



COMMITTEE ON STUDENT SERVICES

11:00 am on Thursday, September 3, 2026
Midlands Technical College-Northeast Campus
CET Building, Room 109
151 Powell Road, Columbia, SC 29203
And via Zoom

<https://che-sc-gov.zoom.us/j/96247490749?pwd=aB2mn0LuW8k0wkdDN5QHxWoKcyKwLP.1>

Meeting ID: 962 4749 0749 Password: 508722

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| 1. | Introduction and Approval of Minutes | Ms. Jenni Bryson, Chair |
| 2. | Chair's Report | |
| | USC Columbia Student Representative | Ms. Addison Felkel |
| 3. | State Scholarship Regulations (For Approval) | |
| | A. LIFE and SC HOPE Scholarships | Dr. Gerrick Hampton
Associate Director |
| | B. Palmetto Fellows Scholarship | Ms. Kathryn Harris
Program Manager |
| 4. | FAFSA First Updates (For Information) | Ms. Alantis Seckal
Program Coordinator |
| 5. | Other Business | Ms. Jenni Bryson, Chair |
| 6. | Adjournment | |

Other Meetings

Committee on Student Services

Thursday, November 5, 2026

Thursday, December 3, 2026

R. Wes Hayes, Jr.
Chairman

L. Jeffery Perez, Ph.D.
President & Executive Director



Minutes of the Committee on Student Services Meeting

August 6, 2026, 11:00 am

Committee Members Attending

Commissioner Jenni Bryson, Chair
Commissioner Paul Batson
Commissioner Amy Bigham
Commissioner Daniel Dukes
Commissioner Gene Fant
Commissioner Charles Schulze

Guests

Dr. Melissa Martin, USC Aiken
Ms. Neva Bassett, USC Aiken LIFE
Ms. Lane Goodwin, SC Technical College System
Ms. Kelli Fookes, Coastal Carolina University
Ms. Katie Stevens, SC Tuition Grants Commission
Dr. Walter Collins, USC Palmetto College
Mr. Zachary Christian, SC Tuition Grants Commission
Mr. Joey Derrick, USC Columbia

Staff Members Present

Dr. Jeff Perez
Dr. Karen Woodfaulk
Ms. Kathryn Harris
Ms. Tanya Weigold
Ms. Alfie Mincy
Ms. Leslie Williams
Dr. Angela Peters
Dr. Tim Rees
Mr. Chris Glenn
Ms. Kinsey Phillips

1. Introductions and Approval of Minutes

Kinsey Phillips introduced the guests in attendance and confirmed that the meeting was held in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act. Chair Jenni Bryson provided greetings and reiterated the purpose of the meeting to all in attendance.

Chair Bryson called for a motion to approve the minutes of the Committee on Student Services May 7, 2026, meeting. A motion was made (Bigham), seconded (Batson), and carried to approve the minutes. Another motion was made to approve the minutes of the June 3, 2026, meeting. A motion was made (Bigham), seconded (Batson), and carried to approve the minutes.

2. Chair Report

Chair Bryson provided a brief introduction of Dr. Melissa Martin, program director of the University of South Carolina Aiken LIFE Program. Dr. Martin introduced Neva Bassett, USC Aiken LIFE program participant and a senior student in the Leadership and Civic Engagement program. Ms. Bassett shared her experiences and discussed the program's offerings, including classes in leadership and financial literacy. Ms. Bassett mentioned her various on-campus jobs and expressed excitement about her upcoming graduation in May 2027.

Dr. Martin highlighted the program's growth and appreciation for the financial support provided by the state, noting that USCA LIFE is South Carolina's most supported College Transition Program in this regard. Dr. Martin mentioned that seven students will be graduating from USCA LIFE in May 2027, and that there will be 38 students in the program in academic year 2026-2027.

3. College Transition Program

Kathryn Harris presented an overview of the College Transition Program (CTP) scholarship report, highlighting that 6 federally approved programs across South Carolina institutions served 110 students in the 2025-26 fiscal year with a 97% completion rate. Ms. Harris stated that employment outcomes had also increased to 59%, which was an increase from 51% in 2024-2025. Ms. Harris presented data to show that the program has accumulated a significant carry-forward balance of \$9.81 million, though CHE has requested expanded flexibility to use this funding beyond just scholarships. These requests have been unsuccessful in 2025 and 2026. Dr. Jeffrey Perez explained that this carryforward has been presented to the General Assembly so that everyone is fully informed. Dr. Karen Woodfaulk explained that the hope is that the carryforward would go down as a result of greater opportunities in South Carolina in the area of College Transition Programs.

Commissioner Batson asked about the status of the development of new CTP programs at technical colleges. Ms. Harris explained that Midlands Technical College would be enrolling its first class in MidlandsLIFE in Fall 2026, with York Technical College next in line. Ms. Harris stated that Greenville Technical College and Horry-Georgetown Technical College are still in the early stages of development. Though these new programs are currently not federally approved as College Transition Programs, Ms. Harris mentioned that funding could be awarded when federal approval is met.

Chair Bryson mentioned that CTP programs have an economic development component, but emphasized that there is also a significant workforce development component. Two hotels in South Carolina, the Shepherd Hotel in Clemson and the Lantern Hotel in

Columbia, partner with ClemsonLIFE and CarolinaLIFE to provide employment opportunities for CTP graduates and individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Chair Bryson called for a motion to approve the College Transition Program report. A motion was made (Bigham), seconded (Batson), and carried to approve the report.

4. South Carolina Program for the Recruitment and Retention of Minority Teachers Quarter 3 Report

Chair Bryson gave a brief update that the South Carolina Program for the Recruitment and Retention of Minority teachers will be undergoing review. Chair Bryson mentioned that CHE staff identified a number of areas in need of clarification in the Quarter 3 report. These areas include annual student enrollment reporting methodology, recruitment and retention efforts, graduation rates, and Praxis pass rates.

Dr. Jeffrey Perez discussed that he has spoken with President Conyers of South Carolina State University, who plans to be personally involved with the review of the program. Dr. Perez stated that President Conyers expects to return with findings by December 2026.

Commissioner Batson asked if there were recent personnel changes at South Carolina State University. Dr. Perez affirmed that there have been several dramatic leadership changes, specifically within this program.

5. Other Business

Tanya Weigold introduced a timeline for the implementation of Act 161. Ms. Weigold explained that Act 161 (Campus Safety Act) goes into effect Fall 2027 and involves two main components: Training and safety plans for new students within 30 days of campus arrival, and Clery reports covering campus crimes. Institutions will begin collecting data from January to December, and must submit Clery Reports and summaries to CHE by October 31, 2027. Once data is received by CHE, a report will be presented in November 2027.

No other business was presented. The meeting was adjourned at 11:38 am.

R. Wes Hayes, Jr.
Chairman

L. Jeffrey Perez, Ph.D.
President & Executive Director



Memorandum

TO: Ms. Jenni Bryson, Chairperson

Members of the Student Services Committee

FROM: Dr. Karen Woodfaulk, Director, Student Affairs Division

DATE: September 3, 2026

Approval of Changes to the Regulation Regarding the LIFE Scholarship Program

In effort to update the regulation to provide consistency between the state scholarship programs, and provide clarity on procedures for awarding, Commission staff has made revisions to the regulation regarding the LIFE Scholarship.

CHE staff has solicited institutional ideas and feedback on draft regulations during the Summer. CHE staff made requests for institutional concerns and proposed changes to the regulation in June. From the feedback received, a draft regulation was generated and circulated to institutional financial aid and residency officers, who met on August 13, 2026 to provide feedback on the suggested changes to the regulation. Based on the feedback from this review by the institutions, a revised draft of the regulation was created. Institutions, as well as the general public, will have another opportunity to provide feedback during the open comment period, to take place from October 23, 2026 to November 27, 2026.

The regulation proposes multiple clarifications, pertaining to the timing for residency qualification, the Early Graduation Process and continued eligibility for summer attendees. In addition, one additional amendment was made to provide for the passage of Act 191 of 2024, which allowed for the American College of the Building Arts to become an eligible institution. Finally, changes were made to reflect the renaming of the LIFE GPA to a State Scholarship GPA. A review of all the changes is below:

Section 62-1200.5: B. "LIFE GPA" language is being replaced with "State Scholarship GPA".

D. “Annual Credit hour requirement” language was added to clarify that academic credit should be placed on the transcript to be considered.

F. “LIFE GPA” Language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

N. “Eligible Institution” “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

Y. “Independent institutions/private institutions” Definition was revised to clarify participating independent institutions in the program.

BB. “LIFE GPA” Language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

DD. “Military mobilization” Language added to clarify that Basic Training and Advance Individual Training may be treated the same as military mobilization.

FF. “Non-degree credit courses” “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

HH. “Private institutions” Repeated definition. Removed for redundancy.

II. “Independent institution” re-lettered with removal of previous definition.

JJ. “Public institutions” re-lettered with removal of previous definition.

KK. “remedial/developmental coursework” re-lettered with removal of previous definition.

LL. “Satisfactory academic progress” re-lettered with removal of previous definition.

MM. “Second year/sophomore year” re-lettered with removal of previous definition.

NN. “South Carolina resident” Language removed to allow for residency to be obtained by the time initial college enrollment. This will give more time for students to qualify for residency. Re-lettered with removal of previous definition.

OO. “Third year/junior year” re-lettered with removal of previous definition.

PP. “3 plus 2 programs” re-lettered with removal of previous definition.

QQ. “Transfer student” re-lettered with removal of previous definition.

RR. “Substantially deviates” re-lettered with removal of previous definition.

SS. “Preparatory high school” re-lettered with removal of previous definition.

TT. “Lawful Presence” re-lettered with removal of previous definition.

UU. “Continuously enrolled” re-lettered with removal of previous definition.

VV. An “approved associate’s degree program that requires a minimum of 68 credit hours” re-lettered with removal of previous definition.

Section 62-1200.10: A.(1). Language removed to allow for legal permanent residency to be obtained by the time initial college enrollment. This will give more time for students to qualify for residency.

A.(2). Language removed to allow for S.C. residency to be obtained by the time initial college enrollment. This will give more time for students to qualify for residency.

A.(3)(c). Language added to clarify that official class rank must be sent to CHE.

E. Language removed to clarify that the Early Graduation Process is done through the awarding institution. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

G. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

H. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

J. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

K. Language added to clarify that a SC HOPE recipient who transfers to an eligible two-year institution in the same academic year may receive the LIFE Scholarship upon transferring.

M. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

O(5). “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

O(7). “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

Section 62-1200.15: A(2). “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

B. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

C. Language added to provide that a student who begins college mid-year, and does not meet the requirements to receive the award the next academic year, may still receive a second term of award the following Fall term. Student would not be eligible in the following Spring term. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

E. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

G. Language added to clarify that all students should be notified of their continued eligibility requirements. This includes those students who indicate they do not wish to continue enrollment.

Section 62-1200.25: A. Language removed to allow for residency to be obtained by the time initial college enrollment. This will give more time for students to qualify for residency.

A(2). “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

B. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

C. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

D. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

E(2). “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

Section 62-1200.30: C(1). “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

D. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

F(1). “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

F(2). “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

F(3). “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

F(4). “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

Section 62-1200.35: C. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

Section 62-1200.40: C. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

E. Language removed to allow for students who take internship, co-op or study abroad to meet the average of 30 credit hours for the year. This will allow them to use Summer schools hours from previous year, AP, IB, CLEP or dual enrollment hours to meet the requirements.

Section 62-1200.45: C. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

D. Language removed to allow for students who take leave from school for military service to meet the average of 30 credit hours for the year. This will allow them to use Summer schools hours from previous year, AP, IB, CLEP or dual enrollment hours to meet the requirements.

E. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

Section 62-1200.60: B. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

C. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

E. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

E(3) & (4). “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

F. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

G. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

O(6) & (7): “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

Recommendation

The Commission staff recommends that the Committee on Students Services approve the proposed amendments to the regulation for the LIFE Scholarship Program. If approved by the Committee on Student Services and the Commission on Higher Education, the proposed regulation will be submitted to the SC General Assembly during the 2027 legislative session for approval under the Administrative Procedures Act.

Document No. 5321

STATE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION**CHAPTER 62**

Statutory Authority: 1976 Code Sections 59-149-10 et seq.

62-1200.1 - 62-1200.75. Legislative Incentives for Future Excellence (LIFE) Scholarship Program and Legislative Incentives for Future Excellence (LIFE) Scholarship Enhancement.

Synopsis:

The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education proposes the following revisions to Chapter 62 regulation, R.62-1200.1 through 62-1200.75, LIFE Scholarship Program. Revisions to the existing regulation for the LIFE Scholarship & LIFE Scholarship Enhancement Program are being considered to clarify the policies and procedures for administering the program. In the proposed amendments, regulation is being revised to align in-state residency timelines with state scholarship residency timelines. In addition, the regulation is being updated to clarify procedures and practices already occurring at the institutions. Lastly, other changes to the regulation include updating of definitions and minor language changes to promote consistency.

The proposed regulation will require legislative review.

A Notice of Drafting was published in the *State Register* on May 22, 2026.

Section-by-Section Discussion

- Section 62-1200.5:
- B. "LIFE GPA" language is being replaced with "State Scholarship GPA".
 - D. "Annual Credit hour requirement" language was added to clarify that academic credit should be placed on the transcript to be considered.
 - F. "LIFE GPA" Language is being replaced with "State Scholarship GPA".
 - N. "Eligible Institution" "LIFE GPA" language is being replaced with "State Scholarship GPA".
 - Y. "Independent institutions/private institutions" Definition was revised to clarify participating independent institutions in the program.
 - BB. "LIFE GPA" Language is being replaced with "State Scholarship GPA".
 - DD. "Military mobilization" Language added to clarify that Basic Training and Advance Individual Training may be treated the same as military mobilization.
 - FF. "Non-degree credit courses" "LIFE GPA" language is being replaced with "State Scholarship GPA".
 - HH. "Private institutions" Repeated definition. Removed for redundancy.
 - II. "Independent institution" re-lettered with removal of previous definition.
 - JJ. "Public institutions" re-lettered with removal of previous definition.
 - KK. "remedial/developmental coursework" re-lettered with removal of previous definition.
 - LL. "Satisfactory academic progress" re-lettered with removal of previous definition.

MM. “Second year/sophomore year” re-lettered with removal of previous definition.

NN. “South Carolina resident” Language removed to allow for residency to be obtained by the time initial college enrollment. This will give more time for students to qualify for residency. Re-lettered with removal of previous definition.

OO. “Third year/junior year” re-lettered with removal of previous definition.

PP. “3 plus 2 programs” re-lettered with removal of previous definition.

QQ. “Transfer student” re-lettered with removal of previous definition.

RR. “Substantially deviates” re-lettered with removal of previous definition.

SS. “Preparatory high school” re-lettered with removal of previous definition.

TT. “Lawful Presence” re-lettered with removal of previous definition.

UU. “Continuously enrolled” re-lettered with removal of previous definition.

VV. An “approved associate’s degree program that requires a minimum of 68 credit hours” re-lettered with removal of previous definition.

Section 62-1200.10:

A.(1). Language removed to allow for legal permanent residency to be obtained by the time initial college enrollment. This will give more time for students to qualify for residency.

A.(2). Language removed to allow for S.C. residency to be obtained by the time initial college enrollment. This will give more time for students to qualify for residency.

A.(3)(c). Language added to clarify that official class rank must be sent to CHE.

E. Language removed to clarify that the Early Graduation Process is done through the awarding institution. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

G. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

H. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

J. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

K. Language added to clarify that a SC HOPE recipient who transfers to an eligible two-year institution in the same academic year may receive the LIFE Scholarship upon transferring.

M. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

O(5). “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

O(7). “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

Section 62-1200.15:

A(2). “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

B. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

C. Language added to provide that a student who begins college mid-year, and does not meet the requirements to receive the award the next academic year, may still receive a second term of award the following Fall term. Student would not

be eligible in the following Spring term. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

E. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

G. Language added to clarify that all students should be notified of their continued eligibility requirements. This includes those students who indicate they do not wish to continue enrollment.

Section 62-1200.25: A. Language removed to allow for residency to be obtained by the time initial college enrollment. This will give more time for students to qualify for residency.

A(2). “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

B. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

C. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

D. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

E(2). “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

Section 62-1200.30 C(1). “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

D. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

F(1). “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

F(2). “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

F(3). “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

F(4). “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

Section 62-1200.35 C. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

Section 62-1200.40: C. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

E. Language removed to allow for students who take internship, co-op or study abroad to meet the average of 30 credit hours for the year. This will allow them to use Summer schools hours from previous year, AP, IB, CLEP or dual enrollment hours to meet the requirements.

Section 62-1200.45: C. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

D. Language removed to allow for students who take leave from school for military service to meet the average of 30 credit hours for the year. This will allow them to use Summer schools hours from previous year, AP, IB, CLEP or dual enrollment hours to meet the requirements.

E. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

Section 62-1200.60: B. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

C. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

E. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

E(3) & (4). “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

F. “LIFE GPA” language is being replaced with “State Scholarship GPA”.

G. "LIFE GPA" language is being replaced with "State Scholarship GPA".

O(6) & (7): "LIFE GPA" language is being replaced with "State Scholarship GPA".

Notice of Public Hearing and Opportunity for Public Comment:

Interested members of the public and regulated community are invited to make oral or written comments on the proposed regulation at a public hearing to be conducted by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education on December 4, 2026, to be held in the Main Conference Room at 1122 Lady Street, Suite 400, Columbia, SC. The meeting will commence at 1:00 p.m. at which time the Commission will consider items on its agenda in the order presented. The order of presentation for public hearings will be noted in the Commission's agenda to be published by the Commission ten days in advance of the meeting.

Interested persons are also provided an opportunity to submit written comments on the proposed regulation by writing to Dr. Karen Woodfaulk, Director of Student Services, South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, 1122 Lady Street, Suite 400, Columbia, SC 29201. Comments must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on November 27, 2026. Comments received shall be considered by the staff in formulating the final proposed regulation for the public hearing on December 4, 2026, as noticed above. Comments received by the deadline shall be submitted to the Commission in summary of public comments for consideration at the public hearing.

Preliminary Fiscal Impact Statement:

There will be no cost incurred by the State or any of its political subdivisions.

Statement of Need and Reasonableness:

The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education proposes the following revisions to Chapter 62 regulation, R.62-1200.1 through 62-1200.75, LIFE Scholarship Program. Revisions to the existing regulation for the LIFE Scholarship & LIFE Scholarship Enhancement Program are being considered to clarify the policies and procedures for administering the program. In the proposed amendments, regulation is being revised to align in-state residency timelines with state scholarship residency timelines. In addition, the regulation is being updated to clarify procedures and practices already occurring at the institutions. Lastly, other changes to the regulation include updating of definitions and minor language changes to promote consistency.

DESCRIPTION OF REGULATION:

Purpose: The Agency is updating the regulation to provide institutions with flexibility within the program, and allow for clarity with awarding.

Legal Authority: SC Commission on Higher Education has general authority to promulgate regulations pursuant to 59-112-100

Plan for Implementation: the revised regulations will take effect upon approval by the General Assembly and upon publication in the State Register. CHE will notify the public of the revised regulations and post the revised regulations on the agency's website.

**DETERMINATION OF NEED AND REASONABLENESS OF THE PROPOSED REGULATION
BASED ON ALL FACTORS THEREIN AND EXPECTED BENEFITS:**

The agency is updating the regulations to assist institutions with determining eligibility, and provide clarity with awarding.

DETERMINATION OF COST AND BENEFITS:

There is no cost incurred by the state

UNCERTAINTIES OF ESTIMATES

There are no uncertainties of estimates concerning the regulations.

EFFECT ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC HEALTH

These regulations will have no effect on the environment or public health.

DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC HEALTH IF THE REGULATION IS NOT IMPLEMENTED:

There will be no detrimental effect on the environment and public health of this State if these regulations are not implemented.

Statement of Rationale:

These regulations are updated to be consistent with changes in law and to clarify the policies and procedures for administering the program

Instructions:

Print the regulation as shown below. All other items remain unchanged.

Text:

Table of Contents:

62-1200.1.	Purpose of the LIFE Scholarship Program.
62-1200.5.	Program Definitions.
62-1200.10.	Student Eligibility: LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement.
62-1200.15.	Continued Eligibility: LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement.
62-1200.20.	Terms of Eligibility: LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement.
62-1200.25.	Regaining or Earning Eligibility: LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement.
62-1200.30.	Transfer Students: LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement.
62-1200.35.	Students with Disabilities: LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement.
62-1200.40.	Enrollment in Internships, Cooperative Work Programs, Travel Study Programs, and National and International Student Exchange Programs: LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement.
62-1200.45.	Military Mobilization: LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement.
62-1200.50.	Refunds and Repayments: LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement.
62-1200.55.	Appeals Procedures: LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement.
62-1200.60.	Institutional Policies and Procedures for Awarding: LIFE Scholarship and LIFE

Scholarship Enhancement.

- 62-1200.65. Institutional Disbursements: LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement.
- 62-1200.70. Program Administration and Audits: LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement.
- 62-1200.75. Suspension and Termination of Institutional Participation: LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement.

62-1200.1. Purpose of the LIFE Scholarship Program.

Pursuant to Act 418, which was initially established in 1998 as Title 59 of the 1976 code and amended by Act 162 during the 2005 legislative session, the Commission on Higher Education shall promulgate regulation and establish procedures for administration of the LIFE Scholarship Program. The General Assembly established the LIFE Scholarship Program in order to increase the access to higher education, improve the employability of South Carolina's students so as to attract business to the State, provide incentives for students to be better prepared for college, and to encourage students to graduate from college on time.

With Act 115, which was established in 2007 as Title 59 of the 1976 code during the 2007 legislative session, the General Assembly established the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement in order to increase the number of students in the State majoring in mathematics and science and to increase the access to higher education, improve the employability of South Carolina's students so as to attract business to the State, provide incentives for students to be better prepared for college, and to encourage students to graduate from college on time. Students enrolled at two-year institutions are not eligible to receive a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement. In order to receive a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement, all students must qualify for the LIFE Scholarship as stipulated herein. With Act 156, passed in 2024, the Enhancements were expanded to include students majoring in education programs leading to certification and accounting.

Independent and public institutions of higher learning in this, or any other state in the U.S., outside the U.S. or abroad, are prohibited from using the Legislative Incentive for Future Excellence or "LIFE" Scholarship in programs that promote financial aid incentives or packages. Any mention of the Legislative Incentive for Future Excellence or "LIFE" Scholarship in these financial aid packages must indicate the scholarship to be separate from the University that is offering the financial aid package, and reference the Legislative Incentive for Future Excellence or "LIFE" Scholarship as a separate financial aid award, provided to the student by the State of South Carolina.

All eligible independent and public institutions that participate in the program must verify the lawful presence of any student who receives a LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement prior to awarding the Scholarship to the student. When verifying the lawful presence of an individual, institutional personnel shall not attempt to independently verify the immigration status of any alien, but shall verify any alien's immigration status with the federal government pursuant to 8 USC Section 1373(c).

62-1200.5. Program Definitions.

A. "Academic year" is defined as the twelve month period during which a full-time student is expected to earn thirty credit hours. The period of time used to measure the academic year will consist of the fall, spring and summer terms (or its equivalent).

B. A student who has earned a GED diploma or SC High School Diploma through Adult Education without a cumulative GPA may be eligible to earn the LIFE Scholarship at the end of the first academic year of a non-GED program. The student must meet the annual credit hour requirement (or equivalent) and a 3.0 "LIFE State Scholarship GPA" at the end of the first academic year. To qualify for subsequent years,

the student must meet all eligibility requirements as stated in Section 62-1200.15., Continued Eligibility section of the LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement.

C. An “approved five-year bachelor’s degree program” shall mean a five-year bachelor’s program as defined and approved by the Commission on Higher Education to receive the LIFE Scholarship for a maximum of ten terms at the same eligible institution to complete the requirements for a bachelor’s degree. An approved five-year bachelor’s degree program does not include inter-institutional and cooperative “3+2” programs (normally in a science degree field and an engineering program).

D. “Annual credit hour requirement” shall be defined as an average of thirty (30) credit hours earned at the end of the academic year based on initial college enrollment at all eligible institutions attended, excluding hours for remedial, continuing education, and non-degree coursework. Credit hours earned before high school graduation, including Advanced Placement (AP) credit hours, International Baccalaureate (IB) credit hours, exempted credit hours as well as academic credit hours earned on active duty, must be placed on the student’s official college transcript by the institution at which they are earned, and must be counted toward the annual credit hour requirement. Eligible LIFE Scholarship recipients may prorate their award amount for the term of graduation (see section 62-1200.10.P.).

E. “Associate’s degree program” is defined as a two-year technical or occupational program, at least a two-year program that is acceptable for full credit towards a bachelor’s degree as defined by the U.S. Department of Education.

F. “Attempted credit hours” shall be defined as courses in which a student earns a grade and is included in the grade point calculation for that institution. Eligible credit hours that do not transfer must also be included. Credit hours earned through dual-enrollment prior to high school graduation must be included in the LIFE State Scholarship GPA. Exempted credit hours, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), College Level Examination Program (CLEP), remedial/developmental courses, non-degree credit courses for an associate’s degree or higher, Pass/Fail, Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory and non-penalty withdrawal credit hours are excluded from the “attempted credit hours.” If a student transfers, refer to the institution’s grading policy where the credit hours were earned. Any credit hours attempted or earned before high school graduation, hours exempted by examination, Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) credit hours do not count against the terms of eligibility.

G. “Bachelor’s degree program” is defined as an undergraduate program of study leading to a bachelor’s degree as defined by the U.S. Department of Education.

H. “Book allowance” shall mean funds that may be applied to the student’s account for expenses towards the cost-of-attendance including the cost of textbooks.

I. “CIP Code (Classification of Instructional Program)” The U.S. Department of Education’s standard for federal surveys and state reporting for institutional data (majors, minors, options and courses). For the purpose of receiving the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement, CIP codes have been approved or identified by the Commission on Higher Education for eligible degree programs in the fields of education, mathematics and science.

J. “Cost-of-attendance” as defined by Title IV Regulations and may include tuition, fees, living expenses, and other expenses such as costs related to disability or dependent care.

K. “Cost-of-tuition” shall mean the amount charged for enrolling in credit hours of instruction and mandatory fees assessed to all students. Other fees, charges, or cost of textbooks cannot be included.

L. “Declared major” shall be defined, for the purposes of the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement, as a degree program in which a student is enrolled as a full-time, degree-seeking student. The student must meet all requirements as stipulated by the policies established by the institution and the academic department to be enrolled as a declared major in an eligible program. Students cannot minor in or take courses related to a specific program without meeting institutional and departmental policies and be considered as a declared major. Students must be enrolled as a declared major in an eligible program that is approved and assigned a CIP code by the Commission. Eligible programs are those listed as such on the Commission’s website.

M. “Degree-seeking student” is defined as any full-time student enrolled in an eligible institution which leads to the first one-year certificate, first two-year program or associate’s degree, or first bachelor’s or program of study that is structured so as not to require a bachelor’s degree for acceptance into the program and leads to a graduate degree. Upon completion of the first one-year certificate, first two-year program or associate’s degree, first approved associate’s degree program that requires a minimum of 68 credit hours, or first bachelor’s or program of study that is structured so as not to require a bachelor’s degree for acceptance into the program and leads to a graduate degree, the student cannot use scholarship funds to pursue a program in the same or preceding level. Students are eligible to receive the Scholarship for a maximum of eight terms (or its equivalent) towards an undergraduate degree, as long as all other eligibility requirements are met and the program is approved by the Commission on Higher Education. Students must be enrolled in an undergraduate degree program in order to receive a LIFE Scholarship and a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement each academic term. In cases where students are enrolled in a program of study that is structured so as not to require a bachelor’s degree for acceptance into the program and leads to a graduate degree, which will be the students’ first academic degree awarded, the students must maintain their undergraduate status to be awarded the LIFE Scholarship and the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement, with the exception of students declaring a major in the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at South University, the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at Presbyterian College, the Master’s of Science in Physician Assistant Studies Program at the Medical University of South Carolina, the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at the University of South Carolina-Columbia, and the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at the Medical University of South Carolina. Students who have been awarded a bachelor’s degree or graduate degree are not eligible to be awarded a LIFE Scholarship or a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement. Students enrolled in a CHE approved five-year bachelor’s degree program may be eligible to receive a LIFE Scholarship for a fifth year of full-time, undergraduate work and a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement for a fourth year of full-time undergraduate coursework. All programs must be approved by CHE for the purposes of receiving the scholarship enhancement.

N. “Eligible institution” shall be defined, solely for the purposes of the annual credit hour requirement and the LIFE State Scholarship GPA calculation, as an accredited public or independent postsecondary, degree-granting institution located in-state or out-of-state. The institution must be accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education for participation in federally funded financial aid programs. This list may be found on the US Department of Education’s website.

O. “Eligible program of study” is defined as a program of study leading to: 1) at least a one-year educational program that leads to a first certificate or other recognized educational credential (e.g., diploma); 2) the first associate’s degree; 3) at least a two-year program that is acceptable for full credit towards a bachelor’s degree; 4) the first bachelor’s degree; or 5) a program of study that is structured so as not to require a bachelor’s degree for acceptance into the program and leads to a graduate degree. Students are eligible to receive the LIFE Scholarship for a maximum of eight terms (or its equivalent) towards an undergraduate degree as long as all eligibility requirements are met and the program is approved by the Commission on Higher Education. Students who have been awarded a bachelor’s or graduate degree are not eligible for Scholarship or Enhancement funding. Students enrolled in an approved associate’s degree program that requires a minimum of 68 credit hours may be eligible to receive a LIFE Scholarship for a maximum of six consecutive semesters at an eligible two-year institution. Students enrolled in an approved

five-year degree program may be eligible to receive a LIFE Scholarship for a fifth year of full-time, undergraduate work and a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement for a fourth year of full-time undergraduate coursework. (see Section 62-1200.20 (C))

P. “Eligible degree program/Qualifying degree program” shall be defined, for the purposes of the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement, as a degree program in education, mathematics or science as approved by the SC Commission on Higher Education. These programs shall include education, science and mathematics disciplines, accounting, computer science or informational technology, engineering, and health care and related disciplines including medicine and dentistry as defined by the Commission on Higher Education. Enrollment in a minor does not meet the requirement of an eligible degree program for a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement. Students must be enrolled as a declared major in an eligible program that is approved and assigned a CIP code by the Commission. Eligible programs must be approved by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education. Eligible/Qualifying programs are those listed as such on the Commission’s website.

Q. “Felonies” shall be defined as crimes classified under State statute (16-1-10) and typically require imprisonment for more than one year.

R. “Fifth year/senior year” shall mean any student who is enrolled in his or her ninth or tenth semester of full-time, undergraduate coursework in an approved five-year program following high school graduation. The student is in his/her fifth year of consecutive, full-time college enrollment based on the student’s initial date of college enrollment after graduation from high school.

S. “First year student/Freshman” is defined as any student who is enrolled as a first year student in his or her first or second semester of undergraduate coursework following high school graduation.

T. “Fourth year/senior year” shall mean seventh or eighth semester of full-time, undergraduate coursework following high school graduation. The student is in his/her fourth year of consecutive, full-time college enrollment based on the student’s initial date of college enrollment after graduation from high school.

