

3.1 State Aid Programs in Which Institution Participates

3.4.1 South Carolina LIFE Scholarship

The Legislative Incentive for Future Excellence (LIFE) Scholarship is a merit-based scholarship. The LIFE scholarship recipient will receive a scholarship in the amount of \$5,000 if eligible.

Eligibility:

To qualify for consideration for a SC LIFE Scholarship, a student must meet two of the following three requirements. Eligibility is based on final high school transcript.

- 3.0 GPA under the State UGS
- 1100 SAT or 24 ACT
- Top 30% of graduating class

A student must also:

- Attend an eligible South Carolina private or public 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 permanent resident
- Certify that he or she has not been convicted of any felonies and has not been convicted of any alcohol or other drug-related misdemeanor convictions within the past academic year
- Verify that he or she does not owe a refund or repayment on any federal or state financial aid
- Must not be eligible for or be a SC HOPE scholarship or Palmetto Fellows Scholarship recipient.

Policies and Procedures

The SC Commission on Higher Education (CHE) expects the FAO of the individual institutions to determine student eligibility for these scholarships.

South Carolina LIFE/HOPE Scholarship

Procedure

The SC Commission on Higher Education (CHE) has left it up to the Financial Aid Offices of the individual institutions to determine who qualifies for these scholarships. We have instituted the following procedure:

A certification form has been created and is posted on the internet along with an affidavit of eligibility. This form has information on it that helps in the tracking of a student's eligibility. In March or early April, the previous year's form is changed (such as dates or any other additions/deletions that need to be made due to changes in the legislation passed by the State legislature). After the changes have been made, the form is corrected and placed on the internet.

A hard copy file is created for each student. These files contain all documents for processing a student's eligibility for LIFE, HOPE, and Palmetto Fellows. After the school year is over, review the records for the year and see which students will be retaining the scholarship for next year. Files for students who have reached their 4 years of enrollment are removed from the current files and moved to storage in the file cabinets. The files that are 3 years old at the end of a school year are destroyed.

The Academy office sends transcripts for the current year's graduating class so we can determine how many of those graduates who are planning to attend the University will qualify for one of the scholarships Slate. Save this information. If the student meets the academic qualifications, their award (LIFE or HOPE) is added to their Powerfaids Awards data in the Packaging section. This will add the Certification form to the Document Details section of PowerFAIDS. If the student has already been sent an award offer, a new one will need to be sent. The student's award offer should include information about completing and submitting the Certification form to the Financial Aid Office in order for their award to be finalized. The Certification form is required each year.

For new incoming freshmen, the Office of Planning, Research and Assessment sends copies of final high school transcripts of other SC students as they are received. Eligibility for LIFE or HOPE Scholarship can usually be determined when these are received, as long as the student has ACT or SAT scores in SLATE. If rank is needed to determine eligibility, the rank report is accessed through the CHE portal. If a ranking report is not in the CHE portal, it may not be used for state merit aid awarding.

As the certification forms begin coming in, check to make sure they are complete and that the affidavit has been signed by the student. Make sure that the documentation proving the parents' residency has been included. First time home school graduate applicants must also include proof that their home school met the requirements as set forth in state law. Homeschoolers **may** submit a transcript that has been issued by the 3rd option group in which the family holds membership. They can also provide a letter of membership from the home school association. A list of approved home-school associations can be found at <http://ed.sc.gov/districts-schools/state-accountability/home-schooling/>. If any of the required documentation is missing, the student is informed via email or in person as to what information is needed. If a form is turned in to the office in person by a student or parent, check the documentation while the person is still in the office. The student's high school transcript can be obtained off of Slate by requesting it from the Admission office if it has not already been sent and added to the other documents. Mark the certification form as "received" in Powerfaids.

Invoices for LIFE, HOPE, and Palmetto Fellows are sent to the Commission on Higher Education with the amount of money requested for each scholarship program. The initial invoice is due no later than November 1st for the Fall term. Along with this invoice, a print out from Powerfaids showing students who have been awarded is included. The CHE will contact us if there is a problem with the invoice(s). If there is no issue, they will process the invoice and send a request to the State Treasurer for funds to be sent to the school. This is an electronic funds transfer and money is sent to our state account at the bank. The Accounting Office notifies Financial Aid when the money from the state has arrived in our bank account.

