



FINANCIAL AID AWARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The purpose of this document is to describe the terms and conditions of your award, outline policies and procedures, and explain the process for the delivery of funds. Information in this document is also available on our financial aid website.

The Palmetto College Campuses Financial Aid Offices award financial aid according to federal, state, and institutional policies and regulations. The aid preferences you indicated are considered in the awarding process. Because of funding limitations, meeting all a student's financial need is usually not possible. Following the philosophy of the U.S. Department of Education, financial aid is awarded to supplement the resources of the student and his/her family. It is their belief that primary responsibility for meeting educational expenses lies with the family.

Federal Consumer Information

The Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA), as amended, requires that postsecondary institutions participating in federal student aid programs make certain disclosures to enrolled and prospective students, parents, employees, and the public. Please visit the [Palmetto College Central Financial Aid Office Website](#) for additional information on the reports and information disclosed to you in compliance with federal law.

Statement on Citizenship and Immigration Status

I understand that a person who is unlawfully present in the United States is not eligible on the basis of South Carolina residency for a South Carolina public higher education benefit including, but not limited to, scholarships, financial aid, grants, or the payment of the lower South Carolina resident tuition (each a "South Carolina Education Benefit").

I further understand that if I make a false statement regarding my lawful presence in the United States, the University of South Carolina will have the right to terminate immediately my eligibility for all South Carolina Education Benefits I have applied for, or have received, based in total or partial reliance on such a false statement. I also realize that this right of termination by the University will include a rescission of any such Benefit improperly extended to me and, therefore, will require that I make repayment to the University of that Benefit including any loan, scholarship, differential between in-state and out-of-state tuition and fees, or any other South Carolina Education Benefit improperly extended to me.

I hereby warrant and represent that as of the date I accept any aid offer, I am a citizen of the United States or an alien who is lawfully present in the United States. I further warrant and represent that I have read the statement above on **Citizenship and Immigration Status** and that I fully understand that statement and agree to be bound thereby. Further, I understand that I must continue to meet all federal requirements for federal financial aid.

Family Education Right and Privacy Act

The Financial Aid Office ensures the confidentiality of student records according to the Family Education Right and Privacy Act. Your family financial information and the type and amounts of your aid are held in confidence. Information is released only with your written consent. Even if you are a dependent student, your parents do not have a legal right to view your records after you reach the age of 18, so you must give written permission if you wish for them to have access. Information will be released to other offices and agencies as may be needed to administer the financial aid programs, such as scholarship donors, services of loans, etc.

Financial Aid Awards

The Financial Aid Programs offered at USC Lancaster, USC Salkehatchie, USC Sumter and USC Union have a dual purpose: to recognize superior academic achievement and to provide assistance to qualified students, who without such aid, would be unable to attend college. All aid given is intended to supplement the resources of the student and his or her parents. To determine financial need with a degree of uniformity, students should submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). To receive financial assistance the student must be accepted into an eligible program of study offered by the university and meet all eligibility requirements. Visit our website for detailed information on **Eligibility Requirements**.

Need-based aid is awarded based on the student's FAFSA data and the results from the Department of Education. Each year awarding parameters are created to distribute funds appropriately and according to federal/state regulations. Students are packaged with all aid available to them and sent to SSC to accept or decline financial aid offered to them.

Federal regulations require our office to consider all estimated financial aid in determining your eligibility for federal student aid. It is your responsibility to notify us of any financial aid that you receive from other sources not provided through the FAFSA. If you receive additional assistance after our initial assessment of your award package, your aid may be adjusted.

Financial Aid awards are based on a student's enrollment status during the official registration period. Should a class or classes be added after this period, Financial Aid funds may not be awarded to cover the cost of the class or classes. The standard practice of the Financial Aid Office is to assume students will be attending full-time (12 hours) during both the fall and spring semester during the awarding process. Summer is processed separately. Detailed information is available here: **Summer Financial Aid**.

Email Communication

It is extremely important that you maintain your University email account. It is your responsibility as a student to check your e-mail account frequently to retrieve official communication and to ensure mailbox space is available to receive these notifications.

