

Columbia International University

South Carolina State Scholarship Policies as Established by the SC Commission on Higher Education

Note: The following policies apply to the majority of students. Exceptions and scenarios outside the norm (i.e. early graduates, mid-year starts, etc.) require review of actual regulations provided by the SC Commission on Higher Education.

South Carolina LIFE Scholarship Program

The Legislative Incentive for Future Excellence (LIFE) Scholarship is a merit-based undergraduate scholarship program in South Carolina. The LIFE Scholarship may be used towards the cost-of-attendance for up to eight semesters based on the students' initial college enrollment date. The maximum annual award amount of the LIFE scholarship is \$5,000 (includes cost-of-tuition up to \$4,700 plus a book allowance of \$300).

To be eligible for the LIFE Scholarship, students must meet the following general eligibility criteria:

- Be a U.S. citizen or a legal permanent resident that meets the definition of an eligible non-citizen under State Residency Statutes
- Be a South Carolina resident at the time of high school graduation and at the time of college enrollment and:
 - Graduated from a high school located in SC, or
 - Successfully completed three of the final four years of high school in SC, or
 - Successfully completed a high school home school program in SC in the manner required by law, or
 - Graduated from a preparatory high school outside SC while a dependent of a parent or guardian who is a legal resident of SC and has custody of the dependent according to State Statute Section 59-149-50A, or
 - Be a student whose parent or guardian has served in or has retired from one of the US Armed Forces within the last four years, paid income taxes in SC for a majority of the years of service, and is a resident of SC
- Be enrolled as a full-time degree-seeking student
- Certify that he/she has never been convicted of any felonies and has not been convicted of any second or subsequent alcohol or drug-related misdemeanor offenses within the past academic year
- Certify that he/she is not currently in default and does not owe a refund or repayment on any Federal or State financial aid
- Must not have previously been awarded a bachelor's or graduate degree
- Must not be a South Carolina HOPE Scholarship or Palmetto Fellows Scholarship recipient

In addition to the above criteria, first-time freshmen must also meet two of the following criteria:

- Earn a cumulative 3.0 grade point average (GPA) based on the SC Uniform Grading Policy (SC UGP) upon high school graduation. The grade point average

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must be reported to two decimal places (minimum) and cannot be rounded. The GPA must be calculated between the date of high school graduation (May-June) and no later than June 15.

- Score at least an 1100 (Critical Reading and Math only) on the SAT or an equivalent composite ACT score of 24. SAT/ACT scores will be accepted through the June national test administration of the high school graduation year. It is permissible to select the highest SAT Critical Reading score combined with the highest SAT Math score from different test administrations. The composite ACT score must be based upon one test administration.
- Rank in the top 30% of the graduating class. The ranking percentages must be reported in two decimal places (minimum) and cannot be rounded. The class rank must be based on the SC UGP and calculated between the date of high school graduation (May-June) and no later than June 15. If rank cannot be used to meet scholarship eligibility criteria (i.e. high school or home school does not rank, grading policy deviates from SC UGP, etc.), only GPA and SAT/ACT criteria will be used to determine eligibility.

After completion of the first academic year of college or to earn the scholarship while in college, students must:

- Meet all general eligibility criteria
- Earn an average of 30 credit hours by the end of each academic year (Fall, Spring, Summer) equaling a minimum of 30 credit hours if a rising second year student, 60 credit hours if a rising third year student, or 90 credit hours if a rising fourth year student
- Earn a minimum 3.0 LIFE GPA based on grades earned at ALL institutions attended by the end of each academic year (Fall, Spring, Summer) excluding remedial, continuing education, and non-degree credit courses.

South Carolina HOPE Scholarship Program

The HOPE Scholarship is a one-year merit-based scholarship created for first-time entering freshmen who do not qualify for the LIFE or Palmetto Fellows Scholarships, but graduate from high school with a minimum 3.0 GPA. The annual award amount is \$2,500 and a \$300 book allowance (maximum \$2,800). Students are eligible to receive the scholarship for no more than two semesters (or its equivalent) during the first year of attendance only.

