

NUMBER: BUSF 4.03
SECTION: Business and Finance
SUBJECT: Free Tuition and Reduction of Fees
DATE: November 1, 2006
REVISED: May 11, 2009
Policy for: All Campuses
Procedure for: All Campuses
Authorized by: Rick Kelly
Issued by: Financial Services

A request for free tuition or reduction of fees must be submitted during the academic year in which the tuition or fees were incurred. A refund may be requested during the academic year pursuant to BUSF 4.06 Refund of Academic Fees (see <http://www.sc.edu/policies/busf406.html>). The academic year begins with the fall term and ends with the last summer session. Additional application may be required for approval or to qualify for free tuition or a reduction of fees as described below.

I. Policy

A. FREE TUITION

1. **Article 1.** Students who qualify under Title 59 Chapter 111 of the South Carolina Code of Laws are granted free tuition as stated below:
 - a. SECTION 59-111-10. Scholarship for winner of essay contest sponsored by Governor's Committee on Employment of Physically Handicapped.

Each year the first place winner of the essay contest sponsored by the Governor's Committee on the Employment of the Physically Handicapped shall receive a four-year scholarship from the State-supported institution of his/her choice, provided he/she is otherwise qualified. The scholarship shall be granted by the governing body of the particular institution upon certification by the Governor's Committee of the first-place winner and that the winner is in financial need. The scholarship shall provide free tuition and fees, and may be cancelled if a recipient does not maintain general scholastic and conduct standards established by the institution.

- b. SECTION 59-111-15. Tuition assistance for permanent faculty and staff.

State-supported colleges or universities and state-supported post-high school vocational or technical colleges are authorized to provide assistance for educational expenses, including the payment, reimbursement, or remission of tuition or fees, to its permanent faculty and staff. The assistance authorized by this section is not considered a prerequisite of office or employment. Permanent faculty and staff are not entitled to assistance provided in this section for more than four credit hours a semester. The credit hours generated by individuals receiving assistance under this section may not be used in computing the higher education funding formula and may not have an impact on the level of funding an institution receives.

c. SECTION 59-111-20. Free tuition for certain veterans' children.

(A) A child of a wartime veteran, upon application to and approval by the South Carolina Department of Veterans Affairs, may be admitted to any state-supported college, university, or post high school technical education institution free of tuition so long as his work and conduct is satisfactory to the governing body of the institution, if the veteran was a resident of this State at the time of entry into service and during service or has been a resident of this State for at least one year and still resides in this State or, if the veteran is deceased, resided in this State for one year before his death, and provided the veteran served honorably in a branch of the military service of the United States during a war period, as those periods are defined by Section 101 of Title 38 of the United States Code and:

- (1) was killed in action;
- (2) died from other causes while in the service;
- (3) died of disease or disability resulting from service;
- (4) was a prisoner of war as defined by Congress or Presidential proclamation during such war period;
- (5) is permanently and totally disabled, as determined by the Veterans Administration from any cause;
- (6) has been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor;
- (7) is missing in action;
- (8) the applicant is the child of a deceased veteran who qualified under items (4) and (5); or
- (9) has been awarded the Purple Heart for wounds received in combat.

(B) The provisions of this section apply to a child of a veteran who meets the residency requirements of Chapter 112 of this title, is twenty-six years of age or younger, and is pursuing any type of undergraduate degree. The age limitation for those children of certain war veterans who may be admitted to any state-supported college, university, or post high school technical education institution free of tuition is suspended for eligible children that successfully appeal the Division of Veterans Affairs on the grounds of a serious extenuating health condition.

To qualify: A child of a wartime veteran must submit a formal application to the South Carolina State Office of Veterans' Affairs. The South Carolina State Office of Veterans' Affairs will send an approval to:

The Governor's Office
Division of Veterans' Affairs
VA Regional Office, Room 141
1801 Assembly Street
Columbia, SC 29201

The Governor's Office will submit the approval to the:

University of South Carolina
Office of the Bursar
Petigru College
Columbia, SC 29208

This application should be made prior to the payment of fees.

