LIFE Scholarship Guidelines

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General Eligibility Requirements

If you are awarded a LIFE Scholarship, your award will be included in your award notification. Eligibility for the LIFE Scholarship, and for continued eligibility in subsequent years, is based upon the requirements below. Please note the requirements for the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement that must be completed during your freshman year. If you are awarded the LIFE Scholarship, you must complete an eligibility certification statement on Self-Service Carolina (SSC). Go to SSC, choose Financial Aid, Award, and Award for Aid Year. Then select Terms and Conditions and complete the Certification. Once you have completed the certification, you will need to accept your Scholarship on the Accept Award Offer Tab. Lost eligibility may be regained by meeting eligibility requirements in the next academic year.

☐ You must be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen under state residency statutes.

☐ You must be a South Carolina resident at the time of high school graduation and during the period of award.

☐ You must have graduated from a South Carolina high school or graduated from a high school outside of South Carolina while a dependent of a parent or legal guardian who is a legal resident. If you graduated from a high school outside of South Carolina, you are expected to self-identify to the Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships in order to be assured that you are not overlooked during the University’s review of LIFE eligible students.

☐ You must be a full-time undergraduate student who is seeking your first baccalaureate degree.

☐ You must not be receiving the South Carolina Palmetto Fellows Scholarship.

☐ You must not have been judged delinquent, nor have been convicted or pled guilty or nolo contendere to any felony in any state.

☐ You must not have been convicted of any second or subsequent alcohol or drug-related misdemeanor in any state within the past academic year.

☐ You must not be in default or owe a refund or repayment on any Federal or State financial aid.
Eligibility Requirements for Entering Freshmen

☐ You must meet all general eligibility requirements.

☐ You must meet two of the three requirements listed below:

1. Have a 3.00 final high school grade point average based on the Uniform Grading Policy.
2. Have a minimum SAT test score of 1100 on critical reading and math sections combined or ACT test score of 24.
3. Have graduated in the top 30% of your high school graduating class.

Eligibility for the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement

☐ You must be a recipient of the base LIFE Scholarship for the current year.

☐ You must have completed at least two semesters and be in your sophomore, junior or senior year.

☐ You must have completed at least 14 hours in mathematics and life and physical science courses or a combination of both during the first year of enrollment. The first year of enrollment includes your fall and spring semesters as well as the summer terms that immediately follow. Courses that can be used to meet the 14 hour requirement include:

- Advanced Placement (AP) courses with a score of three or higher
- Dual Enrollment courses
- International Baccalaureate (IB) courses with a score of four or higher
- Exempted Credit Hours
- College Level Examination Program (CLEP)
- Pass/Fail courses with a grade of “Pass” only

☐ You must be majoring in a course of study determined eligible for a LIFE Scholarship enhancement by the SC Commission on Higher Education
Eligibility Requirements for Continuing Students

☐ You must meet all general eligibility requirements.

☐ You must earn an average of 30 credit hours for each academic year (Fall, Spring, Summer) equaling a minimum of 30 credit hours if a rising second year student, 60 credit hours if a rising third year student, or 90 credit hours if a rising fourth year student.

☐ If your initial college enrollment was mid-year, you must earn 15 credit hours by the beginning of the next academic year (fall semester). In subsequent years, you must earn an average of 30 credit hours for each academic year (Fall, Spring, Summer) equaling a minimum of 45 credit hours after the first full academic year, 75 credit hours after the second full academic year, and 105 credit hours after the third full academic year. The LIFE Scholarship will not be awarded mid-year in subsequent years.

☐ Any credit hours earned before high school graduation, hours exempted by examination, and advanced placement credit approved by the institution as academic credit will be used toward the credit hour requirement;

☐ You must earn a minimum 3.0 LIFE grade point average on a 4.0 scale by the end of the academic year (Fall, Spring, Summer):

☐ The LIFE grade point average will include all grades earned (excluding remedial coursework) at all eligible public or independent institutions attended by the student. Any credit hours and GPA earned before high school graduation and approved by the institution as academic credit will be used.

☐ Please note that the LIFE grade point average will be used to determine LIFE Scholarship eligibility only and will not be used in determining graduation eligibility or standing.
Eligibility Requirements for Transfer Students

You must meet all general eligibility requirements.

