

**SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

1333 MAIN STREET

SUITE 200

COLUMBIA, S.C. 29201

RAYBURN BARTON  
Executive DirectorTELEPHONE  
803/737-2260FAX NUMBER  
803/737-2297

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**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Mr. Austin Gilbert, Chairman, and Members  
Commission on Higher Education

**FROM:** Frank Gilbert, Chairman  
Committee on Access & Equity and Student Services

**Consideration of Appeals Regulations for the  
(LIFE) Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Programs**

The purpose of the Appeals Regulations is to provide consistency among the LIFE Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship programs while providing a process that is fair and encompasses the myriad of appeals that might be submitted by students involved in both programs. The Commission on Higher Education Division of Student Services created an Advisory Committee to review and create Appeals Regulations for the LIFE and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship programs. The Advisory Committee consisted of representatives from the following: College and University financial aid administrators, high school guidance counselors, legislative staff, Governor's Office staff, and representatives from the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education.

The Advisory Committee met to review and create appeals regulations on January 27, February 17, and March 10, 1999. The Committee reviewed established Appeals Regulations at similar state-funded scholarship programs and established Palmetto Fellows appeals guidelines; compared established institutional appeals processes; and formulated regulations specific for both the LIFE Scholarship and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship programs. The proposed regulations were disseminated to institutional admissions and financial aid representatives at the private, public, and technical colleges on March 10 and were reviewed by that group at a public meeting on March 22. In addition, a student advisory committee met on April 24 to review the regulations and offer feedback. The proposed regulations will be considered by the Committee on Access & Equity and Student Services at its meeting on May 3, 1999 (Attachment I). The Committee's recommendations will be forwarded to the Commission on May 6, 1999.

## LIFE Scholarship & Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Appeals Outline

### LIFE:

The student is notified through the established institutional notification process that he/she is not eligible to receive the LIFE Scholarship.

### Palmetto Fellows:

The student is notified by the CHE that he/she has not received Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Renewal.

Student obtains an Application for Appeal from the Institutional Financial Aid Office or the Commission on Higher Education.

Student must complete the Application for Appeal; attach a request for appeal that explains in detail the extenuating circumstance; attach any supporting documents; and mail all documentation to the Commission on Higher Education. **All appeals documents must be postmarked by October 15 for the appeal to be considered by the Appeals Committee.**

The student must also request an official academic transcript(s) to be mailed to the Commission on Higher Education. **The transcript must also be postmarked by October 15 for the appeal to be considered by the Appeals Committee.**

The Commission on Higher Education LIFE Scholarship & Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Appeals Committee meets to review appeals applications and render decisions.

Both the student and institution will be notified by the Appeals Committee of the rendered decision.

**The decision rendered by the Appeals Committee is final.**

Document No.  
COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION  
CHAPTER 62  
Statutory Authority 59-149-10  
Statutory Authority 59-104-20

62-800--62-805      Palmetto Fellows and LIFE Scholarship Appeals

62-800.00      Program Definitions

- A. "Appeal" is defined as an instance in which an extenuating circumstance causes a student enrolled in college to fail to meet the academic requirements (cumulative grade point average and/or credit hours) of earning or renewing a LIFE Scholarship or renewing a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship.
- B. "Extenuating Circumstance" is defined as a situation that involves a serious health condition of the student, death or serious health condition of an immediate family member, or a traumatic event.
- C. "Immediate Family Member" is defined as the spouse, great-grandparents, grandparents, parents or legal guardians, brothers, sisters, or children of either the student or the student's spouse.
- D. "Serious Health Condition" is defined as an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves: (1) Any period of incapacity or treatment in connection with or consequent to inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility; or (2) Any period of incapacity requiring absence from classes for more than five consecutive class days that also involves continuing treatment by (or under the supervision of) a health care provider; or (3) Continuing treatment by (or under the supervision of) a health care provider for a chronic or long-term health condition that is incurable or so serious that, if not treated, would likely result in a period of incapacity that would adversely affect the academic performance of the student.
- E. "Traumatic Event" is defined as a sudden, uncontrollable event which adversely affects the student's academic performance, such as a natural disaster (i.e., earthquake, hurricane, tornado, etc.), divorce, rape, or any other event deemed traumatic/extraordinary by the Appeals Committee.

62-800.50      Identifying Eligibility for Scholarship Renewal

- A. LIFE Scholarship: Each institution is responsible for notifying students about financial aid awards through normal institutional notification procedures, such as personal financial award accounts within the institutional system available for all students to review; telephone notification; award letters; and student bills. Therefore, each student awarded the LIFE Scholarship must make herself/himself aware of the institutional notification process and her/his LIFE Scholarship eligibility. If a LIFE Scholarship recipient finds that she/he is ineligible and

would like to file an appeal, appeal applications must be available in the institutional financial aid office and the Commission on Higher Education.

**B. Palmetto Fellows Scholarship:** Institutions must submit an electronic roster (either Excel or ASKII format) of all students who do not meet the continued eligibility requirements to the Commission on Higher Education. The roster shall include the name, social security number, and permanent home address for each student. The Commission must receive the roster no later than two weeks after the completion of summer school.

The Commission will notify each Palmetto Fellow in writing of the discontinuation of their Palmetto Fellows Scholarship. The Commission will provide information about the opportunity for appeal and also an appeals handbook. If a student wishes to submit an appeal regarding the discontinuation of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, then he or she must follow the approved appeals process.

#### **62-801.00 Filing an Appeal**

An appeal must be filed with the Commission on Higher Education by no later **October 15<sup>th</sup>** of the academic year that scholarship aid is requested. The student must complete an Application for Appeal, attach a letter requesting an appeal and describing extenuating circumstances, and attach any other supporting documentation. The student must also request that an official academic transcript(s) be mailed to the Commission on Higher Education in an official sealed envelope. The Commission on Higher Education will only allow a student to submit one appeal each academic year.

#### **62-801.50 Extenuating Circumstances**

Extenuating circumstances are the following situations: serious health condition of the student; death or serious health condition of an immediate family member; or traumatic/extraordinary event. If the student's situation does not meet any of the above criteria for an extenuating circumstance, then the student cannot submit an appeal. A traumatic event does not include college adjustment issues, such as homesickness, problems with roommates, problems with the faculty or staff at the college or university, difficult course-load, dependent care or transportation problems, etc. This is not an exhaustive list. The Appeals Committee may deem other issues as inappropriate for appeal.

#### **62-802.00 Supporting Materials**

Students are responsible for providing appropriate supporting documentation with their appeal such as: physician's report detailing duration and extent of serious health condition and any recommendations made regarding school attendance; letter from a college or university official; hospital invoice; and/or any other relevant documentation, which will substantiate the appeal.

#### 62-802.50 Appeals Committee

The Appeals Committee will be comprised of: two representatives from the staff of the S.C. Commission on Higher Education; one representative from the board of the Commission on Higher Education; three institutional representatives of which one will be from a public senior college, one from a private senior college, and one from a two-year/technical college; and one representative from the General Assembly or legislative staff member.

#### 62-803.00 Approval of Appeals

If an appeal is granted to a student who does not have the required cumulative 3.0 grade point average or the required number of credit hours, he or she may receive scholarship funding for the academic year. After the completion of the academic year in which the appeal was granted, the student is expected to comply with all eligibility requirements in order to receive scholarship funding for the next academic year.

#### 62-803.50 Notification Process for Appeals Decisions

Once the decision regarding an appeal has been determined, the Appeals Committee will notify both the student and the institution in writing. Decisions are expected to be rendered by January 1.

#### 62-804.00 Appeals Decision

The Appeals Committee's decision is final.