Once applications are received, emails will be sent to your University email account about "missing or incomplete documents," and "information concerning financial aid awards." Also, when your financial aid award (including scholarships) is made or adjusted, you will receive an email notification. In the email, you will be instructed to log into Self Service Carolina (**SSC**) website select the Palmetto College Campus you are attending and review your current financial aid status or award information. In some circumstances, there may be additional information needed to complete the financial aid file.

You may also receive paper correspondence from our office concerning necessary adjustments.

Other Circumstances

If you think we have overlooked some aspect of your financial situation that would affect our evaluation of your need, you should bring this to the attention of the Financial Aid Office. With proper documentation, we can consider certain special circumstances.

Federal Title IV Authorization

Recipients of federal financial aid must complete a Title IV Fee Authorization. This authorization allows federal financial aid to be applied to charges on the student's bill other than tuition, housing and meal plans. The Title IV Fee Authorization gives the university permission to use up to \$200 of your financial aid to cover prior year non-institutional charges. For example, students with health fee or parking permit charges on their account could use financial aid to cover these expenses if an authorization is on record.

On Self Service Carolina (**SSC**), the Title IV Fee Authorization can be found in the Awards section under the "Resources and Additional Information" tab. You may contact the Bursar's Office if you no longer wish to agree to the Title IV Fee Authorization.

Determining Need

To determine your financial need, the total expected family contribution (as determined on your FAFSA) is subtracted from the student cost of attendance. The remaining figure represents your maximum eligibility for need-based financial assistance and scholarships. Because of limited funding, a student's total aid package is often less than the amount of financial need determined.

Cost of Attendance

Your Cost of Attendance (COA) includes estimated amounts for tuition and fees, books and supplies and room and board, plus a modest allowance for personal/miscellaneous expenses. We use standard student expenses to efficiently process many applications and to ensure equitable treatment. If you believe that you have costs that are significantly different than those allowed, you may visit the Financial Aid Office and speak with a financial aid counselor who can help evaluate your circumstances.

The components of an estimated cost of attendance include the following:

- Estimated cost for Tuition and Technology Fees
- Average cost of Room and Board
- Estimated Transportation Costs
- Estimated Miscellaneous and Personal Expenses
- Estimated cost for Books and Supplies

Each student's cost of attendance/budget is based upon full-time enrollment and residency. After the drop and add period each semester the cost of attendance will be reduced to reflect less than full-time enrollment.

Over-awards

In some cases, a student's aid package will require adjustments to avoid an over-award, defined by federal regulations as financial aid in excess of financial need. Students who receive institutional, state, and/or federal aid and later receive additional aid not considered in the development of the initial award package may receive an adjusted award letter reducing aid as required by regulations.

Registration and Schedule Adjustments

Adding a course, changing from credit to audit or audit to credit, changing from one section to another, and changing the number of credits in any variable credit course must be completed by the last day to change course schedule or drop without a grade of W being recorded.

To be officially enrolled, students must complete the registration process including schedule adjustments and the payment of fees for all classes by the official registration deadline date prescribed in the Master Schedule.

Accept, Reduce or Decline Awards

You can view your financial aid awards by logging on to **SSC**. You must follow all instructions provided to ensure that your financial aid awards will be available for fee payment and disbursement. After reviewing your awards, all that is left is to accept or decline your offers for the award year.

Most grants — free money that does not need to be paid back — and institutional scholarships are automatically accepted on your behalf. If you have been awarded a LIFE Scholarship or SC Needs Based Grant (SNBG), you must complete the required certification.

1. Choose *Financial Aid, Award, and then Award for Aid Year*.
2. Choose *Awards Overview* tab. By choosing the Terms and Conditions tab you can also complete the required certification forms for LIFE, or State Need-Based Grant awards.

If you have been awarded LTAP you must complete the required certification form and submit to the Financial Aid Office.

However, any loans (Federal Direct Subsidized, Unsubsidized and Federal Perkins Loans) offered will require your decision. You can accept or decline your Federal Direct Subsidized/Unsubsidized and Federal Perkins Loans online through SSC.

If necessary, you may be required to sign a Master Promissory Note and/or to complete Entrance Loan Counseling. To see if you need to complete these requirements, choose "Financial Aid" on SSC, then "Awards", "Award for the Aid Year" and then "Requirements".

