



Scholarship Enhancement Eligibility Review (SEER) Procedures for Academic Programs and Courses

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Legislative Charge

The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE) administers LIFE and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancements in accordance with the South Carolina Code of Laws Section 59-149-15(B) and 59-104-25(B) as amended, and pursuant to the program regulations for the Palmetto Fellows and LIFE scholarship programs under the South Carolina Code of Regulations, Chapter 62.

The South Carolina General Assembly passed [Act 44](#) which expanded eligibility of students awarded the LIFE and Palmetto Fellows scholarships to receive additional scholarship award stipends (“scholarship enhancements”) if they met the scholarship enhancement criteria, including majoring in CHE-defined science, mathematics, accounting, and education degree programs. Post-secondary and workforce retention of distinguished students are the goals of the additional award amounts, per South Carolina Code of Regulations, Section 59-149-15.

The legislation also directs the Commission to define science and mathematics majors:

“The Commission on Higher Education by regulation shall define what constitutes a science or mathematics major, applicable beginning with the 2024-2025 School Year to persons who did not receive a LIFE Scholarship stipend before the 2024-2025 School Year. This definition of a science or mathematics major must include, at a minimum, majors in science or mathematics disciplines, computer science or informational technology, engineering, accounting, and healthcare and related disciplines including medicine and dentistry; provided, that nothing herein prevents a student from changing majors within acceptable science or mathematics disciplines. For purposes of determining stipend eligibility of accounting majors, courses in microeconomics, macroeconomics, and business statistics completed by an accounting major in his freshman year must count towards the requirement in subsection (A) that the student shall complete at least fourteen credit hours of instruction in mathematics and science courses during the student's freshman year, and these provisions apply beginning with students who took microeconomics, macroeconomics, and business statistics courses as freshman accounting majors during the 2024-2025 School Year so as to enable them to have those courses count toward the fourteen-hour coursework requirement in subsection (A) for purposes of attaining LIFE Scholarship stipend eligibility.”

To refine its determination of the eligibility of academic programs and courses, the Commission issues the following procedures:

1. A definition of eligible science, mathematics, accounting and education majors.
2. Standardization of the processes to review academic programs and courses.
3. Instructions for application for eligibility of programs and courses.
4. Scholarship Enhancement Eligibility Review (SEER) committee procedures.

DEFINITION

The scholarship enhancement program eligibility task force, charged with formulating review guidelines, conducted research and concluded that defining an academic program that constitutes a science, mathematics, accounting, and education majors should consider the following:

For current evaluation, eligible science, mathematics, accounting, and education majors include life and physical sciences, engineering, mathematics, information technology, health disciplines, and accounting, as defined by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics Standard Occupational Classification Recommendation.

The Commission also considers the following:

Growth: How does the program continue to attract and produce STEM professionals in growing economic areas?

Competitiveness: How will the degree program improve students' competitiveness for global careers and/or international job opportunities within the state?

Graduate study: How does the proposed program prepare students for graduate study?

Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) and Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes: How are the CIP and SOC codes aligned with science, mathematics, accounting, and education designations?

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

South Carolina Code of Regulations R.62-318-A and B specify requirements for student eligibility for STEM scholarship enhancements to include: 1) Palmetto Fellows and LIFE eligibility; 2) satisfaction of the 14 credit-hour prerequisite; 3) satisfactory collegiate academic progress; 4) full-time enrollment in a declared major in an eligible degree program; and 5) institutional eligibility. Moreover, the Commission affirms student transferability: for a course counting toward eligibility for a student at one institution, the student maintains the eligibility credits earned when he or she transfers to another in-state institution.

Students must be enrolled in a declared major in an eligible degree program that is approved and assigned a CIP code by the Commission. Eligible degree programs are those listed as such on the Commission's website (Code of Regulations R.62-310-M and 62-1200.5-P). Enrollment in a minor does not meet the requirements of an eligible degree program for the Palmetto Fellows or LIFE scholarship enhancement.

The CHE has published listings of approved scholarship enhancement degree programs as well as courses for satisfying the 14-credit hour requirement. However, mathematics, science and allied health programs approved at one institution do not confer *de facto* approval to other institutions. **Each institution must submit applications for all academic programs or courses it requests the Commission and SEER committee to consider for scholarship enhancement eligibility.** Programs and/or courses that appear and remain on the Commission-approved scholarship enhancement list do not require new applications. Institutions are required to complete the following instructions provided in [Appendix A](#) and [Appendix B](#) to apply for consideration for degree program or course approval. Furthermore, [ACT 44](#) specifies that “...nothing herein prevents a student from changing majors within acceptable science or mathematics disciplines.”