U. “Full-time student” shall mean a student who has matriculated into an eligible program of study and who enrolls full-time, usually fifteen credit hours for fall and spring terms or twelve credit hours for fall, eight credit hours for winter, and twelve credit hours for spring trimester terms. The student must earn an average of thirty credit hours per academic year to receive a LIFE Scholarship. In order for the student to be eligible for Scholarship disbursement, the student must be enrolled full-time at the home institution as stipulated by Title IV Regulations, except that credit hours may not include remedial/developmental, continuing education, and non-degree credit courses for an associate’s degree or higher. Eligible LIFE Scholarship recipients may prorate their award amount for the term of graduation (see section 62-1200.10.P.).

V. “General Educational Development (GED) Diploma” is defined as a GED high school diploma that was completed in South Carolina or outside of the state while the student was a dependent of a legal resident of South Carolina who had custody or paid child support and college expenses of the dependent GED diploma student. A student who earns a GED diploma cannot receive a LIFE Scholarship during his/her initial year (or equivalent) of college enrollment but may earn the scholarship in subsequent years.

W. “High school” is defined as a public, private, charter, virtual, Montessori or Magnet high school located in South Carolina, recognized home school association or program as defined in the State Statute, (Sections 59-65-40, 45, and 47) or a preparatory high school located outside of the state while the student is a dependent of a legal resident of South Carolina who has custody or pays child support and college

expenses of the dependent high school student in accordance with State Statute 59-112-10. A "preparatory high school" (out-of-state) is defined as a school recognized by the state in which the school is located to offer curricula through the twelfth grade and prepares students for college entrance.

X. "Home institution" shall mean the institution where the student is currently enrolled as a degree-seeking student and may be eligible for financial aid at the same institution.

Y. "Independent institutions/private institutions" are those institutions eligible to participate in the South Carolina Tuition Grants Program as defined in ~~Chapter 113 of Title 59~~ accordance with Section 59-113-50 of the 1976 Code, ~~which stipulates that an "independent institution of higher learning means any independent eleemosynary junior or senior college in South Carolina which is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools; or an independent bachelor's level institution chartered before 1962 whose major campus and headquarters are located within South Carolina; or an independent bachelor's level institution which was incorporated in its original charter in 1962, was granted a license to operate in 1997 by the Commission on Higher Education, has continued to maintain a campus in South Carolina, and is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, or a not-for-profit institution headquartered in South Carolina and accredited by the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges.~~ Institutions whose sole purpose is religious or theological training or the granting of professional degrees do not meet the definition of 'public or independent institution' for purposes of this chapter."

Z. "Ineligible degree program" shall be defined, for the purposes of the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement, as a degree program that is not included on the Commission's posted list of approved eligible programs and assigned a CIP code.

AA. "Initial college enrollment" shall mean the first time the student enrolls into a postsecondary degree-granting institution after high school graduation, completion of a GED/Adult Education Program or completion of an approved home school program. The terms of eligibility and the annual credit hour requirement are based upon initial college enrollment and continuous enrollment. This means that students must adhere to the 30 credit hour requirement even if they have a break in enrollment. Any break in enrollment (excluding summer) will also count against the terms of eligibility.

BB. "~~LIFE GPA~~ State Scholarship GPA" shall be defined as the cumulative grade point average calculation that includes credit hours and grades earned at all eligible institutions based on a 4.0 scale. The LIFE State Scholarship grade point average must not include attempted credit hours earned for continuing education courses, non-degree credit courses for an associate's degree or higher and remedial/developmental courses. See Section 62-1200.60 for the steps to calculate the "~~LIFE State Scholarship~~ GPA."

CC. "LIFE Scholarship recipient" is defined as a student who meets all of the eligibility requirements to receive a LIFE Scholarship and is awarded LIFE Scholarship funds during a given academic year. Students who meet the eligibility requirements for a LIFE Scholarship but do not receive any LIFE Scholarship funds, due to the cost of attendance being met by other sources of financial aid, do not meet the definition of a LIFE Scholarship recipient.

DD. "Military mobilization" is defined as a situation in which the U.S. Department of Defense orders members of the United States Armed Forces to active duty away from their normal duty assignment during a time of war or national emergency. For purposes of the LIFE Scholarship program, military mobilization shall also include periods of basic combat training and advanced individual training.

EE. "Misdemeanor offenses" shall be defined as crimes classified under State statute (16-1-100) which are typically punishable by fine or imprisonment for less than one year. A complete listing is located in title

16 of State statute. Examples of alcohol and drug misdemeanors in South Carolina include but are not limited to possession of alcohol under the age of 21, possession of marijuana/illegal drugs, open-container, transfer of alcohol to person under 21, false information as to age (fake ID), etc.

FF. “Non-degree credit courses” shall be defined as courses that count towards graduation in a certificate or diploma program only. Non-degree credit courses must not be used in the “LIFE State Scholarship GPA” calculation or towards the annual credit hour requirement for an associate’s degree or higher.

GG. A “one-year educational program” is defined as an undergraduate program of study leading to recognized credentials (e.g., certificates or diplomas), as defined by the U.S. Department of Education for participation in federally funded financial aid programs and which prepares students for gainful employment in recognized occupations.

~~HH. “Private institutions” are those institutions eligible to participate in the South Carolina Tuition Grants Program as defined in Chapter 113 of Title 59 of the 1976 Code, which stipulates that an “independent institution of higher learning means any independent eleemosynary junior or senior college in South Carolina which is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools; or an independent bachelor’s level institution chartered before 1962 whose major campus and headquarters are located within South Carolina; or an independent bachelor’s level institution which was incorporated in its original charter in 1962, was granted a license to operate in 1997 by the Commission on Higher Education, has continued to maintain a campus in South Carolina, and is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Institutions whose sole purpose is religious or theological training or the granting of professional degrees do not meet the definition of ‘public or independent institution’ for purposes of this chapter.”~~

HH H. “Program of study that is structured so as not to require a bachelor’s degree for acceptance into the program and leads to a graduate degree”, which will be the student’s first academic degree awarded. Students are eligible to receive the LIFE Scholarship for a maximum of eight terms (or its equivalent) and the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement for a maximum of six terms (or its equivalent) as long as all other eligibility requirements are met and the program is approved by the Commission on Higher Education. Students who have been awarded a bachelor’s or graduate degree are not eligible for Scholarship funding. Students must maintain their undergraduate status in order to receive a LIFE Scholarship and a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement each academic term, with the exception of students declaring a major in the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at South University, the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at Presbyterian College, the Master’s of Science in Physician Assistant Studies Program at the Medical University of South Carolina, the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at the University of South Carolina-Columbia and the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at the Medical University of South Carolina. All programs must be approved by CHE for the purposes of enhancement eligibility.

II J. “Public institutions” are institutions of higher learning as defined in Chapter 103 of Title 59 of the 1976 Code, which stipulates “public higher education shall mean any state supported postsecondary educational institution and shall include technical and comprehensive educational institutions.”

JJ ~~KK~~. “Remedial/developmental coursework” shall mean sub-collegiate level preparatory courses in English, mathematics, reading and any courses classified as remedial by the institution where the course is taken.

KK ~~LL~~. “Satisfactory academic progress” shall be defined as the academic progress in the declared major as required by the institution and academic department in which the student is enrolled as a full-time, degree-seeking student. The student must meet all requirements for satisfactory academic progress towards

completion of the declared major as established by the policies of both the institution and academic department in which the student is enrolled to meet the requirements of satisfactory academic progress.

~~LL~~ ~~MM~~. “Second year/sophomore year” shall mean any student who is enrolled in his or her third or fourth semester of full-time, undergraduate coursework following high school graduation. The student is in his/her second year of consecutive, full-time college enrollment based on the student’s initial date of college enrollment after graduation from high school.

~~MM~~ ~~NN~~. “South Carolina resident” shall be defined as an individual who satisfies the requirements of residency in accordance with the State of South Carolina State Statute for Tuition and Fees, Section 59-112-10 and all related guidelines and regulations promulgated by the Commission on Higher Education as established by the institutional residency officer each academic year. A student must be considered a South Carolina resident at the time ~~of high school graduation, and at the time~~ of initial college enrollment, in order to receive a LIFE Scholarship.

~~NN~~ ~~OO~~. “Third year/junior year” shall mean the fifth or sixth semester of full-time, undergraduate coursework following high school graduation. The student is enrolled in his/her third year of consecutive, full-time enrollment based on the student’s initial date of college enrollment after graduation from high school.

~~OO~~ ~~PP~~. “3 plus 2 programs” is defined, for the purposes of the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement, as a program (typically an engineering major) in which a student completes three years of a baccalaureate program at one institution, at which time the student transfers to a second institution and completes the remaining two years of an undergraduate degree program. When the student completes the fourth year of enrollment, credit hours are transferred back to the initial institution, which confers the first baccalaureate degree (e.g., physics) using articulated credits from the second institution. At the end of the second year of enrollment at the second institution, the student receives the second baccalaureate degree (e.g., engineering). 3 plus 2 programs for the purposes of receiving the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement shall be defined and approved by the SC Commission on Higher Education. Students must be enrolled as a declared major in an eligible program that is approved and assigned a CIP code by the Commission. Enrollment in a minor does not meet the requirement of an eligible degree program for a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement award.

~~PP~~ ~~QQ~~. “Transfer student” shall be defined as a student who has changed enrollment from one institution to a SC public or independent institution.

~~QQ~~ ~~RR~~. “Substantially deviates” shall be defined, for the purposes of reviewing out-of-state preparatory high school grading scales, as being less than equivalent to the 2007 Uniform Grading Policy.

~~RR~~ ~~SS~~. “Preparatory high school” (out-of-state) is defined as a school recognized by the state in which the school is located to offer curricula through the twelfth grade and prepares students for college entrance.

~~SS~~ ~~TT~~. “Lawful Presence” is defined as individuals who are US citizens, permanent residents, or non-US citizens and non-permanent residents who are legally present in the US. When verifying the lawful presence of an individual, institutional personnel shall not attempt to independently verify the immigration status of any alien, but shall verify any alien’s immigration status with the federal government pursuant to 8 USC Section 1373(c).

~~TT~~ ~~UU~~. “Continuously enrolled” is defined as enrollment without an interruption that would require the student to pursue a formal process of readmission to that institution. Formal petitions or applications for change of degree level shall be considered readmissions. Students who attend summer terms or are selected

for military mobilization are considered continuously enrolled. Students who are enrolled in internships, cooperative work programs, travel study programs, or National or International Exchange Programs that are approved by the home institution are considered continuously enrolled.

~~UU~~VV. An “approved associate’s degree program that requires a minimum of 68 credit hours” shall mean an associate’s degree program as approved by the Commission on Higher Education that requires a minimum of 68 earned credit hours to complete the degree at an eligible two-year institution. A student initially enrolling in an approved associate’s degree program that requires a minimum of 68 credit hours may receive a maximum of six consecutive terms of LIFE Scholarship funding.

62-1200.10. Student Eligibility: LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement.

A. To be eligible for a LIFE Scholarship, students must:

1. Be a U.S. citizen or a legal permanent resident that meets the definition of an eligible non-citizen under State Residency Statutes at the time of ~~high school graduation~~ initial college enrollment, whose lawful presence has been verified at the time of enrollment at the institution; and

2. Be classified by the awarding institution as a South Carolina resident for in-state purposes at the time of ~~high school graduation and at the time of~~ initial college enrollment at the institution, as set forth by Section 59-112-10, and be either a member of a class graduating from a high school located in this State, or a student who has successfully completed at least three of the final four years of high school within this State, or a home school student who has successfully completed a high school home school program in this State in the manner required by law, or a student graduating from a preparatory high school outside this State, while a dependent of a parent or guardian who is a legal resident of this State and has custody of the dependent according to State Statute, Section 59-149-50A or a student whose parent or guardian has served in or has retired from one of the United States Armed Forces within the last four years, paid income taxes in this State for a majority of the years of service, and is a resident of this State. A student must be a legal permanent resident of the United States before being considered to be a South Carolina resident;

3. Meet two of the following three criteria if a first-time entering freshman at an eligible four-year institution:

(a) Earn a cumulative 3.0 grade point average (GPA) based on the South Carolina Uniform Grading Policy (UGP) upon high school graduation. No other grading policy will be allowed to qualify for the LIFE Scholarship. Final high school GPAs shall be based on the four-year period of high school attendance, with the exception of Carnegie Units earned prior to high school. There may be other exceptions, as deemed necessary by the Commission. Grade point averages must be reported to two decimal places (minimum) and may not be rounded. For example, a student who earns a 2.99 GPA is not eligible. Institutions shall use the final GPA as reported on the official transcript. The final official high school transcript must be dated in accordance with the Commission established date(s). If a South Carolina resident student is graduating from an out of state high school, it is the responsibility of the out of state student’s school counselor to convert the student’s final high school GPA and class ranking to an eligible final high school GPA based on the South Carolina Uniform Grading Policy. The converted final high school GPA and class ranking (if applicable) must be provided to the eligible South Carolina Institution before a student can be awarded.

(b) Score at least an 1100 on the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) or an equivalent ACT score as determined by the Commission. Test scores will be accepted through the CHE determined national test administration of the SAT and ACT during the year of high school graduation. The student must use the highest SAT Math score combined with the highest SAT Evidence-based Reading score. It is permissible to select scores from different test administrations in order to obtain the qualifying composite score. For

purposes of meeting the ACT test score requirement, the student can use the highest English, Math, Reading and Science scores. It is permissible to select scores from different test administrations in order to obtain the qualifying composite score.

(c) Rank in the top thirty percent of the graduating class in a high school with an approved, official rank policy, consisting of high school diploma candidates only. The rank must also be based on the UGP only. Students cannot be removed from the class because they did not meet the eligibility criteria, are not residents of the State, do not meet citizenship requirements, plan to attend college out-of-state, etc. The class rank information must include all students who attended your high school that school year. Ranking percentages must be reported to two decimal places (minimum) and may not be rounded. For example, a student who has a class rank of 13 of 43 ($13/43 \times 100 = 30.23\%$) will not rank in the top thirty percent of the class since 30.23% is not within thirty percent. To determine the top thirty percent for graduating classes with three or less students, the student who is ranked number one in the class would be considered in the top thirty percent for LIFE Scholarship eligibility. Only one student may occupy each place in class rank. Institutions shall use the final ranking as reported by the high school on the official transcript, and on a submitted rank report provided by the high school the student graduated from. A ranking report must be attached to the official transcript regardless of the graduating high school. High schools or home school associations that do not rank as a policy; or high schools whose grading policy deviates from the current SC Uniform Grading Policy and that do not convert the graduating class to the current SC UGP to determine class rank, must use the GPA and SAT or ACT criteria when attempting to meet the academic requirements for the LIFE Scholarship. High schools or home school associations shall not use ranking for the sole purpose of obtaining eligibility for the state scholarships. The rank policy and rank policy information must be available to parents, students, colleges, and universities, and the Commission on Higher Education in publication form to include a school's website, student/parent handbook, and/or school profile. This language must include the ranking policy in place at the school/association. The ranking policy should be consistent in all places where the rank policy is published and is the same information disseminated to parents, students, colleges/universities, and the Commission. The SC UGP GPA and class rank (if school/association officially ranks as a policy) must be printed on an official final end of year high school transcript, which must also include a uniform date of calculation as determined by the Commission on Higher Education. The graduation date must also be printed on the final end of senior year high school transcript, and include no grades earned after the date of the graduating high school class for the graduation year. The official class rank must be sent to CHE for dissemination by the established deadline each academic year. Institutions must award based on the ranked received at CHE.

(d) For the purposes of meeting the rank criterion, the existing high school rank of a South Carolina resident attending an out-of-state high school may be used provided it is calculated pursuant to a state-approved, standardized grading scale at the respective out-of-state high school. If the eligible South Carolina institution determines that a state-approved standardized grading scale substantially deviates from the South Carolina Uniform Grading Policy (SC UGP), the institution must submit the grading scale to CHE for further review. If CHE confirms the out-of-state grading scale substantially deviates from the SC UGP, the state-approved, standardized grading scale shall not be used to meet the eligibility requirements for the LIFE Scholarship. All members of the student's Senior class at the out of state high school must be ranked in accordance with the South Carolina Uniform Grading Policy in these cases. When converting scores to the SC UGP, weighting must adhere to the SC UGP (i.e. honors no more than .50 and AP/IB no more than 1.0). In addition, scores/grades must correspond to the SC UGP. For example, if a student earned a 90 in an honors class, the conversion of the score/grade must be equivalent to the points assigned according to the current SC UGP. The guidance counselor from the out-of-state preparatory school also has the option of converting the cumulative GPAs of all students in the applicant's class to the SC UGP to determine if the student ranks within the top thirty percent of the class. To be considered equivalent to the SC UGP, the out-of-state school's grading scale must adhere to the following minimum requirements:

(1) Must include all courses carrying Carnegie units, including units earned at the middle school and high school level;

(2) To be equivalent to an “A” letter grade, the numerical average must be ≥ 90 ; to be equivalent to a “B” letter grade the numerical average must be between 80 and 89 ; to be equivalent to a “C” letter grade the numerical average must be between 70 and 79 ; to be equivalent to a “D” letter grade the numerical average must be between 60 and 69 ; and to be equivalent to a “F” letter grade the numerical average must be between 50 and 59 (if a course with a numerical average of < 62 is considered passing by the high school the student earned the grade, then a 73 numerical average should be given);

(3) Cannot add more than one half (.50) additional quality point for honors courses; cannot add more than one additional quality point for dual enrollment (DE) courses, Advanced Placement (AP) courses, and standard level International Baccalaureate (IB) courses; and, cannot add more than two additional quality points for higher level IB courses;

(4) Must classify all other courses as College Preparatory if they are not already classified as honors, DE, AP or IB. For a class to be classified as honors, the course must be in English, mathematics, science or social studies or be the third/fourth level for all other content areas; and,

(5) If no numerical average is available, all letter grades must be converted to the equivalent numerical average based on the following: all “A” letter grades must be converted to a 95 numerical average, all “B” letter grades must be converted to a 85 numerical average, all “C” letter grades must be converted to a 75 numerical average, all “D” letter grades must be converted to a 65 numerical average, and all “F” numerical averages must be converted a 50 numerical average.

4. Earn a cumulative 3.0 grade point average (GPA) on the Uniform Grading Policy upon high school graduation and score at least an 1100 on the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT I) or an equivalent ACT score of 22 as determined by the Commission if a first-time entering freshman graduates from a non-ranking South Carolina high school, non-ranking South Carolina approved home school association or out-of-state preparatory high school and attends an eligible four-year institution;

5. Earn a cumulative 3.0 grade point average (GPA) upon high school graduation on the Uniform Grading Policy if a first-time entering freshman at an eligible two-year or technical institution. No other grading policy will be allowed to qualify for the LIFE Scholarship. Grade point ratios must be reported to two decimal places (minimum) and may not be rounded. For example, a student who earns a 2.99 GPA is not eligible. Institutions shall use the final GPA as reported by the high school on the official transcript;

6. Be admitted, enrolled full-time, and classified as a degree-seeking student at a public or independent institution in South Carolina;

7. Certify that he/she has never been adjudicated delinquent, convicted, or pled guilty or *nolo contendere* to any felonies or any second or subsequent alcohol/drug related offenses under the laws of this or any other state or under the laws of the United States in order to be eligible for a LIFE Scholarship, except that a high school or college student otherwise qualified who has been adjudicated delinquent or has been convicted or pled guilty or *nolo contendere* to a second or subsequent alcohol or drug-related misdemeanor offense nevertheless shall be eligible or continue to be eligible for such scholarships after the expiration of one academic year from the date of the adjudication, conviction, or plea by submitting an affidavit each academic year to the institution. However, a high school or college student who has been adjudicated delinquent, convicted, or pled guilty or *nolo contendere* to a second alcohol/drug related misdemeanor offense is ineligible for the next academic year of enrollment at an eligible institution after the date of the adjudication, conviction or plea. If the adjudication, conviction, or plea occurs during the

academic year after the student has already submitted a signed affidavit to the institution, the student will be eligible to receive the Scholarship the remainder of the academic year. However, the student will be ineligible for the Scholarship the following entire academic year of enrollment. If a student completes a pretrial intervention program and has his/her record expunged the conviction will not affect Scholarship eligibility; and

8. Certify that he/she has not defaulted and does not owe a refund or repayment on any federal or state financial aid. If a student has an Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR) or its equivalent on file, the ISIR information will be used to verify default status or refund/repayment owed on any Federal or State financial aid. Students who have not completed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) must have an affidavit on file to verify that he/she is not in default and does not owe a refund or repayment on any Federal or State financial aid including, state grants/scholarships, Federal Pell Grant, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, Perkins Loan and Federal Stafford Loan.

B. Any credit hours attempted or earned before high school graduation, hours exempted by examination, International Baccalaureate (IB) or Advanced Placement (AP) credit hours do not count against the terms of eligibility as provided in State Statute, Section 59-149-60. The credit hours earned before high school graduation can be used toward the credit hour requirement. Credit hours earned through CLEP, IB or AP will be used toward the credit hour requirement.

C. Service members of the United States Armed Forces will not be penalized for any credit hours earned while on active duty. The credit hours earned on active duty will not count against the terms of eligibility, but will be used towards the annual credit hour requirement.

D. First-time entering freshmen will not be penalized for any credit hours earned during the summer session immediately prior to the student's initial college enrollment. The credit hours earned will not count against the terms of eligibility. The credit hours may be used toward the annual credit hour requirement.

E. Students who complete their high school graduation requirements prior to the official Spring graduation date ~~reported on the final high school transcript~~ may be eligible to receive the LIFE Scholarship dependent on the approval of the eligible institution. The student must ~~complete and~~ submit ~~an Early Graduation Application~~, an official high school transcript, an official letter from the high school principal verifying that he/she has met all graduation requirements, and SAT/ACT scores (if attending a four-year institution) by the established deadline. Early graduates cannot use class rank in order to qualify for the LIFE Scholarship at four-year institutions. Early graduates who enroll mid-year (spring term) ~~and are awarded the LIFE Scholarship through the Early Graduation process~~ will officially begin their initial college enrollment. In order to receive the LIFE Scholarship the next academic year, the student must earn a minimum of fifteen credit hours and a 3.0 "LIFE State Scholarship GPA" at the end of the academic year. The student will be eligible to receive the maximum number of terms of eligibility based on initial college enrollment. If a student ~~does not submit an early graduation application for the spring term and~~ has not officially graduated, the student should not have received the LIFE Scholarship and that term will not count against his/her terms of Scholarship eligibility.

F. First-time entering freshmen who enroll mid-year (spring semester) are eligible for the LIFE Scholarship if they qualified upon high school graduation.

G. LIFE Scholarship funds may not be applied to the cost of continuing education, remedial/developmental or non-degree credit courses for an associate's degree or higher. Twelve credit hours of the courseload must be non-remedial/developmental, non-continuing education or degree-credit courses for an associate's degree or higher in order to receive LIFE Scholarship funds. Continuing

education, non-degree credit for an associate's degree or higher and remedial/developmental courses will not be included in the "[LIFE State Scholarship](#) GPA" or credit hour calculations.

H. Non-degree credit hours shall be used to meet the full-time eligibility criteria for a diploma or certificate program only. Students must sign an affidavit certifying that they understand that non-degree credit hours will not be used in calculating the "[LIFE State Scholarship](#) GPA" or credit hour requirements if they are enrolled in an Associate's degree or higher.

I. Credit hours earned during the student's first two term(s) of remedial/developmental enrollment will not be used to determine remaining Scholarship eligibility at the completion of remediation unless the student has completed at least twelve credit hours of non-remedial/developmental coursework each term of enrollment. First-time entering freshmen attending an eligible two-year institution or technical college who enroll in fewer than twelve credit hours of non-remedial/developmental, including at least three hours of remedial/developmental courses during the first term(s) will not be eligible for Scholarship funds during this period. The student's initial college enrollment will begin after a maximum of two terms of remediation at an eligible two-year or technical college only. The student will be eligible for the Scholarship for the term following Spring or Fall term immediately after the completion of remediation if the student was eligible to receive the LIFE Scholarship upon high school graduation. A student is allowed a maximum of two terms of remediation, which must be within the first two terms of attendance at an eligible institution, before his/her terms of eligibility start. If the student requires more than one academic year of remedial/developmental coursework, then he/she will not be eligible for the LIFE Scholarship the term after completion of remediation. If the student was not eligible for the Scholarship upon high school graduation, the student must meet the conditions set forth in Section J below in order to gain the LIFE Scholarship.

J. Students who do not meet the scholarship eligibility requirements upon high school graduation and enroll in remedial/developmental courses during a maximum of two terms at an eligible two-year institution or technical college, and who enroll in fewer than twelve credit hours of non-remedial/developmental courses, must meet the scholarship eligibility requirements (earn a 3.0 "[LIFE State Scholarship](#) GPA" and earn an average of thirty credit hours for the academic year) at the end of the first year of enrollment in non-remedial/developmental courses to be eligible to receive the scholarship for the second year of enrollment in non-remedial/developmental courses. Credit hours earned during the student's first two term(s) of remedial/developmental enrollment will not be used to determine remaining Scholarship eligibility at the completion of remediation unless the student has completed at least twelve credit hours of non-remedial/developmental coursework each term of enrollment.

K. Students receiving a LIFE Scholarship are not eligible to receive a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, SC HOPE Scholarship or Lottery Tuition Assistance in the same academic year. [A SC HOPE recipient who transfers to an eligible two-year institution during the first year of college may receive a term of the LIFE Scholarship at that two-year institution.](#)

L. Students who have already been awarded their first bachelor's degree or graduate degree are not eligible to receive the LIFE Scholarship. In cases where students are enrolled in a program of study that is structured so as not to require a bachelor's degree for acceptance into the program and leads to a graduate degree, which will be the students' first academic degree awarded, the students must maintain their undergraduate status in order to receive a LIFE Scholarship and a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement each academic term, with the exception of students majoring in the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at South University, the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at Presbyterian College, the Master's of Science in Physician Assistant Studies Program at the Medical University of South Carolina, the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at the University of South Carolina-Columbia and the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at the Medical University of South Carolina.

M. All documents required for determining LIFE Scholarship eligibility must be submitted to the institution by their established deadline(s). Students must submit official transcripts from all previous and current institutions, which provide evidence to calculate the “LIFE State Scholarship GPA,” determine initial college enrollment and earned annual credit hour requirement. Students that complete coursework at another institution at any time during the academic year (fall, spring, summer) must submit an official transcript to the home institution at the end of the academic year to determine eligibility for the LIFE Scholarship.

N. First-time entering freshmen who attended out-of-state preparatory high schools or graduated from a South Carolina high school prior to the full implementation of the South Carolina Uniform Grading Policy must have their high school transcript converted to the UGP in order to qualify for the LIFE Scholarship. It is the responsibility of the out-of-state preparatory high school or South Carolina high school to convert the student’s GPA to the Uniform Grading Policy.

O. To be eligible for a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement each academic year, the student must:

1. Meet all of the eligibility requirements at the end of each academic year to receive a LIFE Scholarship as stipulated by state law and regulation and be a recipient of LIFE Scholarship funds at the time of LIFE Scholarship Enhancement disbursement. The student must receive the underlying LIFE Scholarship;

2. Be enrolled as a full-time, degree-seeking student in a declared major of education, science or mathematics, in an eligible program that is approved and assigned a CIP code by the Commission on Higher Education at the time of disbursement of LIFE Scholarship Enhancement funds. Eligible programs include degrees awarded in education, math and science fields, computer science or informational technology, engineering, accounting, and healthcare and related disciplines including medicine and dentistry. The student must meet all requirements for satisfactory academic progress towards completion of the declared major as established by the policies of both the institution and the academic department in which the student is enrolled;

3. Be enrolled at an eligible four-year public or independent institution located in South Carolina;

4. All students not majoring in education- related disciplines must have successfully completed a total of at least fourteen credit hours of instruction in mathematics and life and physical science courses within an approved major, in any combination, by the end of the student’s first year of enrollment in college (based on initial date of college enrollment). For purposes of meeting the required minimum level of instruction in accounting, mathematics, and life and physical science courses during a student’s first year, Exempted Credit Hours placed on the student’s official college transcript by the institution at which they were earned, College Level Examination Program (CLEP), Dual Enrollment, Pass/Fail courses with a grade of “Pass” (only), Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory courses with a grade of “Satisfactory” (only), International Baccalaureate (IB) courses and Advanced Placement (AP) courses in mathematics and life and physical sciences taken in high school in which the student scored a three or more on the advanced placement test and received college credit may count toward the fulfillment of this minimum requirement. The Commission will issue a list of eligible courses by CIP code for determining eligible coursework to meet the fourteen credit hour requirement. Remedial/developmental, continuing education, non-degree credit coursework and credit hours earned for courses taken after the end of the student’s first year of college enrollment cannot be used to meet the specified minimum fourteen credit hour course level requirement to gain eligibility to receive the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement;

5. Meet the continued eligibility requirements for the LIFE Scholarship of a minimum 3.0 LIFE State Scholarship GPA and a minimum average of 30 credit hours by the end of each academic year;

6. Be in the second, third or fourth year of full-time enrollment (based on initial date of college enrollment after high school graduation) at an eligible four-year public or independent institution in South Carolina. Students enrolled full-time in an eligible, approved five-year degree program may also be eligible to receive a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement in their fifth year of college enrollment (based on initial date of college enrollment); and

7. Students who initially enroll in college mid-year (i.e., spring term) as a freshman and meet the requirements under Section 62-1200.10 may be eligible to receive a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement at the beginning of the spring term of the next academic year (i.e., beginning with the third consecutive term of full-time enrollment based on initial date of college enrollment). The student must earn a minimum average of 15 credit hours and a 3.0 ~~LIFE~~ State Scholarship GPA to be awarded a LIFE Scholarship the following academic year and a minimum average of 30 credit hours by the end of the first academic year (i.e., by the end of the fall term or second consecutive term of full-time enrollment based on initial date of college enrollment) of enrollment to receive a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement beginning the spring term of the second, third and/or fourth year of college enrollment.

8. For the 2024-25 academic year, a resident student who is at least in the second year of attendance, based on initial college enrollment, at an eligible four-year public or independent institution of higher learning in this State, who is majoring in science, mathematics, accounting, or an education program that leads to certification as defined by the Commission on Higher Education, and who is receiving a LIFE Scholarship for the current year, shall receive an additional LIFE Scholarship stipend equal to the cost of attendance after applying all other scholarships or grants, not to exceed two thousand five hundred (\$2,500) dollars each year for no more than three additional years of instruction, including his sophomore year, if enrolled in a four-year degree program, or for not more than four additional years of instruction, including his sophomore year, if enrolled in an approved five-year degree program or a 3 plus 2 program. To receive the additional LIFE Scholarship stipend each year, the student must receive the underlying LIFE Scholarship for that year and must be making acceptable progress each year toward receiving a degree in his education major.

9. All education majors receiving the enhancement/stipend based on their status as an education major must enter into a contractual agreement, including a default provision, that stipulates that the stipend recipient shall upon graduation work in a South Carolina public school for at least one school year for every year the stipend is received. A third party may be used for purposes of processing the contractual agreement.

