



# South Carolina Commission on Higher Education

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To: Financial Aid Officers  
From: Karen Woodfaulk  
Subject: SC Scholarship and Grant Programs

## State Scholarships

### o **Continuous Enrollment:**

In order for a student to be eligible to receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, the student must enroll in a four-year institution in South Carolina for the fall semester IMMEDIATELY following high school graduation. A student cannot take a semester or any period of time off before enrollment in college and still be eligible to receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship. If a student is awarded the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship but declines the scholarship to attend an out-of-state institution, he or she may return to an eligible in-state institution and receive the scholarship for the remaining terms if the continued eligibility requirements have been met.

### o **Retroactive Awards:**

All institutions are responsible for ensuring that all eligible students are awarded the Palmetto Fellows, LIFE Scholarships and Enhancements as well as the SC HOPE Scholarship. In the event that an institution discovers that an eligible student was not awarded a State Scholarship or Enhancement in error, the institution is responsible for correcting the error. In addition, institutions must reconcile errors in State Scholarship and/or Enhancement awards within the same academic year in which the student was eligible to receive scholarship and/or enhancement funds. If the late discovery of student eligibility is for more than one academic year (i.e., more than one year old or multiple terms or years), then the student cannot be retroactively awarded the Palmetto Fellows, LIFE or SC HOPE Scholarships and Enhancements. Late discoveries of student eligibility that are for no more than one academic year must be reconciled during the fall or spring term of the same academic year in which the student was eligible to receive State Scholarship or Enhancement funds or during the summer before the June 30<sup>th</sup> deadline each academic year. Retroactive awards as a result of errors by the institution that are for more than one academic year (i.e., more than one year old or multiple years) are subject to institutional review and audit by the Commission on Higher Education.

### o **Scholarship Verification Forms and Affidavits:**

Institutions are responsible for contacting all institutions in which students were previously enrolled to verify enrollment for scholarship eligibility. Students are responsible for providing official copies of transcripts for all previously attended colleges and universities (in-state or out-of-state). For verification, institutions may include a statement concerning receipt of copies of official transcripts on the affidavit that students are required to sign and submit certifying

that he/she has never been adjudicated delinquent, convicted, or pled guilty or *nolo contendere* to any felonies and/or any second or subsequent alcohol/drug related misdemeanor offenses to the institution each academic year. The statement should be signed by the student to certify that he/she has provided the current institution with copies of official transcripts from all previously attended colleges and universities (in-state and out-of-state).

*Example:*

*Affidavits should include a statement for students to sign as certification that they have never been adjudicated delinquent, convicted, or pled guilty or nolo contendere to any felonies and/or any second or subsequent alcohol/drug related misdemeanor offenses. In addition, the affidavits should include a section to allow students to list any and all related convictions.*

Conviction 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Jurisdiction \_\_\_\_\_

Conviction 2: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Jurisdiction \_\_\_\_\_

o **Verifying Eligibility Status of Out-of-State High Schools and Home Schools:**

For students who graduate from a high school or home school located out of state, institutions will need to contact the out-of-state school as well as the department of education or the governing agency for higher education in that state to verify that the high school or home school is accredited and approved by the laws of the state in which the school is based. Institutions should verify the following information for all out of state high schools and home schools:

1. Is the high school or home school approved under the laws of the state in which it is located? (If the high school or home school is not recognized under the laws of the state in which it is located, the Commission cannot approve diplomas earned by students at the school as meeting state scholarship eligibility requirements. South Carolina can only accept diplomas earned at high schools or home schools that are accredited and approved by the state in which the school is based.)
2. Does the high school or home school offer a college-prep curriculum?
3. Does the high school or home school issue high school diplomas recognized by the state in which the school is located?