PROGRAM AND COURSE ELIGIBILITY REVIEW OVERVIEW

The instructions for institutional application for program and course approval are intended to summarize, clarify and remain consistent with applicable laws and regulations. Applicable laws and regulations are published on the South Carolina Legislature website and on the CHE website.

As mandated by state statute, the review of approved academic programs and courses is an iterative process on international, federal and state levels, and therefore warrants continual review, resulting in the periodic update of the published list of approved academic programs and courses by the SEER committee. The committee is not responsible for review or approval of applications for Education Program Scholarship Enhancement. Applications for Education programs leading to teacher certifications are reviewed and approved by CHE staff (See [Appendix E](#)).

SEER COMMITTEE PURPOSE

1. To review applications for academic program and course eligibility according to the procedures in the Instructions for Institutional Application for Degree Programs and Individual Courses.
2. To review, at a minimum of every four years, the definition of eligible science, mathematics, accounting and education majors; the criteria for determining eligible academic programs and courses as published in the instructions; the list of approved academic programs and courses for continued inclusion; and the protocols in the instructions to improve the application process.
3. To provide the recommendations from application reviews and committee deliberations to the Commission's Office of Academic Affairs and Licensing. The SEER committee reviews applications according to the definition for science, mathematics, and accounting majors published in the instructions. To help determine eligibility, the committee considers three criteria: **growth, competitiveness** and preparation for **graduate study**. The committee uses a Scholarship Enhancement Program and Course Eligibility Rubric to review each application and rate the application according to prescribed parameters (See [Appendix D](#)).

SEER COMPOSITION

The SEER committee comprises six members representing the following:

1. Comprehensive public institutions.
2. Independent institutions.
3. The South Carolina Technical College System.
4. Research institutions.
5. The CHE (one staff member from the Office of Academic Affairs and Licensing, and one from the Office of Student Affairs).

The preferred background of a SEER committee member is a full-time academician in mathematics, life and physical sciences, computer science, informational technology, engineering, accounting and/or the health disciplines.

SEER COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

The SEER committee reviews applications twice per academic year (fall and spring) according to the timetable in the review cycles as outlined in Table 1.

**Note: At its discretion, the Commission's SEER Committee may request additional information as warranted*

ACADEMIC PROGRAM AND COURSE ELIGIBILITY

ACADEMIC PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

Applications will be considered only if the existing academic program satisfies the following requirements:

1. The academic program must be an approved program listed in the Commission's Inventory of Academic Programs.
2. Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) under one of the codes approved by the CHE and designated as STEM, mathematics, accounting, or education.
3. Listing in the institution's official catalog with a defined course of study, including course descriptions.
4. Identification in the application of the courses in the curriculum that meet the 14 credit-hour requirement.
5. Academic course applications should only be submitted if the academic program has been approved for scholarship enhancement funds.

New Academic Programs: Academic programs that have not been approved by the Commission require the submission of a New Program Proposal according to [the Policies and Procedures for New Academic Programs, Program Modifications, Program Notifications, Program Terminations, and New Centers](#). The institution must indicate on the new proposal application the program's intention to pursue eligibility for scholarship enhancement. Upon full Commission approval, the institution must submit the SEER application for review by the established deadlines to academicprograms@che.sc.gov (See [Appendix A](#)).

COURSE ELIGIBILITY

Applications for course eligibility will follow the same submission guidelines as academic program submissions. Applications will be considered only if the course has already secured an approved CIP code, and course prefix consistent with programs of study included in the list of eligible programs.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR INSTITUTIONAL APPLICATIONS

1. Applications will be considered for review only for academic degree programs that have been approved by the CHE.
2. Only an institution's chief academic officer or designee may submit applications. Applications for degree programs or courses will not be accepted from unauthorized institutional staff, from students, students' family members, or any other third parties.
3. Applications will be considered and reviewed only during one of two review cycles per academic year.

REVIEW CYCLES

Institutions may submit applications for scholarship enhancement eligibility during one of two review cycles per year, January 15 or August 15. Applications must be submitted and approved prior to the beginning of the academic year requested for implementation. The January cycle is considered "prior to" the beginning of the new academic year, and the August cycle is considered "the same as" the new academic year.

