I. Policy

This policy is adopted pursuant to section 59-101-430 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, as amended, which provides as follows: (A) An alien unlawfully present in the United States is not eligible to attend a public institution of higher learning in this State, as defined in Section 59-103-5. The trustees of a public institution of higher learning in this State shall develop and institute a process by which lawful presence in the United States is verified. In doing so, institution personnel shall not attempt to independently verify the immigration status of any alien, but shall verify any alien’s immigration status with the federal government pursuant to 8 U.S.C. Section 1373(c). (B) An alien unlawfully present in the United States is not eligible on the basis of residence for a public higher education benefit including, but not limited to, scholarships, financial aid, grants, or resident tuition.

A. General Enrollment Requirement

1. A student must be a citizen or national of the United States or an alien lawfully present in the United States to attend the University of South Carolina.

2. If at any time a student enrolled in the University ceases to be a citizen or national of the United States or an alien lawfully present in the United States, the University shall discontinue the student’s enrollment and cease providing the student with any public higher education benefit on the basis of residence.

3. This policy also applies to any person attending any academic course of study offered by the University.
II. Procedure

A. Verification of Immigration Status for Aliens and Those Lawfully Admitted for Permanent Residence

1. In order to enroll in the University, an alien must first submit the immigration documents needed by the University to seek verification of the alien’s immigration status with the Department of Homeland Security.

2. The University shall deny enrollment for any alien who does not submit the documentation needed by the University to verify the alien’s immigration status with the Department of Homeland Security.

3. The University shall seek verification with the Department of Homeland Security that the alien student is lawfully present in the United States prior to the alien being allowed to enroll in courses. The verification shall be sought again upon expiration of current immigration status.

4. If the Department of Homeland Security does not verify that an alien student is lawfully present in the United States, the University may request additional and/or updated documentation from the alien.

5. If after submission of the alien student’s additional information, the Department of Homeland Security does not verify that the student is lawfully present in the United States, the University shall discontinue the enrollment of the alien student.

6. The University Registrar, along with University Technology Services (UTS) in Columbia, will provide lists of students subject to the non-citizen verification policy. A list of alien and lawful permanent resident students will be made available to designated verification officers on Comprehensive campuses. The designated Columbia campus office will coordinate with Palmetto College campuses to collect documentation for verification.

7. Each Comprehensive campus chancellor will designate an official to administer the policy for aliens and lawful permanent residents on that campus. Verification of aliens and lawful permanent residents on Columbia and Palmetto College campuses will be administered through the Columbia campus Office of International Student Services.

8. Forms and letters related to the lawful presence of non-citizens are approved by General Counsel.

9. Verification officers designated in Section II.A.7. of this policy will perform the following tasks in administering the non-citizen verification policy:
a. Communicate to students requesting immigration documents for verification.

b. Verify immigration documents with the federal government and provide follow-up support/guidance to students who cannot be successfully verified.

c. Collect documentation or note transaction numbers which confirm that a verification took place.

d. Record data in appropriate institutional information system.

B. Verification of Citizens and Nationals of the United States

1. Proof of citizenship is required before a citizen or national of the United States will be allowed to enroll in classes at the university. The status of a citizen need only be checked once.

2. The university President is responsible for the implementation of this policy throughout the USC system. The executive vice president for academic affairs and provost will designate a citizenship verification officer for the Columbia campus. Each comprehensive campus chancellor and Palmetto College campus dean will designate a citizenship verification officer to administer the policy on that campus.

3. The University shall deny enrollment to any student claiming to be a citizen or national of the United States who does not submit proof of citizenship acceptable to the verification officers designated above in Section II.B.2.

4. This verification process is adopted to deter and prevent false claims of citizenship by unlawful aliens attempting to evade the eligibility requirements of section 59-101-430 of the South Carolina Code of Laws.

5. The University Registrar and University Technology Services (UTS) in Columbia will coordinate enterprise-wide computer support and instruction for implementation of citizenship verification. A list of students needing verification will be made available to each campus.

6. Forms, letters, and acceptable documents for proof of citizenship are approved by General Counsel. Information and resources will be made available to all verification officers on a central website: [http://registrar.sc.edu/html/citizenshipverification.stm](http://registrar.sc.edu/html/citizenshipverification.stm).

7. Central verification against all legally available federal or other data bases will take place before asking students to submit proof of verification documents.
8. Verification officers designated above in Section II.B.2. will perform the following tasks in administering the citizenship verification policy:

   a. Communicate to students to provide proof of citizenship.

   b. Receive and review verification form and proof of citizenship documents (Note: Student is apprised on signed form that federal law makes it a crime, punishable by up to three years in prison, to falsely and willfully represent oneself to be a citizen of the United States.)

   c. Check that name and date of birth on proof of citizenship document matches that on USC student records.

   d. Record information in student information system.

   e. The proof of citizenship document and signed verification form must be included with the official student admissions/enrollment folder and retained according to the records retention schedule adopted by the University of South Carolina.

C. Appeals

Any student denied enrollment because of this policy can appeal to the University’s President, whose determination shall be final.

D. Definitions

The terms alien, citizen of the United States, national of the United States, and lawfully admitted for permanent residence have the same meaning as those terms are defined in the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act, codified in Title 8 of the United States Code.

E. Implementation

1. The administrative staff of the University shall implement the process set forth herein as soon as administratively practicable.

2. In no event shall a student be allowed to graduate whose citizenship or alien status has not been verified as required by this policy.

3. This policy was effective January 1, 2009, and applies to the entire University of South Carolina System.

III. Related Policies

See also: SC Code 59-101-430
IV. Reason for Revision
Updated to reflect current practice.