P. The LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement are to be annual awards. Half of the Scholarship and Enhancement funds are to be disbursed in the fall and half are to be disbursed in the spring. In the cases where students who initially enroll in college mid-year (i.e., spring term) as a freshman and meet the requirements under Sections 62-1200.10 (O) and 62-1200.15 (C), such student shall be awarded the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement one year after initial college enrollment (i.e., spring term). Students who change their major from an ineligible degree program to an eligible degree program during the same academic year shall not receive the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement until the beginning of the next academic year (i.e., fall term). Students who change their major from an eligible degree program to an ineligible degree program during the same academic year may continue to receive the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement during the current academic year; however, the student cannot be awarded the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement the next academic year of enrollment in an ineligible degree program. During the student's final term of attendance, not to exceed the eighth term of enrollment based on initial college enrollment, the institution may prorate the LIFE Scholarship and the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement award amount, for the number of credit hours attempted for the current term of attendance, which must be the term of graduation for the student. Proration will be based on 12 credit hours.

Q. The Commission on Higher Education shall annually communicate with high school guidance counselors regarding the list of qualifying majors in this section.

62-1200.15. Continued Eligibility: LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement.

A. Students must meet the following criteria to renew eligibility for the LIFE Scholarship:

1. Continue to meet all eligibility requirements as stated in the “Student Eligibility” Section;
2. Earn at least a 3.0 “~~LIFE~~ State Scholarship GPA” by the end of the academic year; and
3. Meet the annual credit hour requirement (or its equivalent) by the end of the academic year based on initial college enrollment:
 - (a) earn a minimum of 30 (or the equivalent) credit hours if entering the second year; or
 - (b) earn a minimum of 60 (or the equivalent) credit hours if entering the third year; or
 - (c) earn a minimum of 90 (or the equivalent) credit hours if entering the fourth year; or
 - (d) earn a minimum of 120 (or its equivalent) credit hours if entering the fifth year of an approved five-year bachelor’s degree program.

B. Students who meet the continued eligibility requirements by the end of the spring term and who enroll in Maymester or summer term will not be eligible to receive the LIFE Scholarship if their cumulative grade point average falls below the minimum 3.0 “~~LIFE~~ State Scholarship GPA” requirement by the end of the summer term.

C. Students who are LIFE eligible upon high school graduation and initially enroll in college mid-year (spring term) may be eligible to receive the LIFE Scholarship the next academic year, if the student earns a minimum of fifteen (15) credit hours and a 3.0 “~~LIFE~~ State Scholarship GPA” at the end of the academic year. If the student does not meet the requirements to qualify for the LIFE Scholarship for the entire next academic year, the student may receive the LIFE Scholarship the next term, only. For subsequent years, the student must meet the annual credit hour requirement and 3.0 ~~LIFE~~ State Scholarship GPA for renewal:

- (a) earn a minimum of 45 (or the equivalent) credit hours if entering the fourth semester based on initial college enrollment; or
- (b) earn a minimum of 75 (or the equivalent) credit hours if entering the sixth semester based on initial college enrollment; or
- (c) earn a minimum of 105 (or the equivalent) credit hours if entering the eighth semester based on initial college enrollment; or
- (d) earn a minimum of 135 (or its equivalent) credit hours if entering the tenth semester of an approved five-year bachelor’s degree program based on initial college enrollment.

Students who fail to meet the initial academic eligibility criteria to receive the LIFE Scholarship upon high school graduation, and who initially enroll in college mid-year (spring term) may be eligible to receive the LIFE Scholarship beginning in their second Fall term of college attendance at an eligible institution, if the student earns a minimum of forty-five (45) credit hours and a 3.0 “~~LIFE~~ State Scholarship GPA” by the end

of the prior academic year. The student may be eligible to receive the maximum number of terms of eligibility based on initial college enrollment.

D. Students must meet the following criteria to renew eligibility for the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement:

1. Continue to meet all eligibility requirements as stated in the “Student Eligibility: LIFE Scholarship and the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement” Section;

2. Be a recipient of LIFE Scholarship funds at the time of LIFE Scholarship Enhancement disbursement; and

3. Be enrolled full-time at an eligible four-year public or independent institution as a declared major in an eligible education, science or mathematics program as stipulated under Section 62-1200.10.

E. Students who meet the continued eligibility requirements by the end of the spring term and who enroll in Maymester or summer term will not be eligible to receive the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement if their cumulative grade point average falls below the minimum 3.0 “LIFE State Scholarship GPA” requirement by the end of the summer term resulting in ineligibility for a LIFE Scholarship. Students who do not meet the continued eligibility requirements to receive the LIFE Scholarship cannot receive a Scholarship or LIFE Scholarship Enhancement for the following academic year.

F. The student may be eligible to receive the maximum number of terms of eligibility (i.e., six consecutive terms) for a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement starting the second year of college enrollment (based on initial date of college enrollment after high school graduation).

G. At the end of the spring term each academic year, the institution must notify all LIFE Scholarship recipients who have not met continued eligibility requirements for the next academic year regardless of the student’s plans for future enrollment. The notification should include information regarding the student’s ability to attend summer school in order to meet the continued eligibility requirements.

62-1200.20. Terms of Eligibility: LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement.

A. The maximum number of terms of eligibility is based on the student’s initial college enrollment with the exception of the summer term immediately prior to the student’s initial college enrollment and up to one academic year of full-time enrollment in remedial/developmental coursework.

B. Students may receive a LIFE Scholarship for a maximum of two terms for a one-year educational program, four terms for an associate’s degree program or at least a two-year program that is acceptable for full credit towards a bachelor’s degree, six terms towards an approved associate’s degree program that requires a minimum of 68 credit hours, eight terms (or its equivalent) towards the first bachelor’s degree or program of study that is structured so as not to require a bachelor’s degree for acceptance into the program and leads to a graduate degree program or ten consecutive terms towards an approved five-year bachelor’s degree program. (See chart in “C” below.) In cases where students are enrolled in a program of study that is structured so as not to require a bachelor’s degree for acceptance into the program and leads to a graduate degree, which will be the students’ first academic degree awarded, such students must maintain their undergraduate status to be awarded the LIFE Scholarship and the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement each academic term, with the exception of students majoring in the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at South University, the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at Presbyterian College, the Master’s of Science in Physician Assistant Studies Program at the Medical University of South Carolina, the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at the University of South Carolina-Columbia and the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at the Medical University of South Carolina. Students who have already been awarded their first bachelor’s degree or

graduate degree are not eligible to be awarded a LIFE Scholarship or a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement. Students are eligible to receive the LIFE Scholarship for a maximum of eight consecutive terms (or its equivalent) and a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement for a maximum of six consecutive terms (or its equivalent), as long as all other eligibility requirements are met and the program is approved by the Commission on Higher Education.

C. If a student pursues the following program, the terms of eligibility for the LIFE Scholarship will be based upon the student's initial college enrollment:

Degree/Program	Average Credit Hours Earned at the End of Each Academic Year					
	Maximum Terms of Eligibility	1st Year = 30 credit hours	2nd Year = 60 credit hours	3rd Year = 90 credit hours	4th Year = 120 credit hours	Fifth Year = 150 credit hours
	Terms of Remaining Eligibility at the End of Each Academic Year					
One-year Certificate/Diploma	2	0	0	0	0	0
Associate/Two-year Program	4	2	0	0	0	0
Approved Associate's Degree Program that requires a minimum of 68 credit hours	6	4	2	0	0	0
Bachelor/First Professional	8	6	4	2	0	0
Approved Five-year Bachelor	10	8	6	4	2	0

D. The maximum number of terms of eligibility for a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement is based on the student's continued eligibility for a LIFE Scholarship and beginning with the student's second year of college enrollment (based on initial date of college enrollment), with the exception of the summer term immediately prior to the student's initial college enrollment and up to one academic year of full-time enrollment in remedial/developmental coursework. A student may receive a LIFE Scholarship for a maximum of two terms towards a one-year certificate/diploma, four terms for a two-year associate's degree at an eligible two year institution, six terms towards an approved associate's degree program that requires a minimum of 68 credit hours, and eight terms towards a bachelor's degree at an eligible institution. The terms of eligibility that may be used towards a certificate, diploma or associate's degree at a two-year institution must be taken within the first two years of college, based on initial college enrollment. The terms of eligibility that may be used towards an approved associate's degree program that requires a minimum of 68 credit hours at a two year institution must be taken within the first three years of college, based on initial college enrollment.

E. Students may receive a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement for a maximum of six consecutive terms (i.e., three academic years) for a first bachelor's degree in an eligible program or an eligible program of study that is structured so as not to require a bachelor's degree for acceptance into the program and leads to a graduate degree program, and eight consecutive terms (i.e., four academic years) towards an approved five-year bachelor's degree program and six consecutive terms towards a 3 plus 2 program. Students must be enrolled in an eligible four-year public or independent institution in South Carolina as a declared major in an eligible education, science or mathematics major or an eligible program that is approved and assigned a CIP code by the Commission on Higher Education. In cases where students are enrolled in a program of study that is structured so as not to require a bachelor's degree for acceptance into the program and leads to a graduate degree, which will be the students' first academic degree awarded, students must maintain their undergraduate status to be awarded the LIFE Scholarship and the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement,

with the exception of students declaring a major in the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at South University, the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at South University, the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at Presbyterian College, the Master's of Science in Physician Assistant Studies Program at the Medical University of South Carolina, the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at the University of South Carolina-Columbia and the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at the Medical University of South Carolina.. Students who have already been awarded their first bachelor's degree or graduate degree are not eligible to be awarded a LIFE Scholarship or a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement. Students are eligible to receive a LIFE Scholarship for a maximum of eight consecutive terms (or its equivalent) and a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement for a maximum of six consecutive terms (or its equivalent) towards an undergraduate degree, as long as all other eligibility requirements are met and the program is approved by the Commission on Higher Education. Students enrolled in an approved five-year degree program may be eligible to receive a LIFE Scholarship for a fifth year of full-time, undergraduate work and a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement for a fourth year of full-time undergraduate coursework.

62-1200.25. Regaining or Earning Eligibility: LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement.

A. Students who were U.S. Citizens or legal permanent residents, and South Carolina residents at the time of ~~high school graduation and initial~~ college enrollment, but were not initially eligible upon high school graduation or failed to meet the continued eligibility requirements can earn or regain eligibility for the LIFE Scholarship if they:

1. Meet all eligibility requirements as stated in the "Student Eligibility" Section;
2. Earn at least a 3.0 "~~LIFE~~ State Scholarship GPA" by the end of the academic year;
3. Meet the annual credit hour requirement by the end of the academic year based on Initial college enrollment:
 - (a) earn a minimum of 30 (or the equivalent) credit hours if entering the second year; or
 - (b) earn a minimum of 60 (or the equivalent) credit hours if entering the third year; or
 - (c) earn a minimum of 90 (or the equivalent) credit hours if entering the fourth year; or
 - (d) earn a minimum of 120 (or its equivalent) credit hours if entering the fifth year of an approved five-year bachelor's degree program.
 - (e) earn the required number of credit hours as stated in Section 62-1200. 15 (C) for students who initially enroll mid-year.

B. A student who has earned a GED diploma may be eligible to earn the LIFE Scholarship at the end of the first academic year of a non-GED program. The student must meet the annual credit hour requirement (or equivalent) and a 3.0 "~~LIFE~~ State Scholarship GPA" at the end of the first academic year. To qualify for subsequent years, the student must meet all eligibility requirements as stated in Section A above.

C. A student who has graduated from a homeschool association not approved by the state of South Carolina may be eligible to earn the LIFE Scholarship at the end of the first academic year based on initial college enrollment. The student must meet the annual credit hour requirement (or equivalent) and a 3.0 "~~LIFE~~ State Scholarship GPA" at the end of the first academic year. The student may also qualify in subsequent years by meeting all eligibility requirements as stated in Section A above.

D. Students who have met the initial eligibility criteria for the LIFE Scholarship and initially enroll in college mid-year (spring term) may be eligible to receive the LIFE Scholarship the next academic year, if the student earns a minimum of fifteen credit hours and earns a cumulative 3.0 "~~LIFE~~ State Scholarship GPA" at the end of the academic year. For subsequent years, the student must meet the annual credit hour requirement for renewal (refer to Section 62-1200. 15 (C) for the required number of credit hours for mid-year students). The student may be eligible to receive the maximum number of terms of eligibility based on initial college enrollment.

E. Students who were not initially eligible for a LIFE Scholarship (as stated in this section) upon high school graduation or failed to meet the continued eligibility requirements for a LIFE Scholarship may earn or regain eligibility for a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement if they:

1. Meet all eligibility requirements as stipulated in Section 62-1200.10 and are recipients of a LIFE Scholarship;

2. Earn at least a 3.0 "~~LIFE~~ State Scholarship GPA" and meet the annual credit hour requirement by the end of each academic year based on initial college enrollment to receive a LIFE Scholarship; and

3. Be a recipient of LIFE Scholarship funds at the time of LIFE Scholarship Enhancement funds disbursement.

62-1200.30. Transfer Students: LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement.

A. Students must meet all eligibility requirements for a LIFE Scholarship and for a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement as stipulated in Section 62-1200.10.

B. Transfer students who receive the LIFE Scholarship and transfer mid-year to another institution may be eligible to receive the Scholarship for the spring term if they met the eligibility requirements at the end of the previous academic year (See "Transfer Student" Section B for eligibility requirements):

1. Freshmen who transfer mid-year to the same type of institution (two-year to two-year or four year to four-year) must have met the Scholarship requirements of the respective institution at the time of initial college enrollment; or

2. Freshmen who transfer mid-year from a two-year to a four-year institution must meet the eligibility requirements of a first-time entering freshmen enrolling at a four-year institution; or

3. Freshmen who transfer mid-year from a four-year to a two-year institution must meet the eligibility requirements of a first-time entering freshmen enrolling at a two-year institution.

C. For determining initial eligibility for transfer students for the first-time at an eligible public or independent institution in South Carolina, students must meet the following requirements at the end of the previous academic year:

1. Earn a cumulative 3.0 ~~LIFE~~ State Scholarship GPA; and

2. Meet one of the following:

- (a) earn a minimum of thirty credit hours (or equivalent) at all institutions if entering the second year of college based on initial college enrollment; or

(b) earn a minimum of sixty credit hours (or equivalent) at all institutions if entering the third year of college based on initial college enrollment; or

(c) earn a minimum of ninety credit hours (or equivalent) at all institutions if entering the fourth year of college based on initial college enrollment; or

(d) earn a minimum of one hundred twenty credit hours (or equivalent) at all institutions if entering the fifth year of college in an approved five-year bachelor's degree program based on initial college enrollment; or

(e) earn the required number of credit hours as stated in Section 62-1200.15 (C) for students who initially enroll mid-year based on initial college enrollment.

D. For eligibility in subsequent years, transfer students must earn a 3.0 ~~LIFE~~ State Scholarship GPA and meet the annual credit hour requirement (or its equivalent) at all eligible institutions by the end of the academic year based on initial college enrollment.

E. The institution where the student is transferring will determine the classification of the entering transferring student based on initial college enrollment and will use this classification to determine the remaining terms of eligibility in compliance with the "Terms of Eligibility" Section.

F. Students transferring to an eligible public or independent four-year South Carolina institution may be eligible to receive a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement if they meet the requirements under Section 62-1200.10 and:

1. The student is a LIFE Scholarship recipient and transferring from an out-of-state institution or from an in-state four-year institution to an eligible public or independent four-year institution at the end of the academic year. The student must earn a minimum 3.0 ~~LIFE~~ State Scholarship GPA and a minimum average of 30 credit hours by the end of each academic year of enrollment (based on initial date of college enrollment) to receive a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement beginning the fall term of the second, third and/or fourth year of enrollment. Transfer students enrolled full-time in an eligible, approved five-year degree program may be eligible to receive a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement in their fifth year of college enrollment (based on initial date of college enrollment after high school graduation).

2. The student is a LIFE Scholarship recipient and transferring from an out-of-state institution or from an in-state four-year institution to an eligible public or independent four-year institution mid-year (i.e., spring term). The student may be eligible to receive a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement for the spring term of the second, third or fourth year of enrollment, if the student earned a 3.0 ~~LIFE~~ State Scholarship GPA and minimum average of 30 credit hours by the end of each academic year of enrollment (based on initial date of college enrollment). Transfer students enrolled full-time in an eligible, approved five-year degree program may be eligible to receive a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement in their fifth year of college enrollment (based on initial date of college enrollment after high school graduation).

3. The student is a LIFE Scholarship recipient and transferring from a two-year institution to an eligible public or independent four-year institution at the end of the academic year. The student must earn a 3.0 ~~LIFE~~ State Scholarship GPA and a minimum average of 30 credit hours by the end of each academic year of enrollment (based on initial date of college enrollment) to receive a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement beginning the fall term of the second, third and/or fourth year of enrollment. Transfer students enrolled full-time in an eligible, approved five-year degree program may be eligible to receive a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement in their fifth year of college enrollment (based on initial date of college enrollment after high school graduation).

4. The student is a LIFE Scholarship recipient and transferring from a two-year institution to an eligible public or independent four-year institution mid-year (i.e., spring term). The student may be eligible to receive a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement for the spring term of the second, third or fourth year of initial college enrollment, if the student earned a 3.0 ~~LIFE~~ State Scholarship GPA and a minimum average of 30 credit hours by the end of each academic year of enrollment (based on initial date of college enrollment). Transfer students enrolled full-time in an eligible, approved five-year degree program may be eligible to receive a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement in their fifth year of college enrollment (based on initial date of college enrollment after high school graduation).

62-1200.35. Students with Disabilities: LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement.

A. Students who qualify under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 must meet all eligibility requirements as defined in “Student Eligibility, Continued Eligibility, Regaining or Earning Eligibility, or Transfer Students” Sections except for the full-time enrollment requirement, if approved by the Disability Services Provider at the home institution. Students must comply with all institutional policies and procedures in accordance with ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. It is the responsibility of the transfer student to provide written documentation concerning services from the previous institutional Disability Services Provider.

B. The institutional Disability Services Provider must provide written documentation to the Office of Financial Aid prior to each academic year or term verifying that the student is approved to be enrolled in less than full-time status or earn less than the required annual credit hours. The institution is responsible for retaining appropriate documentation according to the “Program Administration and Audits” Section.

C. For renewal, students who qualify under ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 must meet all requirements as stated in the “Continued Eligibility” Section, except that if a student does not meet the annual credit hour requirement, the student must have been approved by the institutional Disability Services Provider in the prior academic year to be enrolled in less than “full-time” status or less than the required thirty credit hours. Each academic year, students must complete the required number of credit hours approved by the institutional Disability Services Provider for LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement renewal and earn a 3.0 ~~LIFE~~ State Scholarship GPA.” Students must comply with all institutional policies and procedures in accordance with ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

D. Students who qualify under ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 may receive the maximum number of terms of eligibility as stated in the “Terms of Eligibility” Section.

E. In order to be eligible for the LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement, students who no longer qualify under ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 must comply with all requirements set forth under the “Student Eligibility, Continued Eligibility, Regaining or Earning Eligibility, or Transfer Students” Sections.

62-1200.40. Enrollment in Internships, Cooperative Work Programs, Travel Study Programs and National and International Student Exchange Programs: LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement.

A. Students enrolled in internships, cooperative work programs, travel study programs, or National or International Student Exchange Programs that are approved by the home institution and that the home institution accepts as full-time transfer credit are eligible to receive LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement funds during the period in which the student is enrolled in such programs. Students will be required to meet the continued eligibility requirements.

B. Eligible students may use the appropriated portion of LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement funds for internships, cooperative work programs, travel study programs or National or International Student Exchange Programs that are approved by the home institution and that the home institution accepts as full-time transfer credit. LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement funds must be paid directly to the student's account at the home institution and cannot exceed the cost-of-attendance at the home institution or the cost-of-attendance at the host institution, whichever is less. The Commission on Higher Education will not transfer LIFE Scholarship or LIFE Scholarship Enhancement funds directly to the institution where the student will participate in internships, cooperative work programs, travel study programs or National or International Student Exchange Programs. The institution is responsible for LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement funds according to the "Policies and Procedures for Awarding" Section.

C. Students who enroll in one academic term at the home institution and also enroll in an internship, cooperative work program, travel study program or National or International Student Exchange Program that are approved by the home institution and that do not award full-time transfer credit during the same academic year, must complete an average of thirty credit hours and earn a 3.0 "~~LIFE State Scholarship~~ GPA" by the end of the academic year to be eligible for LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement renewal for the next academic year (see Section 62-1200.15 (3)(a-d) for example). Students who did not use the entire eligibility for LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement funds during this period shall be allowed to receive LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement funds during the succeeding summer or at the end of the maximum terms of eligibility based on their initial college enrollment date (provided the student meets continued eligibility requirements).

D. For students enrolled in an internship, cooperative work program, travel study program or National or International Student Exchange Program during the entire academic year that is approved by the home institution but does not award full-time transfer credit for the entire academic year, LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement renewal for the next academic year will be based on the prior year's eligibility. Students who did not use the entire eligibility for LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement funds during this period shall be allowed to receive LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement funds during the succeeding summer or at the end of the maximum terms of eligibility based on initial college enrollment (provided the student meets the continued eligibility requirements).

E. Students enrolled in an internship, a cooperative work program, a travel study program or national or international student exchange program during the academic year that is approved by the home institution and did not use the entire eligibility for LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement funds during this period shall be allowed to receive LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement funds during the succeeding summer or at the end of the maximum terms of eligibility based on initial college enrollment (provided the student meets the continued eligibility requirements). In order to receive LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement funds for summer school at the home institution, students must enroll in twelve credit hours during the summer. In order to maintain eligibility for the next academic year ~~for students who only attend summer school at the home institution, the student must earn twelve credit hours during the academic year. For students who enroll in summer school and one other term of the academic year at the home institution,~~ the student must earn ~~a total of twenty-seven~~ an average of 30 credit hours (or its equivalent) for the academic year. The student must meet all eligibility requirements as specified in the "Student Eligibility" and "Continued Eligibility" Sections, except for the completion of the annual credit hour requirement for the academic year.

F. The home institution will be responsible for obtaining official certification of the student's grade point average, credit hours earned, and satisfactory academic progress for the purposes of determining eligibility for LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement renewal for the next academic year.

62-1200.45. Military Mobilization: LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement.

A. Service members who are enrolled in college and are affected by military mobilizations will not be penalized for the term they are required to withdraw after the full refund period based on the institutional policies and procedures. Institutions are strongly encouraged to provide a full refund of required tuition, fees and other institutional charges or to provide a credit in a comparable amount against future charges for students who are forced to withdraw as a result of military mobilization. Additionally, the term(s) that the service member is mobilized will not count against the maximum terms of eligibility. The service member shall be allowed to receive the unused terms for the LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement while mobilized during the succeeding summer or at the end of the maximum terms of eligibility based on initial college enrollment (provided the service member meets continued eligibility requirements). The service member must re-enroll in an eligible institution within twelve months upon their demobilization and provide official documentation to verify military deployment to the institutional Financial Aid Office upon re-enrollment to receive LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement. Reinstatement of the LIFE Scholarship and the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement will be based upon the service member's eligibility at the time he/she was mobilized. If the student re-enrolls after the twelve month period, the service member must submit an Appeal Application to the Commission on Higher Education by the established deadline in order to be considered for reinstatement.

B. Service members who are enrolled in college and are mobilized for an entire academic year may renew the LIFE Scholarship and the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement for the next academic year, if they met the eligibility requirements at the end of the prior academic year. Service members who did not use the LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement funds/terms of eligibility during this period due to military mobilization shall be allowed to receive the LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement funds during the succeeding summer or at the end of the maximum terms of eligibility based on initial college enrollment (provided the service member meets continued eligibility requirements).

C. Service members who are enrolled in college and are mobilized for one academic term must complete an average of thirty credit hours and earn a 3.0 "~~LIFE State Scholarship~~ GPA" by the end of the academic year to be eligible for LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement renewal for the next academic year (see Section 62-1200.15 (3)(a-d) for example). Service members who did not use LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement funds/terms of eligibility during this period shall be allowed to receive the LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement during the succeeding summer or at the end of the maximum terms of eligibility based on initial college enrollment (provided the service member meets the continued eligibility requirements).

D. In order to receive the LIFE Scholarship and the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement for summer school for the unused term(s), the service member must enroll in twelve credit hours during the succeeding summer term at the home institution. For service members who enroll in summer school and one other term of the academic year, the service member must earn ~~a total of twenty-seven~~ an average of 30 credit hours (or its equivalent) ~~in order to maintain eligibility for the next academic year. for the academic year. In order to maintain eligibility for the next academic year for service members who only attend summer school, the member must earn twelve credit hours during the academic year.~~ The service member must meet all eligibility requirements as specified in the "Student Eligibility" and "Continued Eligibility" Sections for the LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement, except for the completion of the thirty credit hour requirement for the academic year.

E. The home institution will be responsible for receiving verification of military mobilization status, "~~LIFE State Scholarship~~ GPA," credit hours earned and terms of eligibility based on the service member's

initial college enrollment and eligibility for LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement renewal for the next academic year.

F. Service members of the United States Armed Forces will not be penalized for any credit hours earned while on military mobilization. The credit hours earned will not count against the terms of eligibility, but will be used toward the annual credit hour requirement for the LIFE Scholarship and towards the minimum fourteen credit hour course level requirement for the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement.

62-1200.50. LIFE Scholarship Refunds and Repayments.

A. In the event a student who has been awarded a LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement withdraws, is suspended from the institution, or drops below full-time enrollment status during any term of the academic year, institutions must reimburse the LIFE Scholarship Program for the amount of the LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement for the term in question pursuant to the refund policies of the institution. Collection is the responsibility of the institution.

B. In the event a student withdraws or drops below full-time status after the institution's refund period and therefore must pay tuition and fees for full-time enrollment, the LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement may be retained pursuant to the refund policies of the institution.

62-1200.55. Appeals Procedures: LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement.

A. The Commission on Higher Education shall define the appeals procedures.

B. Students who did not meet the continued eligibility requirements for the LIFE Scholarship at the end of the academic year due to an extenuating circumstance may request an appeal with the Commission on Higher Education.

C. The Commission on Higher Education will allow a student to submit only one appeal each academic year based on an extenuating circumstance.

D. A completed appeal's application must be filed with the Commission on Higher Education by the established deadline of the academic year the scholarship is requested. The student must provide a completed application for appeal, a letter requesting an appeal describing the extenuating circumstance, official transcripts from all prior institutions, and any other supporting documentation to substantiate the basis for the appeal. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that all documents necessary to file an appeal are received at the Commission by the established deadline. Commission staff will not contact the student regarding missing or incomplete appeals documentation. Failure to submit a completed appeal's application by the required deadline(s) will result in forfeiture of the scholarship.

E. The LIFE Scholarship shall be suspended during the appeal period, but will be awarded retroactively if the appeal is granted.

F. Appeal Guidelines apply only to the LIFE Scholarship, not the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement. Students cannot appeal solely on the basis of a loss of a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement. However, students who appeal and are awarded the LIFE Scholarship under this section may be eligible to receive the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement.

G. The Appeals Committee's decision is final.

62-1200.60. Institutional Policies and Procedures for Awarding: LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement.

A. All eligible institutions are responsible for ensuring that each student has met the criteria based on state law and regulation to determine eligibility for the LIFE Scholarship and the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement as stipulated in Section 62-1200.10 and Section 62-1200.15.

B. Each institution is responsible for reviewing all students based on the “LIFE State Scholarship GPA” calculation below to determine eligibility for the LIFE Scholarship. Institutions must use official transcripts from all eligible institutions for each student and the steps in Section E below.

C. The institution must use grades earned at all eligible institutions during any term (fall, spring, and/or summer) for calculating a “LIFE State Scholarship GPA” at the end of the academic year.

D. The student must certify by submitting a signed affidavit that he/she is responsible for submitting transcripts from all previous and current eligible institutions. Students who complete coursework at another institution at anytime during the academic year (fall, spring, summer) must submit an official transcript to the home institution at the end of the academic year to determine eligibility for the LIFE Scholarship.

E. Steps for calculating a “LIFE State Scholarship GPA:”

1. Convert all grades earned at an eligible institution to a 4.0 scale based on each institution’s grading policy where the grades were earned = Grade Points

2. Multiply the grade points by attempted credit hours = Quality Points (QP)

3. Divide the total quality points by the total number of attempted credit hours = LIFE State Scholarship GPA

4. “LIFE State Scholarship GPA” Formula: $(\text{Grade Points} \times \text{Attempted Credited Hours} = \text{QP}) = \frac{\text{QP}}{\text{Total Attempted Credit Hours}} = \text{LIFE State Scholarship GPA}$

Total Attempted Credit Hours

F. The “LIFE State Scholarship GPA” must include all grades earned at eligible institutions, including courses that do not transfer based on the institution’s policy and college courses taken while in high school.

G. The “LIFE State Scholarship GPA” must not include attempted credit hours earned for continuing education courses, non-degree credit courses for an associate’s degree or higher and remedial/developmental courses.

H. The student must meet the annual credit hour requirement at the end of the academic year based on initial college enrollment as defined in the “Continued Eligibility,” “Regaining or Earning Eligibility” or “Transfer Students” Sections.

I. LIFE Scholarship awards are to be used only for payment toward the cost-of-attendance as established by Title IV Regulations. Eligible four-year public and independent institutions shall identify award amounts up to the cost-of-tuition for thirty credit hours, not to exceed four thousand seven hundred dollars, plus a three hundred dollar book allowance (maximum \$5,000 including cost-of-tuition plus book allowance) per academic year. Eligible two-year public or technical institutions shall identify award amounts, which cannot exceed the cost-of-tuition for thirty credit hours plus a three hundred dollar book allowance (maximum \$5,000 including cost-of-tuition plus book allowance) per academic year. For students enrolled at eligible

two-year independent institutions, the award amount shall not exceed the maximum cost-of-tuition at the two-year USC regional institutions plus a three hundred dollar book allowance (not to exceed a maximum award amount of \$5,000 including cost-of-tuition plus book allowance) per academic year. Half shall be awarded during the fall term and half during the spring term (or its equivalent), assuming continued eligibility. The LIFE Scholarship in combination with all other gift aid, including Federal, State, private and institutional funds, shall not exceed the cost-of-attendance as defined in Title IV regulations for any academic year.

J. The LIFE Scholarship Enhancement is an annual award. Half of the funds are to be disbursed in the fall term and half to be disbursed in the spring term. Students who change their major from an ineligible degree program to an eligible degree program during the same academic year shall not receive the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement until the beginning of the next academic year (i.e., fall term). Students who change their major from an eligible degree program to an ineligible degree program during the same academic year may continue to receive the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement during the current academic year; however, the student cannot be awarded the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement the next academic year of enrollment in an ineligible degree program.

K. The institution shall specify exact LIFE Scholarship Enhancement amounts to be used only for payment toward the cost-of-attendance as established by Title IV Regulations at eligible four-year public and independent institutions in South Carolina. The annual LIFE Scholarship Enhancement award amount shall not exceed \$2,500.00 per academic year for no more than three years of instruction if enrolled in an eligible four-year degree program or for not more than four years of instruction if enrolled in an eligible approved five-year degree program. Students enrolled in an eligible 3 plus 2 program shall receive a LIFE Scholarship for no more than four years of instruction and a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement for no more than three years of instruction. Half of the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement funds shall be awarded in the fall term and half during the spring term (or its equivalent), assuming continued eligibility. The LIFE Scholarship Enhancement in combination with all other gift aid, including Federal, State, private and institutional funds, shall not exceed the cost-of-attendance as defined in Title IV Regulations for any academic year.

