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62-1100 Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement

Table of Contents:

62-1100 Purpose of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship
62-1105 Funding for Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Scholarship Enhancement
62-1110 Definitions
62-1115 Student Eligibility for Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Scholarship Enhancement
62-1120 Student Application for Palmetto Fellows Scholarship
62-1125 Selection Process for Palmetto Fellows Scholarship
62-1130 Regaining Eligibility for a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement
62-1135 Policies and Procedures for Awarding Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement
62-1140 Duration and Renewal of Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement
62-1145 Transfer of Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement
62-1150 Students with Disabilities
62-1155 Enrollment in Internships, Cooperative Work Programs, Travel Study Programs, or National or International Exchange Programs
62-1160 Military Mobilization
62-1165 Appeals Procedures for Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement
62-1170 Institutional Disbursement of Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement Funds
62-1180 Refunds and Repayments of Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement
62-1185 Program Administration and Audits
62-1190 Suspension or Termination of Institutional Participation

62-1100 Purpose of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship

Pursuant to Act 115, which was established in 2007 as Title 59 of the 1976 code during the 2007 legislative session, 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 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.

Allocation of Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Funds and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement Funds to Public and Independent Institutions

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 reallocate the remaining funds between the two programs. The Commission on Higher Education shall award to eligible students attending eligible independent or public institutions as Palmetto Fellows Scholarships as follows:

1. Of the funds allocated to public institutions, the percentage shall be equivalent to the percentage of the public institution's share of the total South Carolina resident undergraduate full-time headcount enrollment in the preceding year.

2. Of the funds allocated to independent institutions, the percentage shall be equivalent to the percentage of the independent institutions' share of the total South Carolina resident undergraduate full-time headcount enrollment in the preceding year and will be determined annually by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education and the Tuition Grants Commission.

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 and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement 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.

62-1110 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 will consist of the fall, spring and summer terms (or its equivalent).

B. "Approved five-year program" shall be defined as a five-year program as defined and approved by the Commission on Higher Education to receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship for a maximum of ten terms at the same eligible institution in order to complete the requirements for a bachelor's degree. An approved five-year bachelor's degree program does not include institutional and cooperative "3+2" programs.

C. "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.

D. "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 Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement, CIP Codes have been approved by the Commission on Higher Education for eligible degree programs in the fields of mathematics and science.

E. "Cumulative GPA" is defined as the institutional GPA used for graduation purposes, which includes dividing the number of quality points earned in all courses attempted by the total degree-credit hours in all courses attempted at the student's home institution.

F. "Declared major" shall be defined, for the purposes of the Palmetto Fellows 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 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 must be approved by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education. A list of approved majors must be submitted each year from the institutions to the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education for approval.

G. "Degree-seeking student" is defined as any student enrolled full-time in a program of study that leads to the first 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 are eligible to receive the Scholarship for a maximum of eight terms (or its equivalent) towards an undergraduate degree only, as long as all other eligibility requirements are met and the program is approved by the Commission on Higher Education. Students must maintain their undergraduate status, with the exception of students enrolled in the Master of Science in Physician Assistant studies, Master of Science in Cytology and Biosciences and the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at the University of South Carolina and the Medical University of South Carolina, in order to receive a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement each academic year.

H. "Eligible degree program/Qualifying degree program" shall be defined, for the purposes of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement, as a degree program in mathematics or science as approved by the SC Commission on Higher Education. These programs include science and mathematics disciplines, 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 requirements of an eligible degree program for a Palmetto Fellows 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. The SC Commission on Higher Education will issue a list of eligible, approved majors each academic year.

I. "Felonics" shall be 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.

J. "Fifth year" is defined, for the purposes of this Program, as any student who is enrolled in his or her ninth or tenth semester of undergraduate coursework in an approved five-year program.

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 annual credit hour requirement for continued eligibility as determined for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship. However, a student may use Advanced Placement courses 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 fourteen credit hour requirement for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement. In addition, for purposes of meeting the required minimum level of instruction in mathematics and life and physical science, Dual enrollment and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses will be allowed to count toward the fulfillment of the minimum fourteen credit hour requirement for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement.

K. "First year student/Freshman" is defined, for the purposes of this Program, as any student who is enrolled as a first year student in his or her first or second semester of undergraduate coursework. 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 annual credit hour requirement for continued eligibility as determined for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship. However, a student may use Advanced Placement courses 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 fourteen credit hour requirement for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement. In addition, for purposes of meeting the required minimum level of instruction in mathematics and life and physical science, Dual enrollment and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses will be allowed to count toward the fulfillment of the minimum fourteen credit hour requirement for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement.

L. "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.

M. "Fourth year student/Senior" is defined, for the purposes of this Program, as any student who is enrolled in his or her seventh or eighth semester of undergraduate coursework. 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 annual credit hour requirement for continued eligibility as determined for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship. However, a student may use Advanced Placement courses 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 fourteen credit hour requirement for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement. In addition, for purposes of meeting the required minimum level of instruction in mathematics and life and physical science, Dual enrollment and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses will be allowed to count toward the fulfillment of the minimum fourteen credit hour requirement for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement.

N. "Full-time student" shall mean any student who has matriculated into a program of study leading to 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 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. 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 coursework under no circumstances.

O. "High school" shall be defined as a public or private 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 school recognized by the state in which the school is located to offer curricula through the twelfth grade and prepares students for college entrance.

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

Q. "Independent institutions/private institutions" are defined, for the purposes of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program, as those four-year 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 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. 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.

R. "Ineligible degree program" shall be defined, for the purposes of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement, as a degree program that is not a mathematics, science or a degree program that is not included on the Commission's list of approved eligible programs and assigned a CIP code.

S. "Misdemeanor offenses" shall be 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 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.

T. "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.

U. "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.

V. "Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Recipient" is defined as a student who meets all of the eligibility requirements to receive a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship. Students who meet the eligibility requirements for a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship but do not receive any Palmetto

Fellows Scholarship funds, due to the cost of attendance being met by other sources of financial aid will be classified as a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship recipient.

W. "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 Scholarship for a maximum of eight terms (or its equivalent) towards their undergraduate degree 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 each academic term, with the exception of students enrolled in the Master of Science in Physician Assistant studies, Master of Science in Cytology and Biosciences and the Doctor of Pharmacy program at the University of South Carolina and the Medical University of South Carolina.

X. "Public institutions" are defined, for the purposes of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program, as 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.

Y. "Remedial/developmental 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.

Z. "Second year/Sophomore" is defined, for the purposes of this Program, as any student who is enrolled in his or her third or fourth semester of undergraduate coursework. 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 annual credit hour requirement for continued eligibility as determined for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship. However, a student may use Advanced Placement courses 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 fourteen credit hour requirement for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement. In addition, for purposes of meeting the required minimum level of instruction in mathematics and life and physical science, Dual enrollment and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses will be allowed to count toward the fulfillment of the minimum fourteen credit hour requirement for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement.

AA. "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.

BB. "Satisfactory academic progress in a major" shall be defined as the progress 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 degree completion of the 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.

CC. "Transfer student" is defined, for the purposes of this Program, as a student who has changed full-time enrollment from a four-year institution to another eligible independent or public

institution.