To be eligible for the HOPE Scholarship, students must meet the following general eligibility criteria:

- Be a U.S. citizen or a legal permanent resident that meets the definition of an eligible non-citizen under State Residency Statutes
- Be a South Carolina resident at the time of high school graduation and at the time of college enrollment and:
 - Graduated from a high school located in SC, or
 - Successfully completed three of the final four years of high school in SC, or
 - Successfully completed a high school home school program in SC in the manner required by law, or

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- Graduated from a preparatory high school outside SC while a dependent of a parent or guardian who is a legal resident of SC and has custody of the dependent according to State Statute Section 59-149-50A, or
- Be a student whose parent or guardian has served in or has retired from one of the US Armed Forces within the last four years, paid income taxes in SC for a majority of the years of service, and is a resident of SC
- Be enrolled as a full-time degree-seeking student
- Certify that he/she has never been convicted of any felonies and has not been convicted of any second or subsequent alcohol or drug-related misdemeanor offenses within the past academic year
- Certify that he/she is not currently in default and does not owe a refund or repayment on any Federal or State financial aid
- Must not have previously been awarded a bachelor's or graduate degree
- Must not be a South Carolina LIFE Scholarship or Palmetto Fellows Scholarship recipient

In addition to the above criteria, first-time freshmen must also meet the following criteria:

- Earn a cumulative 3.0 GPA based on the SC UGP upon high school graduation. The GPA must be reported to two decimal places (minimum) and cannot be rounded. The GPA must be calculated between the date of high school graduation (May-June) and no later than June 15.

Life and Palmetto Fellows Math and Science 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 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).

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.

To qualify 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. Students must also successfully complete at least 14 credit hours of instruction in approved mathematics or science courses or a combination of both by the end of their first year in college. Students may use credit hours earned while in high school (dual enrollment); credit hours earned the summer following high school graduation; or exempted credit hours (CLEP, AP, IB) with a grade of "Pass" only.

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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.

South Carolina Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program

The Palmetto Fellows Scholarship is a merit-based undergraduate scholarship administered by the SC Commission on Higher Education. The annual award amount for each Palmetto Fellow cannot exceed \$6,700 per academic year for freshman and \$7,500 for sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Palmetto Fellows may be awarded for a maximum of eight full-time semesters of study toward the first bachelor's degree. Application materials are available at the student's high school. Applications must be submitted to the Commission on Higher Education by the established deadlines. The early award deadline is December 15 and the final award deadline is June 15 of the student's senior year. The Commission on Higher Education notifies students of their selection as a Palmetto Fellow and requires the students return a form to the Commission that designates an eligible four-year independent or public institution in which they plan to enroll.

To be eligible for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, students must meet the following initial eligibility criteria:

- Meet the eligibility criteria for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Application:
 - Score at least a 1200 (Critical Reading and Math only) on the SAT or composite ACT score of 27. It is permissible to select the highest SAT Critical Reading score combined with the highest SAT Math score from different test administrations. The composite ACT score must be based upon one test administration. Earn a minimum 3.5 cumulative GPA on the SC UGP (reported with at least two decimal places and not rounded) and rank in top six percent of the class sophomore, junior or senior year
 - Alternate criteria without regard to class rank – Score at least 1400 on the SAT or 32 on the ACT and minimum 4.0 GPA (criteria for test scores and GPA same as above).
- Be enrolled as a senior in an eligible high school
- Be classified as a SC resident at the time of college enrollment
- Be a U.S. citizen or a legal permanent resident that meets the definition of an eligible non-citizen under State Residency Statutes
- Be seriously considering attending, have applied or have been accepted to an eligible four-year bachelor's degree-granting institution in SC as a first-time, full-time, degree-seeking student
- Certify that he/she has never been convicted of any felonies and has not been convicted of any second or subsequent alcohol or drug-related misdemeanor offenses within the past academic year
- Certify that he/she is not currently in default and does not owe a refund or repayment on any Federal or State financial aid
- Submit the official Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Application by the established deadlines and comply with all the directions contained therein

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- Must enroll full-time continuously at a four-year institution the fall term immediately following high school graduation
- Must not be a South Carolina LIFE or HOPE Scholarship recipient

