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**SECTION 59-149-10.** LIFE scholarships established; public or independent institution defined; tuition.

(A) Legislative Incentives for Future Excellence (LIFE) Scholarships are established which must be offered by the State. These scholarships cover the cost of attendance as defined by the Commission on Higher Education by regulation up to a maximum of two thousand dollars a year to eligible resident students attending four-year public or independent institutions as defined in subsection (B), and to cover the cost of attendance up to a maximum of one thousand dollars a year to eligible resident students attending two-year public or independent institutions as defined in subsection (B).

(B) For purposes of this chapter, a “public or independent institution” which a student may attend to receive a LIFE Scholarship includes the following:

(1) A South Carolina public institution defined in Section 59-103-5 and an independent institution as defined in Section 59-113-50.

(2) A public or independent bachelor’s level institution chartered before 1962 whose major campus and headquarters are located within South Carolina; or an independent bachelor’s level institution which was incorporated in its original charter in 1962, was granted a license to operate in 1997 by the Commission on Higher Education, has continued to maintain a campus in South Carolina, and is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. Institutions whose sole purpose is religious or theological training or the granting of professional degrees do not meet the definition of “public or independent institution” for purposes of this chapter.

(C) These LIFE Scholarships must be granted and awarded as provided in this chapter.

(D) Beginning with school year 2000-2001, the annual amount of a LIFE Scholarship for eligible resident students attending a four-year public or independent institution as defined herein is increased from the cost of attendance up to a maximum of two thousand dollars a year to the cost of attendance up to a maximum of three thousand dollars a year, and the annual amount of a LIFE Scholarship for eligible resident students attending a two-year public or independent institution as defined herein which includes state technical colleges is increased from the cost of attendance up to a maximum of one thousand dollars a year to the cost of tuition for thirty credit hours a year or its equivalent. Tuition for this purpose means the amount charged for registering for credit hours of instruction and shall not include other fees, charges, or costs of textbooks.

(E)(1) Beginning with school year 2002-2003, the annual amount of a LIFE Scholarship for eligible resident students attending a four-year public or independent institution as defined in this chapter is increased to the cost of tuition for thirty credit hours a year or its equivalent plus a three hundred dollar a year book allowance. Tuition for this purpose means the amount charged for registering for credit hours of instruction and shall not include other fees, charges, or costs of textbooks, except for the referenced three hundred dollar book allowance, and may not exceed four thousand seven hundred dollars for each student for each year, plus the book allowance.

(2) In addition, and notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (D) above, beginning with school year 2002-2003, eligible resident students attending two-year independent institutions may not receive an annual LIFE scholarship of more than the maximum cost of tuition at two-year regional public institutions for thirty credit hours a year or its equivalent. An eligible student attending a two-year public or independent institution or technical college shall receive the three hundred dollar book allowance in addition to his cost of tuition.

**SECTION 59-149-15.** Additional LIFE Scholarship stipend.

(A) A resident student who is at least a sophomore attending a four-year public or private institution of higher learning in this State, who is majoring in science or mathematics as defined below, and who is receiving a LIFE Scholarship for the current year, shall receive an additional LIFE Scholarship stipend equal to the cost of attendance after applying all other scholarships or grants, not to exceed two thousand five hundred dollars each year for no more than three additional years of instruction, including his sophomore year, if enrolled in a four-year degree program, or for not more than four additional years of instruction, including his sophomore year, if enrolled in a five-year degree program or a 3 plus 2 program. In addition, during his freshman year, the student must have successfully completed a total of at least fourteen credit hours of instruction in mathematics courses, or life and physical science courses, or a combination of both. A year is defined as thirty credit hours of instruction or its equivalent each year. To receive the additional LIFE Scholarship stipend each year, the student must receive the underlying LIFE Scholarship for that year and must be making acceptable progress each year toward receiving a degree in his science or mathematics major. For purposes of meeting the required minimum level of instruction in mathematics and life and physical science courses during a student's freshman year, advanced placement courses in mathematics and life and physical sciences taken in high school on which the student scored high enough on the advanced placement test to receive credit at his institution and for which he received credit, count toward the fulfillment of this minimum requirement.