DD. "Third year student/Junior" is defined, for the purposes of this Program, as any student who is enrolled in his or her fifth or sixth semester of undergraduate coursework. 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 annual credit hour requirement for continued eligibility as determined for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship. However, a student may use Advanced Placement courses 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 fourteen credit hour requirement for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement. In addition, for purposes of meeting the required minimum level of instruction in mathematics and life and physical science, Dual enrollment and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses will be allowed to count toward the fulfillment of the minimum fourteen credit hour requirement for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement.

EE. "3 plus 2 programs" is defined, for the purposes of the Palmetto Fellows 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, the student receives the second baccalaureate degree (e.g., engineering). 3 plus 2 programs for the purposes of receiving the Palmetto Fellows 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 Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement award.

62-1115 Student Eligibility for Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Scholarship Enhancement

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

1. Meet the eligibility criteria stipulated under the "Student Application" Section;
2. Be enrolled as a senior in an eligible high school;
3. Be a legal resident of South Carolina as defined in applicable State Statute governing the determination of residency for tuition and fee purposes at the time of college enrollment;
4. Be a U.S. citizen or a legal permanent resident that meets the definition of an eligible non-citizen under State Residency Statute;
5. Be seriously considering attending, have applied, or have been accepted for admission to an eligible four-year bachelor's degree-granting independent or public institution in South Carolina as a first-time, full-time, degree-seeking student;
6. 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 Palmetto Fellows 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 a signed 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 of 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;

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

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

D. A student who graduates immediately after the high school junior year is eligible to apply for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, providing that the student meets all eligibility requirements as described in the "Student Eligibility" Section, and providing that the student is entering an eligible independent or public institution not later than the fall term immediately following high school graduation.

E. Students receiving a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship are not eligible for a LIFE Scholarship, SC HOPE Scholarship or Lottery Tuition Assistance.

F. Any student who attempts to obtain or obtains a 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.

G. To be eligible for a Palmetto Fellows 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 Palmetto Fellows Scholarship as stipulated by state law and regulation and be a recipient of Palmetto Fellows Scholarship funds at the time of Enhancement disbursement.

2. Be enrolled as a full-time, degree-seeking student in a declared major in science, mathematics or an eligible program that is approved and assigned a CIP code by the Commission on Higher Education. Eligible programs include degrees awarded in mathematics and science fields, computer science or informational technology, mathematics or science education, engineering, and healthcare and related disciplines including medicine and dentistry. The student must be making satisfactory academic progress towards completion of their declared major.

3. The Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement is to be an annual award. Half to be disbursed in the fall and half to be disbursed in the spring. Students who change their major from an ineligible degree program to an eligible degree program during the same academic year shall not

receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement during that academic year.

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

5. Effective for the 2007-08 academic year only, all students who are enrolled at a four-year institution as sophomores, juniors and seniors must meet the continued eligibility requirements of earning at least 30 credit hours each academic year and a minimum 3.0 cumulative institutional GPA as stipulated by law and regulation for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship by the end of each academic year, be a recipient of Palmetto Fellows Scholarship funds, and be enrolled as a full-time, degree-seeking student in a declared major of 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 Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement funds. These students may continue to receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement for their remaining terms of eligibility for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship. To be awarded a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement each year, these students must meet all requirements in section 62-1115 and be enrolled as a full-time, degree-seeking student in a declared major of 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 Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement funds; or

6. Beginning with the fall 2007 freshman class and thereafter, all students must have successfully completed a total of at least fourteen credit hours of instruction in mathematics and life and physical science courses with a minimum of six hours in mathematics and a minimum of six hours in life and physical science including one laboratory course during the first year of enrollment. For the purpose of meeting the required minimum level of instruction in mathematics and life and physical science courses during a student's first year, advanced placement 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. In addition, for purposes of meeting the required minimum level of instruction in mathematics and life and physical science courses during a student's first year, Dual enrollment and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses will be allowed to count toward the fulfillment of the minimum fourteen credit hour requirement. Remedial/developmental, continuing education, and non-degree credit coursework cannot be used to meet the specified fourteen hour mathematics and science credit hour requirement to gain eligibility to receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement or to meet the requirements to receive a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship.

7. 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 be eligible to receive a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement in their fifth year of college enrollment (based on initial date of college enrollment after high school graduation). Students enrolled full-time in an eligible, approved 3 plus 2 program may be eligible to receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement for six consecutive terms (i.e., three academic years).

62-1120 Student 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 school officials will identify students who meet the specified eligibility criteria by each established deadline. Applications must be submitted no later than the established deadline(s)

along with the appropriate signatures, official transcripts and test score verification to the Commission on Higher Education. 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 shall submit a list to the Commission on Higher Education indicating the names of all students who meet the eligibility criteria according to the high school. The list shall indicate whether the student is submitting a completed application or declining the opportunity to submit an application. If the student declines the opportunity to submit an application, 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 the Program.

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

1. Score at least 1200 on the SAT or 27 on the ACT through the November test administration of the senior year; earn a minimum 3.50 cumulative GPA 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. Score at least 1400 on the SAT or 32 on the ACT through the November test administration of the senior year and earn a minimum 4.00 cumulative GPA at the end of the junior year, without regard to class rank.

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

1. Score at least 1200 on the SAT or 27 on the ACT through the June test administration of the senior year; earn a minimum 3.50 cumulative GPA at the end of the senior year; and rank in the top six percent of the class at the end of the senior year; or

2. Score at least 1400 on the SAT or 32 on the ACT through the June test administration of the senior year and earn a minimum 4.00 cumulative GPA at the end of the senior year, without regard to class rank.

E. Students must have official certification that they earned the requisite score on the SAT I or an equivalent ACT score. The Commission on Higher Education shall convert all ACT scores to the equivalent SAT scores. In order to determine the minimum composite score for the SAT, students must use the highest Math score combined with the highest Critical Reading score (formerly known as the Verbal score). Students may use the highest Math score and highest Critical Reading/Verbal score from different test administrations. However, students cannot use the Writing subsection score to meet the minimum SAT score requirement. Students may use the SAT version prior to March 2005 and/or the new version to meet the SAT score requirement. In order to determine the minimum composite score for the ACT, students must use the highest composite score based upon one test administration.

F. Grade point averages must be based on the Uniform Grading Scale, reported with at least two decimal places, and may not be rounded up.

G. 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 have 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.

H. In order to apply for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship by using rank as an eligibility criterion, 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. If a home school student is unable to obtain rank verification, he/she may also be eligible by using the alternative criteria of scoring at least 1400 on the SAT (or 32 on the ACT) and earning a minimum 4.00 cumulative GPA on the Uniform Grading Scale, without regard to class rank. These students must meet all other eligibility criteria.

I. Students who attend out-of-state preparatory high schools must be eligible to apply by using the alternative criteria of scoring at least 1400 on the SAT (or 32 on the ACT) and earning a minimum 4.00 cumulative GPA on the Uniform Grading Scale. In order to meet the GPA requirement, students must request that an official designated by the Commission on Higher Education convert the students' grades to the UGS. Any fees and requirements associated with the grade conversion are the responsibility of the student. These students must meet all other eligibility criteria, including South Carolina residency requirements.

62-1125 Selection Process

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

B. In order to accept the Scholarship, students must return a form that designates an eligible independent or public institution in which they plan to enroll by the date established by the Commission on Higher Education.

C. Visually impaired, hearing impaired or multi-handicapped students who qualify for the Scholarship may use the State Scholarship funds 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 whether an out-of-state institution specializes in the postsecondary education of visually impaired, hearing impaired or multi-handicapped students.