After drop/add is over, a copy of the student's checksheet is printed from Academic Folder and placed in the student's file to verify they are enrolled in at least 12 credits of non-remedial courses and their gpa meets the qualification. If a student's record confirms eligibility for LIFE or HOPE Scholarship an official letter is sent via email through Powerfaids. Form letters (which are updated each year to include any changes) are in the Word folder under LIFE and HOPE Scholarship.

An EXCEL file is also compiled for the CHE. It is a scholarship file. It lists the students who are receiving the different scholarships, plus other data. It must match the invoice. When the file is ready to be submitted to the CHE it is uploaded to the CHE via their website. Instructions for this process are in the State FA Systems Info folder. There is a deadline for submitting this information, so make sure it is sent by that date. For the fall it is October 30th, for the spring it is March 31st.

Sometimes students who are initially approved for the HOPE Scholarship actually qualify for the LIFE Scholarship, but have not supplied us with a piece of information needed, or we have overlooked information that proves it. When the error is discovered, we will credit them the difference between the two scholarships. Spring invoices and Fall adjustments are due April 1st, and fall adjustments can be made at that time. Summer funds/invoices and Spring adjustments are due by June 1 and summer adjustments are due August 20th.

If a student drops below full-time during the refund period and their account is adjusted to reflect part-time, the student's award is removed. If a student withdraws from classes, then the Financial Services Office will tell us how much the student has been charged through the date of withdrawal (it is based on the percentage of the semester that the student was enrolled). That percentage of time the student is enrolled determines how much of the scholarship can be retained on the account. The difference between the amount of the original award and the cost for the amount of time the student was enrolled is returned to the CHE.

During the spring semester, all scholarship recipients are checked to make sure they will have earned the required number of credits for the current academic year to meet continuing eligibility requirements. If a student will not meet that requirement, the Financial Aid Office notifies the student of the deficiency and informs them that they would need to take additional credits during the summer. Summer classes must be completed and grades posted to the student's record before the first day of classes in the succeeding fall semester

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Life Scholarship Enhancement

Recipients with at least 30 credits, and who, as a freshman, earned 14 hours worth of math and/or science credits, and who are in a qualifying math or science major, will receive an additional amount of up to \$2,500 per year for a maximum of \$7,500.

In addition to defining eligible majors, individual courses must be identified that meet the 14 hours of math and science during the freshman year requirement. Students are

eligible for the enhancements if the 14-hour requirement is met by the end of the freshman year. AP credits and dual enrollment courses (college credit courses taken while still in high school) can satisfy the 14-hour rule.

SC Hope Scholarship

The South Carolina HOPE Scholarship Program is a merit-based scholarship created for eligible first year students attending a four-year institution who do not qualify for the LIFE or Palmetto Fellows Scholarship. Eligible students attending a four-year SC private or public college or university will receive up to \$2,800 during the first two semesters of attendance only. To qualify for consideration for a SC HOPE Scholarship, a student must meet the following requirements:

- 3.0 cumulative high school GPA according to state UGS on final High school transcript
- Attend an eligible South Carolina private or public college/university
- Be a South Carolina resident at the time of high school graduation and at the time of enrollment
- Be enrolled as a full-time degree seeking student
- Must not be eligible for or be a recipient of a LIFE or Palmetto Fellows Scholarship.

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South Carolina Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Procedure

Eligibility for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship for freshmen students is determined by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education. The Commission works with the high schools and homeschool associations to determine the students that qualify. The Commission notifies the Financial Aid Office of those students that meet the academic requirements. The award is added to the student's Award screen in Powerfaids.* The Financial Aid Office then contacts the students to request documentation to prove that the student meets the residency requirements. They must complete and submit the SC Residency Evaluation form with their documentation. They must also sign and submit an Affidavit of Eligibility. The process for submitting an invoice are the same as for the LIFE and HOPE Scholarship. When the funds are received from the Commission they are placed on the students' accounts through Powerfaids. After the next academic year begins, the Financial Aid Office notifies the Commission of those students who have met the continuing eligibility requirements for the next school year via the CHE portal, usually in September. Recipients and the amount of their awards are reported each semester to the Commission on the Disbursement file as referenced in the LIFE Scholarship section.

