

Clinton Christian Academy

A+ Handbook



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GENERAL INFORMATION

Participation in the A+ program is voluntary and is available to all students in grades 9-12 (unless they have been previously eliminated from participating because of violating the A+ good citizen policy). There is no limit to the number of students in each class who may participate. Students who wish to participate, must sign an A+ Participation Agreement and return it to the guidance counselor. Participation can begin at any time prior to graduation. However, for monitoring purposes, it is recommended that students sign a Participation Agreement as soon as they enter high school.

A+ TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

Funding for the A+ school program is provided by the State of Missouri and is subject to the state budgeting process and the legislative action of the Missouri General Assembly. No local monies will be expended in connection with the A+ program and the expenses incurred by students who elect to participate and who are certified as A+ graduates.

Participants who complete all A+ requirements, who meet all local deadlines and who are certified as A+ graduates of Clinton Christian Academy are eligible to receive two years (six semesters) of tuition to attend any Missouri public two-year community college or vocational/technical institution.

A+ REQUIREMENTS

1. Attend a designated A+ high school for three consecutive years prior to graduation.
 - Exceptions from three year requirement
 - *Active military/dependents
 - *Dependents of retired military who relocate to Missouri within one year of retirement
 - Exceptions must attend an A+ high school and meet all other requirements during the school year immediately preceding graduation.
2. Graduate with a minimum, unweighted, unrounded, cumulative GPA of 2.500.
3. Graduate with a minimum, cumulative attendance rate of 95%.
4. Beginning with the high school senior class of 2015, have achieved a score of proficient or advanced on the Algebra I EOC exam, or a higher level DESE

approved EOC exam in the field of math. If you meet all of the eligibility requirements except the end of course exam requirement, you may establish eligibility by achieving a qualifying score on the mathematics component of the ACT test. You may achieve the qualifying score as a high school or postsecondary student. If you achieve the score as a postsecondary student you may be eligible for an award in the same term that you take the test. The Missouri Department of Higher Education (MDHE) will announce the qualifying ACT scores annually.

Qualifying Scores for ACT Alternative to the A+ Algebra I End-of- Course Exam Requirement Set for 2018 High School Seniors

The following qualifying ACT scores have been approved by the Coordinating Board for Higher Education as an exam alternative to the A+ Algebra I End-of-Course Exam requirement. The CBHE is charged with establishing these minimum scores annually. Students must achieve one of these scores if they do not score proficient or advanced on the Algebra I or a higher-level math end-of-course exam.

ACT Math Score		High School GPA
17 or greater	and	2.5 or greater
16	and	2.8 or greater
15	and	3.0 or greater

The Algebra I end-of-course exam requirement is intended for students to demonstrate a mastery of Algebra I skills and knowledge as an indicator of college preparedness. In keeping with that intent, these minimum scores were set to reflect a student's ability to understand and use basic algebraic concepts for placement into a remedial math course requiring skills that correlate to Algebra I skills learned in the eighth or ninth grade.

The scores were set based on an analysis of placement score information from Missouri's community colleges and placement score examples provided by ACT. They are intended to represent real-world college placement practices rather than an equivalency, or concordance, between the scores. The scores are also intended to strike a reasonable balance between the requirement's intent and the reality of

diversity in the developmental coursework available at postsecondary institutions. Prior to the CBHE's approval, the scores were vetted with the A+ community, including high school counselors, postsecondary financial aid professionals, community college presidents, and the State Student Financial Assistance Committee. The majority of the feedback received was supportive of the established score levels.

With these alternatives, students now have opportunities with which to meet the A+ Scholarship's college preparedness criterion. Once a student meets one of the following criteria, the student is considered to have met this requirement regardless of previous or subsequent scores received on any of the other options. For example, a student that scores basic on the Algebra I EOC and scores a 17 on the ACT math subtest is eligible based on the ACT score. Students can also retake all of these exams in an effort to achieve a qualifying score.