The regulations and laws for the Palmetto Fellows, LIFE and SC HOPE Scholarships stipulate that a student must be enrolled in a college-prep track curriculum, graduate from high school and receive a high school diploma. If the high school or home school that a student attended does not meet all of the requirements (i.e., approved by state laws, offers college-prep curriculum, issues high school diplomas, etc.) as stipulated by law and regulation, the student cannot be awarded a State Scholarship unless he/she does one of the following: 1) enrolls in and graduates from an approved high school or approved home school out of state; 2) enrolls in and graduates from an approved high school or approved home school in South Carolina; 3) earns a GED and eligibility for the LIFE Scholarship after the first academic year of enrollment; or 4) earns eligibility in college after the first year of enrollment by earning at least a 3.0 LIFE GPA and at least 30 credit hours by the end of each academic year. Students are required to meet all requirements as stipulated by law and regulation for the Palmetto Fellows, LIFE and SC HOPE Scholarships, including state residency. If the out-of-state high school or home school meets all of the requirements as stipulated by law, then the school can be considered as an approved high school or approved home school located out of state. Once it has been verified that a high school or home school is approved by the laws of the state in which it is located, then the student must have his/her transcript converted to the SC Uniform Grading Policy (UGP) to receive the Palmetto Fellows, LIFE and SC HOPE Scholarships. Either staff at your institution or staff at the approved out-of-state high school or home school can convert the student's transcript to the UGP.

## **Palmetto Fellows Scholarship**

### **o Distance Education as a Freshman**

An entering freshman can only receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship while studying in a Distance Education program IF the program is through the same school/system at which the student has accepted the scholarship. Because an entering freshman does not have a GPA and MUST earn a 3.0 at the institution where he or she is enrolled as a degree-seeking student, the distance education course must show up as taken at that institution. This means that a student enrolled at USC-Aiken, USC-Beaufort, USC-Columbia, or USC-Upstate can enroll in distance education through the USC-Columbia program because it is all through the same system; therefore, a GPA WILL show up on his or her transcript, allowing for continued eligibility of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship. The student must also enroll in semester-bound courses in order for him or her to have a GPA at the correct time. Year-long courses do not show up for several months, and the student would not have a GPA by the necessary time.

## **LIFE Scholarship**

### **o Continuous Enrollment from High School to College & Terms of Eligibility:**

The maximum number of terms of eligibility for the LIFE and the SC HOPE Scholarship is based on the student's initial date of college enrollment, with the exception of the summer term immediately prior to the student's initial college enrollment and up to one academic year of full-time enrollment in remedial or developmental coursework. If the student enrolls in an eligible institution (in-state or out-of-state) at any point in time during a fall or spring term (or its equivalent) upon graduation from high school, then the terms of eligibility for the student must begin with the date of enrollment at the first attended eligible institution. Students may receive a LIFE Scholarship for a maximum of two terms for a one-year educational program, four terms for an associate's degree program or at least a two-year program that is acceptable for full credit towards a bachelor's degree, eight terms (or its equivalent) towards the first bachelor's degree or program of study that is structured so as not to require a bachelor's degree for acceptance into the program and leads to a graduate degree program, or ten consecutive terms towards an approved five-year bachelor's degree program (see, LIFE Scholarship Regulation Section 62-900.20 labeled Terms of Eligibility).

Students MAY take time off before enrolling in college and still earn the LIFE or SC HOPE Scholarships. The student's clock does not start to tick for either the LIFE Scholarship or SC HOPE Scholarship until the initial date of enrollment in college.

### **o Remedial/ Developmental Coursework and the LIFE Scholarship:**

First-time entering freshmen attending an eligible two-year or technical college who enroll full-time in remedial/developmental courses during the first term(s) will not be eligible for the LIFE Scholarship during the first academic year of enrollment. According to the regulation for the LIFE Scholarship, credit hours earned during the term(s) of remedial/developmental enrollment will not be used to determine remaining Scholarship eligibility at the completion of remediation, unless the student has completed at least twelve credit hours of non-remedial/developmental coursework each term of enrollment (see, LIFE Scholarship Regulation Section 62-900.10 labeled Student Eligibility). This means that a student enrolled in at least one remedial/developmental course and no more than 11 credit hours of non-remedial/non-developmental coursework will not begin their terms of eligibility for the LIFE Scholarship. The terms of eligibility for a student enrolled in remedial/developmental courses for the LIFE Scholarship will begin after the completion of remediation. In addition, the terms of eligibility for a student enrolled in remedial/developmental courses for the LIFE Scholarship may be waived for no more than two academic terms (or its equivalent). A student enrolled in 12 credit hours or more of non-remedial/non-developmental coursework must begin their terms of eligibility for the LIFE Scholarship during the term which the courses are taken.