First year students are eligible for up to \$6700. Upon completion of the required 30 credits and having a 3.0 cumulative gpa, students are eligible for up to \$7500 for their second, third, and fourth years, as long as they continue to earn a minimum of 30 credits each year and maintain a 3.0 cumulative gpa.

Recipients who are math and science majors and have completed 30 hours, and who, as a freshman, earned 14 hours of math and/or science credit, will receive an additional amount of up to \$3300 for a maximum award of \$10,000 per year, providing the student meets the continuing eligibility requirements (earning 30 credits and maintaining a cumulative gpa of 3.0). Education majors are also eligible for the enhancement if they sign an agreement to teach in a SC public school for the number of years that they receive the enhanced funds.

In addition to defining eligible majors, individual courses must be identified that meet the 14 hour requirement during the freshman year. In order to qualify for the Enhancement of \$3300, these 14 hours MUST be earned during the freshman year. AP credits and dual enrollment courses (college credit courses taken while still in high school) can satisfy the 14-hour rule. However, AP credits and dual enrollment courses MAY NOT be used to meet the yearly 30 credit hour requirement.

During the spring semester, all scholarship recipients are checked to make sure they will have earned the required 30 credits for the current academic year to meet continuing eligibility requirements. If a student will not meet that requirement, the Financial Aid Office notifies the student of the deficiency and informs them that they would need to take additional credits during the summer. Summer classes must be completed and grades posted to the student's record before the first day of classes in the succeeding fall semester.

*By law, Palmetto Fellows funds are the last financial aid to be awarded to a student. Some students may not be eligible for the full amount of their scholarship if it would put them over their cost of attendance. In this case, the student would receive the amount that would bring them up to that cost.

If a student withdraws during the semester, then the Financial Services office will tell us how much the student has been charged through the date of withdrawal (it is based on the percentage of the semester that the student was enrolled). That percentage of time the student is enrolled determines how much of the scholarship can be retained on the account. The difference between the amount of the original award and the cost of the semester determines the amount that is returned to the CHE.

After funds have been applied to student accounts, the Financial Aid office reconciles with the General Ledger specialist to verify that the funds have been disbursed to the eligible students' accounts. Any discrepancies are resolved and corrected on the Scholarship file that was submitted to the CHE and adjusted in a new invoice (if applicable) is submitted, or funds returned to the CHE if applicable.

During the student's final semester, the award may be pro-rated if full-time enrollment is not needed for graduation.

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3.4.3 South Carolina National Guard College Assistance Program

Policies and Procedures

I. Eligibility for SC National Guard College Assistance Program (SCNG CAP) As a reminder, eligible students can receive SCNG CAP funds if they:

- a) are making Satisfactory Academic Progress;
- b) have not exceeded the \$22,000 maximum award amount; and
- c) have not earned a graduate degree. Eligible programs of study are less than one-year certificates or certifications approved by the SC Technical College System, courses completed as the education component of a registered apprenticeship, a certificate or other recognized educational credential (e.g. diploma), the first associate's degree or a second associate's degree earned at a minimum five (5) years after receiving the first associate's degree, a two-year program that is acceptable for full credit towards the first bachelor's degree, and the first bachelor's degree.

**** Note:** Students may receive college assistance benefits upon completion of their first bachelor's degree in a preceding level (less than one-year certificate or certifications, one-year certificate, and two-year program or associate's degree) in accordance with Section 62-251 H.

Using the SC National Guard Student Data Web Portal, student enrollment status is verified as well as attempted credit hours, SAP and award amount for the current semester.

Upon submission of the enrollment information on the portal, an invoice is sent to the individual at the CHE who oversees this program.

Upon receipt of the funds from the state, the money is disbursed to the students' account.

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