

SC HOPE Scholarship

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the SC HOPE Scholarship Program?

The SC HOPE Scholarship Program was established under the SC Education Lottery Act and was implemented beginning with the 2002-03 academic year. It is a one-year merit-based scholarship created for first-time entering freshmen attending a four-year institution who do not qualify for the LIFE or Palmetto Fellows Scholarships, but graduate from high school with at least a B average. Funding for the program is dependent upon the annual proceeds generated by the SC Education Lottery.

Award Amount:

Students attending an eligible four-year public or private college or university will receive up to \$2,800* (including a \$300 book allowance) towards the cost-of-attendance during the first-year of attendance only.

*Funding is awarded half in the fall term and half in the spring term. The HOPE Scholarship in combination with all other scholarships and grants shall not exceed the cost-of-attendance as defined in Title IV regulations for any academic year.

In order to qualify for the SC HOPE Scholarship, a student MUST meet the following general and initial eligibility requirements:

General Eligibility Requirements

- Graduate from high school or complete an approved home school program as prescribed by law;
- Attend an eligible South Carolina public or private college or university;
- Be a South Carolina resident at the time of high school graduation and at the time of college enrollment;
- Be a U.S. citizen or a legal permanent resident (who meets the definition of a eligible non-citizen according to State Residency Statutes);
- Be enrolled as a full-time degree-seeking student;
- Certify that he or she has never been convicted of any felonies and has not been convicted of any second alcohol or other drug-related misdemeanor convictions within the past academic year;
- Verify that he or she is not in default and does not owe a refund or repayment on any Federal or State financial aid; and
- Must not be a recipient of a LIFE Scholarship, Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, or Lottery Tuition Assistance.

Initial Eligibility Requirements:

In order to qualify for the SC HOPE Scholarship, first-time entering freshmen must meet the following criteria:

- **Earn a cumulative 3.0 grade point ratio (GPR) based on the Uniform Grading Policy (UGP) upon high school graduation**

****Please be aware that the information provided in this handout is subject to change during the Legislative Session. The Commission staff will update this information as necessary.*



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Revised 03/14

If You Plan to Transfer, Read This!

- First-time entering freshman who were eligible to receive the scholarship and transferred mid-year (spring term) to another institution may be eligible to receive the scholarship for the spring term if transferring to the same type of institution (four-year to four-year). Eligibility at the transferring institution will be based on whether or not the student met the initial eligibility requirements at the beginning of the academic year prior to transfer.
- A student who transfers from a two-year college or university to an eligible four-year college or university who enrolled in remedial courses during the freshman year may be eligible to receive the SC HOPE Scholarship. The terms of eligibility to receive scholarship funds must not include the period of time the student was enrolled in remedial courses at a two-year college or university, unless the student completed at least twelve credit hours of non-remedial course work during the first term(s) during the freshman year. The student will be eligible to receive the scholarship for the maximum terms of eligibility following completion of remediation if the student was eligible to receive the SC HOPE Scholarship upon high school graduation.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I apply for the SC HOPE Scholarship?

There is no application required for the SC HOPE Scholarship. The college or university will determine eligibility based upon the final official high school transcript and will notify students if eligible to receive the scholarship. If you believe that you are eligible, but have not received information from the college or university, please contact the financial aid office at the college to inquire about your eligibility.

How long can I receive the HOPE Scholarship?

Students are eligible to receive the HOPE Scholarship for no more than two terms (or its equivalent) during the first year of attendance only. The maximum number of terms of eligibility is based on the student's initial college enrollment date with the exception of credit hours earned during the summer session immediately prior to the student's initial college enrollment. For example, if a student enrolls in college in Fall 2005, the last term of eligibility to receive the HOPE Scholarship will be Spring 2006.

Can I qualify for the HOPE Scholarship if I graduated from a high school out-of-state or completed an approved home school program as prescribed by law?

Yes, as long as you can provide verification to the college that you were a dependent of a South Carolina resident at the time of high school graduation and at the time of college enrollment and you met all other eligibility criteria.

If you were home schooled, this information must be provided by the approved home school association or the parent. If you attended an out-of-state high school, then the information must be provided by the public high school you would have attended if you did not attend an out-of-state high school. An official letter on the public high school's letterhead must be submitted to the eligible college or university you are planning to attend in South Carolina.



What happens if I drop out of school and re-start the next semester?

The HOPE Scholarship is a continuous program. Therefore, if you drop out or take a leave of absence from the institution, the “clock is still ticking” so to speak. The term(s) you are out will count against your two terms of eligibility.

Will I lose the HOPE Scholarship if I need to drop a class one quarter or term?

No, you will not automatically lose the scholarship. Scholarships are awarded annually and refunds are based on the policies and procedures of the institution. However, a student must be enrolled full-time to receive the scholarship.

What happens if I have been convicted of an alcohol or other drug-related misdemeanor offense?

Students who have been adjudicated delinquent or have been convicted or pled guilty or *nolo contendere* to any second alcohol or other drug-related misdemeanor offense are ineligible for the scholarship for one academic year after the adjudication, conviction, or plea occurred. The student will lose eligibility the next academic year (fall and spring terms) immediately following conviction.

What happens if an extenuating circumstance prevented me from being eligible to receive the HOPE Scholarship for the maximum terms of eligibility?

If an extenuating circumstance prevented you from receiving the maximum terms for the HOPE Scholarship, you may submit an appeal. Appeal applications can be obtained from the Financial Aid Office at the college or university, the Commission on Higher Education or <http://www.che.sc.gov>. Applications are reviewed annually and the deadline for receipt of appeal applications is in late September. Please check the CHE website for official appeals deadlines.

May I qualify for the HOPE Scholarship if I complete my high school graduation requirements a semester early?

Students who complete their high school graduation requirements prior to the official graduation date reported on the final high school transcript may be eligible to receive the HOPE Scholarship pending the approval of the Commission on Higher Education. An Early Graduation Application Form can be obtained from your institution’s financial aid office.

For more information about the SC HOPE Scholarship Program, contact:

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