D. A student who applied for and was subsequently awarded the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship as a senior in high school, but declined the award to attend a four-year out-of-state institution, is eligible to reapply for the Scholarship upon transferring back to an eligible independent or public institution in South Carolina. Students must have met all initial and continued eligibility requirements for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship. The number of terms a student attended college out-of-state will be deducted from the eight terms of Scholarship eligibility.

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

62-1130 Regaining Eligibility for a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement

A. Students who lose eligibility for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship cannot regain the Scholarship. Therefore, the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement also cannot be regained if lost.

62-1135 Policies and Procedures for Awarding Palmetto Fellows Scholarships and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement

A. The institution shall specify exact award amounts based upon applying the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Regulation and criteria stipulated herein;

1. The annual award amount for first year Palmetto Fellows Scholarship recipients shall not exceed \$6,700 per academic year and the annual award amount for second, third, fourth and fifth year Palmetto Fellow Scholarship recipients shall not exceed \$7,500.
2. The annual award amount for Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement recipients shall not exceed \$2,500 per academic year.

B. The Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Scholarship Enhancement are to be an annual award. Half to be disbursed in the fall and half to be disbursed in the spring. Students who change their major from an ineligible degree program to an eligible degree program during the same academic year shall not receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement for that academic year.

C. Palmetto Fellows Scholarship funds and the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement funds 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 for which the Scholarship 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 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 and the base Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, must be applied to the unmet total cost of attendance in accord with Title IV Regulations before calculating the Scholarship amount and awarding the Scholarship. Adjustments to the financial aid package will be made to the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement in accordance with prescribed Title IV Regulations in order to prevent an over-award.

E. Although a student may be named a Palmetto Fellow, the student may not receive Palmetto Fellows Scholarship or Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement funds if the award, when added to other financial resources, would cause the student to receive total

assistance in excess of the student's cost of attendance as defined by Title IV Regulations and these guidelines.

F. Eligible independent and public institutions will notify students of their award along with the terms and conditions of the award.

G. Upon verification, eligible independent and public institutions will notify the Commission on Higher Education on an annual basis, the names of students who will be awarded the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement.

H. The institution must retain annual paper or electronic documentation for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement 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 not been convicted of any second or subsequent alcohol/drug-related misdemeanor offenses within the past academic year as stated under "Student Eligibility" and "Duration and Renewal of Awards" Sections
3. Award notification
4. Institutional disbursement to student
5. Refund or repayment (if appropriate)
6. Student's residency status
7. Enrollment and curriculum requirements
8. Verification from the institutional Disability Services Provider of student's disability and approval of reduced course-load requirement (if appropriate)
9. Military mobilization orders (if appropriate)
10. 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 Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement.

I. It is the institution's responsibility to ensure that only eligible students receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement.

62-1140 Duration and Renewal of Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement

In order to receive a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement the student must be a recipient of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and meet the following criteria under this section.

A. A Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement shall be initially awarded for one academic year. The institution shall adjust the amount of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and the Scholarship Enhancement award during the academic year in the event of a change in the student's eligibility.

B. Students selected as Palmetto Fellows must enter an eligible independent or public institution the fall term immediately following high school graduation.

C. A Palmetto Fellows Scholarship may be renewed annually for no more than a total of eight

terms and a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement for no more than six years (or its equivalent) of full-time study toward the first bachelor's degree. Students must maintain their undergraduate status, with the exception of students enrolled in the Master of Science in Physician Assistant studies, Master of Science in Cytology and Biosciences and the Doctor of Pharmacy program at the University of South Carolina and the Medical University of South Carolina, in order to receive a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement each academic year. Students enrolled in an approved five-year degree program may be eligible to receive a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship for a fifth year of full-time, undergraduate work and a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement for a fourth year of full-time undergraduate coursework.

D. The institution shall be responsible for obtaining institutional certification of each recipient's cumulative grade point average, credit hours earned and verification from the academic department of enrollment status in a declared major for purposes of determining eligibility for award renewal. By the end of the spring term, the institution shall notify all Palmetto Fellows who have not met the continued eligibility requirements for the next academic year. The notification should also include information regarding the student's ability to attend summer school in order to meet the continued eligibility requirements.

E. In order to retain eligibility for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement after the initial year, the student must meet the following continued eligibility requirements:

1. Enroll full-time at the time of the Scholarship disbursement;
2. Earn at least a cumulative 3.0 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. Be enrolled as a full-time, degree-seeking student in a declared major in science, mathematics or an eligible program that is approved and assigned a CIP code by the Commission on Higher Education. Eligible programs include degrees awarded in mathematics and science fields, computer science or informational technology, mathematics or science education, engineering,
5. 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 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 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 Palmetto Fellows 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 a signed 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 of 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;

F. 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

62-1145 Transfer of Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement

A. Palmetto Fellows enrolled at a four-year public or independent institution may transfer the Scholarship to another eligible independent or public institution in South Carolina upon obtaining prior approval from the Commission on Higher Education by submitting either a transfer form or reapplication form.

B. Transfer students are only eligible to receive the Scholarship for the remaining terms of eligibility (based on the initial date of college enrollment) for no more than eight terms (or its equivalent) of college attendance.

C. Transfer students must comply with all standards for continued eligibility as defined under "Duration and Renewal of Awards" Section in order for their Scholarship to be eligible for transfer.

D. Students transferring to an eligible public or independent four-year SC institution may be eligible to receive a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement if:

1. The student applied for and was offered a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship as a senior in high school but declined the award to attend an out-of-state institution and is now reapplying and transferring from an out-of-state institution to an eligible public or independent four-year institution at the end of the academic year. The student must meet all requirements as stipulated under section 62-1115 and be a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship recipient at the end of the first academic year in order to be awarded the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement beginning the fall term of the second, third and/or fourth year of enrollment. Transfer students enrolled full-time in an eligible, Commission-approved five-year degree program may be eligible to receive a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement in their fifth year of college enrollment (based on initial date of college enrollment after high school graduation).

2. The student applied for and was offered a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship as a senior in high school but declined the award to attend an out-of-state institution and is now reapplying and transferring from an out-of-state institution to an eligible public or independent four-year institution mid-year (i.e., spring term). The student may be eligible to receive a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement for the fall term of the second, third or fourth year of enrollment, if the student has met all of the requirements stipulated under section 62-1115. Transfer students enrolled full-time in an eligible, Commission approved five-year program may be eligible to receive a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement in their fifth year of college enrollment (based on initial date of college enrollment after high school graduation).

62-1150 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 eligibility requirements as defined in the "Student Eligibility" Section, except for the full-time enrollment requirement, in order to be eligible to receive Scholarship funding. Students must comply with all 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 number of annual credit hours for that academic year. Each academic year for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement 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 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.

C. The institutional Disability Services Provider must provide written documentation to the Office of Financial Aid prior to each academic year verifying that the student is approved to be enrolled in less than full-time status or less than the required annual credit hours. It is the responsibility of transfer students to provide written documentation from the previous institutional Disability Services Provider.

D. Palmetto Fellows who qualify under ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are eligible to receive up to the maximum number of available terms and available funds.