(B) The Commission on Higher Education by regulation shall define what constitutes a science or mathematics major but at a minimum shall include majors in science or mathematics disciplines, computer science or informational technology, engineering, science education, math education, and health care and related disciplines including medicine and dentistry; provided, that nothing herein prevents a student from changing majors within acceptable science or mathematics disciplines. Additionally, the Commission on Higher Education annually shall communicate with high school guidance counselors regarding the list of qualifying majors.

(C) If the additional LIFE Scholarship stipend is lost, it may be regained in the same manner the underlying LIFE Scholarship is regained if lost.

**SECTION 59-149-20.** Residency requirements for eligibility; recipients of Palmetto Fellows Scholarships.

(A) To be eligible for a LIFE Scholarship, a student must be considered a resident of this State as provided in this chapter.

(B) A student attending such a public or independent institution of this State and who is seeking a LIFE Scholarship as a freshman meets the residency requirements of this chapter if he meets the requirements of Section 59-149-50(A) in regard to high school or home school graduation requirements and is classified as a resident of South Carolina for in-state tuition purposes under Chapter 112 of this title at the time of enrollment at the institution.

(C) Students receiving a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship are not eligible for a LIFE Scholarship under this chapter.

**SECTION 59-149-30.** Full-time enrollment requirement.

Full-time enrollment as defined in Title IV of the Federal Higher Education Act is a requirement for eligibility. The student must be admitted, enrolled, and classified as a degree-seeking undergraduate student.

**SECTION 59-149-40.** Scholarships not to exceed cost of attendance.

These LIFE Scholarships in combination with all other grants and scholarships shall not exceed the cost of attendance at the particular institutions referenced in Section 59-149-10.

**SECTION 59-149-50.** Graduating classes covered; cumulative grade point average requirements; regaining eligibility; eligibility for freshman beginning 2002-2003.

(A) To be eligible for a LIFE Scholarship, a student must be either a student who has graduated from a high school located in this State, a student who has completed at least three of the final four years of high school within this State, a home school student who has successfully completed a high school home school program in this State in the manner required by law, a student who has graduated from a preparatory high school outside this State, while a dependent of a parent or guardian who is a legal resident of this State and has custody of the dependent, or a student whose parent or guardian has served in or has retired from one of the United States Armed Forces within the last four years, paid income taxes in this State for a majority of the years of service, and is a resident of this State. These students also must meet the requirements of subsection (B) and be eligible for in-state tuition and fees as determined pursuant to Chapter 112, Title 59 and applicable regulations. In addition, the student must have graduated from high school with a minimum of a 3.0 cumulative grade average on a 4.0 scale and have scored 1100 or better on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or have the equivalent ACT score; provided that, if the student is to attend such a public or independent two-year college or university in this State, including a technical college, the SAT requirement does not apply. If a student chooses to attend such a public or independent institution of this State and does not make the required SAT score or the required high school grade point average, as applicable, the student may earn a LIFE Scholarship after his freshman year if he meets the grade point average and semester credit hour requirements of subsection (B). For the purpose of meeting the rank criteria pursuant to this section, the existing high school rank of a South Carolina resident attending an out-of-state high school may be used provided it is calculated pursuant to a state-approved, standardized grading scale at the respective out-of-state high school. If the Commission on Higher Education determines that a state-approved standardized grading scale substantially deviates from the South Carolina Uniform Grading Scale, the state-approved standardized grading scale shall not be used to meet the eligibility requirements for the LIFE Scholarship.

(B) Students receiving a LIFE Scholarship to retain it and students currently enrolled in an eligible institution to receive such a scholarship must earn a 3.0 cumulative grade point average on a 4.0 scale and earn at least thirty credit hours each year for the maximum of semesters permitted at that institution by Section 59-149-60. The cumulative grade point average calculation, for purposes of LIFE scholarship eligibility, must be inclusive of the student's grade point average at all public or independent institutions attended by the student.

(C) Students who were LIFE Scholarship recipients seeking a degree at such a public or independent institution of this State during their freshman or other year who failed to earn a cumulative 3.0 at the end of the term they attempted the requisite number of hours required by subsection (B) may regain eligibility if their cumulative grade average is a 3.0 at the end of the term they have attempted at least sixty hours if they are a sophomore or ninety hours if they are a junior.