Your eligibility for the LIFE Scholarship during your first year at the University of South Carolina is based on your initial college enrollment and all non-remedial hours earned and cumulative grade point average at your previous institution(s).

Terms of Eligibility

You may receive the LIFE Scholarship through the eighth semester following initial college enrollment. The eight-semester limit is based on enrollment only. The limit is not determined by the number of semesters the LIFE Scholarship has been received and includes periods of nonenrollment after your initial college enrollment. You may only receive the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement for a total of six semesters based on initial college enrollment.

Award Amount

The LIFE Scholarship award amount is determined annually by the South Carolina General Assembly. Currently the LIFE Scholarship award amount at the University of South Carolina - Columbia is $5,000, $4,700 related to tuition expense plus $300 based on the cost of textbooks.

The LIFE Scholarship Enhancement award amount is $2500 in addition to the base LIFE Scholarship award.

Note: The LIFE Scholarship and the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement in combination with all other scholarships and grants may not exceed the cost-of-attendance as defined in Title IV federal student aid regulations.

Award Disbursement

The LIFE Scholarship and the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement will be disbursed in equal amounts at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters.
Summer

Summer school credits earned at any institution and accepted by the University of South Carolina may be used toward the credit hour requirement. The grade point average requirement must be based on the LIFE grade point average. Please refer to Eligibility Requirements for Continuing Students. Remedial courses are not considered toward the credit hour or grade point average requirement. Please keep in mind that if you need hours or grades earned during summer to meet the renewal criteria, your eligibility for the LIFE Scholarship will not be able to be determined until the University of South Carolina has received and processed your final transcript.

If you plan to graduate before completing eight semesters and will be enrolling for 12 hours during the summer term at the University of South Carolina-Columbia, you may be eligible to receive a semester of your LIFE Scholarship during the summer. In order to receive this funding during the summer, you must meet all LIFE Scholarship renewal criteria at the end of the spring semester, plan to graduate in less than eight semesters and enroll in 12 hours of coursework at the University of South Carolina-Columbia for the summer term. Please note the following:

1. The receipt of a LIFE Scholarship award during the summer term will count as one of your eight semesters of eligibility for the award. If you receive a LIFE Scholarship award during the summer and are unable to graduate early as planned, your total allowable LIFE Scholarship funding will be expended before you graduate.

2. Use of LIFE Scholarship funding in the summer may not be the most financially advantageous use of these funds, when considering the cost of summer enrollment as compared to a traditional semester. Carefully consider all options.

Please contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships for more details and to apply for a summer LIFE Scholarship award.
Co-ops

If you participate in a University-sponsored co-op program during the fall or spring semester, you are not eligible to receive the LIFE Scholarship and the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement for that semester. You may elect to receive the LIFE Scholarship and the LIFE Scholarship Enhancement for the summer sessions immediately following the co-op program. A summer payment can be made only if you enroll for at least 12 hours total during the summer. If you do not receive the LIFE Scholarship for the summer, you will only need to complete an average of 15 hours for the year and maintain a 3.00 LIFE grade point average to be eligible the following year. If you do receive the LIFE Scholarship for the summer, you must complete an average of 27 hours from the year and maintain a 3.0 LIFE grade point average to be eligible the following year.

Dropping a Class or Withdrawing

If you are receiving the LIFE Scholarship or any other financial aid, dropping a class or withdrawing may affect your potential refund. Depending upon the type(s) of financial aid awards involved, withdrawal date, the amount of the refund, and other factors, you might receive a portion of the total refund amount or none of the refund amount. Under certain circumstances, if you withdraw or drop classes, you will be required to repay financial aid funds you received including the LIFE Scholarship. This is necessary when the refund amount is insufficient to meet the financial aid fund recovery requirements. If you are considering withdrawing or dropping classes, you should contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships before taking this action.

Changes in Residency

A change in your residency and fee payment status to non-resident will lead to the required repayment of your award for any enrollment period in which you are no longer classified as a resident and received the LIFE Scholarship.

The information on this document is subject to change by either the South Carolina Legislature or the Commission on Higher Education. You may view the most recent guidelines for the LIFE program at www.che.sc.gov.
Contact Us

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