L. In determining the amount awarded for the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement, all other sources of gift aid, including federal, State, private and institutional funds and the base LIFE Scholarship must be applied to the unmet total cost of attendance in accord with Title IV Regulations before calculating the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement amount and receiving the funds. Adjustments to the financial aid package will be made to the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement in accordance with prescribed Title IV Regulations in order to prevent an over award.

M. Students who have already been awarded a first bachelor's degree or graduate degree are not eligible to receive a LIFE Scholarship or a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement. Students enrolled in a program of study that is structured so as not to require a bachelor's degree and leads to a graduate degree as defined in the "Program Definitions" Section must maintain their undergraduate status in order to receive a LIFE Scholarship and a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement each academic term, with the exception of students majoring in the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at South University, the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at Presbyterian College, the Master's of Science in Physician Assistant Studies Program at the Medical University of South Carolina, the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at the University of South Carolina-Columbia and the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at the Medical University of South Carolina.

N. Eligible institutions shall provide an award notification to eligible students that contains the terms and conditions of the LIFE Scholarship and the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement. Institutions will notify students and the SC Commission on Higher Education of any adjustments in LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship

Enhancement funds that may result from an over award, change in eligibility, change in the student's residency or change in financial status or other matters.

O. The institution must retain annual paper or electronic documentation for each LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement award to include at a minimum:

1. Award notification;
2. Institutional disbursement to student;
3. Student's residency status;
4. Refunds and repayments (if appropriate);
5. Enrollment and curriculum requirements;
6. Verification of a 3.0 "LIFE State Scholarship GPA" and the required number of annual credit hours based on initial college enrollment;
7. Affidavit documenting that the student: a) has never been convicted of any felonies and/or a second or subsequent alcohol/ drug-related misdemeanor offenses within the past academic year; b) understands that non-degree credit hours will not be used in calculating the "LIFE State Scholarship GPA" or credit hour requirements if they are enrolled in an associate's degree or higher; and c) must certify that they have submitted transcripts from all previous and current institutions attended;
8. Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR) or affidavit documenting that the student is not in default or does not owe a refund or repayment on any state or federal financial aid;
9. High school transcript(s) and corresponding rank report (if applicable) verifying graduation or home school completion date, grade point averages and class ranks (first-time entering freshmen) or GED or Adult Education High School Diploma;
10. SAT or ACT scores (first-time entering freshmen);
11. Verification of student's disability from Institutional Disability Service Provider and verification of reduced course-load requirement (if appropriate);
12. Military mobilization orders (if appropriate);
13. Beginning with the 2007-08 freshman class and thereafter, all institutions must retain documentation verifying that students met the minimum fourteen credit hour course level requirement by the end of the first year of college enrollment for the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement;
14. Verification from academic department of enrollment in a declared major in an eligible degree program (LIFE and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement purposes only);
15. Documentation from Registrar or Admissions office that student's final high school GPA has been calculated pursuant to a grading scale that is at least equal to the SC UGP (For students who are attempting to use a class rank from an out-of-state institution to qualify for the LIFE Scholarship); and
16. Verification from the institution that lawful presence of the student in the US has been verified.

17. Collection of certification from education majors receiving enhancement/stipend monies of their completed contractual work agreement for the stipend.

P. It is the institution's responsibility to ensure that only eligible students receive a LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement award.

Q. Any student who has attempted to obtain or has obtained a LIFE Scholarship and a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement award through means of a willfully false statement or failure to reveal any material fact, condition, or circumstances affecting eligibility will be subject to applicable civil or criminal penalties, including loss of the LIFE Scholarship and the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement.

R. At the end of the spring term each academic year, the institution must notify all LIFE Scholarship recipients who have not met the continued eligibility requirements for the next academic year. The notification should include information regarding the student's ability to attend summer school in order to meet the continued eligibility requirements.

62-1200.65. Institutional Disbursements: LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement.

A. Eligible four-year public and independent institutions shall award LIFE Scholarship amounts, which cannot exceed the cost-of-tuition for thirty credit hours a year, not to exceed four thousand seven hundred dollars, plus a three hundred dollar book allowance (maximum \$5,000 including cost-of-tuition plus book allowance) per academic year. Eligible two-year public or technical institutions shall award LIFE Scholarship amounts, which cannot exceed the cost-of-tuition for thirty credit hours plus a three hundred dollar book allowance (not to exceed a maximum award amount of \$5,000 including cost-of-tuition plus book allowance) per academic year. For students enrolled at eligible two-year independent institutions, the award amount for a LIFE Scholarship shall not exceed the maximum cost-of-tuition at the two-year USC regional institutions plus a three hundred dollar book allowance (not to exceed a maximum award amount of \$5,000 including cost-of-tuition plus book allowance) per academic year. Half of the LIFE Scholarship shall be awarded during the fall term and half during the spring term (or its equivalent), assuming continued eligibility. LIFE Scholarship funds cannot be disbursed during the summer or any interim sessions with the exception to disbursements that meet the requisites under the "Enrollment in Internships, Cooperative Work Programs, Travel Study Programs and National and International Student Exchange Programs" or "Military Mobilization" Sections. The LIFE Scholarship in combination with all other gift aid, including Federal, State, private and institutional funds, shall not exceed the cost-of-attendance as defined in Title IV regulations for any academic year.

B. Eligible four-year public and independent institutions only shall award LIFE Scholarship Enhancement amounts, which cannot exceed the cost-of-attendance for thirty credit hours a year, not to exceed \$2,500 per academic year. The LIFE Scholarship Enhancement cannot be disbursed during the summer or any interim sessions with the exception of disbursements that meet the requisites under the "Enrollment in Internships, Cooperative Work Programs, Travel Study Programs and National and International Student Exchange Programs" or "Military Mobilization" Sections. The LIFE Scholarship Enhancement in combination with all other gift aid, including Federal, State, private and institutional funds, shall not exceed the cost-of-attendance as defined in Title IV Regulations for any academic year.

C. The LIFE Scholarship and the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement may not be applied to a second bachelor's degree or a graduate degree program as defined in the "Program Definitions" Section. In the event of early graduation, the LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement awards are discontinued. Students are eligible to receive the LIFE Scholarship for a maximum of eight consecutive terms (or its equivalent) and a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement for a maximum of six consecutive terms (or

its equivalent) towards an undergraduate degree, as long as all other eligibility requirements are met and the program is approved by the Commission on Higher Education. In such cases where students are enrolled in a program of study that is structured so as not to require a bachelor's degree for acceptance into the program and leads to a graduate degree, which will be the students' first academic degree awarded, such students must maintain their undergraduate status to be awarded the LIFE Scholarship and the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement, with the exception of students majoring in the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at South University, the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at South University, the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at Presbyterian College, the Master's of Science in Physician Assistant Studies Program at the Medical University of South Carolina, the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at the University of South Carolina-Columbia and the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at the Medical University of South Carolina. Students who have already been awarded their first bachelor's degree or graduate degree are not eligible to be awarded a LIFE Scholarship or a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement. Students enrolled in an approved five-year degree program may be eligible to receive a LIFE Scholarship for a fifth year of full-time, undergraduate work and a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement for a fourth year of full-time undergraduate coursework.

D. In determining the amount awarded for the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement, all other sources of gift aid, including federal, State, private and institutional funds and the base LIFE Scholarship, must be applied to the unmet total cost-of-attendance in accord with Title IV Regulations before calculating the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement amount and receiving the funds. Adjustments to the financial aid package will be made to the base LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement in accordance with prescribed Title IV Regulations in order to prevent an over award.

E. After the last day to register for each term of the academic year, the institution will verify enrollment of each recipient as a South Carolina resident who is a full-time, degree-seeking student. The institution must submit a request for LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement funds and/or return of funds by the established deadline each term. In addition, a listing of all eligible recipients by identification numbers with award amounts for the term must be sent to the Commission on Higher Education. At this time any unused funds must be returned to the Commission on Higher Education immediately.

F. The Commission will disburse LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement awards to the eligible institutions to be placed in each eligible student's account.

G. The student must be enrolled at the time of disbursement of LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement funds as a full-time student at the home institution, and meet all requirements as established in the "Student Eligibility" Section for a LIFE Scholarship and a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement. Students who are retroactively awarded must have been enrolled in a minimum of twelve credit hours (full-time) as a declared major in an eligible program under Section 62-1200.10 at the home institution at the time the LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement would have been disbursed for that term.

H. The LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement are to be annual awards. Half of the funds are to be disbursed in the fall term and half to be disbursed in the spring term. Students who change their major from an ineligible degree program to an eligible degree program during the same academic year shall not receive the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement until the beginning of the next academic year (i.e., fall term). Students who change their major from an eligible degree program to an ineligible degree program during the same academic year may continue to receive the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement during the current academic year; however, the student cannot be awarded the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement the next academic year of enrollment in an ineligible degree program.

62-1200.70. Program Administration and Audits: LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement.

A. The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education shall be responsible for the oversight of functions (e.g., guidelines, policies, rules, regulation) relative to this program with participating institutions. The Commission on Higher Education shall be responsible for the allocation of funds, promulgation of guidelines and regulation governing the LIFE Scholarship Program, any audits or other oversight as may be deemed necessary to monitor the expenditures of scholarship funds.

B. According to the Audit Policies and Procedures for Scholarship and Grant Programs Manual, all eligible institutions that participate in the program must abide by program policies, rules or regulation. Institutions also agree to maintain and provide all pertinent information, records, reports or any information as may be required or requested by the Commission on Higher Education or the General Assembly to ensure proper administration of the program.

C. The Chief Executive Officer at each participating institution shall identify to the Commission on Higher Education a LIFE Scholarship institutional representative who is responsible for the operation of the program on the campus and will serve as the contact person. The institutional representative will act as the student's fiscal agent to receive and deliver funds for use under the program.

D. The participating institution shall identify to the Commission on Higher Education an institutional representative who is responsible for determining residency classification for the purposes of awarding the LIFE Scholarship.

E. All eligible independent and public institutions that participate in the program must verify the lawful presence of any student who receives a LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement prior to awarding the Scholarship to the student. When verifying the lawful presence of an individual, institutional personnel shall not attempt to independently verify the immigration status of any alien, but shall verify any alien's immigration status with the federal government pursuant to 8 USC Section 1373(c).

F. All eligible independent and public institutions shall submit separate invoices for the purposes of enhancements, as determined by the Commission on Higher Education.

62-1200.75. Suspension or Termination of Institutional Participation: LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement.

A. The Commission may review institutional administrative practices to determine institutional compliance with pertinent statutes, guidelines, rules or regulations. If such a review determines that an institution has failed to comply with Program statutes, guidelines, rules or regulations, the Commission may suspend, terminate, or place certain conditions upon the institution's continued participation in the Program and require reimbursement to the LIFE Scholarship Program for any LIFE Scholarship or LIFE Scholarship Enhancement funds lost or improperly awarded.

B. Upon receipt of evidence that an institution has failed to comply, the Commission on Higher Education shall notify the institution in writing of the nature of such allegations and conduct an audit.

C. If an audit indicates that a violation or violations may have occurred or are occurring at any eligible public or independent institution, the Commission on Higher Education shall secure immediate reimbursement from the institution in the event that any funds were expended out of compliance with the provisions of the Act, any relevant statutes, guidelines, rules, and regulations.

D. The institution is responsible for determining South Carolina residency and lawful presence of all LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement recipients. If it is determined that the institution has

failed to verify the lawful presence and South Carolina residency of a LIFE Scholarship or LIFE Scholarship Enhancement recipient, the institution shall immediately reimburse the funds disbursed in error.

E. Independent and public institutions of higher learning in this, or any other state in the U.S., outside the U.S. or abroad, are prohibited from using the Legislative Incentive for Future Excellence or “LIFE” Scholarship in programs that promote financial aid incentives or packages. Any mention of the Legislative Incentive for Future Excellence or “LIFE” Scholarship in these financial aid packages must indicate the scholarship to be separate from the University that is offering the financial aid package, and reference the Legislative Incentive for Future Excellence or “LIFE” Scholarship as a separate financial aid award, provided to the student by the State of South Carolina.

F. The student shall be required to provide a state recognized, unique identifier in order to award, disburse and/or transfer the student’s LIFE Scholarship to an eligible institution.

G. All eligible independent and public institutions that participate in the scholarship enhancement program shall report to CHE the recipients of each enhancement award, per term within the deadlines as determined by CHE. In reporting recipients of the enhancement, institutions shall distinguish recipients by their status in the eligible major, ensuring that education, accounting, math, and science majors are individually identified in a format as determined by CHE.

Fiscal Impact Statement:

There will be no cost incurred by the State or any of its political subdivisions.

Statement of Rationale:

These regulations are updated to be consistent with changes in law and to clarify the policies and procedures for administering the program.

R. Wes Hayes, Jr.
Chairman

L. Jeffrey Perez, Ph.D.
President & Executive Director



Memorandum

TO: Ms. Jenni Bryson, Chairperson

Members of the Student Services Committee

FROM: Dr. Karen Woodfaulk, Director, Student Affairs Division

DATE: September 3, 2026

Approval of Changes to the Regulation Regarding the SC HOPE Scholarship Program

In effort to update the regulation to provide consistency between the state scholarship programs, and provide clarity on procedures for awarding, Commission staff has made revisions to the regulation regarding the SC HOPE Scholarship.

CHE staff has solicited institutional ideas and feedback on draft regulations during the Summer. CHE staff made requests for institutional concerns and proposed changes to the regulation in June. From the feedback received, a draft regulation was generated and circulated to institutional financial aid and residency officers, who met on August 13, 2026 to provide feedback on the suggested changes to the regulation. Based on the feedback from this review by the institutions, a revised draft of the regulation was created. Institutions, as well as the general public, will have another opportunity to provide feedback during the open comment period, to take place from October 23, 2026 to November 27, 2026.

The regulation proposes multiple clarifications, pertaining to the timing for residency qualification, the GPA requirement, transfer eligibility, and one clarification on the early graduation process. In addition, one additional amendment was made to provide for the passage of Act 191 of 2024, which allowed for the American College of the Building Arts to become an eligible institution. A review of all the changes is below:

Section 62-900.90: L. “Independent institutions/private institutions” Definition was revised to clarify participating independent institutions in the program.

N. “Military mobilization” Language added to clarify that Basic Training and Advance Individual Training may be treated the same as military mobilization.

S. “South Carolina resident” Language removed to allow for residency to be obtained by the time initial college enrollment. This will give more time for students to qualify for residency.

U. “General Educational Development Diploma” Language revised to clarify change to “State Scholarship GPA”.

Section 62-900.95:

A.(1). Language removed to allow for legal permanent residency to be obtained by the time initial college enrollment. This will give more time for students to qualify for residency.

A.(2). Language removed to allow for S.C. residency to be obtained by the time initial college enrollment. This will give more time for students to qualify for residency.

A.(3). Language added to clarify that students should not be allotted additional time beyond high school graduation to obtain the qualifying GPA.

C. Language removed to clarify that the Early Graduation Process is done through the awarding institution.

G. Language added to clarify that a SC HOPE recipient who transfers to an eligible two-year institution in the same academic year may receive the LIFE Scholarship upon transferring.

Recommendation

The Commission staff recommends that the Committee on Students Services approve the proposed amendments to the regulation for the SC HOPE Scholarship Program. If approved by the Committee on Student Services and the Commission on Higher Education, the proposed regulation will be submitted to the SC General Assembly during the 2027 legislative session for approval under the Administrative Procedures Act.

Document No. 5006
COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION
 CHAPTER 62
 Statutory Authority: 1976 Code Section 59-150-370

62-900.85 - 62-900.140. South Carolina HOPE Scholarship.

Synopsis:

This proposed regulation will clarify the policies and procedures for administering the SC HOPE Scholarship Program at the public and independent colleges and universities in the state. In the proposed amendments, regulation is being revised to align in-state residency timelines with state scholarship residency timelines. In addition, the regulation is being updated to clarify procedures and practices already occurring at the institutions. Lastly, other changes to the regulation include updating of definitions and minor language changes to promote consistency.

The proposed regulation will require legislative review.

A Notice of Drafting was published in the *State Register* on May 22, 2026.

Section-by-Section Discussion

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Section 62-900.90: | <p>L. “Independent institutions/private institutions” Definition was revised to clarify participating independent institutions in the program.</p> <p>N. “Military mobilization” Language added to clarify that Basic Training and Advance Individual Training may be treated the same as military mobilization.</p> <p>S. “South Carolina resident” Language removed to allow for residency to be obtained by the time initial college enrollment. This will give more time for students to qualify for residency.</p> <p>U. “General Educational Development Diploma” Language revised to reflect change to State Scholarship GPA.</p> |
| Section 62-900.95: | <p>A.(1). Language removed to allow for legal permanent residency to be obtained by the time initial college enrollment. This will give more time for students to qualify for residency.</p> <p>A.(2). Language removed to allow for S.C. residency to be obtained by the time initial college enrollment. This will give more time for students to qualify for residency.</p> <p>A.(3). Language added to clarify that students should not be allotted additional time beyond high school graduation to obtain the qualifying GPA.</p> <p>C. Language removed to clarify that the Early Graduation Process is done through the awarding institution.</p> |

G. Language added to clarify that a SC HOPE recipient who transfers to an eligible two-year institution in the same academic year may receive the LIFE Scholarship upon transferring.

Notice of Public Hearing and Opportunity for Public Comment:

Interested members of the public and regulated community are invited to make oral or written comments on the proposed regulation at a public hearing to be conducted by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education on December 4, 2026, to be held in the Main Conference Room at 1122 Lady Street, Suite 400, Columbia, SC. The meeting will commence at 1:00 p.m. at which time the Commission will consider items on its agenda in the order presented. The order of presentation for public hearings will be noted in the Commission's agenda to be published by the Commission ten days in advance of the meeting.

Interested persons are also provided an opportunity to submit written comments on the proposed regulation by writing to Dr. Karen Woodfaulk, Director of Student Services, South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, 1122 Lady Street, Suite 400, Columbia, SC 29201. Comments must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on November 27, 2026. Comments received shall be considered by the staff in formulating the final proposed regulation for the public hearing on December 4, 2026, as noticed above. Comments received by the deadline shall be submitted to the Commission in summary of public comments for consideration at the public hearing.

Preliminary Fiscal Impact Statement:

There will be no cost incurred by the State or any of its political subdivisions.

Statement of Need and Reasonableness:

The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education proposes the following revisions to Chapter 62 regulation, R.62-900.85 through 62-900.140, LIFE Scholarship Program. This proposed regulation will clarify the policies and procedures for administering the SC HOPE Scholarship Program at the public and independent colleges and universities in the state. In the proposed amendments, regulation is being revised to align in-state residency timelines with state scholarship residency timelines. In addition, the regulation is being updated to clarify procedures and practices already occurring at the institutions. Lastly, other changes to the regulation include updating of definitions and minor language changes to promote consistency.

DESCRIPTON OF REGULATION:

Purpose: The Agency is updating the regulation to provide institutions with flexibility within the program, and allow for clarity with awarding.

Legal Authority: SC Commission on Higher Education has general authority to promulgate regulations pursuant to 59-112-100

Plan for Implementation: the revised regulations will take effect upon approval by the General Assembly and upon publication in the State Register. CHE will notify the public of the revised regulations and post the revised regulations on the agency's website.

**DETERMINATION OF NEED AND REASONABLENESS OF THE PROPOSED REGULATION
BASED ON ALL FACTORS THEREIN AND EXPECTED BENEFITS:**

The agency is updating the regulations to assist institutions with determining eligibility, and provide clarity with awarding.

DETERMINATION OF COST AND BENEFITS:

There is no cost incurred by the state

UNCERTAINTIES OF ESTIMATES

There are no uncertainties of estimates concerning the regulations.

EFFECT ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC HEALTH

These regulations will have no effect on the environment or public health.

DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC HEALTH IF THE REGULATION IS NOT IMPLEMENTED:

There will be no detrimental effect on the environment and public health of this State if these regulations are not implemented.

Statement of Rationale:

These regulations are updated to be consistent with changes in law and to clarify the policies and procedures for administering the program

Instructions:

Replace R.62-900.85 through 62-900.140 in its entirety.

Text:

Table of Contents:

62-900.85. Purpose of the SC HOPE Scholarship Program.
62-900.86. Funding.
62-900.90. Program Definitions.
62-900.95. Student Eligibility.
62-900.100. Duration of Award.
62-900.105. Transfer Students.
62-900.110. Students with Disabilities.
62-900.111. Military Mobilization.
62-900.115. Refunds or Repayments.
62-900.120. Appeals Procedures.
62-900.125. Institutional Policies and Procedures for Awarding.
62-900.130. Institutional Disbursements.
62-900.135. Program Administration and Audits.
62-900.140. Suspension or Termination of Institutional Participation.

62-900.85. Purpose of the SC HOPE Scholarship Program.

The South Carolina HOPE Scholarship was established under the South Carolina Education Lottery Act in 2001 and amended by Act 95 during the 2005 legislative session. Act 356 authorizes the Commission on Higher Education to promulgate regulation for administration of the SC HOPE Scholarship Program. The purpose of the SC HOPE Scholarship Program is to provide funding to first-time entering freshmen who do not qualify for the LIFE or Palmetto Fellows Scholarships.

All eligible institutions that participate in the program must verify the lawful presence of any student who receives a SC HOPE Scholarship prior to awarding the Scholarship to the student. When verifying the lawful presence of an individual, institutional personnel shall not attempt to independently verify the immigration status of any alien, but shall verify any alien's immigration status with the federal government pursuant to 8 USC Section 1373(c).

Independent and public institutions of higher learning in this, or any other state in the U.S., outside the U.S. or abroad are prohibited from using the South Carolina HOPE Scholarship or "SC HOPE" Scholarship in programs that promote financial aid incentives or packages. Any mention of the South Carolina HOPE Scholarship or "SC HOPE" Scholarship in these financial aid packages must indicate the scholarship to be separate from the University that is offering the financial aid package, and reference the South Carolina HOPE Scholarship or "SC HOPE" Scholarship as a separate financial aid award, provided to the student by the State of South Carolina.

62-900.86. Funding.

A. Funds made available for SC HOPE Scholarships under the South Carolina Education Lottery Act shall be included in the annual appropriation to the Commission on Higher Education. This program is dependent upon the annual proceeds generated by the Lottery. The Commission on Higher Education shall award funds as SC HOPE Scholarships to eligible students.

62-900.90. Program Definitions.

A. "Academic year" is defined as the twelve month period during which a full-time student is expected to earn thirty credit hours. The period of time used to measure the academic year will consist of fall, spring, and summer terms or spring, summer, and fall terms (or its equivalent).

B. "Bachelor's degree program" is defined as a program of study leading to a bachelor's degree as defined by the U.S. Department of Education for participation in federally funded financial aid programs.

C. "Book allowance" shall mean funds that may be applied to the student's account for expenses towards the cost-of-attendance including the cost of textbooks.

D. "Cost-of-attendance" as defined by Title IV Regulations and may include tuition, fees, living expenses, and other costs such as costs related to disability or dependent care.

E. "Degree-seeking undergraduate student" is defined as any full-time student enrolled in a bachelor's degree program at an eligible institution.

F. "Eligible institution" shall be defined as a public or independent bachelor's level institution in South Carolina.

G. "Felonies" shall be defined as crimes that are classified under State Statute (Section 16-1-10) and that typically require imprisonment for more than one year.

H. “Freshman year” shall mean the first academic year the student matriculates in an institution after high school graduation or completion of an approved home school program.

I. “Full-time student” shall mean a student who has matriculated into a bachelor’s degree program and who enrolls full-time at the home institution, usually fifteen semester credit hours for fall and spring terms or twelve credit hours for fall, eight credit hours for winter, and twelve credit hours for spring trimester terms. In order for the student to be eligible for Scholarship disbursement, the student must be enrolled full-time as stipulated by Title IV Regulations, except that credit hours may not include remedial/developmental and continuing education courses.

J. “High school” is defined as a public, private, charter, virtual, Montessori or Magnet high school located in South Carolina, recognized home school association or program as defined in the State Statute, (Sections 59-65-40, 45, and 47) or a preparatory high school located outside of the state while the student is a dependent of a legal resident of South Carolina who has custody or pays child support and college expenses of the dependent high school student in accordance with State Statute (Section 59-112-10). A "preparatory high school" (out-of-state) is defined as a school recognized by the state in which the school is located to offer curricula through the twelfth grade and prepares students for college entrance.

K. “Home institution” shall mean the institution where the student is currently enrolled as a degree seeking student and may be eligible for financial aid at the same institution.

L. “Independent institutions” are defined, for the purposes of the SC HOPE Scholarship Program, as those four-year institutions eligible to participate in the South Carolina Tuition Grants Program as defined in accordance with Section 59-113-50 Chapter 113 of Title 59 of the 1976 Code, ~~which stipulates that an “independent institution of higher learning means any independent eleemosynary junior or senior college in South Carolina whose major campus and headquarters are located within South Carolina and which is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools;”~~ or an independent bachelor’s level institution chartered before 1962 whose major campus and headquarters are located within South Carolina; or an independent bachelor’s level institution who had a major campus and headquarters located within South Carolina and was accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools as of March 17, 2004.” , or a not-for-profit institution headquartered in South Carolina accredited by the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges. Institutions whose sole purpose is religious or theological training or the granting of professional degrees do not meet the definition of ‘independent institution’ for purposes of this chapter. Independent two-year institutions are not eligible for participation in this program.

M. “Initial college enrollment” shall mean the first time the student matriculates into a postsecondary, degree-granting institution after high school graduation. The terms of eligibility are based upon initial college enrollment and continuous enrollment. This means that any break in enrollment (excluding summer) will count against the maximum terms of eligibility.

N. “Military mobilization” is defined as a situation in which the U.S. Department of Defense orders members of the United States Armed Forces to active duty away from their normal duty assignment during a time of war or national emergency. For purposes of the SC HOPE Scholarship program, military mobilization shall also include periods of basic combat training and advanced individual training.

O. “Misdemeanor offenses” shall be defined as crimes that are classified under State Statute (Section 16-1-100), less serious than felonies, and are typically punishable by fine or imprisonment for less than one year. A complete listing is located in title 16 of State Statute. Examples of alcohol and/or drug misdemeanor offenses in South Carolina include but are not limited to possession of alcohol under the age of 21,

possession of marijuana/illegal drugs, open-container, transfer of alcohol to a person under 21, providing false information as to age (fake ID), etc.

P. “Multi-handicapped student” shall be defined as a student who, in addition to being visually or hearing impaired, has at least one additional disabling condition that qualifies the student to receive specialized postsecondary education.

Q. “Public institutions” are those four-year bachelor’s degree-granting institutions as defined in Chapter 103 of Title 59 of the 1976 Code, which stipulates “public higher education shall mean state- supported education in the postsecondary field.” Public two-year institutions and technical colleges are not eligible for participation in this Program.

R. “Remedial/developmental coursework” shall mean sub-collegiate level preparatory courses in English, mathematics, and reading or any other course deemed remedial by the institution where the course is taken.

S. “South Carolina resident” shall be defined as an individual who satisfies the requirements of residency in accordance with the State of South Carolina Statute for Tuition and Fees, Section 59-112-10, and all related guidelines and regulations promulgated by the Commission on Higher Education as determined by the institutional residency officer each academic year. A student must be considered a South Carolina resident at the time of ~~high school graduation, and at the time of~~ initial college enrollment, in order to receive a S.C. HOPE Scholarship.

T. “Transfer student” shall be defined as a student who has changed enrollment from one institution to an eligible institution.

U. “General Educational Development (GED) Diploma” is defined as a GED high school diploma that was completed in South Carolina or outside of the state while the student was a dependent of a legal resident of South Carolina who had custody or paid child support and college expenses of the dependent GED diploma student. A student who earns a GED diploma cannot receive a SC HOPE Scholarship during his/her initial year (or equivalent) of college enrollment but may earn the LIFE Scholarship in subsequent years. The student must meet the annual credit hour requirement (or equivalent) and a 3.0 “~~LIFE State Scholarship~~ GPA” at the end of the first academic year.

V. “Lawful Presence” is defined as individuals who are US citizens, permanent residents, or non-US citizens and non-permanent residents who are legally present in the US. When verifying the lawful presence of an individual, institutional personnel shall not attempt to independently verify the immigration status of any alien, but shall verify any alien’s immigration status with the federal government pursuant to 8 USC Section 1373(c).

62-900.95. Student Eligibility.

A. To be eligible for a SC HOPE Scholarship, the student must:

1. Be a U.S. citizen or a legal permanent resident that meets the definition of an eligible non-citizen under State residency statutes at the time of ~~high school graduation~~ initial college enrollment, whose lawful presence in the US has been verified at the time of enrollment at the institution;

2. Be classified by the awarding institution as a South Carolina resident for in-state purposes ~~at the time of high school graduation and~~ at the time of initial college enrollment ~~at the institution~~, as set forth by Section 59-112-10 and be either a member of a class graduating from a high school located in this State, a

home school student who has successfully completed a high school home school program in this State in the manner required by law, or a student graduating from a preparatory high school outside this State, while a dependent of a parent or guardian who is a legal resident of this State and has custody of the dependent according to State Statute, Section 59-149-50A. A student must be a legal permanent resident of the United States before being considered to be a South Carolina resident;

3. Earn a cumulative 3.0 grade point average (GPA) based on the South Carolina Uniform Grading Policy (UGP) upon high school graduation. No other grading policy will be allowed to qualify for the SC HOPE Scholarship. Final high school GPAs shall be based on the four-year period of high school attendance, with the exception of Carnegie Units earned prior to high school. Grade point averages must be reported to two decimal places (minimum) and may not be rounded. For example, a student who earns a 2.99 GPA is not eligible. A student who earns a 3.00 GPA or above is eligible. Institutions shall use the final cumulative GPA as reported by the high school on the official high school transcript. The SC UGP GPA and class rank (if school/association officially ranks as a policy) must be printed on an official final end of year high school transcript, which must also include a uniform date of calculation as determined by the Commission on Higher Education. The graduation date must also be printed on the final end of senior year high school transcript, and no grades earned after the date of the graduating high school class for the graduation year. If a South Carolina resident student is graduating from an out of state high school, it is the responsibility of the out of state student's school counselor to convert the students final high school GPA and class ranking to an eligible final high school GPA based on the S.C. Uniform Grading Policy. The converted final high school GPA and class ranking (if applicable) must be provided to the eligible S.C. Institution before a student can be awarded. A student who graduates high school with a General Educational Development (GED) Diploma is not eligible to receive the SC HOPE Scholarship;

4. Be admitted, enrolled full-time, and classified as a degree-seeking undergraduate student in an eligible institution in South Carolina;

5. Certify that he/she has never been adjudicated delinquent, convicted, or pled guilty or *nolo contendere* to any felonies and/or any second or subsequent alcohol/drug related misdemeanor offenses under the laws of this or any other state or under the laws of the United States by submitting a signed affidavit each academic year to the institution testifying to the fact. However, a high school or college student who has been adjudicated delinquent, convicted, or pled guilty or *nolo contendere* of a second alcohol or other drug related misdemeanor offense is ineligible for the next academic year of enrollment at an eligible institution after the date of the adjudication, conviction or plea. If the adjudication, conviction, or plea occurs during the academic year after the student has already submitted a signed affidavit to the institution, the student is still eligible for the Scholarship for the remainder of the academic year. However, the student will not be eligible to receive the LIFE Scholarship the following fall, spring, and summer terms (or their equivalent), even if all other eligibility requirements have been met. If a student completes a pretrial intervention program and has his/her record expunged, the conviction will not affect Scholarship eligibility;

6. For a home school graduate to be eligible for the SC HOPE Scholarship, the student must be a member of an approved South Carolina homeschool program as defined in the State Statute (Sections 59-65-40, 45, and 47) that provides a GPA on an official transcript upon high school graduation based on the Uniform Grading Policy. No other grading policy will be allowed to qualify for the SC HOPE Scholarship. Grade point averages must be reported to two decimal places (minimum) and may not be rounded; and

7. In order to meet the GPA requirement, a student who attended an out-of-state preparatory high school or graduated from a SC high school prior to the full implementation of the Uniform Grading Policy must have their grades converted to the SC UGP. This conversion is the responsibility of the out of state

preparatory high school or SC high school. These students must meet all other eligibility criteria, including SC residency requirements.