- **Click here** to complete Entrance Loan Counseling and a Master Promissory Note for Federal Direct Loans.
- **Click here** to receive information on completing Entrance Loan Counseling and a Master Promissory Note for the Federal Perkins Loan.

Once all responsibilities have been fulfilled, your loans will appear on the Award Overview tab. Note: all references to loan awards will reflect gross amounts awarded, not net amounts to be received.

Fee Payment and Refunds

Once your bill is created, funds will begin disbursing to your account. It is your responsibility to ensure that all requirements for financial aid are completed so that aid can be used in the disbursement process and that any remaining charges are paid to finalize registration.

Refunds - Aid for Non-University Expenses

Refunds are issued to students if there is additional financial aid remaining after all university fees have been paid. If you have additional financial aid after your University charges have been paid, you will be able to receive the excess in the form of a check or through direct deposit.

Direct deposit is preferred. You can sign up for direct deposit by

1. Logging into [SSC](#)
2. Accessing the Account Information tab.
3. Click on Sign Up for Direct Deposit,
4. Click on the eRefunds tab and set up your account using the Set-up Account link under the Direct Deposit Bank Account section.

If you prefer checks, they are mailed by the Business Office to either your local or permanent address as listed with University Records on SSC. Check with the Business Office for the exact mailing dates and with questions regarding the mailing of your check. Excess financial aid or refunds that result from a parent PLUS loan will be mailed to either the borrower or the student based on the preference indicated on the PLUS application. Refunds will be sent to the parent at the address provided on the PLUS loan application, or to the student at the address on SSC. If the student address has changed, please update the address on SSC. If the parent address has changed, please contact the Financial Aid Office.

You should contact the Business Office regarding the following information:

- Disbursement of all financial aid and scholarships
- Fees payment concerns or problems
- Perkins or Health Professions Student Loan promissory notes, entrance, or exit loan counseling
- Fees deferments
- Financial aid refunds and disbursements

Residency

The Office of South Carolina Residency determines if you are an in-state student or an out-of-state student. Sometimes, updates to residency occur based on information provided to their office. Any change in residency can affect your tuition and financial aid. If your residency status updates after we have determined your eligibility for aid, your awards will likely be adjusted to reflect the updated fee assessment. Our office will notify you that an adjustment has been made to your awards.

Withdrawals and Repayment

For financial aid purposes, there are two types of withdrawals: Official and Unofficial

- Official withdrawal from the University by the student. Please review the current academic year bulletin and contact your academic advisor.
- An unofficial withdrawal occurs when the student doesn't complete the official withdrawal process but stops attending— indicated by the receipt of all "F" failing grades or a combination of "W" withdrawals and "F" failing, in all courses for the term in question.

If students enroll in classes and find that they are unable to attend or cannot continue to attend, they should protect themselves both academically and financially by officially withdrawing from school. *Students who simply stop going to classes risk receiving a grade of "F" in these classes, charged for the classes, and having to repay all or a portion of financial aid funds received.*

Students identified as never attending a class will have their aid sources reduced and/or canceled. Official withdrawal from classes by specified dates each term may allow the institution to refund part of the tuition and fees ([University Refund Policy](#)).

Return of Title IV (R2T4) Funds

The Return of Title IV Funds policy applies only if the student completely terminates enrollment (i.e. cancels his/her registration, withdraws, or is dismissed) or stops attending classes before completing more than 60 percent of the enrollment period. The Return of Title IV Funds policy applies to federal student financial aid programs. Financial Aid & Scholarships will calculate the amount of federal funds to be returned for students who withdraw.

Repayment

The amount of Title IV aid that a student must repay is determined by the Federal Formula for Return of Title IV Funds as specified in Section 484B of the Higher Education Act. This law also specifies the order of return of the Title IV Funds to the program from which they were awarded.

A repayment may be required when aid has been credited to a student's account from financial aid funds in excess of the amount of aid the student earned during the term. The responsibility for returning unearned aid is allocated between the University and the student according to the portion of disbursed aid that could have been used to cover university charges and the portion that could have been disbursed directly to the student once school charges were covered. The University will distribute the unearned aid back to the Title IV programs as specified by law. The student will be billed for the amount the student owes to the Title IV programs and any amount due to the University resulting from the return of Title IV funds used to cover charges.