1. Achievement of a score of proficient or advanced on the Algebra I end-of-course exam requirement
2. Achievement of a score of proficient or advanced on any DESE-authorized mathematics end-of-course exam that is at a higher level than Algebra I
3. Achievement of one of the scores listed above for the ACT math subtest
4. Achievement of one of the scores listed above for the ACT math subtest while in college. Students in this category will not be eligible for A+ reimbursement until a qualifying score has been achieved. Until eligibility is established, students can seek assistance to remediate their math deficiencies, including taking developmental coursework at their own expense.

If you have any questions about the Algebra I end-of-course exam requirement, its alternatives, or the A+ scholarship in general, please contact:

Connie Bestgen, program specialist 800-473-6757, option 4, 573-751-1772, or connie.bestgen@dhe.mo.gov

5. Avoid possession and the use of illegal drugs, including alcohol and tobacco.
6. Maintain a record of good citizenship at school and in the community.
7. Perform a minimum total 50 hours of unpaid tutoring.
8. Complete, submit and provide proof of submission of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid during the spring of their senior year.
9. Register with the selective service in accordance with federal law.
10. Meet all local deadlines by submitting all required documentation.

WINDOW OF ACCESS

Certified A+ graduates have up to 48 months from the date of graduation to access the tuition reimbursement benefit.

MAINTAINING THE A+ TUITION BENEFIT IN COLLEGE

To maintain the A+ tuition benefit, a student must be a full-time student (as defined by the college) and working toward the completion of an approved program. Students must maintain a minimum, unrounded, cumulative GPA of 2.500.

A+ ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for the A+ financial incentive, a student must have a **95% cumulative attendance record** beginning with their freshman year. Students are expected to attend school regularly and to be on time for classes. Therefore, the student will acquire the habits of punctuality, self-discipline, and responsibility. A student who does not meet the **95% attendance requirement** will not be eligible for the A+ financial incentive. The following attendance guidelines are required of all students participating in the A+ Program:

Students must attend Clinton Christian Academy or another Missouri A+ school for three consecutive years prior to graduation. Early graduation is discouraged.

- o Exceptions from three year requirement

 - *Active military/dependents

 - *Dependents of retired military who relocate to Missouri within one year of retirement

- o Exceptions must attend an A+ high school and meet all other requirements during the school year immediately preceding graduation

A cumulative attendance record will be kept from the beginning of the student's freshman year until graduation.

Cumulative attendance information is available in the A+ office or with the attendance secretary.

ATTENDANCE APPEAL PROCESS

A student/parent/guardian can appeal the student's attendance record with the A+ Coordinator. Anyone making an appeal should use the [A+ Attendance Appeal Form](#) available from the A+ Coordinator. Documentation relating specifically to the

appealed absences should be included with the waiver. (i.e. doctor's note must include a statement indicating specific condition or treatment). The A+ Coordinator will convene the Attendance Review committee at the end of each semester. An Attendance Review Committee will be composed of the counselor, the upper school principal and the lead administrator. After the Attendance Review Committee reaches a decision, the A+ Coordinator will notify the students and parents by letter. The decisions of the review committee will be considered final.
All granted attendance waivers will be on record until the end of the senior year and manually recalculated.

ATTENDANCE WAIVER GUIDELINES

Anyone submitting a request for an A+ attendance waiver of days missed shall provide the A+ Coordinator with the following official documentation.

Chronic health problems	Letter from physician with explanation of illness. (Copies of bills or school excuses are not sufficient.)
Hospitalization	Letter from physician
Catastrophic illness (long term hospitalization)	Letter from physician with explanation of illness. (Copies of bills or school excuses are not sufficient.)
Dental/Doctor	Any Routine Dental/Doctor Appointment
Court dates	Court Letter
Funeral	Funeral Tribute
Religious holiday	Letter from Clergyman
Personal/Family Calamity (fire, flood, etc.)	Principal's approval
Exchange Student	Documentation from agency

*Field trips and other school sponsored activities are not considered absences

No student will receive a waiver if absences are due to any of the following:

Personal

- Personal/family vacation
- Suspension from school for any reason
- Transportation problems (unless inclement weather and approved by administrator)
- Truancy
- Skipping Classes

Attendance requirements for A+ are not to be confused with general attendance requirements as stated in the Clinton Christian Academy Student Handbook.