B. Any credit hours attempted or earned before high school graduation, hours exempted by examination, International Baccalaureate (IB) or Advanced Placement (AP) credit hours do not count against the terms of eligibility.

C. Students who complete their high school graduation requirements ~~prior to the official graduation date reported on the final high school transcript~~ early may be eligible to receive the SC HOPE Scholarship pending the approval of the ~~eligible institution. Commission on Higher Education (CHE). The institutional representative student~~ must complete and submit ~~an Early Graduation Application Form and~~ all appropriate documentation as deemed necessary by CHE ~~for each student to the institution~~ by the established deadline. The student must request and submit a letter from the high school principal verifying that he/she has met all graduation requirements along with an official final high school transcript.

D. Service members of the United States Armed Forces will not be penalized for any credit hours earned while on active duty. The credit hours earned will not count against the terms of eligibility.

E. Early graduates who enroll mid-year and are classified as degree-seeking will officially begin their initial college enrollment.

F. SC HOPE Scholarship funds may not be applied to the costs of continuing education or remedial/developmental courses. Twelve credit hours of the course load must be nonremedial/developmental and non-continuing education courses in order to receive SC HOPE Scholarship funds.

G. Students receiving a SC HOPE Scholarship are not eligible for a LIFE Scholarship, Palmetto Fellows Scholarship or Lottery Tuition Assistance. SC HOPE Scholarship recipients who transfer from a four-year institution to an eligible two-year institution within the same academic year may receive the LIFE Scholarship.

H. Students who meet all eligibility requirements for the SC HOPE Scholarship are eligible to receive Scholarship funds for the freshman year of attendance only.

I. All documents required for determining SC HOPE Scholarship eligibility must be submitted to the institution by their established deadline(s). Students must submit official transcripts from all previous and current institutions, which provide evidence to determine initial college enrollment.

J. All eligible independent and public institutions that participate in the program must verify the lawful presence of any student who receives a SC HOPE Scholarship prior to awarding the Scholarship to the student. When verifying the lawful presence of an individual, institutional personnel shall not attempt to independently verify the immigration status of any alien, but shall verify any alien's immigration status with the federal government pursuant to 8 USC Section 1373(c).

62-900.100. Duration of Award.

A. Students are eligible to receive the SC HOPE Scholarship for no more than two terms (or its equivalent) during the freshman year of attendance only.

B. The maximum number of terms of eligibility is based on the student's initial college enrollment with the exception of credit hours earned during the summer session immediately prior to the student's initial college enrollment.

C. If a student enrolls mid-year (spring term) and receives the SC HOPE Scholarship during that term, then qualifies to receive the LIFE Scholarship at the end of the summer term, the student will not be eligible to receive the SC HOPE Scholarship for the next term. If the student does not meet the requirements to qualify for the LIFE Scholarship, then the student may receive the SC HOPE Scholarship the next term of eligibility.

62-900.105. Transfer Students.

A. A student who transfers from an ineligible institution to an eligible institution mid-year during the freshman year of attendance is eligible to receive the SC HOPE Scholarship for the second term of their freshman year only. The student must have met the eligibility requirements as stated in the "Student Eligibility" Section at the beginning of their freshman year.

B. A student who transfers from a two-year or technical institution to an eligible four-year institution who enrolled in remedial courses during the freshman year may be eligible to receive the SC HOPE Scholarship. The terms of eligibility to receive Scholarship funds must not include the period of time the student was enrolled in remedial courses at a two-year or technical institution, unless the student completed at least twelve credit hours of non-remedial course work each term of enrollment during the freshman year. The student will be eligible to receive the Scholarship for the maximum number of terms of eligibility following completion of remediation if the student was eligible to receive the Scholarship upon high school graduation. If the student requires more than one academic year of remedial/developmental coursework, then he/she will not be eligible for the Scholarship after completion of remediation. If the student was not eligible for the Scholarship upon high school graduation, the student will not be eligible for the Scholarship after completion of remediation.

62-900.110. Students with Disabilities.

A. Students who qualify under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 must meet all eligibility requirements as defined in the "Student Eligibility" Section except for the full-time enrollment requirement, if approved by the Disability Services Provider. Students must comply with all institutional policies and procedures in accordance with ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

B. The institutional Disability Services Provider must provide written documentation to the Office of Financial Aid prior to the freshman year verifying that the student is approved to be enrolled in less than full-time status.

C. Students who qualify under ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 may receive the maximum number of available terms of eligibility as stated in the "Duration of Award" Section.

D. In order to be eligible for the SC HOPE Scholarship, students who no longer qualify under ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 must comply with all requirements set forth under the "Student Eligibility" Section.

62-900.111. Military Mobilization.

A. Service members who are enrolled in college and are affected by military mobilizations will not be penalized for the term(s) they are required to withdraw after the full refund period based on the institutional policies and procedures. Institutions are strongly encouraged to provide a full refund of required tuition, fees and other institutional charges or to provide a credit in a comparable amount against future charges for students who are forced to withdraw as a result of military mobilization. Additionally, the term(s) that the service member is mobilized will not count against the maximum terms of eligibility. The service member shall be allowed to receive the unused term(s) while mobilized during the succeeding summer term or at the end of the maximum terms of eligibility based on initial college enrollment. The service member must re-enroll in an eligible institution within twelve months upon their demobilization and provide official documentation to verify military deployment to the institutional Financial Aid Office upon re-enrollment. Reinstatement will be based upon the service member's eligibility at the time he/she was mobilized. If the service member re-enrolls after the twelve month period, the service member must submit an Appeal Application to the Commission on Higher Education by the established deadline in order to be considered for reinstatement.

B. Service members who are enrolled in college and are mobilized for an entire academic year may receive the Scholarship for the next academic year, if they met the "Student Eligibility" requirements at the time of high school graduation. Service members who did not use the SC HOPE Scholarship funds/terms of eligibility during this period due to military mobilization shall be allowed to receive Scholarship funds during the succeeding summer term and/or at the end of the maximum terms of eligibility based on initial college enrollment.

C. Service members who are enrolled in college and are mobilized for one academic term and did not use SC HOPE Scholarship funds/terms of eligibility during this period shall be allowed to receive one term of Scholarship funds during the succeeding summer or one term at the end of the maximum terms of eligibility based on initial college enrollment.

D. In order to receive the SC HOPE Scholarship for summer school for the unused term(s), the service member must enroll in twelve credit hours during the succeeding summer term at the home institution.

E. The home institution will be responsible for receiving verification of military mobilization status and terms of eligibility based on the service member's initial college enrollment.

F. Service members of the United States Armed Forces will not be penalized for any credit hours earned while on military mobilization. The credit hours will not count against their terms of eligibility.

62-900.115. Refunds or Repayments.

A. In the event a student who has been awarded a SC HOPE Scholarship withdraws, is suspended from the institution, or drops below full-time enrollment status during any term of the academic year, institutions must reimburse the SC HOPE Scholarship Program for the amount of the Scholarship for the term(s) in question pursuant to the refund policies of the institution. Collection is the responsibility of the institution.

B. In the event a student withdraws or drops below full-time status after the institution's refund period and therefore must pay tuition and fees for full-time enrollment, the Scholarship may be retained pursuant to the refund policies of the institution.

62-900.120. Appeals Procedures.

A. The Commission on Higher Education shall define the appeals procedures.

B. Students who did not receive the maximum number of terms of eligibility for the Scholarship at the end of the first academic year due to an extenuating circumstance may request an appeal with the Commission on Higher Education.

C. The Commission on Higher Education will allow a student to submit only one appeal at the end of the first academic year based on an extenuating circumstance.

D. A completed appeal application must be filed with the Commission on Higher Education by the established deadline of the academic year the Scholarship is requested. The student must provide a completed application for appeal, a letter requesting an appeal describing the extenuating circumstance, official transcripts from all prior institutions, and any other supporting documentation to substantiate the basis for the appeal. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that all documents necessary to file an appeal are received at the Commission by the established deadline. Commission staff will not contact the student regarding missing or incomplete appeals documentation. Failure to submit a completed appeal application by the required deadline(s) will result in forfeiture of the scholarship.

E. The SC HOPE Scholarship shall be suspended during the appeal period, but will be awarded retroactively if the appeal is granted.

F. The Appeals Committee's decision is final.

62-900.125. Institutional Policies and Procedures for Awarding.

A. SC HOPE Scholarship awards are to be used only for payment toward the cost-of-attendance as established by Title IV regulations. The award amount shall not exceed two thousand eight hundred dollars (includes \$300 book allowance) during the freshman year only. Half shall be awarded during the fall term and half during the spring term (or its equivalent). The SC HOPE Scholarship in combination with all other gift aid, including federal, State, private and institutional funds, shall not exceed the cost-of attendance as defined in Title IV regulations for any academic year.

B. Eligible institutions shall provide an award notification to eligible students that will include the book allowance and also contain the terms and conditions of the Scholarship. Institutions will notify students of all adjustments in Scholarship funds that may result from an over award, change in eligibility, change in the student's residency, change in financial status or other matters.

C. The institution must retain annual paper or electronic documentation for each award to include at a minimum:

- (1) Award notification
- (2) Institutional disbursement to student
- (3) Student's residency status
- (4) Refund and repayment (if appropriate)
- (5) Enrollment and curriculum requirements
- (6) Affidavit documenting that the student has never been convicted of any felonies and/or any second alcohol/drug related misdemeanor offenses within the past academic year as stated under the "Student Eligibility" Section
- (7) High school transcript(s) verifying high school graduation or home school completion date and cumulative grade point average
- (8) Verification from institutional disability service provider of student's disability and approval of reduced course-load requirement (if appropriate)
- (9) Military mobilization orders (if appropriate)

(10) Verification from the institution that lawful presence in the US has been verified.

D. Any student who has attempted to obtain or obtained a SC HOPE Scholarship award through means of willfully false statement or failure to reveal any material fact, condition, or circumstances affecting eligibility will be subject to applicable civil or criminal penalties, including loss of the SC HOPE Scholarship.

E. Visually impaired, hearing impaired or multi-handicapped students who qualify for the SC HOPE Scholarship may use the State Scholarship funds for the freshman year only to attend a four-year out-of-state institution that specializes in educating students with their impairment upon receiving prior approval from the Commission on Higher Education. The Commission on Higher Education shall make the final decision as to whether an out-of-state institution specializes in the postsecondary education of visually impaired, hearing impaired or multi-handicapped students.

F. It is the institution's responsibility to ensure that only eligible students receive the Scholarship.

G. At the end of the spring term each academic year, the institution must notify all SC HOPE Scholarship recipients who have not met continued eligibility requirements for the next academic year. The notification should include information regarding the student's ability to attend summer school in order to meet the continued eligibility requirements.

62-900.130. Institutional Disbursements.

A. The eligible institution will identify award amounts, which cannot exceed two thousand eight hundred dollars (includes \$300 book allowance) for students enrolled at four-year public and independent institutions for the freshman year of attendance only. Half shall be disbursed during the fall term and half during the spring term (or their equivalents). Scholarships cannot be disbursed during the summer or any interim sessions. The SC HOPE Scholarship in combination with all other gift aid, including federal, State, private and institutional funds, shall not exceed the cost-of-attendance as defined in Title IV regulations for any academic year.

B. After the last day to register for each term of the academic year, the institution will verify enrollment of each recipient as a South Carolina resident who is enrolled in at least twelve hours of non-remedial coursework and is a degree-seeking student. The institution must submit a request for funds and/or a return of funds by the established deadline each term. In addition, a listing of all eligible recipients by identification number with award amounts for the term must be sent to the Commission on Higher Education by the established deadline each term. At this time, any unused funds must be returned to the Commission immediately.

C. The Commission will disburse awards to the eligible institutions to be placed in each eligible student's account.

D. Students must be enrolled full-time at an eligible institution at the time of Scholarship disbursement. Students who are retroactively awarded must have been enrolled in a minimum of twelve credit hours of non-remedial coursework at the home institution at the time the Scholarship would have been disbursed for that term.

62-900.135. Program Administration and Audits.

A. The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education shall be responsible for the oversight of functions (e.g., guidelines, policies, rules, regulations) relative to this program with participating

institutions. The Commission on Higher Education shall be responsible for the allocation of funds, promulgation of guidelines and regulations governing the SC HOPE Scholarship Program, any audits or other oversight as may be deemed necessary to monitor the expenditures of Scholarship funds.

B. According to the Audit Policies and Procedures for Scholarship and Grant Programs Manual, all eligible institutions that participate in the program must abide by program policies, rules or regulations. Institutions also agree to maintain and provide all pertinent information, records, reports or any information as may be required or requested by the Commission on Higher Education or the General Assembly to ensure proper administration of the program.

C. The Chief Executive Officer at each participating institution shall identify to the Commission on Higher Education a SC HOPE Scholarship institutional representative who is responsible for the operation of the program on the campus and will serve as the contact person. The institutional representative will act as the student's fiscal agent to receive and deliver funds for use under the program.

D. The participating institution shall identify to the Commission on Higher Education an institutional representative who is responsible for all inquiries pertaining to residency classification for the purposes of awarding the SC HOPE Scholarship.

E. All eligible independent and public institutions that participate in the program must verify the residency status and lawful presence of any student who receives a SC HOPE Scholarship prior to awarding the Scholarship to the student. When verifying the lawful presence of an individual, institutional personnel shall not attempt to independently verify the immigration status of any alien, but shall verify any alien's immigration status with the federal government pursuant to 8 USC Section 1373(c).

62-900.140. Suspension or Termination of Institutional Participation.

A. The Commission may review institutional administrative practices to determine institutional compliance with pertinent statutes, guidelines, rules or regulations. If such a review determines that an institution has failed to comply with program guidelines, rules, or regulations, the Commission may suspend, terminate, or place certain conditions upon the institution's continued participation in the program and require reimbursement to the SC HOPE Scholarship Program for any funds lost or improperly awarded.

B. Upon receipt of evidence that an institution has failed to comply with program rules, regulations, or guidelines, the Commission on Higher Education shall notify the institution in writing of the nature of such allegations and conduct an audit.

C. If an audit indicates that a violation or violations may have occurred or are occurring at any public or independent college or university, the Commission on Higher Education shall secure immediate reimbursement from the institution in the event that any funds were expended out of compliance with the provisions of the Act, any relevant Statutes, pertinent rules, and regulations.

D. The institution is responsible for determining SC Residency and lawful presence off all SC HOPE Scholarship recipients. If it is determined that the institution has failed to verify the lawful presence and SC residency of a SC HOPE Scholarship recipient, the institution shall immediately reimburse the Commission with any and all funds disbursed in error.

E. Independent and public institutions of higher learning in this, or any other state in the U.S., are prohibited from using the South Carolina HOPE Scholarship or "SC HOPE" Scholarship in programs that promote financial aid incentives or packages. Any mention of the South Carolina HOPE Scholarship or "SC HOPE" Scholarship in these financial aid packages must indicate the scholarship to be separate from

the University that is offering the financial aid package, and reference the South Carolina HOPE Scholarship or “SC HOPE” Scholarship as a separate financial aid award, provided to the student by the State of South Carolina.

F. The student shall be required to provide a nationally recognized, unique identifier in order to award, disburse and/or transfer the student’s SC HOPE Scholarship to an eligible institution.

Fiscal Impact Statement:

There will be no increased administrative costs to the state or its political subdivisions.

Statement of Rationale:

This proposed regulation will clarify the policies and procedures for administering the SC HOPE Scholarship Program at the public and independent colleges and universities in the state. In the proposed amendments, regulation is being revised to align in-state residency timelines with state scholarship residency timelines. In addition, the regulation is being updated to clarify procedures and practices already occurring at the institutions. Lastly, other changes to the regulation include updating of definitions and minor language changes to promote consistency.

R. Wes Hayes, Jr.
Chairman

L. Jeffrey Perez, Ph.D.
President & Executive Director



Memorandum

TO: Ms. Jenni Bryson, Chairperson

Members of the Student Services Committee

FROM: Dr. Karen Woodfaulk, Director, Student Affairs Division

DATE: September 3, 2026

Approval of Changes to the Regulation Regarding the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program

In effort to update the regulation to provide consistency between the state scholarship programs, and provide clarity on procedures for awarding, Commission staff has made revisions to the regulation regarding the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship.

CHE staff solicited institutional input on proposed changes to the regulations throughout the summer. In June, institutions were invited to identify concerns and recommend potential revisions. Based on the feedback received, CHE staff developed a draft of the proposed regulatory changes and circulated it to institutional financial aid and residency officers for review. Representatives met on August 13, 2026, to discuss the draft and provide additional input. CHE staff incorporated feedback from this review into the revised draft presented to the Committee. Institutions and members of the general public will have an additional opportunity to provide comments during the formal public comment period, scheduled for October 23 through November 27, 2026.

The regulation proposes multiple clarifications, pertaining to the timing for residency qualification, the creation of a State Scholarship GPA and inclusion of AP, IB, CLEP and dual enrollment hours earned and when possible, verbiage was aligned with the LIFE Regulations. In addition, one additional amendment was made to provide for the passage of Act 191 of 2024, which allowed for the American College of the Building Arts to become an eligible institution. A review of all the changes is below:

Section 62-310: A. "Academic Year" language revised to clarify the academic year.

B. "Annual Credit hour requirement" language was added to clarify that academic credit should be placed on the transcript to be

considered.

I. “State Scholarship GPA” language added to create a State Scholarship GPA for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship program.

O. “Early Awards” language revised to remove April and replace with procedures established by CHE.

Z. Language added to clarify “Independent institutions” language was revised to clarify participating independent institutions in the program.

BB. “Late Awards” language revised to remove June and replace with procedures established by CHE.

DD. “Military Mobilizations” language added to clarify that Basic Training and Advance Individual Training may be treated the same as military mobilization.

Section 62-315:

A.(3). Language added to clarify eligibility at initial college enrollment.

D. Language changed from cumulative institutional GPA to “State Scholarship” GPA.

Section 62-318:

B. Language changed for Enhancement eligibility to include AP, CLEP, IB and dual enrollment credit hours and a State Scholarship GPA.

C. Language changed for Enhancement eligibility to include AP, CLEP, IB and dual enrollment credit hours and a State Scholarship GPA.

Section 62-320:

A. Language updated to reflect to electronic application with student submission.

B. Language updated to reflect electronic process and monthly reports for high school and eligible homeschool association staff.

D. Language revised to remove June for ‘Late Awards’ applications and replace with date as established by CHE.

F. “High school GPA” language revised to match LIFE Scholarship verbiage in that students have four years of high school coursework to meet initial GPA requirement.

I. Language added to reflect the high school and eligible homeschool association is responsible for sending the class rank report to CHE each year.

- Section 62-325: B. Language updated to reflect electronic designation submission process.
- Section 62-330: A.(1). Removed duplicative language on proration that is covered 62-330.B.
- A.(2). Removed duplicative language on proration that is covered 62-330.B. and to correct a typo.
- A.(3). Removed duplicative language on proration that is covered 62-330.B.
- J.(8). Language revised from cumulative GPA to “State Scholarship” GPA.
- Section 62-335: A. Language revised to clarify student must enroll within one academic at an eligible school.
- A.(1). Language revised to clarify that student receives no more than 2 terms toward the first one-year certificate or diploma program.
- A.(2). Language revised to clarify that student receives no more than 4 terms toward the first associate degree or two-year diploma program.
- A.(3). Language revised to clarify that student receives no more than 8 terms toward the first bachelor’s degree or a program of study that does not require a bachelor’s degree and leads directly to a graduate degree.
- A.(4). Language revised to clarify that student receives no more than 10 terms toward the first CHE approved five-year bachelor’s degree program.
- B. Language revised to clarify the Palmetto Fellows renewal eligibility requirements.
- B.(1). Language revised to clarify that student must be degree-seeking and continuously enrolled at an eligible institution.
- B.(2). Language revised to clarify that student must earn at least a 3.0 “State Scholarship GPA”.
- B.(3). Language revised to clarify that student must meet the annual credit hour requirement based off students’ initial date of college enrollment.
- B.(4). Language revised to clarify that student cannot be in default or owe an overpayment on any federal or state financial aid program.

B.(5). Language revised to clarify that student must remain eligible under the felony alcohol/drug-related misdemeanor provisions.

C. “Continued Eligibility” language revised to clarify when renewal is calculated and calculated using the “State Scholarship GPA” and credit hour requirements.

D. Language revised to clarify the State Scholarship GPA and credit hour requirement for renewal.

E. Language revised to clarify the State Scholarship GPA and credit hour requirement for renewal.

E.(1). Language revised to clarify that a minimum of thirty credit hours is required at the end of the students’ first academic year.

E.(2). Language revised to clarify that a minimum of sixty credit hours is required at the end of the students’ second academic year.

E.(3). Language revised to clarify that a minimum of ninety credit hours is required at the end of the students’ third academic year.

E.(4). Language revised to clarify that a minimum of one hundred twenty credit hours is required at the end of the students’ fourth academic year.

F. Language revised to clarify the “Annual Credit Hour Requirement” includes hours earned in AP, IB, CLEP and dual enrollment courses.

G. Language revised to clarify students must maintain a 3.0 “State Scholarship GPA” for renewal.

H. Language revised to clarify institutions must notify students who fail to meet renewal criteria regardless of students’ future enrollment.

I. Language revised to clarify Enhancement renewal eligibility requirements.

I.(1). Language revised to clarify student must meet Enhancement eligibility requirements in order to renew the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement.

I.(2). Language revised to clarify student must meet Palmetto Fellows renewal requirements in order to renew the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement.

I.(3). Language revised to clarify student must be enrolled full-time at an eligible institution in a declared major.

I.(4). Language revised to clarify student must be making satisfactory academic progress toward completion of declared eligible major.

J. Language revised to clarify the institution is responsible to determine Enhancement renewal eligibility.

K. Language revised to clarify any attempt of student fraud to obtain a scholarship or Enhancement could result in forfeiture and is subject to civil or criminal penalties.

Section 62-336:

A. Language added to define how to calculate a “State Scholarship GPA”.

A.(1.). Language added to define how to calculate Grade Points.

A.(2.). Language added to define how to calculate Quality Points.

A.(3.). Language added to divide Quality Points by total number of attempted hours to calculate the “State Scholarship GPA”.

A.(4.). Language added to show “State Scholarship GPA” calculation formula.

B. Language added to clarify that a “State Scholarship GPA” must include grades from all college coursework.

C. Language added to clarify that a “State Scholarship GPA” must not include grades from continuing education and remedial college coursework.

D. Language added to clarify that a “State Scholarship GPA” must be used to determining continuing eligibility for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship program.

Section 62-340:

A. Language updated to clarify Transfer and Reapplication online processes.

B. Language updated to clarify Transfer and Reapplication online processes.

C. Language revised to clarify eligibility for Transfer and Reapplication students.

D. Language revised to clarify how eligibility for transfer students will be determined.

E. Language revised to clarify that receiving institution is responsible to determine students' remaining eligibility.

F. Language revised to clarify how receiving institution will calculate students' eligibility and residency.

G. Language added to clarify that the receiving institution will use the students' initial date of college enrollment to calculate remaining terms of eligibility.

Section 62-345:

A. Language added to clarify the regulatory section reference and initial eligibility requirements.

B. Language added to clarify the regulatory section reference and use of State Scholarship GPA and credit hours earned eligibility requirements.

C. Language added to clarify the use of an approved reduced course load.

D. Language added to clarify the eligibility requirements.

Section 62-350:

C. Language added to clarify the use of a State Scholarship GPA and annual earned credit hour requirement.

F. Language added to clarify the use of a State Scholarship GPA and annual earned credit hour requirement.

Section 62-351:

C. Language added to clarify the use of State Scholarship GPA.

E. Language added to clarify the use of State Scholarship GPA.

Section 62-355:

B. Language added to clarify that the student submits the appeal.

D. Language added to correct a typo.

Section 62-360:

B. Language added to correct a typo.

G. Language added to correct a typo.

Recommendation

The Commission staff recommends that the Committee on Students Services approve the proposed amendments to the regulation for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program. If approved by the Committee on Student Services and the Commission on Higher Education, the

proposed regulation will be submitted to the SC General Assembly during the 2027 legislative session for approval under the Administrative Procedures Act.

Document No. 5405
STATE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION
 CHAPTER 62
 Statutory Authority: 1976 Code Section 59-104-20

62-300 - 62-375. Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program.

Preamble:

The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education proposes the following revisions to Chapter 62 regulation, R.62-300 through 62-375, Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program. Revisions to the existing regulation for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement Program are being considered to revise the renewal methodology for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship to align with the LIFE Scholarship renewal methodology, establish a State Scholarship GPA calculation for renewal purposes, and clarify the policies and procedures governing the administration of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement Program. Additional revisions include updates to definitions, administrative procedures, and other technical and conforming changes to improve consistency and administration of the program.

The proposed regulation will require legislative review.

A Notice of Drafting was published in the *State Register* on May 22, 2026.

Section-by-Section Discussion:

- Section 62-310:
- A. “Academic Year” language revised to clarify the academic year.
 - B. “Annual Credit hour requirement” language was added to clarify that academic credit should be placed on the transcript to be considered.
 - I. “State Scholarship GPA” language added to create a State Scholarship GPA for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship program.
 - O. “Early Awards” language revised to remove April and replace with procedures established by CHE.
 - Z. Language added to clarify “Independent institutions” language was revised to clarify participating independent institutions in the program.
 - BB. “Late Awards” language revised to remove June and replace with procedures established by CHE.
 - DD. “Military Mobilizations” language added to clarify that Basic Training and Advance Individual Training may be treated the same as military mobilization.
- Section 62-315:
- A.(3). Language added to clarify eligibility at initial college enrollment.
 - D. Language changed from cumulative institutional GPA to “State Scholarship” GPA.

- Section 62-318: B. Language changed for Enhancement eligibility to include AP, CLEP, IB and dual enrollment credit hours and a State Scholarship GPA.
- C. Language changed for Enhancement eligibility to include AP, CLEP, IB and dual enrollment credit hours and a State Scholarship GPA.
- Section 62-320: A. Language updated to reflect to electronic application with student submission.
- B. Language updated to reflect electronic process and monthly reports for high school and eligible homeschool association staff.
- D. Language revised to remove June for ‘Late Awards’ applications and replace with date as established by CHE.
- F. “High school GPA” language revised to match LIFE Scholarship verbiage in that students have four years of high school coursework to meet initial GPA requirement.
- I. Language added to reflect the high school and eligible homeschool association is responsible for sending the class rank report to CHE each year.
- Section 62-325: B. Language updated to reflect electronic designation submission process.
- Section 62-330: A.(1). Removed duplicative language on proration that is covered 62-330.B.
- A.(2). Removed duplicative language on proration that is covered 62-330.B. and to correct a typo.
- A.(3). Removed duplicative language on proration that is covered 62-330.B.
- J.(8). Language revised from cumulative GPA to “State Scholarship” GPA.
- Section 62-335: A. Language revised to clarify student must enroll within one academic at an eligible school.
- A.(1). Language revised to clarify that student receives no more than 2 terms toward the first one-year certificate or diploma program.
- A.(2). Language revised to clarify that student receives no more than 4 terms toward the first associate degree or two-year diploma program.
- A.(3). Language revised to clarify that student receives no more than 8 terms toward the first bachelor’s degree or a program of study that does not require a bachelor’s degree and leads directly to a graduate degree.
- A.(4). Language revised to clarify that student receives no more than 10 terms toward the first CHE approved five-year bachelor’s degree program.
- B. Language revised to clarify the Palmetto Fellows renewal eligibility requirements.

B.(1). Language revised to clarify that student must be degree-seeking and continuously enrolled at an eligible institution.

B.(2). Language revised to clarify that student must earn at least a 3.0 “State Scholarship GPA”.

B.(3). Language revised to clarify that student must meet the annual credit hour requirement based off students’ initial date of college enrollment.

B.(4). Language revised to clarify that student cannot be in default or owe an overpayment on any federal or state financial aid program.

B.(5). Language revised to clarify that student must remain eligible under the felony alcohol/drug-related misdemeanor provisions.

C. “Continued Eligibility” language revised to clarify when renewal is calculated and calculated using the “State Scholarship GPA” and credit hour requirements.

D. Language revised to clarify the State Scholarship GPA and credit hour requirement for renewal.

E. Language revised to clarify the State Scholarship GPA and credit hour requirement for renewal.

E.(1). Language revised to clarify that a minimum of thirty credit hours is required at the end of the students’ first academic year.

E.(2). Language revised to clarify that a minimum of sixty credit hours is required at the end of the students’ second academic year.

E.(3). Language revised to clarify that a minimum of ninety credit hours is required at the end of the students’ third academic year.

E.(4). Language revised to clarify that a minimum of one hundred twenty credit hours is required at the end of the students’ fourth academic year.

F. Language revised to clarify the “Annual Credit Hour Requirement” includes hours earned in AP, IB, CLEP and dual enrollment courses.

G. Language revised to clarify students must maintain a 3.0 “State Scholarship GPA” for renewal.

H. Language revised to clarify institutions must notify students who fail to meet renewal criteria regardless of students’ future enrollment.

I. Language revised to clarify Enhancement renewal eligibility requirements.

I.(1). Language revised to clarify student must meet Enhancement eligibility requirements in order to renew the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement.

I.(2). Language revised to clarify student must meet Palmetto Fellows renewal requirements in order to renew the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement.

I.(3). Language revised to clarify student must be enrolled full-time at an eligible institution in a declared major.

I.(4). Language revised to clarify student must be making satisfactory academic progress toward completion of declared eligible major.

J. Language revised to clarify the institution is responsible to determine Enhancement renewal eligibility.

K. Language revised to clarify any attempt of student fraud to obtain a scholarship or Enhancement could result in forfeiture and is subject to civil or criminal penalties.

Section 62-336:

A. Language added to define how to calculate a “State Scholarship GPA”.

A.(1.). Language added to define how to calculate Grade Points.

A.(2.). Language added to define how to calculate Quality Points.

A.(3.). Language added to divide Quality Points by total number of attempted hours to calculate the “State Scholarship GPA”.

A.(4.). Language added to show “State Scholarship GPA” calculation formula.

B. Language added to clarify that a “State Scholarship GPA” must include grades from all college coursework.

C. Language added to clarify that a “State Scholarship GPA” must not include grades from continuing education and remedial college coursework.

D. Language added to clarify that a “State Scholarship GPA” must be used to determining continuing eligibility for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship program.