All requests for refunds for fee reduction must be made during the academic year for which the fees were paid. A refund may be requested during the academic year pursuant to BUSF 4.06 Refund of Academic Fees (see <http://www.sc.edu/policies/busf406.html>). The academic year begins with the fall term and ends with the last summer session (Summer II).

d. SECTION 59-111-60. Scholarship, free tuition, and other financial assistance for trustee or member of immediate family prohibited; exceptions.

(A) No person who is a member of the board of trustees or other governing body of a state institution as defined in Section 59-112-10 or member of his immediate family may receive a scholarship, free tuition, or other financial assistance except as provided in subsection (B). "Immediate family" includes the spouse, natural or adoptive child, stepchild, or legal dependent.

(B) Nothing in subsection (A) prohibits a person from obtaining a scholarship, free tuition, or other financial assistance based on criteria applicable to all persons eligible for scholarships, free tuition, or other financial assistance.

2. ARTICLE 3. FREE TUITION FOR CHILDREN OF CERTAIN FIREMEN, LAW-ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS AND THE LIKE

a. SECTION 59-111-110. Tuition not charged children of firemen, law-enforcement officers and government employees totally disabled or killed in line of duty. No tuition may be charged for a period of four school years by any state-supported

college or university or any state-supported vocational or technical school for children of:

- (A) firemen, both regularly employed and members of volunteer organized units, organized rescue squad members, members of the Civil Air Patrol, law enforcement officers, or corrections officers, as defined herein, including reserve and auxiliary units of counties or municipalities who become totally disabled or are killed in the line of duty on or after July 1, 1964;
- (B) government employees who become totally disabled or are killed in the line of duty while working on state time on or after July 1, 1996, as a result of a criminal act committed against them which constitutes a felony under the laws of this State.

The tuition authorized to be paid by this section applies only to undergraduate courses or curriculum and may be paid for a period not exceeding four years, regardless of the number of state-supported colleges, universities, or state-supported vocational or technical schools the child attends.

To qualify: The employee/student must request that the employee's department provide a letter indicating the nature of the disability and the effective date the employee qualified for disability under this law. The department's letter is to be sent to:

University of South Carolina
Office of the Bursar
Petigru College
Columbia, SC 29208

This application should be made prior to the payment of fees.

All requests for refunds for fee reduction must be made during the academic year for which the fees were paid. A refund may be requested during the academic year pursuant to BUSF 4.06 Refund of Academic Fees (see <http://www.sc.edu/policies/busf406.html>). The academic year begins with the fall term and ends with the last summer session (Summer II).

- b. SECTION 59-111-120. "Fireman" defined.
For the purposes of this article, a fireman shall be defined as any person performing general fire-fighting duties who is either employed by an official State, municipal or county fire department in this State, or is a member of any organized volunteer fire department within this State, whose name has been entered on an official roster of such volunteer organization prior to the time such person is totally disabled or killed in line of duty.
- c. SECTION 59-111-130. "Law-enforcement officer" defined.
For the purposes of this article, a law enforcement officer means a:

- (A) person performing law enforcement duties at the request of and under the supervision of an official state, municipal, or county law enforcement agency in South Carolina when the person is totally disabled or killed in the line of duty;
 - (B) person performing law enforcement duties at the request of and under the supervision of a federal agency when the person is totally disabled or killed in the line of duty if he has been a resident of South Carolina for at least eighteen years. This item applies whether or not the law enforcement officer was disabled or killed in South Carolina or another state.
- d. SECTION 59-111-140. "Corrections officer" defined.
For purposes of this article a corrections officer shall be defined as any person who performs duties of security, control, or discipline over inmates at the request of and under the supervision of any official State, municipal, or county correctional institution and who was performing such duties at the time of his death or total disability.
- e. SECTION 59-111-145. "Government employee" defined.
For the purposes of this article, a government employee means a person who is required to participate in the state retirement system.
- f. SECTION 59-111-150. "State-supported college or university" defined. For the purposes of this article, a State-supported college or university shall be defined as any two-year or four-year college or university supported by the State of South Carolina, including colleges or universities offering postgraduate or professional courses of study.
- g. SECTION 59-111-160. "Total disability" defined.
For the purposes of this article, total disability shall mean the physical inability to perform work in any gainful occupation, which disability directly results from any injury received in line of duty. In cases of such total disability, the free tuition provided for herein shall be extended only while such fireman or law-enforcement officer continues to be totally disabled. This article shall not apply to a child or children born after the first year of total disability as herein defined.
- h. SECTION 59-111-170. Application for free tuition.
Application for the free tuition provided for in this article shall be filed with the governing body of the institution and shall be accompanied by proof or evidence of the death or total disability of the parent of the applicant and such proof or evidence that the injury or death occurred in the line of duty as considered necessary by such governing body, which shall have sole discretion in granting or not granting free tuition.