62-1155 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

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 Scholarship 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 Scholarship 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 fifteen credit hours and a cumulative 3.0 grade point average for graduation purposes by the end of the academic year to be eligible for Scholarship renewal for the next academic year. The student may continue to be eligible to receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship for up to a total of eight terms and the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement for up to a total of six terms (or its equivalent) at all institutions attended (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, Scholarship renewal for the next academic year will be based on the prior year's eligibility. The student may continue to be eligible to receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship for up to a total of eight terms and the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement for up to a total six terms (or its equivalent) at all institutions attended (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. 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 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 27 credit hours (or its equivalent) by the end of the academic year. The student must meet all continued eligibility requirements, except for the completion of the thirty credit hour requirement for the academic year.

F. The home institution will be responsible for obtaining official certification of the student's cumulative grade point average, credit hours earned and verification from the academic department of enrollment status in a declared major for the purposes of determining eligibility for Scholarship renewal for the next academic year.

62-1160 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 renew the Scholarship for the next academic year, if they met the continued eligibility requirements at the end of the prior academic year. Service members may continue to be eligible to receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship for up to a total of eight terms and the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement for up to a total of six terms (or its equivalent) at all institutions attended (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 fifteen credit hours and earn a cumulative 3.0 grade point average for graduation purposes by the end of the academic year to be eligible for Scholarship renewal for the next academic year. Service members may continue to be eligible to receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship for up to a total of eight terms and the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement for up to a total of six terms (or its equivalent) at all institutions attended (provided the service member meets the continued eligibility requirements).

D. In order to receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and a Palmetto Fellows 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 credit hours (or its equivalent) 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 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 thirty credit hour requirement for the academic year.

E. The home institution will be responsible for obtaining verification of military mobilization status, cumulative grade point average, credit hours earned and verification from the academic department of enrollment status in a declared major for the purposes of determining eligibility for Scholarship renewal for the next academic year.

62-1165 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 criteria for renewal of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship forfeits continued participation in the Program and may request an appeal based on extenuating circumstances.

C. A student is allowed to submit only one appeal each academic year.

D. A student wishing to appeal any non-renewal decision based on extenuating circumstances must submit the following source documents to the Commission on Higher Education by no later than the established deadline of the academic year the scholarship is requested:

1. A completed application for appeal
2. A letter requesting an appeal describing the extenuating circumstances
3. An official transcript(s)
4. Any other supporting documentation to substantiate the basis for the appeal

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. Appeal Guidelines apply only to the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, not the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement. Students cannot appeal solely on the basis of a loss of a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement.

G. The Appeals Committee's decision is final.

62-1170 Institutional Disbursement of Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Funds

A. The institution will identify Palmetto Fellows Scholarship amounts, which cannot exceed \$6,700 per academic year for first year students and \$7,500 for second, third, fourth and fifth year students. The institution will identify Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement amounts which cannot exceed \$2,500 for the second, third, fourth and fifth year. Half of each Scholarship shall be awarded during the fall term and half during the spring (or its equivalent), assuming continued eligibility. Scholarships cannot be disbursed during the summer or any interim sessions with the exception of disbursements that meet the requirements under the "Enrollment in Internships, Cooperative Work Programs, Travel Study Programs, or National or International Student Exchange Programs" or "Military Mobilization" Sections. Palmetto Fellows Scholarships may not be funded for more than a total of eight terms and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancements may not be funded for more than a total of six terms (or its equivalent) of full-time study toward the first bachelor's degree. Students must maintain their undergraduate status, with the exception of students enrolled in the Master of Science in Physician Assistant studies, Master of Science in Cytology and Biosciences and the Doctor of Pharmacy program at the University of South Carolina and the Medical University of South Carolina, in order to receive a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement each academic year. Students enrolled in an approved five-year degree program may be eligible to receive a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship for a fifth year of full-time, undergraduate coursework and a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement for a fourth year of full-time undergraduate coursework.

B. The Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement may

not be applied to remedial/developmental 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 "Program Definitions" Section.

C. The institution shall provide each Palmetto Fellow with an award notification for their Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement 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 terms for the award.

D. 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 funds and/or return of funds by the established deadline each term. 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.

E. The Commission will disburse awards to the eligible independent and public institutions to be placed in each eligible student's account.

G. Students who change their major from an ineligible degree program to an eligible degree program during the same academic year shall not receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement for that academic year. 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 Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement during the current academic year; however, the student cannot be awarded the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship the next academic year of enrollment in an ineligible degree program.

62-1175 Refunds and Repayments Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement

A. In the event a student who has been awarded a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and a 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 Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program for the amount of the Scholarship 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 Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement may be retained by the student pursuant to the refund policies of the institution.

C. The Palmetto Fellows Scholarship as well as award amounts for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement are both contingent on the availability of funds appropriated by the General Assembly each academic year.

62-1180 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 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 Palmetto Fellows 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 independent and public 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 eligible independent and public institution shall identify to the Commission on Higher Education a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement 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.

62-1190 Suspension or Termination of Institutional Participation

A. The Commission on Higher Education 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 on Higher Education may suspend, terminate, or place certain conditions upon the institution's continued participation in the Program and require reimbursement to the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship 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.

Statement of Rationale: The Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement regulation is required by Section 59-149-30 and 59-149-15(B) of Act 115 of 2007 in implementing the legislation.

Document No.
COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION
CHAPTER 62
Statutory Authority: 1976 Code Section 59-149-10

62-1200.1-120 Legislative Incentives for Future Excellence (LIFE) Scholarship Enhancement

Instructions: The following regulation will replace in its entirety R.62-900.1 through 62-900.70, LIFE Scholarship Program, to Chapter 62 regulation.

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.

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 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. 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 in order 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, Advanced Placement (AP) credit hours, exempted credit hours, and credit hours earned on active duty must count toward the annual credit hour requirement.

E. "Associate's degree program" is defined as a two-year technical or occupational program, or 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 GPA. Exempted credit hours, Advanced Placement (AP), College Level Examination Program (CLEP), remedial/developmental courses, non-degree credit courses for an associate's degree or higher, Pass/Fail 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, or Advanced Placement (AP) 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 by the Commission on Higher Education for eligible degree programs in the fields of 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 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 must be approved by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education. A list of approved majors must be submitted each year from the institutions to the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education for approval.

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, 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 Master's of Science in Physician Assistant Studies Program, the Master's of Science in Cytology and Biosciences Program and the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at the University of South Carolina-Columbia and 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 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.

N. "Eligible institution" shall be defined, solely for the purposes of the annual credit hour requirement and the LIFE 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 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.

P. "Eligible degree program/Qualifying degree program" shall be defined, for the purposes of the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement, as a degree program in mathematics or science as approved by the SC Commission on Higher Education. These programs shall include science and mathematics disciplines, computer science or informational technology, engineering, science education, math education 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. The SC Commission on Higher Education will issue a list of eligible, approved majors each academic year.

Q. "Felonies" shall be defined as a 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.

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 high school located in South Carolina, an approved home school 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 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."

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 list of approved eligible programs and assigned a CIP code.

AA. "Initial college enrollment" shall mean the first time the student matriculates 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" 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 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 62-900.55 for the steps to calculate the "LIFE 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.

EE. "Misdemeanor offenses" shall be defined as a 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 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."

II. "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 Master's of Science in Physician Assistant Studies Program, the Master's of Science in Cytology and Biosciences Program and the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at the University of South Carolina-Columbia and the Medical University of South Carolina.

JJ. "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."

