



## Policies and Procedures | Processing the Merit-Based State Scholarships

The following section(s) of this document outline the policies and procedures related to the **processing** of the South Carolina Merit-Based Scholarships (LIFE, HOPE, PALMETTO FELLOWS, ENHANCEMENT):

### A: Determining Eligibility

- (1) The financial aid office will determine the residency status of all students who report South Carolina as their primary residence on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.
  - a. To determine residency, the college asks students to complete the institution's *SC Residency Certification Form* and provide the required supporting documentation.
- (2) For incoming freshmen, the college uses the following criteria to determine eligibility:
  - a. SAT scores (face value);
  - b. ACT scores;
  - c. High School GPA (SC UGP, as reflected on the final high school transcript);
  - d. Class Rank (as reflected on the final high school transcript).
- (3) For incoming transfers and returning students, the college uses the following criteria to determine eligibility:
  - a. LIFE GPA
  - b. LIFETIME Credit Hours Earned
  - c. Initial Date of College Enrollment (not to include summer immediately following high school graduation).

### B: Processing State Aid

- (1) The financial aid office will complete the required award reports and upload them through CHEMIS, as required by the SC Commission on Higher Education.
  - a. Prior to the submission of this report, the financial aid office will conduct a final internal review of the pending scholarship awards. The internal review will ensure that:
    - i. All eligible students have completed the *SC Residency Certification Form* and the *SC State Affidavit*.
    - ii. All eligible students are enrolled on a full-time basis.
    - iii. All awarded students still meet the renewal / initial awarding criteria.

### C: Receiving State Aid Funds

- (1) Once the award report(s) have been submitted via CHEMIS, the financial aid office will notify the accounting office of the pending fund amounts so that they may request the funds from the state. Once the funds have been received by the college, the accounting office will notify the financial aid office, and the financial aid office will process the disbursement report and send it to the accounting office for further processing.

### D: Returning Funds to the State

- (1) In the event that the college must process a refund to the State of South Carolina for LIFE, HOPE, PALMETTO FELLOWS, or the ENHANCEMENT program, the financial aid office will complete the relevant request for payment paperwork and send it to the accounting office. The accounting office will then process the refund and send the funds back to the State of South Carolina.

### E: Miscellaneous Notes

- (1) The Financial Aid Office completes the PALMETTO FELLOWS Renewal Report and uploads it via the SCNGCAP website at the beginning of each award year. This process is completed prior to the submission of the award report(s) via CHEMIS.
- (2) Initial eligibility for PALMETTO FELLOWS is determined by the Commission on Higher Education.
- (3) The Financial Aid Office completes the SCNGCAP Renewal / Eligibility Report and uploads it via the SCNGCAP website prior to submitting the award report(s) via CHEMIS.