

Winthrop University's Office of Financial Aid Policies and Procedures

Policy and Procedure: State Scholarships & Grants Policy

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Scope

To establish policies and procedures related to the awarding of lottery funds (state scholarships and grants).

General Guidelines

All processes are governed by applicable state statutes and regulations available at www.che.sc.gov. Internal step-by-step instructions for staff are maintained on the Office of Financial Aid's shared drive.

Initial Awarding

1. Scholarships - The Office of Financial Aid (OFA) administers scholarship awards for HOPE Scholarship, LIFE Scholarship, Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, Enhancement Scholarships (STEM & Education), CTP Scholarships, National Guard College Assistance, and Foster Care Youth Funding. OFA has a system in place to accurately and efficiently process these awards within the Banner system.
 - The Office of Admissions determines initial eligibility for incoming freshmen and transfers for HOPE and LIFE scholarships.
 - The Commission on Higher Education (CHE) determines initial eligibility for Palmetto Fellows, Foster Care and National Guard recipients.
 - OFA determines eligibility for CTP scholarships, Enhancement Scholarships, returning student scholarships and students regaining eligibility after a year of not receiving the award.
 - Returning student eligibility is reviewed at the end of each spring term and then throughout the summer as coursework is completed.
2. Grants - OFA processes grant awards for SC Grant and CTP SC Grant. OFA has a system in place to accurately and efficiently process these awards within the Banner system. The number of awards made each year is contingent on the total amount of state funding allocated.
3. Awards are prorated in accordance with CHE regulations (e.g., half-time students receiving SC Grant or students in their final term before graduation).

Disbursement of Funds

1. Students must complete the required annual certification/affidavit (Terms & Conditions) prior to disbursement.
2. Eligibility requirements (e.g., South Carolina residency, enrollment status) are verified before aid is released.

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Billing

1. The Controller's Office manages cash functions related to scholarships and grants, including disbursement, invoicing, and reconciliation.
2. Each semester, the Controller's Office submits reimbursement requests to CHE for the scholarship and grant amounts disbursed, adhering to published deadlines. Adjustments made after the initial invoice (e.g., new awards, reductions) are reflected in the following request.
 - OFA provides any supplemental information needed for invoicing (e.g., CAP database updates, Education Enhancement Agreements).

Refunds

1. Winthrop University follows CHE refund guidance, applying the institutional withdrawal policy to scholarships and grants. Awards are adjusted in proportion to tuition refunds (e.g., 50%).

Reporting

1. OFA completes all required financial aid reporting (e.g., Palmetto Fellows renewal) by established deadlines.
2. The Controller's Office completes all required cash management reporting by established deadlines.

Audits

1. Winthrop University provides full cooperation with audits conducted by CHE or contracted external auditors. These audits use sampling methods to confirm student eligibility and ensure the accuracy of award determinations.