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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; and
2. Be a South Carolina resident for in-state purposes at the time of high school graduation

and at the time of 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;

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 Uniform Grading Scale (UGS) upon high school graduation. No other grading policy will be allowed to qualify for the LIFE Scholarship. 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.

b. Score at least an 1100 on the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) or an equivalent ACT score of 24. Test scores will be accepted through the June 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 Critical Reading score (formerly known as the Verbal score). It is permissible to select scores from different test administrations in order to obtain the qualifying composite score. Students cannot use the Writing subsection score to obtain the qualifying composite score. The composite ACT score must be based upon one test administration.

c. Rank in the top thirty percent of the graduating class consisting of high school diploma candidates only. The rank must also be based on the UGS only. 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. Institutions shall use the final ranking as reported by the high school on the official transcript. If a student is a member of an approved home school association that ranks, a ranking report must be attached to the official transcript.

4. Earn a cumulative 3.0 grade point average (GPA) on the Uniform Grading Scale upon high school graduation and score at least an 1100 on the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT I) or an equivalent ACT score of 24 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 Scale 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, 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 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 graduation date reported on the final high school transcript may be eligible to receive the LIFE Scholarship dependent on the approval of the Commission on Higher Education (CHE). 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 for the spring semester since the class has not officially graduated. A student may use class rank to receive the Scholarship after the class officially graduates. 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 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 GPA" or credit hour calculations.

II. 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 GPA" or credit hour requirements if they are enrolled in an Associate's degree or higher.

I. First-time entering freshmen attending an eligible two-year or technical college who enroll full-time in remedial/developmental courses during the first term(s) will not be eligible for Scholarship funds during this period. Credit hours earned during the 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. The student will be eligible for the Scholarship for the term following completion of remediation if the student was eligible to receive the LIFE 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 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 full-time in remedial/developmental courses must meet the scholarship eligibility requirements (earn a 3.0 "LIFE 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.

K. Students receiving a LIFE Scholarship are not eligible to receive a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, SC HOPE Scholarship or Lottery Tuition Assistance.

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 Master's of Science in Physician Assistant Studies Program, Master's of Science in Cytology and Biosciences Program and the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at the University of South Carolina-Columbia and 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 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 SC high school prior to the full implementation of the Uniform Grading Scale in 2004 (if the high school had not already converted to UGS) must have their high school transcript converted by a designated official appointed by the Commission on Higher Education to the UGS in order to qualify for the LIFE Scholarship. Any fees and requirements for the conversion are the responsibility of the student. Students who attended high school out-of-state must meet the South Carolina residency requirement.

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 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 math and science fields, computer science or informational technology, engineering, science education, math education 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. Effective for the 2007-08 academic year only, all students who are enrolled at a four-year institution as a sophomore, junior or senior must meet the continued eligibility

requirements of earning a minimum average of 30 credit hours and a minimum 3.0 LIFE GPA as stipulated by law and regulation for the LIFE Scholarship by the end of each academic year, be a recipient of LIFE Scholarship funds, and be enrolled as a full-time, degree-seeking student in a declared major of 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. These students may continue to receive the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement for their remaining terms of eligibility for the LIFE Scholarship. To be awarded a LIFE Scholarship Enhancement each year, these students must meet all requirements for the LIFE Scholarship and be enrolled as a full-time, degree-seeking student in a declared major of 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;

5. Beginning with the Fall 2007 freshman class and thereafter, all students must have successfully completed a total of at least fourteen credit hours of instruction in mathematics and life and physical science courses with a minimum of six hours in mathematics and a minimum of six hours in life and physical science including one laboratory course 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 mathematics and life and physical science courses during a student's first year, Exempted Credit Hours, College Level Examination Program (CLEP), Dual Enrollment, Pass/Fail courses with a grade of "Pass" (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;
6. Meet the continued eligibility requirements for the LIFE Scholarship of a minimum 3.0 LIFE GPA and a minimum average of 30 credit hours by the end of each academic year;
7. 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
8. 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 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.

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. 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.

62-1200.15 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 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 GPA" requirement by the end of the summer term.

C. Students who 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 GPA" at the end of the academic year. For subsequent years, the student must meet the annual credit hour requirement and 3.0 LIFE 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.

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 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 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).

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, 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 Master's of Science in Physician Assistant Studies Program, the Master's of Science in Cytology and Biosciences Program and the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at the University of South Carolina-Columbia and 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	Maximum Terms of Eligibility	Average Credit Hours Earned at the End of Each Academic Year				
		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
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.

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 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 Master's of Science in Physician Assistant Studies Program, the Master's of Science in Cytology and Biosciences Program and the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at the University of South Carolina-Columbia and 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 not initially eligible upon high school graduation or failed to meet the continued eligibility requirements may 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 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 62-1200.25 (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 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 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 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 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 62-1200.30 (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 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 SC, students must meet the following requirements at the end of the previous academic year:

1. Earn a cumulative 3.0 LIFE 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 62-900.15 (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 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 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 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 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 enrollment, if the student earned a 3.0 LIFE 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 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 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 fifteen credit hours and earn a 3.0 "LIFE GPA" by the end of the academic year to be eligible for LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement renewal for the next academic year. 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 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 fifteen credit hours and earn a 3.0 "LIFE GPA" by the end of the academic year to be eligible for LIFE Scholarship and LIFE Scholarship Enhancement renewal for the next academic year. 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 credit hours (or its equivalent) 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 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. Failure to submit an appeal 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 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 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 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 GPA

4) "LIFE GPA" Formula:
$$\frac{(\text{Grade Points} \times \text{Attempted Credited Hours} = \text{QP})}{\text{Total Attempted Credit Hours}} = \text{LIFE GPA}$$

F. The "LIFE 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 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 Master's of Science in Physician Assistant Studies Program, Master's of Science in Cytology and Biosciences Program and the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at the University of South Carolina-Columbia and 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 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 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) 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.

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.

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 Master's of Science in Physician Assistant Studies Program, the Master's of Science in Cytology and Biosciences Program and the Doctor of Pharmacy Program at the University of South Carolina-Columbia and 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 the 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.

**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.

Statement of Rationale: LIFE Scholarship Enhancement Regulation is required by Section 59-149-30 and 59-149-15(B) of Act 115 of 2007 in implementing the legislation.

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

62-900.85–140 South Carolina HOPE Scholarship

Synopsis:

The Commission on Higher Education proposes to amend and replace in its entirety R.62-900 of the SC HOPE Scholarship Program. Revisions to the existing regulation for the SC HOPE Scholarship Program are being considered to clarify the policies and procedures for administering the program. The proposed amendment will make the Scholarship regulation consistent with recently approved legislation, Act 115 approved during the 2007 legislative session: SC HOPE scholarships are authorized in an amount of up to two thousand five hundred dollars, plus a three hundred dollar book allowance to cover the cost of attendance, as defined by the Commission on Higher Education by regulation, during the first year of attendance only, to an eligible student attending a four-year public or independent institution as defined in subsection who does not also qualify for a LIFE Scholarship or a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship. The proposed amendment will make the Scholarship regulation consistent with recently approved legislation, Act #103 approved during the 2007 legislative session: SC HOPE recipients who are convicted or pled guilty or nolo contendere of their second or subsequent alcohol related offense would lose their SC HOPE Scholarship if convicted or pled guilty or nolo contendere before the year begins, and lose their LIFE Scholarship for the following year if they have already received SC HOPE funds for the academic year in which they were convicted. There are also additional clarifications being proposed such as adding definitions and minor grammatical changes to promote consistency among the State scholarship and grant programs. The proposed regulation for the SC HOPE Scholarship Program was published in the *State Register* on October ____, 2007. The Commission on Higher Education conducted a public hearing on December ____, 2007.

