis process is to ensure that schools receive GPA reports with a minimal number of error messages. Until a school makes the corrections that are required during Data Analysis, the school will not be able to receive GPA reports through STARS. Therefore, it is imperative that schools actively pursue making their corrections during Data Analysis.

3. The Feedback Loop

Once the corrections for Data Analysis are made, schools will be moved into the Feedback Loop stage of the Transcript Exchange HOPE GPA process. During this stage, schools will be able to access their GPA reports through STARS. Schools will be notified by email that they have completed Data Analysis and directed to access their reports through STARS. If a school has not received an email notifying them that they can access their reports through STARS, they have not uploaded for live processing or they have not completed Data Analysis. Schools should contact GSFC to find out where they are in the process and what needs to be done to move forward.

To get to STARS, schools must first go to www.GAcollge411.org and then click the "Middle School and High School" link. Then, schools should select the link that says "Scholar Tracking and Reporting System (STARS)." Once a school clicks that link, the school should sign in to STARS. When a school signs in, they will immediately see a red link that says "HOPE GPA Calculation 2010: GPA Calculation Reports." Clicking this link will take you to the list of reports. Schools will have 5 reports:

- (1) HOPE Eligible Scholars Report - a list of students that have HOPE GPAs that qualify them to receive the HOPE Scholarship
- (2) HOPE Ineligible Report - a list of students that have HOPE GPAs that do not qualify them to receive the HOPE Scholarship

Overview of the HOPE GPA Calculation Process

- (3) HOPE GPA Calculation: Detailed Student Calculations Report - the detailed calculation for every student that was calculated
- (4) HOPE GPA Calculation: Error Report - a list of errors that appear in the data
- (5) HOPE GPA Calculation: School Rules Report - a copy of the rules that were reported in the school profile for the school

When schools receive these reports, schools must verify that the underlying data in the reports is correct. To go through these reports, GSFC recommends the following 5 steps to spot check what was used in the calculation:

1. Schools should review the Error Report and make any corrections.

During the preliminary HOPE GPA process, there are 2 kinds of errors that will appear on the Error Report: Fatal Errors and Non-Fatal Errors.

Fatal Errors are those errors in the data that will cause a student to fail to have a calculated HOPE GPA and the student will not appear on either the HOPE Eligible Scholars Report or the HOPE Ineligible Report. These errors must be corrected by the school to have the student's HOPE GPA calculated.

Non-Fatal Errors are those that can be present in the data and the student will still have a calculated HOPE GPA and will still appear on either the HOPE Eligible Scholars Report or the HOPE Ineligible Report. These non-fatal errors are the types of errors that may exist because a student is currently enrolled in a class. The 4 non-fatal errors are (1) Blank Grade, (2) Blank Term Code, (3) Blank End Date, and (4) Blank Credits Attempted. Even though these errors are nonfatal, schools should check to make sure that this is due to the student being currently enrolled in the course and not missing data. If there is missing or incorrect data, the school should correct these errors.

During the final HOPE GPA Calculation process in June, all errors will be fatal errors and must be corrected by the school.

For advice on what an error code means, whether the error code is fatal, and how to correct the error, schools should reference the Error Code Dictionary, accessible through STARS.

2. Schools should review the School Rules Report and correct any errors in the School Rules Report by correcting its School Profile in the Professional Center.

The School Rules Report is a copy of the rules that GSFC used to calculate the HOPE GPAs for your school. If these rules are incorrect, the GPAs will be inaccurate. Therefore, schools should be especially careful to make sure that the rules that were provided to GSFC accurately reflect your school's practices and policies.

3. Schools should review the HOPE Eligible Scholars Report and the HOPE Ineligible Report.

When schools review the HOPE Eligible Scholars Report and the HOPE Ineligible Report, schools should look to make sure that their notoriously good students appear on the Eligible Report and their notoriously bad students appear on the Ineligible Report. If there is a student that obviously appears on the incorrect report (for example, your valedictorian is on the Ineligible Report), that student's Detailed Student Calculation Report should be referenced to determine why that student's GPA is incorrect. Schools should correct any errors in the transcripts and resubmit the transcripts to GSFC.

Overview of the HOPE GPA Calculation Process



4. Schools should review the Detailed Student Calculation Reports for all students with HOPE GPAs between 3.2 and 2.5.

Students with HOPE GPAs between 3.2 and 2.5 are those most vulnerable to incorrect HOPE eligibility if their data is incorrect. For this reason, these students' Detailed Student Calculation Reports should be given special attention to make sure that all of their grades are reported correctly. If there are any errors, the transcripts should be corrected and resubmitted to GSFC.

5. Steps 1-4 should be repeated until the data appears correct. Once the data appears correct, schools should check the verification statement on the HOPE Eligible Scholars Report and click the submit button. Schools should also check the verification statement on the HOPE Ineligible Report and click the submit button.

The submission of the verification statement is very important. Students will not be able to receive HOPE funding until schools verify the reports. Furthermore, students will not be able to access their Detailed Calculation Report through GAcollege411 until schools verify the reports.

Once a school has verified their preliminary lists, they are finished until final calculations, at which time, schools should submit completed transcripts to GSFC and verify their reports through STARS. If a school has completed Data Analysis before the final calculations in June, the school will not have to go through Data Analysis again. The school will skip straight through to the Feedback Loop Stage. If a school has not completed Data Analysis before the final calculations in June, the school will have to go through Data Analysis before they will be able to move forward to the Feedback Loop Stage of the process.