Section 62-340:

A. Language updated to clarify Transfer and Reapplication online processes.

B. Language updated to clarify Transfer and Reapplication online processes.

C. Language revised to clarify eligibility for Transfer and Reapplication students.

D. Language revised to clarify how eligibility for transfer students will be determined.

E. Language revised to clarify that receiving institution is responsible to determine students’ remaining eligibility.

F. Language revised to clarify how receiving institution will calculate students’ eligibility and residency.

G. Language added to clarify that the receiving institution will use the students' initial date of college enrollment to calculate remaining terms of eligibility.

Section 62-345: A. Language added to clarify the regulatory section reference and initial eligibility requirements.

B. Language added to clarify the regulatory section reference and use of State Scholarship GPA and credit hours earned eligibility requirements.

C. Language added to clarify the use of an approved reduced course load.

D. Language added to clarify the eligibility requirements.

Section 62-350: C. Language added to clarify the use of a State Scholarship GPA and annual earned credit hour requirement.

F. Language added to clarify the use of a State Scholarship GPA and annual earned credit hour requirement.

Section 62-351: C. Language added to clarify the use of State Scholarship GPA.

E. Language added to clarify the use of State Scholarship GPA.

Section 62-355: B. Language added to clarify that the student submits the appeal.

D. Language added to correct a typo.

Section 62-360: B. Language added to correct a typo.

G. Language added to correct a typo.

Notice of Public Hearing and Opportunity for Public Comment:

Interested members of the public and regulated community are invited to make oral or written comments on the proposed regulation at a public hearing to be conducted by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education on December 4, 2026, to be held in the Main Conference Room at 1122 Lady Street, Suite 400, Columbia, SC. The meeting will commence at 1:00 p.m. at which time the Commission will consider items on its agenda in the order presented. The order of presentation for public hearings will be noted in the Commission's agenda to be published by the Commission ten days in advance of the meeting.

Interested persons are also provided an opportunity to submit written comments on the proposed regulation to publiccomments@che.sc.gov at the attention of Dr. Karen Woodfaulk, Director of Student Services, South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, 1122 Lady Street, Suite 400, Columbia, SC 29201. Comments must be received in writing no later than 5:00 p.m. on November 27, 2026. Comments received shall be considered by the staff in formulating the final proposed regulation for the public hearing on December 4, 2026, as noticed above. Comments received by the deadline shall be submitted to the Commission for consideration at the public hearing.

Preliminary Fiscal Impact Statement:

The proposed amendments are expected to result in an estimated annual increase in state expenditures of approximately \$287,500 by aligning the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship renewal methodology with the LIFE Scholarship renewal methodology.

Statement of Need and Reasonableness:

The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education proposes the following revisions to Chapter 62 regulation, R.62 300 through 62 375, Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program. Revisions to the existing regulation for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement Program are being considered to revise the renewal methodology for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship to align with the LIFE Scholarship renewal methodology, establish a State Scholarship GPA calculation for renewal purposes, and clarify the policies and procedures governing the administration of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement Program. Additional revisions include updates to definitions, administrative procedures, and other technical and conforming changes to improve consistency and administration of the program.

DESCRIPTION OF REGULATION:

Purpose: The Agency is updating the regulation to provide institutions with flexibility within the program and to allow for clarity with awarding.

Legal Authority: SC Commission on Higher Education has general authority to promulgate regulations pursuant to 59-149-10.

Plan for Implementation: the revised regulations will take effect upon approval by the South Carolina General Assembly and publication in the *State Register*. CHE will notify the public of the revised regulations and post the revised regulations on the agency's website.

DETERMINATION OF NEED AND REASONABLENESS OF THE PROPOSED REGULATION BASED ON ALL FACTORS HEREIN AND EXPECTED BENEFITS:

The agency is updating the regulations to assist institutions with determining eligibility and provide clarity with awarding.

DETERMINATION OF COSTS AND BENEFITS:

There is no cost incurred by the state.

UNCERTAINTIES OF ESTIMATES:

There are no uncertainties of estimates concerning the regulations.

EFFECT ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC HEALTH:

These regulations will have no effect on the environment or public health.

DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC HEALTH IF THE REGULATION IS NOT IMPLEMENTED:

There will be no detrimental effect on the environment and public health of this State if these regulations are not implemented.

Statement of Rationale:

These regulations are updated to align the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship renewal requirements with the LIFE Scholarship renewal methodology, establish a State Scholarship GPA calculation, and clarify the policies and procedures for administering the program.

Instructions:

Modify and replace in its entirety R. 62-300 through 62-375 with the following.

Text:

Table of Contents:

- 62-300. Purpose of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Scholarship Enhancement.
- 62-305. Allocation of Program Funds.
- 62-310. Definitions.
- 62-315. Initial Eligibility for Palmetto Fellows Scholarship.
- 62-318. Eligibility for Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement.
- 62-320. Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Application.
- 62-325. Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Selection Process.
- 62-330. Policies and Procedures for Awarding the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement.
- 62-335. Duration and Renewal of Awards.
- 62-336. State Scholarship GPA.
- 62-340. Transfer of Reapplication for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement.
- 62-345. Students with Disabilities.
- 62-350. Enrollment in Internships, Cooperative Work Programs, Travel Study Programs, or National or International Exchange Programs.
- 62-351. Military Mobilization.
- 62-355. Appeals Procedures.
- 62-360. Institutional Disbursement of Funds.
- 62-365. Refunds and Repayments.
- 62-370. Program Administration and Audits.
- 62-375. Suspension or Termination of Institutional Participation.

62-300. Purpose of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Scholarship Enhancement.

A. Pursuant to Act 458 and amended by Act 95 and Act 162 in 2005, the Commission on Higher Education shall promulgate regulation and establish procedures to administer the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program. The General Assembly established the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program to foster scholarship among the State's postsecondary students and retain outstanding South Carolina high school graduates in the State through awards based on scholarship and achievement. The purpose of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program is to recognize the most academically talented high school seniors in South Carolina and to encourage them to attend eligible colleges or universities in the State. A secondary purpose is to help retain talented minority students who might otherwise pursue studies outside the State.

B. Pursuant to Act 115 and amended by Act 235 in 2008, the Commission on Higher Education shall promulgate regulation and establish procedures for administration of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement. The General Assembly established the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement in order to foster scholarship among the State's postsecondary students through awards based on scholarship and achievement. The purpose of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement Program is to recognize the most academically talented college students throughout the state of South Carolina in the areas of education, accounting, mathematics and science and encourage them to attend eligible colleges or universities in the State. In order to receive a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement, all students must qualify for a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship as stipulated herein. With Act 156, passed in 2024, the Enhancements were expanded to include students majoring in education programs leading to certification and accounting.

C. Independent and public institutions of higher learning in this or any other state in the U.S., outside the U.S. or abroad are prohibited from using the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship in programs that promote financial aid incentives or packages. Any mention of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship in these financial aid packages must indicate the scholarship to be separate from the University that is offering the financial aid package, and reference the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship as a separate financial aid award, provided to the student by the State of South Carolina.

62-305. Allocation of Program Funds.

A. Funds made available for higher education grants and scholarships under Chapter 143 of Title 59 of the 1976 Code, as amended under Act 458, South Carolina Children First: Resources for Scholarship and Tuition Act of 1996, shall be included in the annual appropriation to the Commission on Higher Education. Fifty percent of the appropriation shall be designated for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program and the remaining fifty percent shall be for the Need-based Grants Program. However, in instances where the equal division of the appropriated funds between the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Need-based Grants Programs exceeds the capacity to make awards in either program, the Commission on Higher Education has the authority to re-allocate the remaining funds between the two programs.

B. Under the South Carolina Education Lottery Act, a designated amount shall be allocated for Palmetto Fellows Scholarships and shall be included in the annual appropriation to the Commission on Higher Education.

C. After expending funds appropriated for Palmetto Fellows Scholarships from all other sources, there is automatically appropriated from the general fund of the State whatever amount is necessary to provide Palmetto Fellows Scholarships to all students meeting the requirements of Section 59-104-20.

D. The Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement is contingent upon the availability of funds appropriated by the General Assembly each academic year.

62-310. Definitions.

A. ~~"Academic year" is defined as the twelve-month period of time during which a full-time student is expected to earn thirty credit hours. The period of time used to measure the academic year consists of the fall, spring and immediately succeeding summer terms.~~ "Academic year" is defined as the twelve-month period beginning with the fall term and ending with the immediately succeeding summer term, during which a full-time student is expected to earn thirty (30) credit hours.

B. ~~"Annual credit hour requirement" is defined for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship as a minimum of thirty (30) credit hours taken and earned at the end of each academic year based on the date of initial college enrollment. Credit hours cannot include remedial, continuing education, exempted credit hours (such as AP,~~

CLEP, IB, etc.), credit hours earned before high school graduation (dual enrollment) and credit hours earned the summer term immediately following high school graduation. Credit hours earned before high school graduation, including Advanced Placement (AP) credit hours, International Baccalaureate (IB) credit hours, exempted credit hours as well as credit hours earned on active duty, must be placed on the student's official college transcript by the institution at which they are earned, and be counted toward the annual credit hour requirement for the purposes of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement. Eligible Palmetto Fellows may prorate their award amount for the term of graduation (see section 62-330.B.). "Annual credit hour requirement" shall be defined as an average of thirty (30) credit hours earned at the end of the academic year based on initial college enrollment at all eligible institutions attended, excluding hours for remedial coursework, continuing education coursework, and non-degree coursework. Credit hours earned before high school graduation, including Advanced Placement (AP) credit hours, International Baccalaureate (IB) credit hours, exempted credit hours as well as academic credit hours earned on active duty, must be placed on the student's official college transcript by the institution at which they are earned, and must be counted toward the annual credit hour requirement. Eligible Palmetto Fellows Scholarship recipients may prorate their award amount for the term of graduation (see Section 62-330.B.).

C. "Approved five-year bachelor's degree program" is defined as a five-year bachelor's program that is defined and approved by the Commission on Higher Education to receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship for a maximum of ten terms and the Scholarship Enhancement for a maximum of eight terms at the same eligible independent or public institution to complete the requirements for a bachelor's degree. An approved five-year bachelor's degree program does not include institutional and cooperative "3 plus 2" programs.

D. "Bachelor's degree program" is defined as an undergraduate program of study leading to the first bachelor's degree as defined by the U.S. Department of Education.

E. "CIP (Classification of Instructional Program) Code" is defined as the U.S. Department of Education's standard for federal surveys and state reporting for institutional data (majors, minors, options and courses). For the purpose of receiving the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement, CIP Codes have been approved or identified by the Commission on Higher Education for eligible degree programs in the fields of education, mathematics and science.

F. "Continuing education coursework" is defined as postsecondary courses designed for personal development and that cannot be used as credit toward a degree.

G. "Continuously enrolled" is defined as enrollment without an interruption that would require the student to pursue a formal process of readmission to that institution. Formal petitions or applications for change of degree level shall be considered readmissions with the exception of students changing degree level within the programs cited in paragraphs L and HH of this section and students who have been granted preapproved leave status for no longer than one semester by their institution. Continuously enrolled includes summer terms, military mobilization, or students who transfer from a four-year institution only to return to a four-year institution. Students who are enrolled in internships, cooperative work programs, travel study programs, or National or International Exchange Programs that are approved by the home institution are considered continuously enrolled. Any student who has been suspended, expelled, does not attend subsequent (or consecutive semesters) that does not require a formal process of readmission to that institution, or voluntarily withdraws from a four-year institution and/or enrolls at a two-year institution during the interruption is considered to be no longer continuously enrolled.

H. "Cost-of-attendance" is defined by Title IV regulations and may include tuition, fees, books, room and board, and other expenses related to transportation, disability or dependent care.

I. ~~“Cumulative grade point average (GPA)” is defined as the cumulative institutional GPA used for graduation purposes, which includes dividing the total number of quality points earned in all courses by the total credit hours in all courses attempted at the student’s home institution. The cumulative GPA must be at least a 3.0 at the home institution for graduation purposes at the end of each academic year based on the date of initial college enrollment.~~ “State Scholarship GPA” shall be defined as the cumulative grade point average calculation that includes credit hours and grades earned at all eligible institutions based on a 4.0 scale. The State Scholarship GPA must not include attempted credit hours earned for continuing education coursework, non-degree coursework, and remedial/developmental coursework. See Section 62-336 for the steps to calculate the State Scholarship GPA.

J. “Date of initial college enrollment” is defined as the first time a student matriculates into a postsecondary degree-granting institution after high school graduation or completion of an approved home school program, excluding the summer term immediately prior to the student’s enrollment in the first regular academic year. Students must remain continuously enrolled as any break in enrollment (excluding summer) will count toward the student’s terms of eligibility.

K. For the purposes of the Scholarship Enhancement, “declared major” is defined as an eligible degree program in which a student is enrolled as a full-time, degree-seeking student. The student must meet all requirements as stipulated by the policies established by the institution and the academic department the student is enrolled in a declared major in an eligible degree program. Students cannot minor in or take courses related to a specific program without meeting institutional and departmental policies and be considered enrolled in a declared major. 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 Web site. Students who change their declared major from an ineligible degree program to an eligible degree program within the same academic year shall not receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement for that academic year. Additionally, students who change their declared major from an eligible degree program to an ineligible degree program within the same academic year will not lose eligibility until the next academic year.

L. “Degree-seeking student” is defined as a student enrolled full-time in a program of study that leads to the first bachelor’s degree, first approved five-year bachelor’s degree or a program of study that is structured so as not to require a bachelor’s degree at an eligible independent or public institution. Students must maintain their undergraduate status in order to receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and the Scholarship Enhancement each academic year, with the exception of students enrolled in the following programs: 1) Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies at the Medical University of South Carolina; 2) Doctor of Pharmacy at the Medical University of South Carolina; 3) Doctor of Pharmacy at the University of South Carolina; and 4) Doctor of Pharmacy at Presbyterian College. All programs must be approved by CHE for the purposes of receiving the scholarship enhancement.

M. “Eligible degree program” is defined for the purposes of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement as a degree program in education, mathematics or science as approved by the SC Commission on Higher Education. These programs include education, science or mathematics disciplines, accounting, computer science or informational technology, engineering, health care and health care related disciplines (including nursing, pre-medicine and pre-dentistry) as defined by the Commission on Higher Education. Enrollment in a minor does not meet the requirements of an eligible degree program for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement. 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 Web site.

N. “Eligible high school” is defined as a public, private, charter, virtual, Montessori, or Magnet high school located within South Carolina, an approved home school program as defined in relevant State Statute

(Sections 59-65-40, 45, and 47) or a preparatory high school located outside of the State while the student is a dependent of a legal resident of South Carolina who has custody or pays child support and college expenses of the dependent high school student in accordance with Section 59-112-10. A "preparatory high school" (out-of-state) is defined as a public or private school recognized by the state in which the school is located to offer curricula through the twelfth grade and prepares students for college entrance.

O. ~~"Early awards" is defined as a period determined by CHE to apply for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship. Application must be made through the students' high school. This period is generally from the end of the student's junior year (3rd year in high school) through April of the student's senior year (4th year in high school).~~ "Early awards" is defined as a period determined by the Commission during which eligible high school seniors may apply for an Early Award under the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program. Students shall submit the official Palmetto Fellows Scholarship application in accordance with procedures established by the Commission.

P. "Early graduate" is defined as a student who graduates mid-year their senior year.

Q. "Eligible institution" is defined as a South Carolina two-year or four-year public or independent postsecondary, degree-granting institution.

R. "Felonies" are defined as crimes classified under State statute (Section 16-1-10) for which the punishment in federal or state law and typically requires imprisonment for more than one year.

S. "Fifth year" is defined as the ninth or tenth consecutive term of undergraduate coursework in an approved five-year bachelor's program. The fifth year is based on the student's date of initial college enrollment after graduation from high school.

T. "First/freshman year" is defined as the first or second consecutive term of undergraduate coursework following high school graduation.

U. "For graduation purposes" is defined as any grade or credit hour that the home institution requires in accordance with their policies and procedures for graduation of the student, including electives and additional coursework.

V. "Fourth year" is defined as the seventh or eighth consecutive term of undergraduate coursework. The fourth year is based on the student's date of initial college enrollment after graduation from high school.

W. "Full-time student" shall mean a student who has matriculated into a program of study leading to the first year certificate program, first two-year diploma program, first associate degree, first bachelor's degree, first approved five-year bachelor's degree or a program of study that is structured so as not to require a bachelor's degree and leads to a graduate degree and who enrolls full-time, usually fifteen credit hours for the fall and fifteen credit hours for the spring term. In order for the student to be eligible for Scholarship disbursement, the student must be enrolled full-time at the home institution as stipulated by Title IV Regulations, except that credit hours may not include remedial coursework or continuing education coursework. Eligible Palmetto Fellows may prorate their award amount for the term of graduation (see section 62-330.B.).

X. "Gift aid" is defined as scholarships and grants that do not nor will not under any circumstance require repayment, and excludes any self-help aid such as student loans and work-study.

Y. "Home institution" is defined as the independent or public institution where the student is currently enrolled as a full-time, degree-seeking student and may be eligible for financial aid at the same institution.

Z. “Independent institutions” are defined, for the purposes of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement Programs, as those two-year and four-year institutions eligible to participate in the South Carolina Tuition Grants Program as defined in accordance with Section 59-113-50; Chapter 113 of Title 59 of the 1976 Code, which stipulates that an “independent institution of higher learning means any independent eleemosynary junior or senior college in South Carolina whose major campus and headquarters are located within South Carolina and which is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools; or an independent bachelor’s level institution which was incorporated in its original charter in 1962, was granted a license to operate in 1997 by the Commission on Higher Education, has continued to maintain a campus in South Carolina, and is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, or a not-for-profit institution headquartered in South Carolina and accredited by the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges. Institutions whose sole purpose is religious or theological training or the granting of professional degrees do not meet the definition of ‘public or independent institutions’ for purpose of this charter”. ~~Two year independent institutions are not eligible to participate in the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program.~~

AA. “Ineligible degree program” is defined for the purposes of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement as any degree program that is not on the Commission’s posted list of eligible degree programs.

BB. ~~“Late awards” is defined as a period determined by CHE for high school seniors to apply for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship. Application must be made through the students’ high school. This period is generally from May through June of the academic year.~~ “Late awards” is defined as a period determined by CHE during which eligible high school seniors may apply for a Late Award under the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program. Students shall submit the official Palmetto Fellows Scholarship application in accordance with procedures established by CHE.

CC. “Lawful Presence” is defined as individuals who are US citizens, permanent residents, or non-US citizens and non-permanent residents who are legally present in the US. When verifying the lawful presence of an individual, institutional personnel shall not attempt to independently verify the immigration status of any alien, but shall verify any alien’s immigration status with the federal government pursuant to 8 USC Section 1373(c). Only those individuals whose lawful presence in the US has been verified prior to initial college enrollment may receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement.

DD. “Military mobilization” is defined as a situation in which the U.S. Department of Defense orders ~~service members~~ of the United States Armed Forces to active duty away from their normal duty assignment during a time of war or national emergency. ~~Service members include: 1) active duty and reserve members in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard, and; 2) members of the Army and Air National Guard.~~ For purposes of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship program, military mobilization shall also include periods of basic combat training and advanced individual training.

EE. “Misdemeanor offenses” are defined as crimes classified under State statute (Section 16-1-100), less serious than felonies, and are typically punishable by fine or imprisonment for less than one year. A complete listing is located under Title 16 of State statute. Examples of alcohol and/or drug-related misdemeanor offenses in South Carolina include, but are not limited to, possession of alcohol while under the age of 21, possession of marijuana/illegal drugs, open container, transfer of alcohol to persons under 21, providing false information as to age (fake identification), etc.

FF. “Multi-handicapped student” shall be defined as a student who, in addition to being visually or hearing impaired, has at least one additional disabling condition that qualifies the student to receive specialized postsecondary education.

GG. “Palmetto Fellow” is defined as a student awarded the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship during his/her senior year of high school and continues to meet all eligibility requirements to receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship. A Palmetto Fellow who is not awarded any Palmetto Fellows Scholarship funds due to the cost of attendance being met by other sources of financial aid will still be classified as a Palmetto Fellow.

HH. “Program of study that is structured so as not to require a bachelor’s degree” shall be defined as a program of study that is structured so as not to require a bachelor’s degree for acceptance into the program and leads to a graduate degree, which will be the student’s first academic degree awarded, as defined by the U.S. Department of Education. Students are eligible for a maximum of eight terms as long as all other eligibility criteria are met and the program is approved by the Commission on Higher Education. Students must maintain their undergraduate status each academic term, with the exception of students enrolled in the following programs: 1) Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies at the Medical University of South Carolina; 2) Doctor of Pharmacy at the Medical University of South Carolina; 3) Doctor of Pharmacy at the University of South Carolina; and 4) Doctor of Pharmacy at Presbyterian College. Students who have been awarded a bachelor’s or graduate degree are not eligible for funding. All programs must be approved by CHE for the purposes of enhancement eligibility.

II. “Public institutions” are defined, for the purposes of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement Programs, as those two-year and four-year institutions of higher learning as defined in Chapter 103 of Title 59 of the 1976 Code, which stipulates “public higher education shall mean any state supported postsecondary educational institution and shall include technical and comprehensive educational institutions.”

JJ. “Reapplication student” is defined as a student who applied for and was offered the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship as a senior in high school, but declined the award to take a Gap year or attend an out-of-state, four-year institution. Students taking a Gap year (see section 62-310.SS.) must enroll in an eligible South Carolina institution no later than the fall term one year immediately following high school graduation and make a request to CHE for reapplication for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship. During the Gap year, the student cannot attend any institution of higher education or earn any college credit hours or they forfeit their Palmetto Fellows Scholarship. If the student was offered the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship as a senior in high school, but declined the award to attend an out-of-state institution at any time during the eight eligible terms immediately following high school graduation, after attending an out-of-state four-year institution, the student must return to South Carolina, enroll in an eligible South Carolina four-year institution, and make a request to CHE for reapplication for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship.

KK. “Remedial coursework” shall be defined as sub-collegiate level preparatory courses in English, mathematics, reading or any other course deemed remedial by the institution where the course is taken.

LL. “Second year” is defined as the third or fourth consecutive term of full-time, undergraduate coursework. The second year is based on the student’s date of initial college enrollment after graduation from high school.

MM. “South Carolina resident” is defined as an individual who satisfies the requirements of residency in accordance with the state of South Carolina’s Statute for Tuition and Fees, Section 59-112-10, and all related guidelines and regulations promulgated by the Commission on Higher Education as determined by the institutional residency officer each academic year. A student must be considered a South Carolina resident at the time of high school graduation, and at the time of initial college enrollment, in order to receive a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship.

NN. “Satisfactory academic progress in a declared major” is defined for the purposes of the Scholarship Enhancement as the progress required by the institution and academic department in which the student is enrolled as a full-time, degree-seeking student. Students must meet all requirements for satisfactory academic progress toward degree completion in their declared major as established by the policies of both the institution and the declared major in which the student is enrolled to meet the requirements of satisfactory academic progress.

OO. “Substantially deviates” shall be defined, for the purposes of reviewing out-of-state preparatory high school grading scales, as being less than equivalent to the current South Carolina Uniform Grading Policy.

PP. “Transfer student” is defined, for the purposes of the Program, as a student who has changed full-time enrollment from one eligible independent or public institution to another eligible independent or public institution.

QQ. “Transient student” is defined as a student enrolled in a non-matriculated status, which means he/she is granted temporary admission to earn credit hours that will transfer back to his/her home institution toward a degree. A transient student is not eligible to receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship or the Scholarship Enhancement unless the student is participating in a program that is both approved and accepted as full-time transfer credit by the home institution.

RR. “Third year” is defined as the fifth or sixth consecutive term of undergraduate coursework. The third year is based on the student’s date of initial college enrollment after graduation from high school.

SS. “Gap Year” is defined as a period of time immediately following high school graduation, including a semester or academic year (Fall and Spring semesters) taken by the student as a break between high school graduation and the date of initial college enrollment. The Gap year must be taken immediately following high school graduation and does not constitute a break in enrollment.

62-315. Initial Eligibility for Palmetto Fellows Scholarship.

A. In order to qualify for consideration for a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, a student must:

1. Meet the eligibility criteria stipulated under the “Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Application” Section;

2. Be enrolled as a senior in an eligible high school;

3. Be classified as a South Carolina resident at the time of initial college enrollment;

4. Be a U.S. citizen or a lawful permanent resident that meets the definition of an eligible non-citizen under State Residency Statutes whose lawful presence in the US has been verified at the time of enrollment at the institution. When verifying the lawful presence of an individual, institutional personnel shall not attempt to independently verify the immigration status of any alien, but shall verify any alien’s immigration status with the federal government pursuant to 8 USC Section 1373(c). A student must be a legal permanent resident of the United States before being considered to be a South Carolina resident;

5. Be seriously considering attending, have applied, or have been accepted for admission to an eligible two-year or four-year degree-granting independent or public institution in South Carolina as a first-time, full-time, degree-seeking student; and

6. Certify that he/she has never been adjudicated delinquent, convicted or pled guilty or *nolo contendere* to any felonies and any second or subsequent alcohol, or drug related offenses under the laws of this or any other state or under the laws of the United States by submitting a signed affidavit each academic year to the home institution testifying to the fact, except that a high school or college student who has been adjudicated delinquent, convicted, or pled guilty or *nolo contendere* of a second or subsequent alcohol or drug related misdemeanor offense is only ineligible the next academic year of enrollment in an eligible independent or public institution after the date of the adjudication, conviction or plea. If the adjudication, conviction, or plea occurs during the academic year after the student has already submitted a signed affidavit to the home institution, the student will continue to be eligible for the remainder of that academic year. However, the student will be ineligible the following academic year of enrollment. If a student completes a pretrial intervention program and subsequently has his/her record expunged, the conviction will not affect the student's eligibility;

7. Submit the official Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Application by the established deadline(s) and comply with all the directions contained therein.

B. The high schools shall ensure that all students meeting the eligibility criteria are given the opportunity to be included in the applicant pool.

C. A student who graduates immediately after the high school sophomore year is eligible to apply for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, providing that the student meets all eligibility requirements as described in the "Initial Eligibility" Section and providing that the student is entering an eligible independent or public four-year institution no later than the fall term one year immediately following high school graduation.

D. A student who graduates in December/January of the high school senior year (considered an early graduate) is eligible to apply for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship after the completion of the junior year but prior to graduating high school, provided that the student meets all eligibility requirements as described in the "Initial Eligibility" Section and provided that the student is entering an eligible independent or public four-year institution no later than the Spring term one year immediately following high school graduation. Early graduates must be certified by the high school principal that they have met the South Carolina graduation requirements. Students who graduate high school mid-year are unable to use rank as an eligibility criterion. The South Carolina UGP GPA, as well as the high school graduation date, must be printed on the official final high school transcript. Students must enroll full-time continuously at a four-year institution no later than the Spring term one year immediately upon high school graduation. Early graduates who enroll mid-year (spring term) and are awarded the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship through the Early Graduation process will officially begin their initial college enrollment. In order to receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship the next academic year for a student who enrolls mid-year, the student must earn a minimum of fifteen (15) credit hours and a 3.0 ~~cumulative institutional~~ State Scholarship GPA by the end of the academic year.

E. Students cannot earn eligibility for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship after high school graduation. All students must apply and be awarded during the high school senior year.

F. Students receiving the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship are not eligible for the LIFE Scholarship, SC HOPE Scholarship or Lottery Tuition Assistance within the same academic year.

G. Any student who attempts to obtain or obtains the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship through means of a willfully false statement or failure to reveal any material fact, condition or circumstances affecting eligibility will be subject to applicable civil or criminal penalties, including loss of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship.

62-318. Eligibility for Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement.

A. To be eligible for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement each academic year, a student must be:

1. A Palmetto Fellow at the time the Scholarship Enhancement is disbursed;
2. Enrolled full-time, degree-seeking in a declared major in an eligible degree program;
3. Making satisfactory academic progress toward completion of his/her declared major; and
4. Enrolled in the second year, third year, fourth year, or fifth year (if enrolled in a Commission approved five-year bachelor's degree) at an eligible four-year independent or public institution.

B. All students not majoring in education-related disciplines must successfully complete a total of at least fourteen (14) credit hours of instruction in mathematics or life and physical science courses within an approved major, in any combination, by the end of the student's first year of enrollment in college (based on the student's initial date of college enrollment). ~~For the purpose of meeting the fourteen credit hour requirement at the end of the student's first year, exempted credit hours (AP, CLEP, IB, etc.), credit hours earned while in high school (dual enrollment, credit hours earned during the summer session immediately prior to the student's date of initial college enrollment, Pass/Fail courses with a grade of "Pass" (only), International Baccalaureate (IB) courses and Advanced Placement (AP) courses in mathematics, life and physical sciences and accounting, taken in high school in which the student scored a three or more on the advanced placement test and received college credit may be used. However, remedial coursework and continuing education coursework cannot be used to meet the fourteen credit hour requirement.~~ For purposes of meeting the fourteen (14) credit hour requirement, credit hours earned before the student's initial date of college enrollment, including Advanced Placement (AP), College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and dual enrollment credit, as well as Pass/Fail courses with a grade of "Pass" (only), Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory courses with a grade of "Satisfactory" (only), and credit hours earned during the summer term immediately preceding the student's initial date of college enrollment, may be used to satisfy the fourteen (14) credit hour requirement. The Commission shall maintain a list of eligible courses by CIP Code for determining coursework that satisfies the fourteen (14) credit hour requirement. Remedial coursework, continuing education coursework, non-degree coursework, and credit hours earned after the end of the student's first year of college enrollment shall not be used to satisfy the fourteen (14) credit hour requirement.

C. Students who initially enroll in college mid-year (i.e., spring term) as a first year student and meet the requirements under Section 62-318 may be eligible to receive a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement at the beginning of the spring term of the next academic year (i.e., beginning with the third consecutive term of full-time enrollment based on initial date of college enrollment). A student who initially enrolls mid-year (i.e., spring term) must earn a minimum of fifteen (15) credit hours and a 3.0 ~~cumulative institutional~~ State Scholarship GPA by the end of the student's first academic year to be eligible to receive ~~to be awarded~~ a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship the following academic year. ~~A student must earn a 3.0 cumulative institutional GPA and a minimum of 30 credit hours each subsequent year of enrollment to receive a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement.~~ For all subsequent academic years, the student must satisfy the renewal requirements established in Section 62-335 to remain eligible to receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement.

D. For the 2024-25 academic year, a resident student who is at least in the second year of attendance, based on initial college enrollment, at an eligible four-year public or independent institution of higher learning in this State, who is majoring in science, mathematics, accounting, or an education program that

leads to certification as defined by the Commission on Higher Education, and who is receiving a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship for the current year, shall receive an additional Palmetto Fellows Scholarship stipend equal to the cost of attendance after applying all other scholarships or grants, not to exceed two thousand five hundred dollars each year for no more than three additional years of instruction, including their sophomore year, if enrolled in a four-year degree program, or for not more than four additional years of instruction, including their sophomore year, if enrolled in an approved five-year degree program or a 3 plus 2 program. To receive the additional Palmetto Fellows Scholarship stipend each year, the student must receive the underlying Palmetto Fellows Scholarship for that year and must be making acceptable progress each year toward receiving a degree in their education major.

