



South Carolina Commission on Higher Education

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June 16, 2011

MEMORANDUM

TO: Directors of Financial Aid, Directors of Admission and Provosts
State Scholarship Eligible Institutions

South Carolina High Schools (Public and Private)

FROM: Dr. Karen Woodfaulk
Director, Student Services Division

RE: Legislative Change to Fourteen Credit Hour Requirement
LIFE Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancements

Purpose:

The General Assembly originally passed Act 115 in 2007, which established the new LIFE Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancements. Scholarship Enhancements are awarded to eligible students majoring in approved mathematics and science programs beginning in their second/sophomore year based on their date of initial college enrollment (freshman are not eligible for Enhancement funds). LIFE and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Scholarship Enhancements funds must be used toward the cost-of-attendance at an eligible four-year institution in South Carolina.

LIFE Scholarship recipients receive up to \$5,000 each academic year (assuming continued eligibility). With the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement, eligible sophomores, juniors and seniors may receive up to \$7,500 (\$5,000 LIFE Scholarship award combined with \$2,500 additional Enhancement funds). Please note that LIFE Scholarship Enhancements are not available to students attending two-year institutions.

Palmetto Fellows receive up to \$6,700 their first/freshman year. Assuming continued eligibility, eligible sophomores, juniors and seniors receive up to \$7,500 per year. With the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement, students receive up to \$10,000 (\$7,500 Palmetto Fellows Scholarship award combined with additional \$2,500 Enhancement funds) per year.

On May 22, 2008, Act No. 235 (House Bill 4408) became law. This Act changed the minimum level of instruction required in mathematics and science courses by the end of the first/freshman year. Effective with the Fall 2007 freshman class and therefore, LIFE and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship recipients may use credit hours successfully completed in mathematics **or** life and physical science **or** a combination of both by the end of their first year (based on date of initial college enrollment) to meet the fourteen credit hour requirement for Enhancement eligibility.

Eligibility Criteria for Scholarship Enhancements:

To be eligible for the LIFE or Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement beginning with the sophomore year, students must be eligible for and be a recipient of the underlying scholarship (either the LIFE or Palmetto Fellows Scholarship). Students must also be enrolled as a full-time, degree-seeking student with a declared major in an approved mathematics or science program at an eligible four-year institution in South Carolina (please refer to the Commission’s web site for a listing of approved majors by institution).

Students must also successfully complete at least fourteen credit hours of instruction in mathematics **or** life and physical science **or** a combination of both by the end of their first year of college. **Freshman are not required to earn credit hours in a laboratory course to meet the fourteen credit hour course requirement (Act No. 235 removed this requirement).** The fourteen credit hour requirement is waived for scholarship recipients who completed their first year prior to Fall 2007 (all other criteria is still applicable for Enhancement eligibility).

Fourteen Credit Hour Requirement:

In order to be eligible for the LIFE or Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement, students must complete the minimum level of instruction in approved mathematics and science courses by the end of their freshman/first year of college enrollment. Freshmen must complete at least fourteen credit hours of instruction in mathematics **or** life and physical science **or** a combination of both. Students may use the following to meet the fourteen credit hour requirement: 1) credit hours earned while in high school (dual enrollment); 2) credit hours earned the summer following high school graduation (for Palmetto Fellows, the summer must be immediately following high school graduation); 3) exempted credit hours (CLEP, AP, IB), and; 4) Pass/Fail courses with a grade of “Pass” only. **For Palmetto Fellows, these hours are only acceptable for Enhancement purposes and cannot be used to meet the annual credit hour requirement for renewing the underlying Scholarship.** In addition, remedial/developmental, continuing education and non-degree credit coursework cannot be used to meet the specified minimum level of instruction in mathematics and science. A list of disciplines from which coursework may be selected to meet the fourteen credit hour requirement for the Scholarship Enhancements is available on Commission’s web site at www.che.sc.gov.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions about the above information, please feel free to contact me (803.737-2244 or kwoodfaulk@che.sc.gov), Mr. Gerrick Hampton, LIFE Scholarship (803.734.4397 or ghampton@che.sc.gov) or Ms. Lorna Manglona-Williams, Palmetto Fellows Scholarship (803.737.2262 or lmangwilliams@che.sc.gov). If you have questions concerning the CHE-approved list of eligible disciplines for qualifying majors or courses, please contact Dr. Michael Raley (803.737.3921 or mraley@che.sc.gov) in the Academic Affairs & Licensing Division.