Instructions: The following regulation will replace in its entirety R.62-900.85 through 62-900.140, SC HOPE Scholarship Program, to Chapter 62 regulation.

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.

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.

G. "Felonics" 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 high school located in South Carolina, an approved home school 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 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." 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.

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. "Multihandicapped 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.

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

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;
2. Be a South Carolina resident for in-state purposes at the time of high school graduation and at the time of 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;
3. Earn a cumulative 3.0 grade point average (GPA) based on the Uniform Grading Scale (UGS) upon high school graduation. 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. 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;
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 ~~only~~ 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 Scale. 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 Scale in 2004 must request that an official designated by the Commission on Higher Education convert the student's grades to the UGS (if the high school had not already converted to the UGS). Any fees and requirements associated with the conversion are the responsibility of the student. 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, 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 may be eligible to receive the SC HOPE Scholarship pending the approval of the Commission on Higher Education (CHE). The institutional representative must complete and submit an Early Graduation Application Form and all appropriate documentation as deemed necessary by CHE for each student 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 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.

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.

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 one institution to an eligible institution during the freshman year of attendance is eligible to receive the SC HOPE Scholarship if the student met the eligibility requirements as stated in the "Student Eligibility" Section at the beginning of the academic 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'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.

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 six hundred fifty dollars~~ two thousand eight hundred dollars (includes ~~\$150~~ \$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)

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.

62-900.130 Institutional Disbursements

A. The eligible institution will identify award amounts, which cannot exceed ~~two thousand six hundred fifty dollars~~ two thousand eight hundred dollars (includes ~~\$150~~ \$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 a full-time, 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 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 (c.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.

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.

Fiscal Impact Statement: Estimated fiscal impact of increased book allowance is \$366,600.

Statement of Rationale: Revisions to the SC HOPE Scholarship regulation were necessary to be consistent with legislation approved during the 2007 legislative session.

Document Number 2755
COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION
Chapter 62
Statutory Authority: 1976 Code Section 59-142-20

62-450 South Carolina Need-based Grants Program

Synopsis:

The General Assembly passed Act 103 establishing that any LIFE, Palmetto Fellows, SC HOPE or SC Need-based Grant recipient who is adjudicated delinquent or been convicted or pled guilty or nolo contendere to any felonies or 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 will lose their State Scholarship or Grant for the following academic year. The Commission on Higher Education proposes to amend and replace in its entirety R.62-460 (Q) of the South Carolina Need-based Grants Program. The proposed amendments will clarify the policies and procedures in identifying a South Carolina resident.

Text:

Table of Contents:

- 62-450 Purpose of the South Carolina Need-based Grants Program
 - 62-455 Allocation of Need-based Grant Funds to Public and Independent Institutions
 - 62-460 Program Definitions for Administering South Carolina Need-based Grants at Public Institutions
 - 62-465 Student Eligibility
 - 62-470 Policies and Procedures for Awarding Need-based Grants
 - 62-475 Duration of Award and Continued Eligibility
 - 62-480 Students with Disabilities
 - 62-485 Enrollment in Internships, Cooperative Work Programs, Travel Study Programs, or National or International Student Exchange Programs
 - 62-490 Institutional Disbursement of Need-based Grants
 - 62-495 Refunds and Repayments
 - 62-500 Program Administration and Audits
 - 62-505 Suspension or Termination of Institutional Participation
- 62-450 Purpose of the South Carolina Need-based Grants Program

Pursuant to Act 458, South Carolina Children First: Resources for Scholarships and Tuition Act of 1996, of the 1995-1996 Appropriations Bill, the Commission on Higher Education shall promulgate regulation and establish procedures to administer the South Carolina Need-based Grants Program. The purpose of the South Carolina Need-based Grants Program is to provide additional financial aid assistance to South Carolina's neediest students. The program will assist students who wish to attend public or independent colleges or universities in the State.

62-455 Allocation of Need-based Grant Funds to Public and Independent Institutions

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. The Commission on Higher Education shall award to eligible students who are attending public or independent eligible institutions as State Need-based Grant recipients as follows:

1. Of the funds allocated to public institutions, the percentage shall be equivalent to the percentage of the public institution's share of the total South Carolina resident undergraduate full-time headcount enrollment in the preceding year.

2. Of the funds allocated to independent institutions, the percentage shall be equivalent to the percentage of the independent institutions' share of the total South Carolina resident undergraduate full-time headcount enrollment in the preceding year and will be determined annually by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education and the Tuition Grants Commission. The funds allocated for Need-based Grants shall be included in the annual appropriation to the Commission on Higher Education and transferred annually into the budget of the South Carolina Tuition Grants Commission, which will distribute these funds as Tuition Grants.

62-460 Program Definitions for Administering South Carolina Need-based Grants at Public Institutions

A. "Academic year" is defined as the fall and spring semesters during which a part-time student would be expected to earn a minimum of twelve credit hours or a full-time student would be expected to earn a minimum of 24 credit hours.

B. "Associate degree program" is defined as a two-year technical or occupational program or an associate's degree program (Associate of Arts or Associate of Science) which leads to the first two years of a baccalaureate degree at a location approved by the U.S. Department of Education for participation in Federally funded financial aid programs and authorized by the Commission on Higher Education.

C. "Baccalaureate degree program" is defined as an undergraduate program of study leading to the first bachelor's degree at a location approved by the U.S. Department of Education for participation in Federally funded financial aid programs and authorized by the Commission on Higher Education.

D. "Degree-seeking student" is defined as any part-time or full-time student enrolled in an eligible program of study at an eligible institution.

E. "Eligible program" is defined as a program of study leading to: 1) the first baccalaureate degree 2) a program of study that is structured so as not to require a baccalaureate degree and leads to a graduate degree; 3) first associate's degree or two-year program that is acceptable for full credit towards a bachelor's degree; or 4) one-year program that leads to other recognized credentials (e.g., first diploma or first certificate). Study toward the first diploma or certificate may be followed by study toward the first associate's degree, which may be followed by transfer to the first baccalaureate degree or a program of study that is structured so as not to require a baccalaureate degree and leads to a graduate degree. Students who have already obtained a baccalaureate degree are not eligible for subsequent grant funds.

F. "Full-time student" shall mean a student who has matriculated into an eligible program of study, and who enrolls in a minimum of twelve credit hours during the regular academic semester.

G. "Independent 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 whose major campus and headquarters are located within South Carolina and which is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools."

H. "Need analysis" shall mean the process of analyzing the household and financial information on the student's financial aid application and calculating the amount the family can be expected to contribute to the educational costs. For Federal Student Aid Programs, the need analysis system is defined under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

I. "Needy student" shall mean a post-secondary student enrolled in or accepted for enrollment in a public institution who demonstrates to the institution the financial inability, either parental, familial, or personal, to bear the total cost-of-attendance for any regular academic semester. The determination of need shall be made in accordance with Federal need analysis formulae and provisions.

J. An "offense" shall mean a violation of any law or rule in any state or Federal criminal justice system.

K. "One-year program" is defined as an undergraduate program of study leading to other recognized educational credentials (e.g., certificates or diplomas that prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation) at a location approved by the U.S. Department of Education for participation in Federally funded financial aid programs and is authorized by either the Commission on Higher Education or the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education.

