



South Carolina Residency Regulation Changes – 2026

Quick Reference Cheat Sheet for Financial Aid, Admissions, and Residency Staff

The South Carolina General Assembly approved updates to the Residency Regulations effective May 18, 2026. The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE) developed this resource to help institutions better understand the regulatory changes, align with state law, and support consistent residency determinations for students across South Carolina.

Topic	Key Change
Dependent Residency	Residency determinations may now be based on one South Carolina resident parent or legal guardian.
Intent to Establish Residency	Applicants must demonstrate a minimum number of residency intent items. Four intent items are now required.
Driver's License Requirement	Timeline to obtain a South Carolina driver's license reduced to 45 days to align with state law.
Vehicle Registration	Only one vehicle must be registered in South Carolina for residency purposes.
Independent Status	Clarifies that state income taxes may be reviewed when determining financial independence.
Divorced/Separated Parents	Institutions may consider alternate-year tax filing arrangements when reviewing dependency.
Remote Employees	Clarifies how remote employees working for companies with a South Carolina location may qualify for residency exceptions.
Faculty & Administrative Employees	Public college faculty and administrative employees may qualify for the 12-month residency exception.
Visa & Permanent Status	Students receiving in-state rates under an approved visa may continue receiving in-state rates after obtaining permanent residency without interruption.
Appeals & Flexibility	Institutions have greater flexibility in residency appeals and evaluating residency intent documentation.
Transcript Holds	Institutions may not withhold transcripts solely due to unpaid balances.

What Institutions Should Review This Summer:

- Update residency training materials and internal procedures.
- Review institutional residency checklists and required documentation.
- Train staff on the revised residency intent requirements.
- Update website language and residency guidance for students.
- Review appeal processes for flexibility and consistency.