(D) Beginning with school year 2002-2003, an entering freshman at a four-year institution to be eligible for a LIFE Scholarship in addition to the other requirements of this chapter shall meet two of the following three criteria:

- (1) have the grade point average required by this section;
- (2) have the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or equivalent ACT score required by this section;
- (3) be in the top thirty percent of his high school graduating class.

For home school students and students whose high school graduating class is less than fifty students, the Commission on Higher Education may define alternative criteria for students to meet the requirement of item (3).

After receipt of a LIFE Scholarship by an entering freshman beginning with school year 2002-2003, a student shall meet the criteria established in this chapter to retain or regain the scholarship.

For an exceptionally gifted student who is accepted into college without having attended high school, the Commission on Higher Education shall define alternative criteria for the student to qualify for a LIFE Scholarship.

**SECTION 59-149-60.** Duration of scholarship.

The student may receive a LIFE Scholarship for not more than ten semesters for a five-year degree program, eight semesters for a four-year degree program, or four semesters for a two-year degree program.

**SECTION 59-149-70.** Default on education loan.

The student must not be in default on a Federal Title IV or State of South Carolina educational loan, nor owe a refund on a Federal Title IV or State of South Carolina student financial aid program. If the student has repaid the defaulted loan or refund in full, he is eligible to obtain a LIFE Scholarship in the future.

**SECTION 59-149-80.** Transfer to other eligible institution.

Students transferring from one eligible public or independent institution of this State to another are eligible for a LIFE Scholarship, if they continue to meet all eligibility requirements.

**SECTION 59-149-90.** Adjudication of delinquency or for drug or alcohol offenses; additional degrees.

(A) Students must not have been adjudicated delinquent or been convicted or pled guilty or nolo contendere to any felonies or any second or subsequent alcohol or drug-related offenses under the laws of this or any other state or under the laws of the United States in order to be eligible for

a LIFE Scholarship, except that a high school or college student otherwise qualified who has been adjudicated delinquent or has been convicted or pled guilty or nolo contendere to a second or subsequent alcohol or drug-related misdemeanor offense nevertheless shall be eligible or continue to be eligible for such scholarships after the expiration of one academic year from the date of the adjudication, conviction, or plea.

(B) Regardless of the number of hours attempted, once the student has earned a bachelor's degree, he is ineligible for a LIFE Scholarship to seek another degree.

**SECTION 59-149-100.** Scholarship eligibility for study-abroad or out-of-state program; summer school.

Students enrolled in an eligible public or independent institution qualify for a LIFE Scholarship, even though they may not be physically present in South Carolina during all or part of the school term for which the LIFE Scholarship applies. The student's institution must approve for credit a study-abroad or out-of-state program. Summer school may be substituted for one fall or spring semester in any year in a planned program of study.

**SECTION 59-149-110.** Effect of credits exempted or earned prior to high school graduation on semester limits; continuing education or remedial courses.

(A) Any credit hours attempted or earned before high school graduation, hours exempted by examination, or advanced placement credit hours do not count against the semester limits as provided in Section 59-149-60.

(B) No LIFE Scholarship funds may be applied to the costs of continuing education or remedial courses.

**SECTION 59-149-120.** Funding to be carried forward.

Any funds appropriated by the General Assembly to the Commission on Higher Education or any other agency, department, or institution to provide funding for these LIFE Scholarships may be carried forward from fiscal year to fiscal year.

**SECTION 59-149-130.** Promulgation of regulations and procedures; monitoring grades to ensure accountability.

The commission shall promulgate regulations and establish procedures to administer the provisions of this chapter. In addition, the commission must ensure accountability for the scholarship by monitoring the distribution of grades at the institutions which receive these scholarship funds.

**SECTION 59-149-140.** Enrollment reports.

All institutions participating in the LIFE Scholarship Program must report their enrollment and other relevant data as solicited by the Commission on Higher Education which may audit these institutions to ensure compliance with this provision.

**SECTION 59-149-150.** Appropriation from general fund.

There is automatically appropriated from the general fund of the State whatever amount is necessary to provide to all eligible recipients the LIFE Scholarships authorized by this chapter.

**SECTION 59-149-160.** Additional staff to administer scholarship program authorized.

The Commission on Higher Education is authorized two additional FTEs to administer the LIFE Scholarship Program established by this chapter, the compensation for whom shall be provided from funds appropriated to the commission by the General Assembly.