L. "Part-time student" shall mean a student who has matriculated into an eligible program of study, and who enrolls in a minimum of six credit hours and a maximum of eleven credit hours during the regular academic semester.

M. "Program of study that is structured so as not to require a baccalaureate degree" is a program of study that is structured so as not to require a baccalaureate degree for acceptance into the program

and leads to a graduate degree, which will be the student's first academic degree awarded, at a location approved by the U.S. Department of Education for participation in Federally funded financial aid programs. Students are eligible to receive the grant for a maximum of eight full-time equivalent semesters as long as all other eligibility criteria are met. Students who have been awarded a baccalaureate or graduate degree are not eligible for grant funding.

N. "Public institutions" are those institutions as defined in Chapter 103 of Title 59 of the 1976 Code, which stipulates that: "1) 'public higher education' shall mean state-supported education in the post-secondary field, including comprehensive and technical education; 2) 'public institution of higher learning' shall mean any state-supported post-secondary educational institution and shall include technical and comprehensive educational institutions."

O. "Remedial coursework" shall mean sub-collegiate level preparatory courses in English, mathematics, and reading offered at the State's technical colleges.

P. "Satisfactory academic progress" shall mean the minimum academic standard for academic progress established by the public institution for the purpose of complying with Title IV regulations for Federal Student Aid Programs.

Q. "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, Statute 59-112-10.

62-465 Student Eligibility

A. To be eligible for a Need-based Grant each academic year, the student must:

1. Be a "needy student" following the financial need analysis as established under Title IV Regulations for determining eligibility for Federal Student Aid. The student must file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Form;

2. Be a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident that meets the definition of an eligible non-citizen under State Residency Statute;

3. Be a resident of the state of South Carolina for twelve consecutive months as defined in Chapter 112 of Title 59 of the 1976 Code of Laws governing the determination of residency for tuition and fee purposes, unless the student qualifies for an exception as defined in the residency regulation promulgated by the Commission on Higher Education;

4. Be enrolled or accepted for enrollment as a part-time or full-time degree-seeking student in an eligible program of study at an eligible public institution in South Carolina. A student enrolled in less than six credit hours during one semester may not receive a Need-based Grant for the semester in question but is eligible for reapplication for a grant upon return to part-time or full-time status;

5. Be enrolled and attending or have completed at the time of the grant disbursement in a minimum of six credit hours if part-time for the semester or twelve credit hours if full-time for the

semester;

6. Certify that he/she has not been adjudicated delinquent or been convicted or pled guilty or nolo contendere to any felonies or 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 in order to be eligible for a South Carolina need-based grant, 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 grants after the expiration of one academic year from the date of the adjudication, conviction, or plea; and be eligible for the need-based grants for a maximum of four academic years of two semesters by submitting a signed 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 of a second or subsequent 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 Need-based Grant the remainder of the academic year. However, the student will be ineligible for the Need-based Grant 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 grant eligibility; and

7. Verify that he/she does not owe a refund or repayment on a State Grant, a Pell Grant, or a Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant and is not in default on a loan under the Federal Perkins Loan or Federal Stafford Loan Programs; and

8. Must reapply for the Need-based Grant each academic year and meet all eligibility requirements annually.

B. Students enrolled part-time or full-time may not receive a Need-based Grant for more than a maximum of eight full-time equivalent semesters. Students who have already been awarded their first baccalaureate degree are not eligible to receive a Need-based Grant.

C. Students enrolled in an eligible program of study as stated in the "Program Definitions" Section may include remedial courses as part of the minimum number of required credit hours for part-time or full-time status, as long as such courses carry credit hours and meet Title IV limitations on remedial coursework.

D. Any false information provided by the student or any attempt to obtain or expend any Need-based Grant for unlawful purposes or any purpose other than in payment or reimbursement for the cost-of-attendance at the institution authorized to award the grant will be cause for immediate cancellation of the Need-based Grant. Any student who has obtained a Need-based Grant 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 Need-based Grant.

A. The Need-based Grants Program for the public institutions will be campus-administered. Grant funds will supplement the student financial aid awards administered by the participating public colleges and universities.

B. The participating institution will make awards in amounts to be defined in accordance with the Need-based Grants Program regulation and criteria, but not to exceed \$1,250 per eligible part-time student and \$2,500 per eligible full-time student per academic year, based on the institution's allocated funds for Need-based Grants and other financial aid awarded to individual applicants. However, the Commission, due to inflation increases or other relevant factors, may periodically adjust the maximum award for the Need-based Grants Program. Half of the grant shall be disbursed during the fall semester and half disbursed during the spring semester, assuming continued eligibility.

C. Need-based Grants are to be used only towards payment for the cost-of-attendance as defined by Title IV Regulations as modified by D below for the academic year for which the award is made at the designated institution. The maximum amount awarded shall not exceed the cost-of-attendance as defined in Title IV Regulations for any 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 on-campus meal plan, which includes 21 meals per week.

E. In determining the amount awarded for the Need-based Grant, all other sources of gift aid, including Federal, State, private and institutional funds, must be applied to the total cost-of-attendance in accordance with Title IV Regulations before calculating the unmet need and awarding the grant. The Need-based Grant shall be awarded only after all other sources of gift aid have been exhausted. Adjustments to the financial aid package will be made to the Need-based Grant in accordance with prescribed Title IV Regulations in order to prevent an over-award.

F. Institutions must give first priority and award the maximum allowable Need-based Grant (\$2,500 if full-time or \$1,250 if part-time) to students who are in the custody of the South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS). However, institutions should not award the maximum amount if, by doing so, this causes the student to exceed the unmet need according to Title IV Regulations. Students who may be eligible under this provision are responsible for contacting the institution and providing official verification to the institution that he/she is in custody of DSS. Acceptable verification shall include a letter from DSS.

G. Participating institutions will notify students of their Need-based Grant along with the terms and conditions of the award.

H. Annual allocations of funds to the public institutions will be based on each institution's percentage of the State's total enrollment of South Carolina resident undergraduate full-time degree-seeking headcount enrollment. The percentage will be based on the previous year's total as

determined by the Commission on Higher Education. Unused funds, which cannot be awarded by an institution, must be returned to the Commission on Higher Education, which may redirect the funds to institutions where unmet need exists.

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

1. Need analysis
2. Affidavit documenting that the student has never been convicted of any felonies or any second or subsequent alcohol or drug related misdemeanor offenses as stated under "Student Eligibility" and "Duration of Award and Continued Eligibility" Sections
3. Award notification
4. Institutional disbursement to student
5. Refund or repayment (if appropriate)
6. Satisfactory academic progress
7. Student's residency status
8. Enrollment and curriculum requirements
9. Student's disability (if appropriate)
10. Student is in custody of DSS (if appropriate)
11. Student award based upon approval of institutional appeal (if appropriate)

J. It is the institution's responsibility to ensure that only eligible students receive a Need-based Grant.

62-475 Duration of Award and Continued Eligibility

A. Need-based Grants shall be awarded each academic year. The institution shall adjust the amount of the grant award during the academic year in the event of a change in the student's eligibility.

B. Need-based Grants may be awarded annually for no more than a total of eight full-time equivalent semesters of part-time or full-time study. Award decisions will be made annually and are not automatically guaranteed. Students who have already been awarded their first baccalaureate degree are not eligible to receive a Need-based Grant.