A+ CITIZENSHIP GUIDELINES

Participation in the A+ Program is an honor and a unique privilege for Clinton Christian Academy students. Students pursuing the A+ financial incentive must maintain a record of good citizenship and avoid the unlawful use of drugs/alcohol.

Certification of good citizenship will be based on the official discipline record maintained in the high school office. The High School Principal will assign consequences for infractions of the discipline code and those administrators are responsible for certifying the accuracy of the student's discipline record.

EXPECTATION

Clinton A+ participants are expected to be good citizens at school and in the community. At Clinton Christian Academy a good citizen:

- Maximizes his/her educational opportunity.
- Recognizes and accepts responsibility in and beyond the school environment.
- Sets a positive example for all to follow at school and in the community.

All participants begin their high school career with good citizen status—zero (0) points. The accumulation of twenty-four (24) points at any time during a student's enrollment at Clinton Christian Academy will result in the revocation of the participant's good citizen status and his/her removal from the A+ Program.

Each disciplinary referral will negatively affect good citizen status according to the chart below.

Disciplinary Action	Point Value Assigned
ISS	3 pts per day
OSS	8 pts per day

Students may, for good cause, appeal their dismissal. Appeals may be made to the A+ Citizenship Appeals Committee who will be the final authority.

UNLAWFUL USE OF DRUGS/ALCOHOL

An A+ student will not sell, possess, or use any controlled substance or drug paraphernalia as defined by law and stated in the Clinton Christian Academy Student Handbook. The use of prescription medicine is allowed under Board Policy. Students and parents are responsible for understanding and following those guidelines.

A+ CITIZENSHIP APPEAL PROCESS

Students and parents or guardians may appeal an A+ disciplinary decision using the following process:

- Students and parents/guardians will have 15 calendar days to appeal a decision that is made dealing with discipline using the A+ Citizenship Appeal Form available from the A+ Coordinator.
- The appeal must be made in writing through the A+ Coordinator.
- The A+ Coordinator will convene the A+ Citizenship Review Committee. The counselor, upper school principal and lead administrator will serve on the A+ Citizenship Review Committee. After the committee reaches a decision, the A+ Coordinator will notify the parents by letter. Decisions of the Review Committee will be considered final.

A+ TUTORING

In order to qualify for the A+ financial incentive, students are required to perform at least 50 hours of unpaid school-based tutoring/mentoring of younger students. The tutoring/mentoring activities must:

- Involve A+ students with students in lower grades in the district;
- Provide, as an ultimate goal, encouragement to students in lower grades to get “turned on” to school, stay in school, and strive for good grades;
- Be school-based or under the auspices of the school.

Students seeking A+ financial incentive must meet the following qualifications prior to beginning a tutoring/mentoring experience:

- Have a 2.5 unweighted, cumulative grade point average, 95% attendance, good citizenship status, and a signed A+ Statement of Intent;
- Commit to 50 hours of service in mentoring/tutoring;
- Sign a tutoring agreement and have a tutoring permission form on file in the A+ office; and
- Provide own transportation and waive school district liability.

POLICIES OF THE TUTORING PROGRAM

Tutoring/mentoring must be school sponsored. Any exceptions must be preapproved by the A+ Coordinator. **A log of hours must be kept and submitted to the A+ office to receive credit for tutoring.**

Students may enroll in a Tutor/Mentoring course to meet these requirements.

Tutoring/mentoring may be done during the school year or during summer school (when offered or pre-approved).