To retain eligibility for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship after the initial year, the student must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Enroll and be continuously enrolled at an eligible four-year public or independent institution as a full-time, degree-seeking student at the time of scholarship disbursement
- Earn at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA (no rounding) at the home institution for graduation purposes by the end of each academic year
- Earn a minimum of 30 credit hours for graduation purposes by the end of each academic year (exempted credit hours (such as CLEP and AP) earned before high school graduation and credit hours earned the summer term immediately following high school graduation cannot be used to meet the annual credit hour requirement (Note: that this is not the same as the LIFE criteria that require an average of 30 hours per year)
- Certify that he/she has never been convicted of any felonies and has not been convicted of any second or subsequent alcohol or drug-related misdemeanor offenses within the past academic year
- Certify that he/she is not currently in default and does not owe a refund or repayment on any Federal or State financial aid

Year-Round State Scholarship Eligibility (Summer)

As of July 1, 2014 eligible students are permitted to use state scholarship funds in a summer term in which they are enrolled as a full-time student.

Year round scholarship guidelines are archived online at:
http://www.che.sc.gov/CHE_Docs/studentservices/Year-RoundPolicyGuideline_Website.pdf.

South Carolina National Guard College Assistance Program

The SC National Guard College Assistance Program (CAP) was established to provide incentive for enlisting or remaining for a specified time in both the SC Army and Air National Guards (SCNG). SCNG CAP benefits apply toward the cost-of-attendance as defined by Title IV regulation. Annual maximum grant amount will be determined prior to the beginning of each academic year based on the amount of available program funds.

Maximum benefit for academic year 2020-2021 is \$9,000 (\$4,500 per term) for Air Guard and \$4,500 (\$2,250 per term) for Army Guard.

CAP funds are available to all eligible SCNG members who are in an active drilling status and have one of the following qualifications:

- Basic Combat Training and Advanced Individual Training completed (Army)/Basic Military Training and Technical Training Completed (Air)

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- Enrolled in the Simultaneous Membership Program with the ROTC department
- Working toward a first one-year certificate, first associate's or first bachelor's degree
- Expiration Term of Service (ETS) date cannot fall within the academic year that CAP funds are being requested
- CAP funds can only be used at a college or university whose headquarters is located with the state of SC

A member shall not qualify for CAP benefits for more than 130 semester hours or related quarter hours from the time of initial eligibility. Maximum benefit amount not to exceed \$18,000.

A new application must be submitted each year to the SCNG identifying his/her home institution and his/her intent to enroll in that institution. CAP application window is June 1st to August 1st of every academic year.

Disbursements of this grant will typically be paid in two equal disbursements (i.e. Fall and Spring). Any remaining funds can be used in subsequent terms prior to annual expiration date (i.e. Summer). If the recipient is in his/her final semester of enrollment as required for degree completion, the recipient may receive up to the full annual benefit in the final semester. Students not enrolled full-time will be awarded prorated funds based on the Pell Grant model.

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South Carolina State Scholarship Awarding Procedures

Eligibility

State scholarships are awarded as part of the overall awarding process for each student based on eligibility. Eligibility for state scholarships is determined in accordance with policies as set forth by SC Commission on Education and summarized in general terms in the South Carolina State Scholarship Policies section of this document.

The following general eligibility criteria must be met before a file is reviewed for state scholarship eligibility:

- Acceptance or continuing enrollment in academic year being processed
- Submission of valid FAFSA for academic year being processed or notification from student that no FAFSA will be filed
- Submission of all other required documents needed to put file into “Ready for Packaging” (RP) status in PowerFAIDS (PF)

Awarding

First-time First-year Students

- All RP files are packaged manually and assigned to a Counselor
- Eligibility data in EX and PF are reviewed to confirm residency and scholarship eligibility:
 - Legal/permanent/home state – SC
 - SC High School
 - High school GPA (SC UGP)
 - SAT/ACT Scores
 - Class rank
- If student meets the residency and scholarship eligibility criteria, counselor will award the appropriate scholarship – HOPE, LIFE or none
 - Palmetto Fellows will be awarded by counselor if the student shows on the PFS online portal school list (Clicking “View Eligible Palmetto Fellows Students” and selecting “Columbia International University” as the institution)
 - Only recipients that have returned the required form to CHE indicating CIU as their institution will appear on the CIU list
 - Each year CHE will post these files after the early awards and after the late awards
 - If not, LIFE will be awarded and adjustments will be made once the student shows on the list (updated award notification will be sent when award is changed)
- Once awarded, tracking status changes to AW; award notification emailed and mailed during daily procedures; sending of notification changes tracking status to AR