Specifically, submissions by the January 15 review cycle will be considered spring term applications during the current academic year. Therefore, in accordance with the Commission's Policy for Addition and Removal of Programs to the List of Programs Eligible for Math/Science Scholarship Enhancements (2010), if the application is approved, student eligibility status for the scholarship enhancement begins with the freshman class enrolling in the program the beginning the fall term of the **next** academic year.

Submissions during the August 15 cycle will be considered fall semester applications of the same calendar year (the new academic year). Therefore, if approved, scholarship enhancement eligibility begins with the freshman class enrolling in the program beginning the fall term of **the following academic year** (eligible students do not *receive* scholarship enhancements until their sophomore year, per the South Carolina Code of Laws as amended, §59-104-25-A and §59-149-15-A).

Example: If an application is reviewed by January 2025 and it is approved, student eligibility status begins with the freshman class in Fall 2025. If an application is reviewed by August 2025 and it is approved, student eligibility status begins with the freshman class in Fall 2026.

This timetable is designed to assure the Commission review panel (SEER) has opportunities for thorough yet timely analysis.

The Commission advises institutions seeking **same calendar year eligibility** for new programs or program modifications that include the request for scholarship enhancement to submit proposals in the January cycle.

Table 1. SEER REVIEW TIMELINES

COMMISSION EVALUATION PROCESS FOR SCHOLARSHIP ENHANCEMENT			
Scholarship Enhancement Application Due	Scholarship Enhancement Eligibility Review Committee Meeting	Notification to Institutions	Implementation Cycle (earliest possible date)
January 15	February	April 15	Same calendar year, beginning the fall term
August 15	September	November 15	Next calendar year, beginning the fall term

Applications for courses and applications for academic programs are separate documents with separate instructions. See [Appendix A](#) and [Appendix B](#) for the respective application requirements.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SEER Program Application

Name of Institution and Academic Unit:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Name of Program: (include concentrations, options, and tracks):

Click or tap here to enter text.

Approved CIP Code(s):

Click or tap here to enter text.

Delivery Site(s):

Click or tap here to enter text.

Program Contact Information (name, title, unit or office, telephone number, and email address):

Click or tap here to enter text.

Institutional Approvals and Dates:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Academic Program Information

State the nature and purpose of the proposed program.

Click or tap here to enter text.

List the program's objectives.

Click or tap here to enter text.

List the program's unique features including dual-degree partnerships, articulation agreements, or internships.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Provide a concise explanation for consideration of the degree program's eligibility for scholarship enhancement. This rationale should address *growth*, *competitiveness* and *graduate study* as described in the definition.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Curriculum Outline

Provide a curriculum outline of the academic program by academic year (freshman, sophomore, junior and senior) itemizing each course by title, course prefix and number, and by course requirement: general education, core or concentration coursework, or electives.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Identify the courses in the curriculum that meet the 14-credit-hour requirement within the first year (i.e. Freshman year).

Click or tap here to enter text.

APPENDIX B

SEER Course Application

Name of Institution and Academic Unit:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Full name of course including prefix and number:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Course Contact Information: (name, title, unit or office, telephone number, and email address):

Click or tap here to enter text.

Academic Individual Course Information

Course description:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Type of Course, e.g. general education, major requirement, etc.:

Click or tap here to enter text.

List the course unique features including laboratory or experiential learning components, if applicable:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Current CIP code:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Syllabus:

Click or tap here to enter text.

APPENDIX C

SEER Submission Checklist

Math, Science and Accounting majors SEER Submission Checklist:

- ☐ 14 Credit hours in Math, Science and Accounting Courses during first year.
- ☐ Well defined course of study with course descriptions.
- ☐ Appropriate CIP code – Cip Code corresponds to a Math, Science and Accounting related field.

Academic Program Information:

- ☐ Outline program purpose, objectives, and unique features: and explain consideration of the program for scholarship enhancement.
- ☐ Curriculum for second, third- and fourth-year students.
- ☐ Comparison to Other SEER programs.
- ☐ Growth: How does the program continue to attract and produce Math, Science and Accounting professionals in growing economic areas?
- ☐ Competitiveness: How will the degree program help to improve students' competitiveness for international global job opportunities within the state?
- ☐ Graduate Study: How does the proposed program prepare students for graduate study?