Failure to follow the Tutoring/Mentoring guidelines may result in disciplinary action, and/or dismissal from the A+ Program.

No financial compensation may be accepted for tutoring/mentoring activities.

SCHOOLS ACCEPTING A+ BENEFITS & SCHOLARSHIPS

2-Year Public Colleges

Crowder College (Neosho)
East Central College (Union)
Jefferson College (Hillsboro)
Mineral Area College (Park Hills)
State Fair Community College (Sedalia)
North Central Community College (Trenton)
State Technical College (Linn)

Metropolitan Community Colleges

Blue River
Penn Valley
Maple Woods
Longview
Business & Technology College

Moberly Area Community College

Ozark Technical Community College (Springfield)
St. Charles Community College
Three Rivers Community College

SMSU-West Plains
Missouri Western State University

St Louis Community Colleges

Florissant Valley
Forest Park
Meramec

REMINDERS:

- A+ students must be enrolled full-time in a program of study at any Missouri public community college and or career technical school.
- A+ students must maintain a minimum 2.5 cumulative GPA. If a student's cumulative GPA drops below 2.5 they would no longer be eligible to receive A+ funds until the overall GPA is 2.5 or higher.
- Students must apply for non-repayable federal financial aid (FAFSA/SEOG) each subsequent year of eligibility.
- A+ financial incentives must be used within four years of high school graduation.

For more school information and updates go to:

<http://dhe.mo.gov/ppc/grants/aplusscholarship.php>

Four Year Colleges with A+ SCHOLARSHIPS

You may still be able to use A+ to get money at your four-year school. Since A+ will never be extended to four-year colleges/universities, some of those schools are offering their own local financial aid programs for A+ certified graduates...

A+ students who transfer from community colleges have a higher rate of graduation from four-year colleges because they have already invested two years in their education; are more focused; have had the experience of competing for grades in a college classroom; have better refined study skills; are 2 years older; and are better adjusted to the college environment. A+ transfer students are desirable and several Missouri four-year schools are trying to attract these students.

Below are examples of 4-year schools which offer limited financial benefits for being A+ eligible. This list is subject to change.

Avila College	\$1000 renewable for 4 years.
Central Methodist University	20 on ACT and 2.5 GPA \$5000 instead of \$6000 (will do better with other scholarships available)
University of Central Missouri	\$750 per semester. ACT composite score of 21 or greater. Renewable.
Columbia College	Transfer award, for 1/3 tuition if completed 2-year-program
Lindenwood University	ACT 25-29, recommendation, community service, residential student
Missouri Western State University	Full tuition and fees for 10, 2-year associate degree programs
Missouri Valley	\$700 awarded per year. Must be a first year resident or commuter student that meets admission requirements. Renewable for a maximum of 5 years.
Northwest Missouri State	Must score a 85 or higher in selection index criteria \$1000-2000 renewable with 24 hours and 3.0 GPA
Southeast Missouri State	Very Limited to technical Programs
Southwest Baptist University	21 on ACT, \$1500, 3.0 GPA, renewable with 2.5 GPA
Stephens College	21 on ACT, \$1000, 3.0 GPA, renewable with 2.5 GPA
Truman State University	Competitive with 100 awarded, \$1500 renewable with 3.25 GPA, sophomore community service required
Webster University	21 on ACT, \$1000, renewable if qualify for other Webster scholarships, \$2000 with no other scholarships
Westminster College	Call or write for details
William Jewell College	1-time transfer award of \$1500 after completing 2 years at community college
William Woods University	\$1000 renewable for 4 years with 2.0 GPA

**This list may be incomplete. Contact individual colleges to inquire about A+ Scholarships and Awards.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE A+ PROGRAM

1. Is there any cost for participating in the A+ Program? No
2. Does my child have to use A+ if he or she signs the A+ Agreement? No. A+ is an option. If other forms of financial aid are available and the student doesn't wish to use A+ to attend college, he or she is under no obligation to do so.
3. Where do the A+ requirements come from? With the exception of "local deadlines" all A+ requirements are established by the state and found in the Missouri statutes.
4. Is there any limit to the number of children in each family who may participate? No.
5. Where does the money come from to pay for this program? The general revenues of the State of Missouri.