C. Students must reapply each academic year for a Need-based Grant in accord with these guidelines and other pertinent statutes and regulations and with application timeliness and procedures stipulated by the participating institution. Students applying for a Need-based Grant must complete a FAFSA Form and be a needy student. The student must also complete any supplemental forms that may be required by the institution.

D. The institution shall be responsible for securing institutional certification of each recipient's cumulative grade point average, credit hours attempted and earned, and satisfactory academic progress for purposes of determining eligibility for award renewal.

E. For continued eligibility, the student is required to:

1. For graduation purposes, earn at least 24 credit hours each regular academic year if awarded a Need-based Grant as a full-time student or earn at least twelve credit hours each regular academic year if awarded a Need-based Grant as a part-time student. If a student is awarded a Need-based Grant for one semester of the academic year as a part-time student and the other semester as a full-time student, the student must earn at least eighteen credit hours each regular academic year. If a student is awarded a Need-based Grant for only one semester of the academic year, the student must earn at least twelve credit hours each regular academic year if a full-time student or earn at least six credit hours each regular academic year if a part-time student. Credits earned during any additional semesters (i.e., interim, winterim, maymester, summer or other non-regular semester) cannot be used to replace or reduce the minimum credit hour requirement for the regular academic year; and

2. Earn at least a cumulative 2.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale for graduation purposes by the end of each regular academic year.

F. Students wishing to appeal any grant award decision must submit a written request to the institution's Director of Financial Aid. This request will be handled in accordance with the institution's financial aid appeal procedures. The institution's decision on appeals shall be final.

62-480 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 "Student Eligibility" Section except for a student who is approved by the Disability Services Provider to be enrolled in less than part-time status is eligible to receive grant funding. Students must comply with all institutional policies and procedures in accordance with ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

B. For renewal, students who qualify under ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 must meet all renewal requirements as defined in "Duration of Award and Continued Eligibility" Section except for a student not meeting the annual credit hour requirement who is approved by the Disability Services Provider to be enrolled in less than part-time status for that academic year. Students must earn the required number of hours approved by the institutional Disability Services Provider each academic year for grant renewal and earn a minimum 2.0 cumulative grade point average on a 4.0 scale by the end of the academic year. Students must comply with all institutional policies and procedures in accordance with ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

C. The institutional Disability Services Provider must provide written documentation to the Office of Financial Aid each academic year verifying that the student is approved to be enrolled in less than part-time status.

D. Students who qualify under ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are

eligible to receive up to the maximum number of available semesters and available funds.

62-485 Enrollment in Internships, Cooperative Work Programs, Travel Study Programs, or National or International Student Exchange Programs

A. Students enrolled in an internship, cooperative work program, travel study program, or National or International Student Exchange Program approved by the student's home institution, and enrolled in fewer than six credit hours, shall not be eligible to receive a Need-based Grant during the period in which the student is enrolled in such programs or courses. Students enrolled in such programs may receive a Need-based Grant during a subsequent fall or spring semester if determined to be eligible.

B. 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 at least part-time transfer credit (minimum of six credit hours) are eligible to receive Need-based Grant funds during the period in which the student is enrolled in such programs. Students will be required to meet the continued eligibility requirements.

C. Eligible students may use the appropriated portion of the Need-based Grant 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 at least part-time transfer credit (minimum of six credit hours). Need-based Grant 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 grant funds to the institutions where students will participate in internships, cooperative work programs, travel study programs, or National or International Student Exchange Programs. The institution is responsible for grant funds according to the "Program Administration and Audits" Section.

D. The home institution will be responsible for securing official certification of the student's cumulative grade point average, credit hours earned, and satisfactory academic progress for the purposes of determining eligibility for grant renewal for the next academic year.

62-490 Institutional Disbursement of Need-based Grants

A. The participating institution will identify award amounts, which cannot exceed \$1,250 per eligible part-time student and \$2,500 per eligible full-time student per academic year. Half of the grant shall be disbursed during the fall semester and half disbursed during the spring semester, assuming continued eligibility. The maximum amount, which may be received by a recipient for eight full-time equivalent semesters, shall be \$10,000 for students seeking their first baccalaureate degree or a program of study that is structured so as not to require a baccalaureate degree and leads to a graduate degree, \$5,000 for students seeking their first associate's degree, and \$2,500 for students seeking their first one-year certificate or diploma. Students who have obtained an associate's degree initially are eligible to apply for a Need-based Grant upon enrollment in their first baccalaureate degree or a program of study that is structured so as not to require a baccalaureate degree. Students who have obtained a recognized educational credential in a one-year program

initially are eligible for application for a Need-based Grant upon enrollment in their first associate's degree, first baccalaureate degree, or a program of study that is structured so as not to require a baccalaureate degree and leads to a graduate degree.

B. A Need-based Grant may not be applied to a second baccalaureate 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 baccalaureate degree as defined in the "Program Definitions" Section.

C. The institution shall provide an award notification each academic year to Need-based Grant recipients, which will contain the terms and conditions of the grant 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 Need-based Grant and terms for the award.

D. After the last day to register for each semester of the academic year, the institution will verify enrollment of each recipient as a South Carolina resident that is a part-time or full-time degree-seeking student. According to the Scholarship and Grant Programs Policies and Procedures Manual, a listing of eligible recipients by social security number with the award amounts for the semester will be sent to the Commission on Higher Education with the institution's request for funds. A year-end reconciliation report will be submitted to the Commission on Higher Education prior to June 30th. Any unused funds shall be refunded to the Commission on Higher Education no later than June 30th of each fiscal year.

62-495 Refunds and Repayments

A. In the event a student who has been awarded a Need-based Grant withdraws, is suspended from the institution, or drops below part-time (six credit hours) or full-time (twelve credit hours) status during any regular semester of the academic year, institutions must reimburse the Need-based Grants Program for the amount of the grant for the semester in question pursuant to refund policies of the institution. Collection is the responsibility of the institution.

B. The institution may redistribute such funds to other eligible students in accordance with the guidelines, or if such funds cannot be redistributed within the academic year, the institution shall return the refund amount to the Commission on Higher Education for redistribution to other institutions.

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

62-500 Program Administration and Audits

A. The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education will coordinate the oversight of functions (e.g., guidelines, policies, rules, regulations) relative to this program with eligible

institutions. The Commission on Higher Education shall be responsible for the allocation of funds, promulgation of the regulation and rules, any audits, or other statewide oversight of the Need-based Grants Program as deemed necessary to monitor the expenditure of grant 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. Where the initial allocation exceeds the need of students at an institution, the Commission shall have the authority to redistribute the excess funds to other institutions:

1. All funds not awarded by the institution 45 days after the last day to register for the spring semester of the academic year shall be returned to the Commission for redistribution.

2. Institutions in need of additional Need-based Grant funds for eligible students must provide documentation to this effect and must request additional funds from the Commission on Higher Education in writing by not later than 45 days after the last day to register for the spring semester of the academic year.

D. Participating institutions are authorized to establish additional guidelines, rules, and regulations for awarding the grants consistent with the South Carolina Need-based Grants Program Regulation contained herein.

E. The Chief Executive Officer at each participating institution shall identify to the Commission on Higher Education a Need-based Grant 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 fiscal agent to receive and deliver funds for use under the program.

62-505 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 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 State Need-based Grants 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 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, guidelines, rules, and regulations.

Fiscal Impact Statement: There will be no increased costs to the State or its political subdivisions.

Statement of Rationale:

Revisions to the S.C. Need-based Grant regulation were necessary to be consistent with legislation approved during the 2007 legislative session.