APPENDIX D

Scholarship Enhancement Program and Course Eligibility Review Rubric

Scholarship Enhancement PROGRAM Rubric Template:

Institution Name: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Proposed Program: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Review categories	REQUIRED:			Yes/No
14-credit hours requirement	14-credit hours in science, mathematics, accounting courses during first year	14 -credit hours in science, mathematics, accounting courses during first year not present	14 -credit hours or more in science, mathematics, accounting courses during first year present	Yes
Course descriptions	Well-defined course of study with course descriptions	Course of study with course descriptions not present	Course of study with course descriptions is present and well-defined	Yes
CIP Code	Appropriate CIP code	CIP Code does not correspond to a science, mathematics, accounting related field	CIP Code corresponds to science, mathematics, accounting related field	Yes

Criterion	Does Not Meet Expectations (0)	Meets Expectations (1)	Exceeds Expectations (2)	Score
Academic Program Information: Outline program purpose, objectives, and unique features; and explain consideration of the program for scholarship enhancement	The nature and purpose of program for scholarship enhancement is not clear, lacking a list of program objectives and any unique features. Explanation for consideration of academic program for scholarship enhancement and connection to science, mathematics, accounting field is vague.	The nature and purpose of program for scholarship enhancement is included. Explanation for consideration of academic program for scholarship enhancement and connection to science, mathematics, accounting field is clearly stated	The nature and purpose of program for scholarship enhancement is clear, including a list of program objectives and any unique features. Explanation for consideration of academic program for scholarship enhancement and connection to science, mathematics, accounting field is clear and concise.	
Curriculum for second, third, and fourth-year students	No indication of curriculum is included for second, third or fourth year.	Students will complete additional science, mathematics, accounting curriculum (beyond the 14 hours) during the remainder of their time in the program.	Curriculum for second, third and fourth years is clearly identified. Science, mathematics, accounting content is reasonably and evenly distributed through program.	
Comparison to Other SEER Programs	Comparison analysis of the proposed program	Comparison analysis of the proposed program to	Program compares favorably to other SEER	

Criterion	Does Not Meet Expectations (0)	Meets Expectations (1)	Exceeds Expectations (2)	Score
	to other similar programs approved for scholarship enhancement is not evident.	other similar programs approved for scholarship enhancement is evident.	eligible programs that are similar in content.	
Growth: How does the program continue to attract and produce science, mathematics, accounting professionals in growing economic areas?	Not addressed.	Response makes some reference to the ways that this program will attract and produce science, mathematics, and accounting professionals.	Institutional response clearly documents how this program will continue to attract and produce new science, mathematics, accounting professionals in growing academic areas.	
Competitiveness: How will the degree program help to improve students' competitiveness for international job opportunities within the state?	Not addressed.	Response makes some references to how this program will help students to find a job after graduation.	Response clearly indicates how this program will develop students' competitiveness for international jobs within the state. Response makes specific references to international companies within the state.	

Criterion	Does Not Meet Expectations (0)	Meets Expectations (1)	Exceeds Expectations (2)	Score
Graduate Study: How does the proposed program prepare students for graduate study?	Not addressed.	Response indicates that graduate school is one possibility for students after graduation.	Response clearly details how this program specifically prepares students for graduate study and includes names of graduate programs students have attended or will be likely to attend in the future.	
TOTAL				0.00

[APPENDIX E](#)

Scholarship Enhancement Eligibility Application – EDUCATION

Name of Institution:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Name of Program: (include degree designation and all concentrations, options, or tracks):

Click or tap here to enter text.

Program Designation:

☐ Bachelor's Degree: Four Year

Consider the program for Education degree supplemental Palmetto Fellows and LIFE Scholarship awards?

☐ Yes, consider for full approval.

☐ Yes, consider for provisional approval.

*IF applying for provisional approval pending South Carolina Department of Education (SCDOE) Educator Preparation Program approval, please provide a narrative on the status of the SCDOE application:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Approved CIP Code(s):

Click or tap here to enter text.

Delivery Site(s):

Click or tap here to enter text.

Program Contact Information (name, title, telephone number, and email address):

Click or tap here to enter text.

Institutional Approvals:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Attach the following items:

1. CHE approved proposal.
2. CHE approval letter.
3. SCDOE SC Approved Educator Preparation letter.

Note: Provisional approval may be considered if the educator preparation program has been approved by CHE but has not received recognition of approval in the SCDOE Approved Educator Preparation Program Inventory. The institution must provide the following additional documentation:

1. Proof of submission of an application to the SCDOE for approval and placement on the Approved Educator Preparation Program Inventory
2. Description of application status and anticipated completion timeframe.

Provisional approval will be effective for 1-year. The institution will be responsible for submission of an approval letter from the SCDOE verifying their approval and placement on [Approved Educator Preparation Program Inventory](#) Upon submission and verification the program will continue to receive scholarship enhancement funding.