6. Is there any danger that the program will be eliminated? This is a state program and the economic condition of the state is not particularly promising. Historically, the A+ program has been the last program in the Department of Education to experience a funding cut, but there are no guarantees. The program should be there in 4 years, but there is no way to guarantee this.
7. What about the tutoring requirements? Tutoring must be performed between the summer before the 9th grade year through the end of the senior year.
8. What is the GPA requirement? Students must graduate with a minimum, unrounded, unweighted cumulative 2.500 GPA. All grades starting in 9th grade contribute toward the final GPA. GPA cannot be rounded; so a 2.499 GPA is not 2.500 for A+ purposes. Students cannot be removed from the program because the GPA falls below the GPA requirement; but, for every “bad” grade semester, it takes 3 semesters to recover.
9. How many students may be certified A+ graduates for each class? There is not a limit.
10. Are there any 4 year A+ colleges? No. However, several of the 4 year colleges in Missouri offer institutional scholarships to students who are certified as A+ graduates.
11. How many high schools are A+? There are around 700 high schools in Missouri and 287 of them are A+ schools. Most Missouri graduates don’t have access to the A+ benefit.
12. Where is the A+ Coordinators office located? The A+ Coordinator is Mr. Roger Bancroft.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION & LINKS

Missouri Department of Higher Education (MDHE)

<http://dhe.mo.gov/ppc/grants/aplusscholarship.php>

FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION: (FAFSA) <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>

Students must complete the FAFSA prior to April 15 of the graduating year.

Qualification for student aid does NOT affect qualification for the A+ benefit. The FAFSA can be completed online utilizing the web address listed above. To complete this process, you will need all current W2 forms and related tax information OR a completed tax return.

STUDENT LETTER OF INTENT
To participate in the Missouri A+ Scholarship Program

I, _____, have been fully informed of the conditions of eligibility for the A+ Student Financial Incentives in accordance with the A+ School of **Clinton Christian Academy**. I understand that in order to qualify for eligibility for financial incentives by the State of Missouri A+ schools program I must agree to accomplish all of the following:

- Be a U.S. citizen, permanent resident, or lawfully present in the U.S
- Enter into a written agreement with your high school prior to graduation
- Attend a designated A+ high school for 3 consecutive years immediately prior to graduation
- Graduate with an overall grade point average of 2.5 or higher on a 4.0 scale
- Have at least 95% attendance record overall for grades 9-12
- Perform at least 50 hours of unpaid tutoring or mentoring, of which up to 25% may include job shadowing
- Maintain a record of good citizenship and avoid the unlawful use of drugs and/or alcohol
- Have achieved a score of proficient or advanced on the Algebra I end of course exam and/or any other requirements set forth by the Missouri Department of Secondary and Elementary Education

Further, to maintain eligibility after graduation, I understand that I must accomplish the following:

1. Attend on a full time basis a Missouri public community college, vocational, or technical post-secondary institution; and
2. Maintain a grade point average of 2.5 (C+) or higher.

This agreement only signifies that it is my intent to meet or exceed the above noted eligibility criteria that will allow me to participate in the A+ Scholarship Program. I further understand that if I should successfully meet the criteria, the State of Missouri will provide for the reimbursement of up to 50% of the cost of books, tuition, and general fees to any public community college, vocational, or technical school provided that state funds are appropriated by the Missouri Legislature and the Clinton Christian Academy is awarded the A+ status.

Student Date

Counselor Date

Parent/Guardian Date

Principal Date

I do not wish to participate:

Parent/Guardian

Date