Transfer Students

- RP files identified as SC and Transfer are awarded manually by the assigned Counselor

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- To maintain LIFE hours and GPA information, a report in Jenzabar is used for all the required data from transfer students' transcripts
`P:\Additional Reports\Financial Aid\financial_aid_pbl\life_scholarship_list`
- High school and college transcripts can be viewed in Etrieve:
 - Confirm SC high school
 - Confirm initial semester of post high school college enrollment
 - Confirm that credit hours in report match transcripts
- Award accordingly

Returning Students

- RP files identified as SC and continuing are awarded manually by the assigned counselor
- To maintain LIFE hours and GPA information, a report in Jenzabar is used for all the required data from returning students' transcripts
`P:\Additional Reports\Financial Aid\financial_aid_pbl\life_scholarship_list`
- Confirm that student did not take a course(s) at another institution during the summer term. If so, check to see if it matches the transcript in Etrieve.
- If a rising sophomore check for eligible math or science major and then check to see if student met the 14 credit hour requirement in approved mathematics and science courses.
- Award accordingly

Palmetto Fellows Scholarship

- Initial eligibility for Palmetto Fellows is determined by CHE
 - Due to timing students are often awarded LIFE (as noted in First-time First-year awarding)
 - CHE posts Palmetto Fellows recipient information on the Palmetto Fellows portal.
 - Palmetto Fellows all eligible recipients
 - Palmetto Fellows recipients for your institution
 - Palmetto Fellows renewal requires annual submission of the renewal report on the same website. Students must meet annual GPA and credit hour requirements. Data is inputted as follows:
 - **Terms Awarded**- total terms the student has received the scholarship since initial college enrollment.
 - **Fall Credit Hours, Spring Credit Hours, Summer Credit Hours**- the PREVIOUS academic year hours completed
 - **Total Hours**- Total Hours Earned
 - **GPA**- Cumulative GPA
 - **Renewed**- If the scholarship can be renewed or not
 - **Graduated**- Did the student graduate?
 - **Comments**- Any comments related to why it was not renewed or if there are any other issues

SCNG College Assistance Program

- Annual notification regarding eligibility for CAP funds comes through the CHE CAP portal.

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- Email notification to the state aid coordinator communicates when the list of eligible students is available
 - Log on to portal and verify attendance of students on the list
 - Verify hours and if students are meeting SAP
- Award CAP funds in accordance with eligibility and invoice SCCHE

Review of Final Eligibility Criteria

Most awarding is done prior to submission of final high school transcripts for first-time first-year students and final college transcripts for transfers and returning students

- Audit each file at the end of drop-add period to check that all transcripts have all required elements on them.
- Check for attendance and final registration.
- Check all final GPAs and hours

SC Certification Form

The SC Certification Form is used to document that students are eligible for SC state scholarships and grants in accordance with the state policies below:

- Certify that he/she has never been convicted of any felonies and has not been convicted of any second or subsequent alcohol or drug-related misdemeanor offenses within the past academic year
- Certify that he/she is not currently in default and does not owe a refund or repayment on any Federal or State financial aid

The SC Certification Form is added as a document required for disbursement to records in PF that include:

- FAFSA for dependent student with parent resident state as SC
- FAFSA for independent undergraduate student with student resident state as SC
- Award funds: HOPE, LIFE, PALM and SCTG

State Scholarship and Grant Reporting and Invoicing

The state aid coordinator works directly with SC Commission on Higher Education (CHE) to report and invoice state scholarship and grant awards.

The following steps are taken each semester:

- Sometime after compliance is run and prior to October 31 for fall and prior to March 31 for spring, the state scholarship report is pulled from Jenzabar.
- Compare data on report to PF data ensure accuracy of data
- Prior to uploading file to CHEMIS, make sure tab in spreadsheet is named a Scholarship
- Upload file to CHEMIS
- Create individual invoices for each scholarship (HOPE, LIFE, Palmetto Fellows and SCNG CAP)
- Send HOPE, LIFE and Palmetto Fellows invoices to Wes Brothers in Accounting for him to provide GL documentation and then forward to CHE via email
- Send SCNG CAP invoice to CHE via email

Refunds

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- If a student withdraws or drops below full-time AFTER CHE has been invoiced, state funds will be refunded to CHE based on institutional refund policy