Important Information

- If you are delinquent on financial obligations to this campus, you cannot register again at this institution, transfer credits to another institution, or graduate until the obligation is met.
- A student may not receive financial aid (federal or state) while in default on a federal student loan or while owing a repayment to a federal grant program.
- Please review the [Effect of Withdrawal on Eligibility](#) on our website.

Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards

Federal regulations require the Financial Aid Office to establish and apply reasonable standards of satisfactory progress for the purpose of the receipt of financial assistance under the programs authorized by Title IV of the Higher Education Act. The law requires institutions to develop policies regarding satisfactory academic progress (SAP). USC Palmetto College Campus students who wish to be considered for financial aid must maintain satisfactory progress in their selected course of study as set forth in this policy. Students are evaluated based on three criteria: 1) grade point average (GPA), 2) credit hour completion rate (CHCR), and 3) maximum time frame limitation (MAXHRS).

1. **Grade Point Average (GPA)** - Students must maintain a minimum cumulative USC-GPA of 2.0 to be making satisfactory academic progress for financial aid.
2. **Credit Hour Completion Rate (CHCR)** - Students must complete with a passing grade 67% of all credit hours attempted to remain eligible for Financial Aid.
3. **Maximum Time Frame Limitations (MAXHRS)** - The maximum time limit for a student to receive financial aid is 150% of the published program length. The published program lengths for Associate Degree programs at the USC Palmetto College Campuses are 60 credit hours and Bachelor's degree programs are 120 credit hours.

Please review the entire [Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress policy](#) on our website for information on the following:

- Evaluation of financial aid eligibility
- FASAP Statuses
- FASAP Appeal Process

Federal Penalties for Drug Law Violations

The Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965 as amended suspends aid eligibility for students who have been convicted under federal or state law of the sale or possession of drugs if the offense occurred during a period of enrollment for which the student was receiving federal student aid (grants, loans, and/or work-study). If you have a conviction(s) for these offenses, call the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243).

If you have lost federal student aid eligibility due to a drug conviction, you can regain eligibility if you pass two unannounced drug tests conducted by a drug rehabilitation program that complies with criteria established by the U.S. Department of Education.

Even if you are ineligible for federal aid, you should complete the FAFSA because you may be eligible for non-federal aid from states and private institutions. If you regain eligibility during the award year, notify your financial aid administrator immediately. If you are convicted of a drug-related offense after you submit the FAFSA, you might lose eligibility for federal student aid, and you might be liable for returning any financial aid you received during a period of ineligibility.

Federal Aid

Federal Pell Grant

The Federal Pell Grant is a federally funded grant that serves as the foundation upon which all other undergraduate aid is awarded. Unlike a loan, it does not have to be repaid. Federal Pell Grants are awarded to undergraduate students who have not earned a Bachelor's degree. Eligibility for the Federal Pell Grant is determined by federal law and is based on the financial information that students and their parents provide on the FAFSA.

Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG)

Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant is federally funded grants awarded on a limited basis to students with exceptional financial need. Students selected for these grants must not have earned a Bachelor's degree. Additionally, recipients must be eligible to receive a Federal Pell Grant. SEOG does not have to be repaid.

Federal Work-Study Program (FWS)

The Federal Work-Study Program provides University students with part-time, on-campus employment;

community service employment; and tutoring positions with the America Reads Program.

If you indicate on the FAFSA that you are interested in work-study, your application was reviewed to determine if you are eligible for Federal Work-Study.

Federal Perkins Loan Program

The Perkins Loan program is a low-interest (5%), long-term educational loan program available to undergraduate students demonstrating exceptional financial need. Interest is not charged, and repayment does not begin until 9 months after you graduate, withdraw from school, or your enrollment drops below half-time status.

You are required to complete Perkins entrance loan counseling each academic year that you are awarded a Perkins Loan. Your Perkins loan will not be available for you to use toward your charges until this requirement is met.

If you graduate, withdraw from school, or your enrollment drops below half-time status, exit interviews must be conducted as well.