A student enrolled in remedial/developmental courses will be eligible for the LIFE Scholarship for the term following completion of remediation, if the student was eligible to receive the LIFE Scholarship upon high school graduation. If the student requires more than one academic year of remedial/developmental coursework, then he/she will

not be eligible for the LIFE Scholarship the term after completion of remediation. If the student was not eligible for the Scholarship upon high school graduation, then the student must earn at least a 3.0 LIFE GPA and 30 credit hours of non-remedial/non-developmental coursework each academic year in order to be awarded the LIFE Scholarship the next academic year.

### **Lottery Tuition Assistance Program (LTAP)**

#### **o Progression:**

According to the regulation (Section 62-900.165 Student Eligibility B), *Students shall not be eligible to receive Lottery Tuition Assistance for more than one certificate, diploma, or degree earned within any five-year period unless the additional certificate, diploma, or degree that constitutes progress in the same field of study.*

In order to show progression, a student must progress from a certificate to a diploma, certificate to an associate's degree, or diploma to an associate's degree. A student who earns an associate's degree cannot receive LTAP for another associate's degree within a five-year period, even if the additional program is in the same field-of-study.

#### **o Transfer, not Transient:**

According to the regulation, (Section 62-900.165 Student Eligibility A6), students must *be enrolled or have completed at the time of funds disbursement a minimum of six credit hours **at the home institution** for the term of eligibility.*

Therefore, students who come to your institution from another institution must actually transfer in. They cannot be a transient student.

#### **o Tuition waivers**

According to the regulation, (Section 62-900.170 Policies and Procedures for Awarding Lottery Tuition Assistance, B), *in calculating the amount awarded in Lottery Tuition Assistance, all federal grants and Need-based Grants must be awarded first before determining the amount eligible in Lottery Tuition Assistance to be used for payment towards cost-of-tuition.*

The cost-of-tuition is defined as *the amount charged for enrolling for credit hours of instruction and mandatory fees assessed to all students. Other fees, charges, or cost of textbooks cannot be included* (Section 62-900.160 Program Definitions C).

If a student receives a tuition waiver, LTAP can only be used to pay the mandatory fees assessed to the student.

#### **o “Graduate,” not “Complete”**

In our proposed change to the LTAP regulation, we will change the word “completes” to “graduates from.” Please see below:

(Section 62-900.185 Institutional Disbursement of Funds E) *At the end of each term, the institution will verify whether or not a student completed a certificate, diploma, or degree program during that term. Once a student ~~completes~~ graduates from a certificate, diploma, or degree program, they are not eligible to receive Lottery Tuition Assistance again within a five year period, unless the additional certificate, diploma, or degree constitutes progress in the same field of study.*

## Need-based Grant

### o **Process for Awarding Additional Funding for DSS Students**

1. The Finance Division of CHE will calculate the projected Need-based Grant calculations for the following academic year by April 1, 2008. The Finance Division will reserve \$100,000 for CHE to award to foster youth.
2. The Need-based Grant Coordinator will distribute the projected calculations to the institutions by April 1, 2008.
3. DSS will provide a complete list of foster youth attending college the following academic year by May 1, 2008 to the Need-based Grant Coordinator.
4. The Need-Based Grant Coordinator will provide the list of foster youth to the Financial Aid Offices on May 1, 2008.
5. The Financial Aid Office will award the maximum Need-based Grant (\$2,500) to each foster youth as per State Statute and NBG regulation. This amount comes out of the public institution's allocation of NBG money and the SC Tuition Grants Commission for the independent institutions. It will be requested by IDT.
6. CHE will award up to an additional \$2,000 to each foster youth enrolled per academic year from foster care set-aside funds.
7. Institutions must provide an invoice to the Internal Operations Division of the Commission requesting set-aside funds for each semester (i.e. fall and spring). The invoice must be have a separate line item for the original Need-based Grant allocation and the foster care youth set-aside funds. In addition, the names of each foster care youth must be indicated on the invoice.
8. The Need-based Grant Coordinator will track the amount of financial assistance provided by the State to the foster youth for each academic year by September 1, 2008.