E. All education majors receiving the enhancement/stipend based on their status as an education major must enter into a contractual agreement, including a default provision, that stipulates that the stipend recipient shall upon graduation work in a South Carolina public school for at least one school year for every year the stipend is received. A third party may be used for purposes of processing the contractual agreement.

F. Any student who attempts to obtain or obtains the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement through means of a willfully false statement or failure to reveal any material fact, condition or circumstances affecting eligibility will be subject to applicable civil or criminal penalties, including loss of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement.

G. The Commission on Higher Education shall annually communicate with high school guidance counselors regarding the list of qualifying majors in this section.

62-320. Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Application.

A. The Commission on Higher Education will send information regarding the application process to all South Carolina high schools, home school associations and district superintendents. High schools and/or home school associations that do not receive information regarding the application process from the Commission on Higher Education by the beginning of each application process must contact the Commission for information. ~~It is the sole responsibility of the high schools, home schools, home school associations, and district superintendents to contact CHE regarding the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship program including the application process.~~ High schools, home schools, home school associations, and district superintendents are responsible for obtaining current information regarding the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program and application procedures from the Commission. High school officials will identify students who meet the specified eligibility criteria by each established deadline. ~~High school officials must submit applications (both electronic and paper documentation) no later than the established deadline(s) along with the appropriate signatures, official transcripts and test score verification to the Commission on Higher Education. High school officials must certify each eligible applicant's signature form.~~ Students shall submit the official Palmetto Fellows Scholarship application in accordance with procedures established by the Commission. High school officials shall submit the required supporting documentation, including official transcripts, class rank, test score verification, and any other documentation required by the Commission, by the established deadline(s). Students who are enrolled at out-of-state high schools are personally responsible for contacting the Commission on Higher Education about the application process and must adhere to the same established deadline(s).

B. ~~The high schools and home school associations must submit a list to the Commission on Higher Education indicating the names of all students who meet the eligibility criteria at their high school. The list should indicate whether the student is submitting a completed application or declining the opportunity to apply. If the student declines the opportunity to apply, the high school will submit a form for each of these students, signed by both the student and the parent/guardian and indicating the reason(s) for not submitting an application. Students who decline to apply for the Scholarship forfeit any future eligibility under this~~

~~Program.~~ High schools, home school associations, and district superintendents shall review the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship applicant status reports provided by the Commission during each application cycle to verify that eligible students have been identified and that application records are complete. Schools shall promptly notify the Commission of any discrepancies, omitted eligible students, or if they are not receiving the applicant status reports. Schools shall submit all required supporting documentation by the established deadline(s) in accordance with procedures established by the Commission. Students who fail to apply for the Scholarship forfeit any future eligibility under this Program.

C. Applications for early awards must be submitted to the Commission on Higher Education for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship by the date established each academic year. Students must meet one of the following set of academic criteria in order to be eligible to apply for the early awards (students cannot use the early awards criteria to apply during the late awards):

1. Score at least 1200 on the SAT or an equivalent ACT score as determined by the Commission through the test administration date as determined by CHE of the senior year; earn a minimum 3.50 cumulative GPA on the current South Carolina Uniform Grading Policy (UGP) at the end of the junior year; and rank in the top six percent of the class at the end of either the sophomore or the junior year; or

2. The alternate criteria of a score at least 1400 on the SAT or an equivalent ACT score as determined by the Commission through the test administration date as determined by CHE of the senior year and earn a minimum 4.00 cumulative GPA on the UGP at the end of the junior year, without regard to class rank.

3. High schools or home school associations that do not rank as an official policy; or high schools whose grading policy deviates from the current South Carolina Uniform Grading Policy and do not convert the graduating class grades to the current South Carolina UGP to determine class rank, must use the alternate criteria of meeting the academic requirements for the Palmetto Fellow Scholarship.

4. High schools or home school associations shall not use ranking for the sole purpose of obtaining eligibility for the state scholarships.

D. Applications for late awards must be submitted to the Commission on Higher Education for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship by the date established ~~in June each academic year~~ by the Commission each academic year. Students must meet one of the following set of academic criteria in order to be eligible to apply for the late awards:

1. Score at least 1200 on the SAT or an equivalent ACT score as determined by the Commission through the test administration date as determined by CHE of the senior year; earn a minimum 3.50 cumulative GPA on the UGP at the end of the senior year; and rank in the top six percent of the class at the end of the sophomore, junior or senior year; or

2. Score at least 1400 on the SAT or an equivalent ACT score as determined by the Commission through the test administration date as determined by CHE of the senior year and earn a minimum 4.00 cumulative GPA on the UGP at the end of the senior year, without regard to class rank.

3. High schools or home school associations that do not rank as a policy; or high schools whose grading policy deviates from the current South Carolina Uniform Grading Policy and that do not convert the graduating class grades to the current South Carolina UGP to determine class rank, must use the alternate criteria of meeting the academic requirements for the Palmetto Fellow Scholarship.

4. High schools or home school associations shall not use ranking for the sole purpose of obtaining eligibility for the state scholarships.

E. Students must have official verification that they earned the requisite score on the SAT or an equivalent ACT score. In order to determine the minimum composite score for the SAT, students must use the highest Math score combined with the highest Evidence-Based Reading and Writing score. However, students cannot use the Essay subsection score to meet the minimum SAT score requirement. For the purposes of meeting the ACT test score requirement, the student must use the highest English, Math, and Reading scores, which may come from different test administrations. A Science score may be included to improve the composite score but is not required.

F. Grade point averages must be based on the current South Carolina Uniform Grading Policy, reported with at least two decimal places, and may not be rounded up. The South Carolina UGP GPA and class rank (if school/association officially ranks as a policy) must be printed on an official final end of year high school transcript, which must also include a uniform date of calculation as determined by the Commission on Higher Education. The graduation date must also be printed on the final end of senior year high school transcript. No coursework completed after the date of uniform calculation can be included in the end of the year GPA. ~~Student must meet the scholarship eligibility criteria within four years of high school coursework.~~ Final high school GPAs shall be based on the four-year period of high school attendance, with the exception of Carnegie Units earned prior to high school.

G. Class rank must be based on the South Carolina Uniform Grading Policy using diploma candidates only. Class rank is determined at the end of the sophomore, junior and senior years (not the beginning of the next school year) before including any summer school coursework or including any students who transfer into your high school after the school year ended in May/June. Students cannot be removed from the class because they did not meet the eligibility criteria to apply, declined to apply, are not residents of the State, do not meet citizenship requirements, plan to attend college out-of-state, etc. The class rank information must include all students who attended your high school that school year. Only one student may occupy each place in class rank. The rank policy and rank policy information must be available to parents, students, colleges, and universities, and the Commission on Higher Education in publication form to include a school's website, student/parent handbook, and/or school profile. This language must include the ranking policy in place at the school/association. The ranking policy should be consistent in all places where the rank policy is published and is the same information disseminated to parents, students, colleges/universities, and the Commission. The South Carolina UGP GPA and class rank (if school/association officially ranks as a policy) must be printed on an official final end of year high school transcript, which must also include a uniform date of calculation as determined by the Commission on Higher Education. The graduation date must also be printed on the final end of senior year high school transcript.

H. The number of students included in the top six percent of the class will be the next whole number if the top six percent is not already a whole number. For example, a class size of 185 students would include the top twelve students since 11.1 rounds up to twelve. For those high schools that officially rank as a policy (see section 62-320.G.) with fewer than twenty students in the class, the top two students (students ranked as number one and two) shall be considered for the Scholarship regardless of whether they rank in the top six percent of the class. These students must meet all other eligibility criteria.

I. In order to apply for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship using rank as one of the eligibility criteria, home school students must be a member of an approved home school program (as defined in relevant State Statute) that provides an official class rank for their members. All high schools (see section 62-310.N.) and home school associations must submit a rank report on official school/association letterhead that includes the class rank and GPA based on the current South Carolina Uniform Grading Policy for all students in the applicant's class. If a student is unable to obtain rank verification, he/she may also be eligible to apply using the alternative criteria of scoring at least 1400 on the SAT (or an equivalent ACT score as determined by

the Commission-) and earning a minimum 4.00 cumulative GPA on the South Carolina UGP, without regard to class rank. These students must meet all other eligibility criteria. The official class rank must be sent to CHE by the established deadline each academic year.

J. For schools or home school associations that do not rank as an official policy, students must use the alternate criteria to meet eligibility requirements for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship.

K. For the purposes of meeting the rank criterion, the existing high school rank of a South Carolina resident attending an out-of-state high school may be used, provided it is calculated pursuant to a state-approved, standardized grading scale at the respective out-of-state high school. If the Commission on Higher Education determines that a state-approved standardized grading scale substantially deviates from the South Carolina Uniform Grading Scale, the state-approved, standardized grading scale shall not be used to meet the eligibility requirements for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship. The school counselor from the out-of-state preparatory school also has the option of converting the cumulative GPAs of all students in the applicant's class to the current South Carolina UGP to determine if the student ranks within the top six percent of the class and must provide a ranking report that identifies all students in the applicant's class and their respective GPA's based on the South Carolina UGP. When converting scores to the South Carolina UGP, weighting must adhere to the South Carolina UGP (i.e. honors no more than .50 and AP/IB no more than 1.0). In addition, scores/grades must correspond to the South Carolina UGP. For example, if a student earned a 90 in an honors class, the conversion of the scores/grades must be equivalent to the points assigned according to the current South Carolina UGP. To be considered equivalent, the out-of-state school's grading scale must adhere to the following minimum requirements:

1. Must include all courses carrying Carnegie units, including units earned at the middle school and high school level;

2. To be equivalent to an "A" letter grade, the numerical average must be ≥ 90 ; to be equivalent to a "B" letter grade the numerical average must be between 80 and 89; to be equivalent to a "C" letter grade the numerical average must be between 70 and 79; to be equivalent to a "D" letter grade the numerical average must be between 60 and 69; and to be equivalent to a "F" letter grade the numerical average must be between 51 and 59 (if a course with a numerical average of < 51 is considered passing by the high school the student earned the grade, then a 65 numerical average should be given);

3. Cannot add more than one half (.50) additional quality point for honors courses; cannot add more than one additional quality point for dual enrollment (DE) courses, Advanced Placement (AP) courses, and standard level International Baccalaureate (IB) courses; and, cannot add more than two additional quality points for higher level IB courses;

4. Must classify all other courses as College Preparatory if they are not already classified as honors, DE, AP or IB. For a class to be classified as honors, the course must be in English, mathematics, science or social studies or be the third/fourth level for all other content areas; and

5. If no numerical average is available, all letter grades must be converted to the equivalent numerical average based on the following: all "A" letter grades must be converted to a 95 numerical average, all "B" letter grades must be converted to a 85 numerical average, all "C" letter grades must be converted to a 75 numerical average, all "D" letter grades must be converted to a 65 numerical average, and all "F" letter grades must be converted a 50 numerical average.

L. Students who attend out-of-state preparatory high school may also be eligible to apply by using the alternative criteria of scoring at least 1400 on the SAT (or an equivalent ACT score as determined by the Commission) and earning a minimum 4.00 cumulative GPA on the current South Carolina Uniform Grading

Policy. The student's school counselor must convert the student's grades to the UGP to determine if the student meets the GPA requirement. These students must meet all other eligibility criteria, including South Carolina residency requirements.

M. Students submitted for the late award will need to make arrangements for tuition and fee payments as a student will not be notified of their PFS status in enough time to meet any institutionally established payment deadlines.

62-325. Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Selection Process.

A. The Commission on Higher Education will notify students of their selection as a Palmetto Fellow along with the terms and conditions of the award.

B. Students selected to receive ~~who have met the academic requirements of the~~ Palmetto Fellows Scholarship must ~~return a form to the Commission that~~ designate an eligible two-year or four-year public or independent or public institution in accordance with procedures established by the Commission by the date established by the Commission ~~which they plan to enroll by the date established by the Commission on Higher Education~~. The Palmetto Fellows Scholarship will only be awarded to those students who have a lawful presence in the United States and have been identified as a South Carolina resident in accordance with the state of South Carolina's Statute for Tuition and Fees, Section 59-112-10, at the time of initial college enrollment.

C. Visually impaired, hearing impaired or multi-handicapped students who qualify for the Scholarship may use the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship to attend a two-year or four-year out-of-state institution that specializes in educating students with their impairment upon receiving prior approval from the Commission on Higher Education. The Commission on Higher Education shall make the final decision whether an out-of-state institution specializes in the postsecondary education of visually impaired, hearing impaired or multi-handicapped students.

D. The Commission on Higher Education shall ensure that there is equitable minority participation in the Program.

62-330. Policies and Procedures for Awarding the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement.

A. The institution will identify award amounts, which cannot exceed:

1. \$6,700 the first/freshman year and \$7,500 for the second year, third year, fourth year and fifth year (if applicable) for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship; ~~Eligible Palmetto Fellows may prorate their award amount for the term of graduation.~~

2. \$2,500 for the second year, third year, fourth year and fifth year (if applicable) for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement if enrolled in an eligible four-year degree program or for not more than four years of instruction if enrolled in an eligible approved five-year degree program. ~~Eligible Palmetto Fellows may prorate their award amount for the term of graduation.~~

3. For mid-year initial college enrollment (i.e. a student who starts college in the spring term), a student may receive a maximum of \$3,350 for the spring term. Beginning the second academic year (i.e. the fall term) a student may receive up to \$7,500 for the second year, third year, fourth year and fifth academic year (if applicable) for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship; ~~Eligible Palmetto Fellows may prorate their award amount for the term of graduation.~~

B. Half shall be awarded during the fall term and half during the spring term. Palmetto Fellows Scholarships and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancements are to be used only toward payment for cost-of-attendance as established by Title IV Regulations with modifications set forth in D below for the academic year the award is made at the designated independent or public institution. The maximum amount awarded shall not exceed the cost-of-attendance as established by Title IV Regulations for any academic year. During the final term of attendance, the institution may prorate the Palmetto Fellow Scholarship and the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement award amount, for the number of credit hours attempted for the current term of attendance, which must be the term of graduation for the student. Proration will be based on 12 credit hours.

C. Students who change their major from an ineligible degree program to an eligible degree program during the same academic year cannot be awarded the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement until the next academic year. Additionally, students who change their major from an eligible degree program to an ineligible degree program during the same academic year will retain their Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement eligibility for the remainder of the current academic year.

D. Charges for room and board are to be limited as follows:

1. Room charges shall not exceed the average cost of on-campus residential housing; and
2. Board charges shall not exceed the cost of the least expensive campus meal plan that includes 21 meals per week.

E. In determining the amount awarded for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement, all other sources of gift aid, including federal, State, private and institutional funds, must be applied to the unmet cost-of-attendance before calculating the Scholarship and Enhancement amounts and making the award. Adjustments to the financial aid package will be made to the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement in accordance with prescribed Title IV regulations in order to prevent an over-award.

F. Although a student may be named a Palmetto Fellow, the student may not receive a monetary award, if the award when combined with all other sources of gift aid would cause the student to receive financial assistance in excess of the student's cost-of-attendance as defined by Title IV regulations and the guidelines contained herein.

G. Eligible two-year and four-year independent and public institutions will notify students of their award along with the terms and conditions.

H. Effective Fall 2008, Section 59-101-430 (A), Chapter 101, Title 59 of the 1976 Code states that unlawful aliens are prohibited from attending South Carolina Public institutions of higher learning. This does apply to students who are currently enrolled, as well as new enrollees. In accordance of this law, institutions must institute a process that verifies an individual's lawful presence in the United States. This process must verify any alien's immigration status with the federal government. Students receiving the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement must be verified. Any student that is not verified and documented by the institution will not receive the Scholarship.

I. All eligible independent and public institutions that participate in the program must verify the lawful presence in the US of any student who receives a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement prior to awarding the Scholarship to the student. When verifying the lawful presence of an individual, institutional personnel shall not attempt to independently verify the immigration

status of any alien, but shall verify any alien's immigration status with the federal government pursuant to 8 USC Section 1373(c).

J. The institution must retain annual paper or electronic documentation for each award to include at a minimum:

1. Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR) or affidavit documenting that the student is not in default or does not owe a refund on any state or federal financial aid

2. Affidavit documenting that the student has never been convicted of any felonies and has not been convicted of any second or subsequent alcohol/drug-related misdemeanor offense within the past academic year as stated under "Initial Eligibility" and "Duration and Renewal of Awards" Sections

3. Award notification

4. Institutional disbursements to student

5. Verification student is not in default and does not owe a refund or repayment

6. Student's residency status and citizenship status

7. Enrollment status and degree-seeking status

8. Verification of the State Scholarship ~~cumulative~~ GPA and annual credit hours requirement for renewal purposes

9. Verification from the institutional Disability Services Provider of student's disability and approval of reduced course-load requirement (if appropriate)

10. Military mobilization orders (if appropriate)

11. Verification student met fourteen credit hour requirement at the end of the first year of college enrollment for the 2007-08 freshman class and thereafter (Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement purposes only)

12. Verification from academic department of enrollment in a declared major in an eligible degree program (Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement purposes only).

13. Verification from the institution that lawful presence in the US, and has been verified.

14. Collect certification from education majors receiving enhancement/stipend monies of their completed contractual work agreement for the stipend.

K. It is the institution's responsibility to ensure that only eligible students receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement.

L. The student shall be required to provide a state recognized unique identifier in order for the institution to award, disburse, and/or transfer the student's state scholarship and/or grant to an eligible institution.

62-335. Duration and Renewal of Awards.

~~A. The Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement where applicable shall be initially awarded for one academic year. The institution shall adjust the amount of the Scholarship and Enhancement awards during the academic year in the event of a change in the student's eligibility.~~ A Palmetto Fellows Scholarship shall be awarded for one academic year and may be renewed annually, provided the student continues to meet all applicable eligibility and renewal requirements. Students selected as Palmetto Fellows must initially enroll at an eligible two-year or four-year public or independent institution no later than the fall term one academic year immediately following high school graduation, unless otherwise authorized by statute or these regulations. Students must remain continuously enrolled at an eligible institution to retain scholarship eligibility, except as otherwise provided by these regulations. A student may receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship for:

1. No more than two consecutive terms toward the first one-year certificate or diploma program;
2. No more than four consecutive terms, based on the student's initial date of college enrollment, toward the first associate degree or two-year diploma program;
3. No more than eight consecutive terms, based on the student's initial date of college enrollment, toward the first bachelor's degree or a program of study that is structured so as not to require a bachelor's degree and leads directly to a graduate degree; or
4. No more than ten consecutive terms, based on the student's initial date of college enrollment, toward the first Commission-approved five-year bachelor's degree program.

Students who have been awarded their first bachelor's degree or graduate degree are no longer eligible to receive a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship.

~~B. Students selected as Palmetto Fellows must enter an eligible two year or four year independent or public institution no later than the fall term one year immediately following high school graduation. Students must be continuously enrolled at an eligible two year or four year institution. Students with a break in continuous full time enrollment at a two year or four year institution will forfeit the scholarship. Students must meet the following criteria to renew eligibility for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship:~~

1. Continue to be enrolled and continuously enrolled at an eligible two-year or four-year public or independent institution as a full-time, degree-seeking student at the time of scholarship disbursement;
2. Earn at least a 3.0 State Scholarship GPA by the end of each academic year;
3. Meet the annual credit hour requirement by the end of each academic year based on the student's initial date of college enrollment;
4. Certify annually that the student is not in default and does not owe a refund or repayment on any federal or state financial aid program;
5. Certify annually that the student remains eligible under the felony and alcohol/drug-related misdemeanor provisions established in Section 62-315.

~~C. A Palmetto Fellows Scholarship may be renewed annually for no more than a total of two terms towards a one year certificate or diploma program, or four terms (based on the date of initial college enrollment) toward the first associate degree or two year diploma program, or eight terms (based on the date of initial college enrollment) toward the first bachelor's degree or a program of study that is structured so as not to require a bachelor's degree and leads to a graduate degree or for no more than a total of ten~~

terms (based on the date of initial college enrollment) toward the first approved five-year bachelor's degree. The Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement may not be awarded for no more than a total of six terms (based on the date of initial college enrollment) toward the first bachelor's degree or a program of study that is structured so as not to require a bachelor's degree and leads to a graduate degree or for no more than a total of eight terms (based on the date of initial college enrollment) toward the first approved five-year bachelor's degree. Students who have already been awarded their first bachelor or graduate degree are not eligible to receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship or the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement. During the final term of attendance, the institution may prorate the Palmetto Fellow Scholarship and the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement award amount, for the number of credit hours attempted for the current term of attendance, which must be the term of graduation for the student. Proration will be based on 12 credit hours (see section 62-330.B). Continued eligibility for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship for the following academic year shall be determined after all coursework completed during the academic year, including the trailing Maymester and summer terms, has been evaluated. Students who have not met the continued eligibility requirements by the end of the spring term may earn additional credit hours, improve their State Scholarship GPA, or both, through Maymester or summer coursework to satisfy the renewal requirements. Final renewal eligibility shall be determined at the conclusion of the academic year after all coursework has been evaluated.

D. ~~The institution is responsible for obtaining institutional certification of each recipient's cumulative grade point average and annual credit hours for the purposes of determining eligibility for award renewal. For the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement, the institution must also obtain verification from the academic department of enrollment in a declared major in an eligible degree program.~~ Students who are initially eligible for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship upon high school graduation and who initially enroll in college mid-year (spring term) may be eligible to renew the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship for the following academic year if the student earns a minimum of fifteen (15) credit hours and a 3.0 State Scholarship GPA by the end of the academic year. For each subsequent academic year, the student must meet the annual credit hour requirement established in these regulations and maintain a minimum 3.0 State Scholarship GPA to renew the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship.

E. ~~By the end of the spring term each academic year, the institution must notify all Palmetto Fellows who have not met the continued eligibility requirements for the next academic year. The notification should include information regarding the student's ability to attend summer school in order to meet the continued eligibility requirements.~~ For purposes of renewing the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, students shall satisfy the annual credit hour requirement based on the student's initial date of college enrollment. A student shall be considered to have met the annual credit hour requirement by earning:

1. A minimum of thirty (30) credit hours (or the equivalent) by the end of the student's first academic year to enter the second year;

2. A minimum of sixty (60) credit hours (or the equivalent) by the end of the student's second academic year to enter the third year;

3. A minimum of ninety (90) credit hours (or the equivalent) by the end of the student's third academic year to enter the fourth year; or

4. A minimum of one hundred twenty (120) credit hours (or the equivalent) by the end of the student's fourth academic year to enter the fifth year of a Commission-approved five-year bachelor's degree program.

F. ~~The eligible two-year or four-year independent or public institution is responsible for reporting to the Commission on Higher Education credit hours earned at the home institution only. Transfer credit hours~~

~~cannot be reported by the home institution.~~ For purposes of determining continued eligibility, the annual credit hour requirement shall include all eligible credit hours earned by the end of the academic year at eligible institutions attended. Credit hours earned before high school graduation, including Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), dual enrollment, credit hours earned during the summer term immediately preceding the student's initial college enrollment, transfer credit accepted by the eligible institution, and academic credit hours earned while serving on active duty in the United States Armed Forces may be used to satisfy the annual credit hour requirement, provided the credit hours are placed on the student's official transcript by the institution at which they are earned or accepted. Remedial or developmental coursework, continuing education coursework, and non-degree coursework shall not be included in determining the annual credit hour requirement.

G. ~~In order to retain eligibility for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship after the initial year, the student must meet the following continued eligibility requirements:~~ To retain eligibility for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, a student must earn and maintain a minimum 3.0 State Scholarship GPA by the end of the academic year. The State Scholarship GPA shall be calculated in accordance with Section 62-336.

~~1. Enroll and be continuously enrolled at an eligible two-year or four-year public or independent institution as a full-time, degree-seeking student at the time of Scholarship disbursement;~~

~~— 2. Earn at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA at the home institution for graduation purposes by the end of each academic year;~~

~~— 3. Earn a minimum of thirty credit hours for graduation purposes by the end of each academic year. Exempted credit hours (such as AP, CLEP, etc.), credit hours 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;~~

~~— 4. Certify each academic year that he/she has not defaulted and does not owe a refund or repayment on any federal or state financial aid. If a student has an Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR) or its equivalent on file, the ISIR information will be used to verify default status or refund/repayment owed. Students who have not completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) must have an affidavit on file to verify that he/she is not in default and does not owe a refund or repayment on any federal or state financial aid, including the state grants/scholarships, Pell Grant, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, Federal Perkins or Stafford Loan; and~~

~~— 5. Certify each academic year that he/she has never been adjudicated delinquent, convicted or pled guilty or *nolo contendere* to any felonies and any second or subsequent alcohol/drug-related misdemeanor offenses under the laws of this or any other state or under the laws of the United States by submitting a signed affidavit to the home institution. However, a high school or college student who has been adjudicated delinquent, convicted, or pled guilty or *nolo contendere* of a second or subsequent alcohol or drug-related misdemeanor offense is only ineligible for the next academic year of enrollment at an eligible independent or public institution after the date of the adjudication, conviction or plea. If the adjudication, conviction or plea occurs during the academic year after the student has already submitted a signed affidavit to the institution, the student will continue to be eligible for the remainder of the academic year. However, the student will be ineligible for the Scholarship for the following academic year of enrollment. If a student completes a pretrial intervention program and his/her record is subsequently expunged, the charge will not affect Scholarship eligibility.~~

H. ~~In order to retain eligibility for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement, a student must:~~ At the end of the spring term each academic year, the institution must notify all Palmetto Fellows who have

not met the continued eligibility requirements for the following academic year, regardless of future enrollment. The notification should include information regarding the student's opportunity to enroll in Maymester or summer coursework in order to meet the continued eligibility requirements.

- ~~— 1. Be a Palmetto Fellow at the time the Scholarship Enhancement is disbursed;~~
- ~~— 2. Be enrolled and continuously enrolled at an eligible four-year public or independent institution as a full-time, degree-seeking student in a declared major in an eligible degree program;~~
- ~~— 3. Be making satisfactory academic progress toward completion of his/her declared major;~~
- ~~— 4. Be enrolled in the second year, third year, fourth year or fifth year (if enrolled in a Commission approved five-year bachelor's degree) at an eligible four-year independent or public institution; and~~
- ~~— 5. Successfully complete a total of at least fourteen credit hours of instruction in accounting, mathematics, or life and physical science courses within an approved major, in any combination by the end of the student's first year of enrollment in college (based on initial date of college enrollment). For the purpose of meeting the fourteen credit hour requirement at the end of the student's first year, exempted credit hours (AP, CLEP, IB, etc.), credit hours earned while in high school (dual enrollment), and credit hours earned during the summer session immediately prior to the student's date of initial college enrollment may be used. However, remedial coursework and continuing education coursework cannot be used to meet the fourteen credit hour requirement. Palmetto Fellows who were already enrolled in at least their second year in the 2007-2008 academic year only are not required to meet the fourteen credit hour requirement at the end of their first/freshman year.~~

~~I. Any student who attempts to obtain or obtains a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship or Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement through means of a willfully false statement or failure to reveal any material fact, condition, or circumstances affecting eligibility will be subject to applicable civil or criminal penalties, including loss of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement.~~ Students must meet the following criteria to retain continued eligibility for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement:

- 1. Continue to meet all eligibility requirements for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement established in Section 62-318;
- 2. Be eligible to receive the underlying Palmetto Fellows Scholarship at the time the Enhancement is disbursed;
- 3. Be enrolled full-time at an eligible four-year public or independent institution in a declared major within an eligible degree program;
- 4. Be making satisfactory academic progress toward completion of the declared eligible major.

J. The institution is responsible for determining each recipient's continued eligibility for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and, where applicable, the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement in accordance with these regulations. The institution shall calculate each recipient's State Scholarship GPA in accordance with Section 62-336, verify the student's annual credit hour requirement, and maintain documentation supporting the student's continued eligibility.

K. Any student who attempts to obtain or obtains a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship or Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement through a willfully false statement or by failing to disclose any material fact,

condition, or circumstance affecting eligibility shall be subject to applicable civil or criminal penalties, including forfeiture of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement, as applicable.

62-336. State Scholarship GPA

A. Steps for calculating a State Scholarship GPA:

1. Convert all grades earned at an eligible institution to a 4.0 scale based on each institution's grading policy where the grades were earned = Grade Points.

2. Multiply the grade points by Attempted Credit Hours = Quality Points (QP).

3. Divide the total quality points by the total number of attempted credit hours = State Scholarship GPA.

4. State Scholarship GPA Formula:

Grade Points × Attempted Credit Hours = Quality Points (QP)

Quality Points ÷ Total Attempted Credit Hours = State Scholarship GPA

B. The State Scholarship GPA must include all grades earned at eligible institutions, including courses that do not transfer based on the receiving institution's policy and college courses taken while in high school.

C. The State Scholarship GPA must not include attempted credit hours earned for continuing education coursework, non-degree coursework, and remedial/developmental coursework.

D. The State Scholarship GPA shall be used solely for purposes of determining continued eligibility for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship.

62-340. Transfer of or Reapplication for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement.

A. Palmetto Fellows enrolled at an eligible two-year or four-year public or independent ~~or public~~ institution may transfer the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship to another eligible two-year or four-year eligible public or independent ~~or public~~ institution in South Carolina upon ~~obtaining prior approval from the Commission, on Higher Education, by submitting a transfer form, which is available on the Commission's Web site.~~ Students must submit an In-State Transfer Request in the manner prescribed by the Commission.

B. A student who ~~applied for and~~ was offered the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship upon high school graduation as a senior in high school, but declined the award to attend an out-of-state two-year or four-year institution no later than the fall term one year immediately following high school graduation, or a student who attends an out-of-state institution at any time during the student's remaining terms of eligibility ~~eight eligible terms,~~ must submit a Reapplication Request in the manner prescribed by the Commission before transferring ~~reapply if they transfer~~ to an eligible two-year or four-year public or independent ~~or public~~ institution in South Carolina. ~~The reapplication form is available on the Commission's Web site.~~

C. Transfer students and reapplication students are ~~only~~ eligible to receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and, where applicable, the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement only for the student's remaining terms of eligibility (based on the date of initial college enrollment).

D. ~~Transfer students and reapplication students must comply with all standards for continued eligibility as defined under the “Duration and Renewal of Awards” Section in order for their award to be eligible for transfer.~~ For purposes of determining initial eligibility upon transfer or reapplication, students must satisfy the continued eligibility requirements established in Section 62-335 at the end of the previous academic year.

E. The receiving eligible two-year or four-year public or independent ~~or public~~ institution is responsible for determining whether transfer and reapplication students satisfy the eligibility requirements ~~reviewing all Palmetto Fellows transferring to their institution to determine whether the students are eligible for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and,~~ where applicable, the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement.

F. ~~The eligible two-year or four-year independent or public institution is responsible for reporting to the Commission on Higher Education credit hours earned at their institution only. Transfer credit hours cannot be reported by the home institution.~~ The receiving institution shall calculate the student's State Scholarship GPA in accordance with Section 62-336; determine whether the student satisfies the annual credit hour requirement using all eligible coursework; and verify the student's South Carolina residency at the time of enrollment, in accordance with Section 62-310 of these regulations.

G. The receiving institution shall use the student's initial date of college enrollment to determine the student's remaining terms of eligibility.

62-345. Students with Disabilities.