- i. SECTION 59-111-180. Penalties for misrepresenting eligibility.
Any applicant who willfully misrepresents his eligibility for the free tuition provided for under this article, or any person who knowingly aids or abets such applicant in misrepresenting his eligibility for such benefits, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, shall be fined not more than five hundred dollars or imprisoned for not less than six months.

3. ARTICLE 5. FREE TUITION FOR RESIDENTS SIXTY YEARS OF AGE

- a. SECTION 59-111-310. "Tuition" defined.
As used in this article, "tuition" shall mean the amount charged for registering for a credit hour of instruction and shall not be construed to mean any other fees or charges or costs of textbooks.
- b. SECTION 59-111-320. Persons age sixty and over may attend classes without payment of tuition. State-supported colleges and universities, and institutions under the jurisdiction of the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education, are authorized to permit legal residents of South Carolina who have attained the age of sixty to attend classes for credit or noncredit purposes on a space available basis without the required payment of tuition, if these persons meet admission and other standards deemed appropriate by the college, university, or institution, and if these persons do not receive compensation as full-time employees.
- c. SECTION 59-111-330. Rules and regulations.
The State Commission on Higher Education shall promulgate rules and regulations necessary for the implementation of the provisions of this article.
- d. SECTION 59-111-340. Institutions to which article applies.
The provisions of this article apply to:
 - (1) those institutions enumerated in Section 59-107-10 and to the branches and extensions of those institutions;
 - (2) those institutions under the jurisdiction of the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education.
- e. SECTION 59-111-350. Persons attending under article not counted in computing enrollment. Persons attending classes under the provisions of this article, on a space available basis without payment of tuition, shall neither be counted in the computation of enrollment for funding purposes nor considered on a formula basis for the issuance of capital improvement bonds.
- f. SECTION 59-111-360. Proof of eligibility.
The officials of such colleges, universities or institutions charged with administration may require such proof, as they deem necessary, to insure that the

person applying to the college, university or institution is eligible for the benefits provided by this article.

- g. SECTION 59-111-370. Penalties for misrepresenting eligibility.
Any applicant who willfully misrepresents his eligibility for the tuition benefits provided for under this article, or any person who knowingly aids or abets such applicant in misrepresenting his eligibility for such benefits, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, shall be fined not more than one hundred dollars or imprisoned for not more than thirty days.

Authorization:

Institutions are authorized, but not required, to waive the tuition portion of the cost of a course in which eligible residents enroll. The cost of any fees, charges, and/or textbooks normally associated with the course remains in effect and must be borne by the participant.

Program Definitions

- A. "Classes for credit or non-credit" is defined as regularly scheduled classes, including those offered through distance education, in which an adequate number of students not eligible for the over sixty waivers are enrolled an adequate number of students, for the purpose of this provision, shall be consistent with institutional policy.
- B. "Full-time employees" is defined as employment that consists of at least thirty-seven and one half hours a week on a single job in a full time status. However, a person who works less than thirty-seven and one half hours a week, but receives or is entitled to receive full time employee benefits shall be considered to be employed full time. A person who meets the eligibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act must present acceptable evidence that they do not satisfy their prescribed employment specification in order to qualify for this waiver.
- C. "Legal resident of South Carolina" is defined as those persons who would otherwise be eligible to pay in-state tuition and fees per CHE regulation 62-600, Determination of Rates of Tuition and Fees.
- D. "Persons meeting admission and other standards" is defined as persons who have evidence via documentation or evaluation normally accepted by the institutions, which show that all course prerequisites have been satisfied.
- E. "Persons who have attained the age of sixty" is defined as persons who have reached the age of sixty no later than the first day of class of the term for which the waiver is sought.

