California Community Colleges

MESA Program Regulations: FAQ

1. **Is there an updated version of the MESA Program Applicant Checklist that reflects the change in eligibility requirements in title 5, California Code of Regulations relating to MESA?**

   Yes, the updated checklist is attached. The revised form expands eligibility to include students who are current or former foster youth and up to 10 percent of students per college who are qualified by special circumstances. This change highlights that each student's path to higher education is unique and may not fit a single profile.

2. **What is the new process to admit a MESA student under special circumstances?**

   Colleges can now admit up to 10 percent of students per college who are qualified by special circumstances, if it is approved by the Director and their supervising administrator. Chancellor's Office approval is no longer required. Directors are charged with keeping track of special admits and ensuring the campus is within the 10 percent threshold. Community College Indicators must be met before consideration as an admit under special circumstances.

3. **What are allowable uses with MESA funds?**

   Usage of MESA funds must be aligned with MESA Objectives. The main goal of the MESA grant is to increase the number of MESA-eligible students served and increase transfer success rates for STEM majors. Expenditures should contribute to successful student outcomes: course success, course retention, award attainment, or student transfer. Refer to your local district policies and consult with the administrator responsible for expenditure approval or to determine if the cost is locally permissible.

   MESA funds can be used to support, but not limited to, the following:

   - Advertising, mailing, and promotional items
   - Program team salary/benefits (counselor, clerical, tutors, student workers, AEW facilitators, retention specialist, etc.)
   - Faculty stipends
   - Instructional materials
   - Non-instructional materials
   - College-owned laptops, computers, calculators, iPads, workstations
   - Transportation

- Summer research
- Enrichment programs
- Student stipends
- Student events
- Student campus tours, conferences, and leadership retreats
- Travel for MESA Program Director (student conferences, Statewide Training/Meetings, Leadership Retreat, and professional development conferences)

Please note that MESA funds cannot be used for construction, remodeling, or lease of facilities.

MESA program implementation is ultimately a local responsibility, and each college has the authority—and the obligation—to determine how best to design and deliver MESA in ways that meet the needs of its students and community.

4. What is supplanting and is it allowed in MESA?

Supplanting is defined as "using grant funds to pay for costs that are already funded within your agency's budget, or for which other funding has already been received, in order to reallocate existing funding to other purposes" (*Office of the CA Attorney General*).

Supplanting is not allowed in MESA and would be in violation of California Education Code 88682 and title 5 section 56304.

Note: If the college is moving local source funds from one MESA program line item to another MESA program line item and the level of local source funds stays the same, that is NOT supplanting.

5. Do MESA students now get priority registration?

No, the new title 5 regulations for MESA do not guarantee priority registration for students. However, some MESA students may qualify for priority registration through other factors, i.e.: a member of the armed forces, a foster youth or former foster youth, determined to be eligible for Disabled Student Programs and Services, receiving services through the Extended Opportunity Programs and Services, receiving aid from the CalWORKs program, a member of Rising Scholars Network Program, or a student parent who has a child or children under age 18 who will receive more than half of their support from the student.

More information on priority registration can be found here: https://www.cccco.edu/-/media/CCCCO-Website/docs/faq/2023-priority-registration-faq-a11y.pdf

6. **What does funding look like beyond fiscal year 26/27, when the current grant agreements end?**

   Unspent MESA funds carryover to the next fiscal year. However, saving for a "rainy day" fund is not allowed. Funding beyond fiscal year 26/27 is dependent on the state budget. The Chancellor's Office will continue to advocate for MESA funds. The end dates listed on grant agreements do not indicate an end to MESA funds.