A. Palmetto Fellows who qualify under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 must meet all initial eligibility requirements established ~~as defined in Section 62-315, the “Initial Eligibility” Section,~~ except for the full-time enrollment requirement, in order to ~~be eligible to receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship funding.~~ Students must comply with all applicable institutional policies and procedures ~~in accordance with ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.~~

B. ~~For renewal, Palmetto Fellows who qualify under ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 must meet all renewal requirements as defined in the “Duration and Renewal of Awards” Section, except for a student not meeting the annual credit hour requirement who is approved by the Disability Services Provider at the home institution to be enrolled in less than full-time status or less than the required annual credit hours for that academic year. Each academic year for award renewal, students must earn the required number of hours approved by the institutional Disability Services Provider at the home institution and earn a minimum 3.0 cumulative grade point average at the home institution for graduation purposes. Students must comply with all institutional policies and procedures in accordance with ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.~~ For purposes of continued eligibility, Palmetto Fellows who qualify under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 must satisfy all continued eligibility requirements established in Section 62-335, except that a student who is approved by the institutional Disability Services Provider to enroll in less than full-time status or complete fewer than the required annual credit hours shall be required to earn the number of credit hours approved by the institutional Disability Services Provider. The student must also earn and maintain a minimum 3.0 State Scholarship GPA in accordance with Section 62-336. Students must comply with all applicable institutional policies and procedures.

C. The institutional Disability Services Provider ~~shall~~ must provide written documentation to the Office of Financial Aid prior to each academic year verifying that the student's ~~is~~ is approved reduced course load ~~to be enrolled in less than full-time status or less than the required annual credit hours.~~ It is the responsibility

of transfer ~~students~~ and reapplication students to provide ~~written~~ documentation from the previous ~~institutional~~ institution's Disability Services Provider.

D. Palmetto Fellows who qualify under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 remain ~~are~~ eligible to receive up to the maximum number of available terms and available funds, provided all applicable eligibility requirements are satisfied.

62-350. Enrollment in Internships, Cooperative Work Programs, Travel Study Programs, or National or International Student Exchange Programs.

A. Students enrolled in internships, cooperative work programs, travel study programs, or National or International Student Exchange Programs that are approved by the home institution and that the home institution accepts as full-time transfer credit are eligible to receive Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Palmetto Fellow Scholarship Enhancement funds during the period in which the student is enrolled in such programs. Students will be required to meet the continued eligibility requirements.

B. Eligible students may use the appropriated portion of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement funds for internships, cooperative work programs, travel study programs, or National or International Student Exchange Programs that are approved by the home institution and that the home institution accepts as full-time transfer credit. Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement funds must be paid directly to the student's account at the home institution. The amount awarded cannot exceed the cost-of-attendance at the home institution or the cost-of-attendance at the host institution, whichever is less. The Commission on Higher Education will not transfer funds to the institutions where students will participate in internships, cooperative work programs, travel study programs, or National or International Student Exchange Programs. The home institution is responsible for funds according to the "Program Administration and Audits" Section.

~~C. Students who enroll in one academic term at the home institution and also enroll in an internship, cooperative work program, travel study program, or National or International Student Exchange Program that are approved by the home institution and that do not award full-time transfer credit during the same academic year must earn at least fifteen credit hours and a minimum 3.0 cumulative grade point average at the home institution for graduation purposes by the end of the academic year to be eligible for renewal the next academic year. The student may continue to be eligible for up to the maximum terms of eligibility based on the date of initial college enrollment (provided the student meets the continued eligibility requirements).~~ Students who enroll in one academic term at the home institution and also enroll in an internship, cooperative work program, travel study program, or National or International Student Exchange Program that is approved by the home institution and that does not award full-time transfer credit during the same academic year, must complete the annual credit hour requirement and earn a minimum 3.0 State Scholarship GPA by the end of the academic year to be eligible for continued eligibility for the following academic year (see Section 62-335 for the annual credit hour requirement). Students who did not use the entire eligibility for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement funds during this period may receive the unused term during the succeeding summer or at the end of the maximum terms of eligibility based on the initial date of college enrollment, provided the student meets the continued eligibility requirements.

D. For students enrolling in an internship, cooperative work program, travel study program, or National or International Student Exchange Program that is approved by the home institution but does not award full-time transfer credit for the entire academic year, renewal for the next academic year will be based on the prior year's eligibility. The student may continue to be eligible for up to the maximum terms of eligibility based on the date of initial college enrollment (provided the student meets the continued eligibility requirements).

E. Students enrolling in an internship, a cooperative work program, a travel study program, or National or International Student Exchange Program that are approved by the home institution during the academic year and did not use their entire eligibility for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship or the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement funds during this period shall be allowed to receive one term of Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement funds during the succeeding summer or at the end of the maximum terms of eligibility based on the date of initial college enrollment (provided the student meets the continued eligibility requirements). In order to receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement funds for the succeeding summer term, students must enroll in twelve credit hours at the home institution. In order to maintain eligibility for the next academic year for students who only attend summer school, the student must earn at least twelve credit hours by the end of the academic year. For students who enroll in summer school and one other term of the academic year, the student must earn a total of at least 27 credit hours by the end of the academic year. The student must meet all continued eligibility requirements, except for the completion of the annual credit hour requirement for the academic year.

F. The home institution will be responsible for obtaining official certification of the student's State Scholarship GPA ~~cumulative grade point average~~ and annual credit hours ~~earned~~ for purposes of determining continued eligibility for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and, where applicable, the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement ~~renewal~~ for the following ~~next~~ academic year. For purposes of Enhancement eligibility, the home institution must also obtain certification from the academic department ~~of enrollment~~ verifying the student's enrollment in a declared major in an eligible degree program.

62-351. Military Mobilization.

A. Service members who are enrolled in college and are affected by military mobilizations will not be penalized for the term they are required to withdraw after the full refund period based on the institutional policies and procedures. Institutions are strongly encouraged to provide a full refund of required tuition, fees and other institutional charges or to provide a credit in a comparable amount against future charges for students who are forced to withdraw as a result of military mobilization. Additionally, the term(s) that the service member is mobilized will not count against the maximum terms of eligibility. The service member shall be allowed to receive the unused term(s) while mobilized during the succeeding summer term or at the end of the maximum terms of eligibility (provided the service member meets continued eligibility requirements). The service member must re-enroll in an eligible independent or public institution within twelve months upon their demobilization and provide official documentation to verify military deployment to the institutional Financial Aid Office upon re-enrollment. Reinstatement will be based upon the service member's eligibility at the time he/she was mobilized. If the service member re-enrolls after the twelve month period, the service member must submit an Appeal Application to the Commission on Higher Education by the established deadline in order to be considered for reinstatement.

B. Service members who are enrolled in college and are mobilized for a minimum of one academic year may be eligible the next academic year, if they met the continued eligibility requirements at the end of the last academic year of attendance. Service members may continue to be eligible for up to the maximum terms of eligibility based on the date of initial college enrollment (provided the service member meets the continued eligibility requirements).

C. Service members who are enrolled in college and are mobilized for one academic term must complete at least fifteen credit hours and a minimum 3.0 State Scholarship GPA ~~cumulative grade point average~~ at the home institution for graduation purposes by the end of the academic year to be eligible for renewal for the next academic year. Service members may continue to be eligible for up to the maximum terms of

eligibility based on the date of initial college enrollment (provided the service member meets the continued eligibility requirements).

D. In order to receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement for summer school for any unused term(s), the service member must enroll in twelve credit hours during the succeeding summer term at the home institution. For service members who enroll in summer school and one other term of the academic year, the service member must earn a total of at least twenty-seven credit hours by the end of the academic year. In order to maintain eligibility for the next academic year for service members who only attend summer school, the member must earn at least twelve credit hours by the end of the academic year. The service member must meet all continued eligibility requirements, except for the completion of the annual credit hour requirement for the academic year.

E. The home institution will be responsible for obtaining verification of military mobilization status, State Scholarship GPA ~~cumulative grade point average~~ and annual credit hours for the purpose of determining eligibility to renew the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship for the next academic year. For purposes of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement, the home institution must also obtain certification from the academic department of enrollment in a declared major in an eligible degree program.

62-355. Appeals Procedures.

A. The Commission on Higher Education shall define the procedures for scholarship appeals.

B. A student who does not meet the continued eligibility requirements ~~criteria~~ for ~~renewal~~ of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship forfeits continued participation in the Program and may submit ~~request~~ an appeal based on extenuating circumstances.

C. A student is allowed to submit only one appeal each academic year.

D. A completed appeal's application must be filed with the Commission on Higher Education by the established deadline of the academic year in which the scholarship is requested. The student must provide a completed application for appeal, a letter requesting an appeal describing the extenuating circumstance, official transcripts from all prior institutions, and any other supporting documentation to substantiate the basis for the appeal. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that all documents necessary to file an appeal are received at the Commission by the established deadline. Commission staff will not contact the student regarding missing or incomplete appeals documentation. Failure to submit a completed appeal's application by the required deadline(s) will result in forfeiture of the scholarship.

E. A student who fails to submit an appeal by the required deadline will result in forfeiture of the award.

F. The Palmetto Fellows Scholarship shall be suspended during the appeal period, but will be awarded retroactively if the appeal is granted.

G. Students cannot appeal solely on the loss of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement.

H. The Appeals Committee's decision is final.

62-360. Institutional Disbursement of Funds.

A. The institution will identify award amounts, which cannot exceed:

1. \$6,700 the first/freshman year and \$7,500 for the second year, third year, fourth year and fifth year (if applicable) for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship; Eligible Palmetto Fellows may prorate their award amount for the term of graduation (see section 62-330.B.).

2. \$2,500 for the second year, third year, fourth year and fifth year (if applicable) for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement if enrolled in a eligible four-year degree program or for not more than four years of instruction if enrolled in an eligible approved five-year degree program. Eligible Palmetto Fellows may prorate their award amount for the term of graduation (see section 62-330.B.).

3. For mid-year initial college enrollment (i.e. a student who starts college in the spring term), a student may receive a maximum of \$3,350 for the spring term. Beginning the second academic year (i.e. the fall term) a student may receive up to \$7,500 for the second year, third year, fourth year and fifth year (if applicable) for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship; Eligible Palmetto Fellows may prorate their award amount for the term of graduation (see section 62-330.B.).

B. Half shall be awarded during the fall term and half during the spring term. Funds cannot be disbursed during the summer or any interim sessions except for disbursements made in accordance with the requirements of the "Enrollment in Internships, Cooperative Work Programs, Travel Study Programs, or National or International Student Exchange Programs" or "Military Mobilization" Sections. Palmetto Fellows may not be funded for more than a total of eight terms of study toward the first bachelor's degree or a program of study that is structured so as not to require a bachelor's degree and leads to a graduate degree or for more than a total of ten terms of study toward the first approved five-year degree. Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancements may not be funded for more than a total of six terms toward the first bachelor's degree or a program of study that is structured so as not to require a bachelor's degree or for no more than a total of eight terms toward the first-approved bachelor's degree.

C. The Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement cannot be applied to remedial coursework, continuing education coursework, a second bachelor's degree or to graduate coursework, unless the graduate coursework is required as part of a program of study that is structured so as not to require a bachelor's degree and leads to a graduate degree as defined in the "Definitions" Section or the student is enrolled in one of the following programs: 1) Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies at the Medical University of South Carolina; 2) Doctor of Pharmacy at the Medical University of South Carolina; 3) Doctor of Pharmacy at the University of South Carolina; and 4) Doctor of Pharmacy at Presbyterian College. In the event of early graduation, the award is discontinued.

D. Students who change their major from an ineligible degree program to an eligible degree program during the same academic year cannot be awarded the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement until the next academic year. Additionally, students who change their major from an eligible degree program to an ineligible degree program during the same academic year will retain their Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement eligibility for the remainder of the current academic year.

E. The institution shall provide each Palmetto Fellow with an award notification for each academic year, which will contain the terms and conditions of the Scholarship and other financial aid awarded. Students will be notified of adjustments in financial aid due to changes in eligibility and/or over-award issues. The Commission on Higher Education, for documentation purposes, requires that each institution obtain verification of acceptance of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement and terms for the awards.

F. After the last day to register for each term of the academic year, the institution will verify enrollment of each recipient as a South Carolina resident who is a full-time degree-seeking student.

G. The institution must submit a request for funds and/or return of funds by the established deadline each term. The Commission will disburse funds to eligible ~~public and~~ independent and public institutions to be placed in each eligible student's account. In addition, a listing of eligible recipients by identification number with the award amounts must be sent to the Commission on Higher Education by the established deadline each term. At this time, any unused funds must be returned to the Commission immediately.

H. The Commission will disburse awards to the eligible four-year independent and public institutions to be placed in each eligible student's account.

I. The student shall be required to provide a state recognized unique identifier in order for the institution to award, disburse, and/or transfer the student's state scholarship and/or grant to an eligible institution.

62-365. Refunds and Repayments.

A. In the event a student who has been awarded the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement withdraws, is suspended from the institution, or drops below full-time status during any regular term of the academic year, institutions must reimburse the Program for the amount of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement for the term in question pursuant to refund policies of the institution. Collection is the responsibility of the institution.

B. In the event a student withdraws or drops below full-time status after the institution's refund period and therefore must pay tuition and fees for full-time enrollment, the award may be retained by the student pursuant to the refund policies of the institution.

C. In the event a student who has been awarded the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement and has been identified as not being a South Carolina resident at any time, the institution must reimburse funds to CHE for the time period the student was no longer a South Carolina resident.

62-370. Program Administration and Audits.

A. The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education shall be responsible for the oversight of functions (e.g., guidelines, policies, rules, regulations) relative to this Program with the eligible independent and public institutions. The Commission on Higher Education shall be responsible for the allocation of funds, promulgation of guidelines and regulation governing the Program, any audits, or other oversight as may be deemed necessary to monitor the expenditure of funds.

B. According to the Audit Policies and Procedures for Scholarship and Grant Programs Manual, all eligible independent and public institutions must abide by all Program policies, rules and regulations. Institutions also agree to maintain and provide all pertinent information, records, reports or any information as may be required or requested by the Commission on Higher Education or the General Assembly to ensure proper administration of the Program.

C. The Chief Executive Officer at each eligible independent and public institution shall identify to the Commission on Higher Education an institutional representative who is responsible for the operation of the Program on the campus and will serve as the contact person for the Program. The institutional representative will act as the student's fiscal agent to receive and deliver funds for use under the Program.

D. All eligible independent and public institutions that participate in the program must verify the lawful presence in the US of any student who receives a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement prior to awarding the Scholarship to the student. When verifying the lawful

presence of an individual, institutional personnel shall not attempt to independently verify the immigration status of any alien, but shall verify any alien's immigration status with the federal government pursuant to 8 USC Section 1373(c).

E. The participating institution shall identify to the Commission on Higher Education an institutional representative who will be responsible for determining residency and lawful presence classification for the purposes of awarding the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship.

F. Independent and public institutions of higher learning in this, or any other state in the U.S., are prohibited from using the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship in programs that promote financial aid incentives or packages. Any mention of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship in these financial aid packages must indicate the scholarship to be separate from the University that is offering the financial aid package, and reference the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship as a separate financial aid award, provided to the student by the State of South Carolina.

G. All eligible independent and public institutions shall submit separate invoices for the purposes of enhancements, as determined by the Commission on Higher Education.

62-375. Suspension or Termination of Institutional Participation.

A. The Commission on Higher Education may review institutional administrative practices to determine compliance with pertinent statutes, guidelines, rules or regulations. If such a review determines that an institution has failed to comply with Program statutes, guidelines, rules or regulations, the Commission on Higher Education may suspend, terminate, or place certain conditions upon the institution's continued participation in the Program and require reimbursement to the Program for any funds lost or improperly awarded.

B. Upon receipt of evidence that an institution has failed to comply, the Commission on Higher Education shall notify the institution in writing of the nature of such allegations and conduct an audit.

C. If an audit indicates that a violation(s) may have occurred or are occurring at any eligible independent or public institution, the Commission on Higher Education shall secure immediate reimbursement from the institution in the event that any funds were expended out of compliance with the provisions of the Act, any relevant statutes, guidelines, rules, and regulations.

D. All eligible independent and public institutions that participate in the scholarship enhancement program shall report to CHE the recipients of each enhancement award, per term within the deadlines as determined by CHE. In reporting recipients of the enhancement, institutions shall distinguish recipients by their status in the eligible major, ensuring that education, accounting, math, and science majors are individually identified, in a format as determined by CHE.

Fiscal Impact Statement:

Based on historical recipient data, the Commission calculated a three-year average of students who transitioned from the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship to the LIFE Scholarship in the following fiscal year. During Fiscal Years 2022–23 through 2024–25, the number of recipients transitioning to the LIFE Scholarship was 117, 108, and 119 students, respectively. Using these three years of data, the average annual number of affected students is 114.7, rounded to 115 students:

$$(117+108+119) \div 3 = 114.7 \approx 115 \text{ students}$$

The proposed regulation aligns the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship renewal methodology with the LIFE Scholarship renewal methodology. Because institutions do not currently calculate a State Scholarship GPA for Palmetto Fellows recipients, these historical transitions represent the best available estimate of students who may retain Palmetto Fellows eligibility under the proposed regulations.

The estimated annual fiscal impact is approximately \$287,500, calculated using the average of 115 students multiplied by the \$2,500 difference between the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship award (\$7,500) and the LIFE Scholarship award (\$5,000). Scholarship Enhancement funding does not result in an additional fiscal impact because eligible students may receive the corresponding \$2,500 Enhancement under either the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship or the LIFE Scholarship.

Statement of Rationale:

These regulations are updated to align the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship renewal requirements with the LIFE Scholarship renewal methodology, establish a State Scholarship GPA calculation, and clarify the policies and procedures for administering the program.

R. Wes Hayes, Jr.
Chairman

L. Jeffrey Perez, Ph.D.
President & Executive Director



An Overview and Data Update on FAFSA First 2025-26

September 3, 2026

Background

In the summer of 2006, the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE) was awarded a three-year grant from the Lumina Foundation, a non-profit education policy foundation committed to increasing the number of Americans with high-quality degrees, certificates and other credentials, to implement College Goal Sunday in South Carolina. The program was adapted to our state and rebranded as College Goal South Carolina now renamed FAFSA First. FAFSA First, which aims to increase the number of college-bound students who complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), was initially piloted in South Carolina along the I-95 corridor (17 counties) which stretches from Jasper County to Marlboro County.

FAFSA First is an annual event hosted during the months of October - March which provides one-on-one assistance to students and families/guardians who are completing the FAFSA to access federal financial aid for college. Additionally, the FAFSA can be a prerequisite for qualifying for the SC Need-based Grant and other state and private financial assistance. Students receive assistance from financial aid administrators at SC's public and independent colleges and universities in completing and submitting the FAFSA during these events. Students are also provided information on state scholarship programs, as well as information about the state's public and independent two and four-year higher education institutions.

Today, FAFSA First is funded as a portion of the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education's operating budget. The program is administered statewide through a partnership between CHE and the South Carolina Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (SCASFAA). The National College Access Network an organization that

supports initiatives that focus on preparing students for post-secondary access, assists CHE with social media efforts and guidance on program implementation.

FAFSA First has evolved into a true statewide effort and is the second step in the “Step 1-Step 2-Step 3” college access process. This process includes three important steps to accessing higher education: Step 1 (applying to college) Step 2 (paying for college) and Step 3 (celebrating the selection of a college to attend).

Program Model: FAFSA First

Higher education institutions, high schools and libraries around the state register to host FAFSA First events each year through CHE. Each individual site consists of an event team that includes: 1) a site coordinator (a financial aid professional employed at the hosting site or a school employee at the hosting high school,); 2) financial aid staff from higher education institutions in the state and; 3) community business volunteers

Similar to the College Application Month model, students and parents/guardians who attend these events receive one-on-one assistance from financial aid professionals and community business volunteers in an effort to assist with case-by-case questions pertaining to filling out and submitting the FAFSA form during a session. These sessions are hosted during the months of October to March each year, which coincides with the release of the FAFSA form for the upcoming academic year. Some events are hosted during school hours, but these are typically focused on helping students set up their FSA ID, which acts as a student identification and signature for the form, and start the application. The standard model that is used at most sites is hosting the event as an afternoon or evening event. This allows for parents to join their student with the completion of the form. This is important because the FAFSA requires parent or guardian information. Several sites will host additional events at satellite locations to provide additional opportunities for students and parents/guardians in their community to receive assistance with their FAFSA form.

Evaluation of the Data

In 2025-26, during the months of October to April, 88 South Carolina high schools (public, charter, virtual, and adult education centers) and higher education institutions registered to host 103 FAFSA First events. **(Attachment I)** Multiple sites hosted events in both the Fall and Spring terms, allowing several opportunities for their students complete the FAFSA. These high schools were asked to provide the anticipated number of high school seniors who would participate in the event at their respective high schools. Of the 103 events held during the season, 60 site coordinators submitted an end-of-event report. The data regarding the program comes from the submitted end-of-event reports. In the sites that hosted an event, 1512 high school seniors and returning college students signed into a FAFSA First event. A total of 1914 attendees were reported, including parents. To support the students with completing and submitting the FAFSA, 134 volunteers from financial aid

offices and local community members were present this year at FAFSA First events.

(Attachment II) Based on the reported figures, 777 FAFSA applications were completed and submitted during a FAFSA First event.

Attachment I
FAFSA First 2025-26 Event Sites

School	Date	Start Time	County Served
AC Flora High School	10/9/2025	6:00-8:00 pm	Richland
Aiken County District	10/28/2025	6:00-8:00 pm	Aiken
Aiken Scholars Academy	11/6/2025	6:00-7:00 pm	Aiken
Aynor High School	10/21/2025	6:00-8:00 pm	Horry
Baptist Hill High School	2/19/2026	12:00-3:00 pm	Charleston
Belton-Honea Path High	10/23/2025	5:00-7:00 pm	Anderson
Berea High School	10/6/2025	6:00-7:00 pm	Greenville
Blackville Hilda High School	11/5/2025	5:00-6:00 pm	Barnwell
Bluffton High School	11/18/2025	5:30-7:30 pm	Beaufort
Brookland Cayce High School	11/13/2026	5:30-7:30 pm	Lexington
Buford High School	10/30/2025	5:30-7:30 pm	Lancaster
C.A. Johnson High School	10/1/2025	5:00-6:00 pm	Richland
C.A. Johnson High School	1/27/2026	5:00-7:00 pm	Richland
Calhoun County High School	10/15/2025	6:00-8:00 pm	Calhoun
Calhoun Falls Charter School	1/29/2026	9:00-12:00 pm	Calhoun
Carolina Forest High School	11/4/2025	2:00-6:00 pm	Horry
Carolina High School	10/21/2025	4:30-6:30 pm	Greenville
Catawba Ridge High School	11/13/2025	6:00-7:00 pm	York
Charleston Charter School for Math and Science	10/28/2025	5:30-7:30 pm	Charleston
CHE FAFSA Night-Darlington Library	10/16/2025	6:00-7:00 pm	Darlington
CHE FAFSA Night-Laurens (USC Laurens)	10/14/2025	5:30-6:30 pm	Laurens
CHE FAFSA Night-Orangeburg Library	10/21/2025	6:00-7:00 pm	Orangeburg
Chester Senior High School	10/23/2025	5:30-7:30 pm	Chester

Chesterfield High School	1/13/2026	9:00-2:00 pm	Chester
Colleton County High School	11/20/2025	5:30-7:30 pm	Colleton
Columbia High School	12/4/2025	6:00-8:00 pm	Richland
Conway Christian School	1/8/2026	5:00-6:00 pm	Horry
Cross High School	11/5/2025	5:00-7:00 pm	Berkeley
Darlington High School	1/15/2026	5:30-6:30 pm	Darlington
Denmark-Olar High School	11/11/2025	2:00-2:00 pm	Bamberg
Dixie High School	10/22/2025	5:30-7:30 pm	Abbeville
Dorman High School	10/16/2025	4:00-6:30 pm	Spartanburg
Dorman High School	11/14/2025	1:00-3:00 pm	Spartanburg
Dorman High School	12/11/2025	4:00-6:30 pm	Spartanburg
Dorman High School	2/5/2026	4:00-6:30 pm	Spartanburg
Dorman High School	4/24/2026	1:00-3:00 pm	Spartanburg
Dreher High School	11/5/2025	6:00-8:00 pm	Richland
Dutch Fork High School	1/13/2026	8:30-11:30 am	Lexington
Francis Marion University	10/14/2025	5:30-8:30 pm	Florence
Gaffney High	11/17/2025	3:00-7:00 pm	Cherokee
Gilbert High School	10/9/2025	4:30-6:30 pm	Lexington
Goose Creek High School	11/12/2025	6:00-8:00 pm	Berkeley
Green Sea Floyds High School	11/6/2025	4:30-6:30 pm	Horry
Green Upstate High School	11/17/2025	6:00-7:00 pm	Greenville
Greenville Senior High School	11/12/2025	5:00-6:00 pm	Greenville
Greer High School	11/11/2025	6:30-7:30 pm	Greenville
Hamilton Career Technology Center	10/21/2025	4:00-6:00 pm	Oconee
Hardeeville Junior & Senior High School	12/11/2025	6:30-7:30 pm	Jasper
HCS Scholars Academy High School	10/27/2025	5:00-7:00 pm	Horry
Hillcrest High School	10/27/2025	6:00-8:00 pm	Greenville
Horry Georgetown Technical College	2/24/2026	4:00-6:00 pm	Horry

Horry Georgetown Technical College	2/26/2026	4:00-6:00 pm	Horry
Irmo High School	10/14/2025	6:00-8:00 pm	Richland
JL Mann High School	12/4/2025	6:00-7:00 pm	Greenville
Kingstree High School	1/14/2026	9:00-12:00 pm	Williamsburg
Laurens District 55 High School	11/13/2025	6:00-8:00 pm	Laurens
Lee Central High School	2/25/2026	12:00-4:00 pm	Lee
Legion Collegiate Academy	10/17/2025	8:30-12:00 pm	York
Lexington High School	11/6/2025	5:30-7:30 pm	Lexington
Liberty High School	10/8/2025	6:00-8:00 pm	Pickens
Lower Richland High School	10/2/2025	6:00-8:00 pm	Richland
Lugoff Elgin High School	2/5/2026	5:00-7:00 pm	Kershaw
Manning High School	10/16/2025	6:00-8:00 pm	Clarendon
Mauldin High School	10/16/2025	6:00-7:00 pm	Greenville
Mauldin High School	11/6/2025	6:00-7:00 pm	Greenville
Military Magnet Academy	4/29/2026	8:30-9:30 am	Charleston
MTC, USC & Benedict College TRIO Programs	10/11/2025	9:00-12:00 pm	Lexington
Ninety Six High School	10/20/2025	5:30-7:30 pm	Greenwood
North Central High School	2/12/2026	6:00-7:00 pm	Kershaw
Palmetto High School	11/13/2025	5:30-7:30 pm	Anderson
Patrick Henry Academy	10/3/2025	10:00-11:00 am	Allendale
Pee Dee Academy	10/29/2025	6:00-7:00 pm Virtual	Marion
Pelion High School	10/9/2025	5:00-6:00 pm	Lexington
Pickens High School	10/20/2025	5:30-6:30 pm	Pickens
Presbyterian College	10/3/2025	1:00-3:00 pm	Laurens
Richland Northeast High School	10/16/2025	2:00-6:00 pm	Richland
Richland Two Institute of Innovation R2i2	11/20/2025	5:00-7:00 pm	Richland
River Bluff High School	10/28/2025	5:30-7:00 pm	Lexington
Riverwalk Academy	10/15/2025	4:00-5:00 pm	York

Saluda High School	1/12/2026	5:00-8:00 pm	Saluda
South Carolina Leadership School	11/18/2025	1:00-4:00 pm Virtual	Anderson
South Carolina Preparatory Academy	11/19/2025	1:00-3:00 pm Virtual	Anderson
South Carolina Virtual Charter School	10/15/2025	11:00-3:10 pm Virtual	All
South Florence High School	11/13/2025	5:30-6:30 pm	Florence
Southside High School	12/16/2025	5:30-6:30 pm	Greenville
Spring Hill High School	10/21/2025	6:00-7:00 pm	Lexington
Stratford High School	10/15/2025	5:30-7:30 pm	Berkeley
Swansea High School	10/8/2025	5:00-6:30 pm	Lexington
Swansea High School	3/23/2026	4:00-7:00 pm	Lexington
T L Hanna High School	11/11/2025	5:30-7:30 pm	Anderson
Travelers Rest High School	12/17/2025	5:30-6:30 pm	Greenville
Trinity Collegiate School	12/11/2025	6:00-8:00 pm	Darlington
Waccamaw High School	10/15/2025	5:00-7:00 pm	Georgetown
Ware Shoals High School	10/21/2025	3:00-6:00 pm	Greenwood
Westside High School	10/14/2025	6:00-7:00 pm	Anderson
Westwood High School	2/23/2026	5:30-7:30 pm	Richland
White Knoll High School	10/15/2025	6:00-7:00 pm	Lexington
White Knoll High School	11/20/2025	6:00-7:00 pm	Lexington
White Knoll High School	2/24/2026	6:00-7:00 pm	Lexington
White Knoll High School	4/14/2026	6:00-7:00 pm	Lexington
Wilson High School	10/21/2025	6:00-8:00 pm	Florence
Woodland High School	10/28/2025	6:00-8:00 pm	Dorchester
York Preparatory Academy	10/23/2025	5:00-6:00 pm	York

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26*
Total # of FAFSA First Sites	89	32	59	89	67	77	103
Total # of Students and Families attending FAFSA First events	3,835	1,102	3,450	3,562	1281	2820	2914
Total # of volunteers and college representatives at reporting schools	1,904	503	264	383	320	375	204
Number of statewide completed FAFSAs	33,287	32,100	35,302	25,266	28,365	31,869	30,305*

FAFSA Completion

FAFSA completion is an important factor in moving the state towards the goals of *Ascend 60 x 30*, which sets a goal of ensuring that by 2030, at least 60% of eligible South Carolinians earn a highly skilled credential, CHE staff has placed a priority on ensuring that more students complete the FAFSA. By not completing the FAFSA, eligible students bypass access to financial assistance to help pay for college costs. The FAFSA is also the gateway to receiving three of the state sponsored grant programs – Lottery Tuition Assistance Grant, South Carolina Need-based Grant and South Carolina Tuition Grant.

One of the major goals of *Ascend 60 x 30* calls for FAFSA completion in South Carolina to increase by 3% over the next four years, and by 5% over the next ten years. Traditionally, South Carolina starts the FAFSA completion cycle slow, and significantly increases completions towards the summer months. For the 2025-26 cycle, at the time of reporting, FAFSA completion in South Carolina has increased as compared to the previous year (class of 2025). Through May 15, 2026, 50.8% of the high school class of 2026 has already completed a FAFSA. To date, 30,305 FAFSAs have been completed, which represents a 5.8% increase from the same point in time, last cycle. Looking at the current completion data with regards to special populations, FAFSA completion is also increasing. FAFSA completion in high minority population areas in South Carolina are seeing a 6.7% increase

in FAFSA completion at the same point in time over last year. Students in South Carolina's Title 1 high schools or high schools with large concentrations of low-income students are completing the FAFSA at a 6.6% higher rate than their counterparts in the class of 2025 were at this point in time last year. Finally, students in rural areas of South Carolina are completing the FAFSA at a rate 5.0% higher than the class of 2025 at the same point in time last year. **(Attachment III)**

Attachment III – FAFSA Completion Data in South Carolina