- F. "Space available basis" is defined as the upper limit of class capacity, both physical and academic, as defined by institutional policy.

To qualify: Senior citizens of the State of South Carolina who are sixty years of age, or older, may make application for free tuition. Proof of your age is required in order to qualify for this reduction in your academic fees. A copy of your birth certificate or South Carolina driver's license must be presented to the Legal Residency Office located in the Bursar's office. This application should be made prior to the payment of fees.

All requests for refunds for fee reduction must be made during the academic year for which the fees were paid. A refund may be requested during the academic year pursuant to BUSF 4.06 Refund of Academic Fees (see <http://www.sc.edu/policies/busf406.html>). The academic year begins with the fall term and ends with the last summer session (Summer II).

4. REDUCTION OF FEES AND RECIPROCAL TUITION

Military personnel and their dependents. [SECTION 59-112-50]

Notwithstanding other provisions of this chapter, during the period of their assignment to duty in South Carolina, members of the armed services of the United States stationed in South Carolina and their dependents may be considered eligible for in-state rates. When such armed service personnel are ordered away from the State, their dependents are eligible for in-state tuition rates so long as remain continuously enrolled at the state institution where they are enrolled at the time the assignment ends. These persons and their dependents are eligible for in-state rates after their discharge from the armed services even though they were not enrolled at a state institution at the time of their discharge, if they have evidenced an intent to establish domicile in South Carolina and if they have resided in South Carolina for a period of at least twelve months immediately preceding their discharge.

Abatement of rates for nonresidents on scholarship; waiver for students participating in international Sister-State agreement program. [SECTION 59-112-70]

State supported colleges and universities which have an established and ongoing relationship in one or more degree programs with an international institution, the terms of which have been formally approved by the institution's Board of Trustees, and the relationship includes regular arrangements for the enrollment of qualified students and/or the exchange of faculty between the institutions, although not necessarily in equal exchange numbers, may charge tuition to such qualified students at the South Carolina resident rate.

Academic year. A nonresident student will be allowed to pay academic fees at a substantially reduced rate per semester provided the student is receiving the minimum

amount (established by the University) of scholarship aid each semester that has been awarded or approved by the University Scholarship and Financial Aid Committee.

Summer Terms. A nonresident student who was eligible to pay the reduced rate for the preceding spring semester will be allowed to pay summer academic fees at a reduced rate.

University of South Carolina's Aiken Campus and Aiken Technical College; in-state tuition for certain Georgia residents. [SECTION 59 112 110]

The University of South Carolina's Aiken Campus and Aiken Technical College may offer in-state tuition to a student whose legal residence is in the Richmond/Columbia County area of the State of Georgia as long as the Georgia Board of Regents continues its Georgia Tuition Program by which in-state tuition is offered to students residing in the Aiken/Edgefield/McCormick County area of the State of South Carolina, or students residing in the Aiken/Edgefield County area of the State of South Carolina if the Georgia Board of Regents does not include McCormick County residents in its Georgia Tuition Program.

USC: Beaufort Campus - Reciprocal Tuition. The University of South Carolina Beaufort Campus may offer in-state tuition to any student whose legal residence is in the Chatham-Effingham and Bryan County area of the neighboring state of Georgia as long as the Georgia Board of Regents continues its Georgia Tuition Program by which in-state tuition is offered to students residing in the Beaufort/Jasper County area of the State of South Carolina.

Reason for Revision: ARTICLE 6, ONE-HALF TUITION FOR MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA NATIONAL GUARD [REPEALED], SECTIONS 59-111-410 to 59-111-440.
Repealed by 2007 Act No. 40, Section 3, effective June 4, 2007.

Send comments to [Joe Taylor](#)