Please visit the USC Bursar's Office for more information about the Federal [Perkins Loan Program](#).

**** Important [Perkins Loan Borrower Disclosure](#) information.**

South Carolina Educational Resources

These funds are restricted to residents of the state of South Carolina.

South Carolina Need-Based Grant Program (SNBG)

The purpose of the South Carolina Need-Based Grant program is to provide additional financial aid to South Carolina's neediest students. It is a state funded grant for undergraduates attending public and independent colleges and universities within South Carolina. Recipients may not have already earned a Bachelor's degree.

South Carolina Lottery Tuition Assistance Program (LTAP)

The purpose of the Lottery Tuition Assistance Program is to provide resources that supplement, not supplant, existing resources for educational purposes to South Carolina's students. The program provides tuition assistance. The program will assist students who wish to attend two-year public or independent colleges in the State. In calculating the amount awarded in Lottery Tuition Assistance, any federal grants and Need-based

Grants must be awarded first before determining the amount eligible in Lottery Tuition Assistance to be used for payment towards cost-of-tuition.

Legislative Incentives for Future Excellence Scholarship Program (LIFE)

The LIFE Scholarship is a merit-based scholarship program administered by the financial aid office. The LIFE Scholarship may be used towards the cost of attendance for up to eight terms based on the student's initial college enrollment date. Students must be enrolled in their first associate degree, first two-year program leading to a baccalaureate degree, or first baccalaureate degree.

This information is subject to change by either the South Carolina Legislature or the Commission on Higher Education. You may view the most recent guidelines for Scholarships and Grants for SC Residents by visiting [SC Commission on Higher Education](#).

Federal Direct Loans (DL)

The Federal Direct Loan program provides low interest, long term loans to eligible student. There are two types of Federal Direct Loans for student borrowers:

Subsidized Federal Direct Loan

A subsidized loan is awarded based on financial need and accrues no interest while the student is enrolled in school at least half-time, during the grace period, or during periods of deferment.

Unsubsidized Federal Direct Loan

An unsubsidized loan is not dependent upon need. Interest accrues from the time the loan is disbursed until final payment. The student has the option to make interest payments while in school and during the grace period.

Federal Direct Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students (PLUS)

The Direct Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students (PLUS) is designed to assist the parents of dependent undergraduate students enrolled at least half-time in meeting educational expenses. The Federal Direct Parent PLUS Loan is a non-need-based program and the lender is the U.S. Department of Education. However, the parent borrower must pass a credit check. A completed current year Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) must be on file for the student before a Parent PLUS loan can be processed. A parent may borrow up to the student's full cost of attendance

for educational expenses including tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, transportation and living allowance, less any other financial aid the student receives.

Parent PLUS Loans, interest is charged on the loan from the date the first disbursement is made until the loan is paid in full. Repayment begins within 60 days after the final loan disbursement or parent borrowers may choose to defer payments on a Parent PLUS loan until six months after the date the student ceases to be enrolled at least half time. Accruing interest can either be paid monthly or quarterly or be capitalized quarterly.

Dependent students whose parents have applied for but were unable to get a PLUS Loan are eligible to receive additional Direct Unsubsidized Loan funds.

Federal Direct Loan Disbursement

If you are a first-time borrower, we require that you receive loan counseling. If you do not receive loan counseling before registration, it must be completed before loan funds can be disbursed. The counseling sessions takes approximately 30-45 minutes.

Other conditions that might apply:

- If you are only applying for one term, we may divide your disbursement into two equal disbursements. We will disburse one half at registration and one half at the semester midpoint.
- If you are a first year, first time borrower at the University, you may not receive your loan check until thirty days after the beginning of classes.

Check with your Financial Aid Office to find out if either of these conditions will apply to you.

Financial Literacy and Default Prevention

Federal student loans are an excellent resource to help pay your education expenses and a great way to establish a solid financial future. It's important that you borrow responsibly so you'll be able to repay your loan.

Borrowing responsibly includes borrowing only what you need to pay your education expenses and what you can realistically afford to repay when you leave school.

Please visit our website for important [Financial Literacy and Default Prevention](#) information.

Contact Information

University of South Carolina Lancaster

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