



# South Carolina Commission on Higher Education

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October 16, 2015

Mr. Gary S. Glenn  
Interim Executive Director

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Superintendents, Principals, Headmasters, Home School Association  
Directors, and Guidance Counselors  
South Carolina Public and Private High Schools

**FROM:** Dr. Karen Woodfaulk, Director of Student Affairs

**RE:** **Class of 2016 – Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Early Award Application  
October 16- December 15, 2015 (ALL application materials must be in  
receipt of the Commission by 5:00 pm on Monday, December 15<sup>th</sup>)**

The purpose of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program is to recognize the most academically talented high school seniors in South Carolina and to encourage them to attend college within the State. Palmetto Fellows may receive up to \$6,700 annually for their freshman year and up to \$7,500 annually for their sophomore, junior and senior years. The Scholarship is limited to not more than eight terms of full-time study toward the first bachelor's degree or ten consecutive terms of full-time study toward the first approved five-year bachelor's degree at an eligible college or university in South Carolina.

Palmetto Fellows who are in their second, third and fourth academic years are eligible to receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement that provides up to \$2,500 in additional funds increasing the maximum annual award from \$7,500 to \$10,000 (not to exceed cost of attendance.) The purpose of the Scholarship Enhancement is to encourage more students to major in science, mathematics, computer science, information technology, engineering, science education, math education, and health care and related disciplines (including nursing, pre-medicine and pre-dentistry). In order for Palmetto Fellows who begin their initial college enrollment in the Fall of 2016 to be eligible for the Enhancement beginning in their second academic year, they must declare a major in an eligible CHE-approved degree program and must complete fourteen semester credit hours of math and/or science courses by the end of their first academic year.

The Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program Early Award application process is **NOW OPEN** and will **close on Monday, December 15, 2015 by 5:00 pm** (All application materials must be in receipt of the Commission by 5:00 pm of the established deadline). A complete submission includes: 1) Eligible Applicant Form; 2) Electronic application that must be completed by the guidance counselor/school representative for every eligible applicant; 3) Signed Certification and Authorization Form on each student (under step #3 of the electronic application); 4) Official transcript(s); 5) Official SAT or ACT scores; and 6) Rank Report (if applicable). For those schools wishing to use rank as an eligibility criteria, the rank policy and rank materials must be reviewed by the

Commission for compliance if not submitted for review for compliance in a prior application period.

Once the guidance counselor completes the electronic application and all required documentation is received in the Commission office by 5:00 pm on Tuesday, December 15<sup>th</sup> it is considered a complete application for consideration of the scholarship. **It is the school's responsibility to ensure that submission of the documents and electronic applications are complete BEFORE submitting to CHE.**

**Academic Criteria for Early Awards Eligibility**

**For Early Awards**, high school seniors must meet one of the following sets of academic criteria in order to be eligible to apply by no later than December 15<sup>th</sup>:

- 1. Score at least 1200 on the SAT (27 on the ACT) by the November national test administration; earn a minimum 3.5 cumulative GPA on the SC UGP at the end of the junior year; and rank in the top six percent of either the end of the sophomore or junior year. *Students registered for the November test administration should have their scores sent directly to the Commission using the following codes: SAT 4313; ACT 6326. Official scores MUST be in receipt of the Commission by 5:00 pm December 15, 2016.***
  - a.** In order to calculate the highest combined score on the SAT, the student's highest Math score must be combined with his/her highest Critical Reading score only. The writing score cannot be used in determining the requisite SAT score to qualify for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship. The highest **composite** score only may be used for the ACT;
  - b. If the top six percent is a whole number, do NOT round up to the next number in order for one additional student to qualify.** For example, a class of 200 students would have only twelve students qualify within the top six percent ( $200 \times 6\% = 12.00$ ; this does not allow for the number to round up to thirteen since twelve is already a whole number). However, if the class size were 201, then thirteen students would qualify within the top six percent ( $201 \times 6\% = 12.06$ ; **since 12.06 is not a whole number, then it can be rounded up to the next whole number of thirteen**). Two students may not occupy the same rank. In the event of a tie, the high school/home school association is responsible for determining the legitimate rank for each eligible applicant. For the purposes of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship the student's GPA may need to be truncated past two decimal points in order to determine the true rank for each student. The Commission will not be able to participate in a process to determine a student's true rank. The high school/home school association is responsible for determining each student's true rank.

**OR**

**Alternate criteria without regard to class rank, students must:**

- 2. Score at least 1400 on the SAT (32 on the ACT) by the November national test of the senior year and earn a minimum 4.00 cumulative GPA on the SC UGP at the end of the junior year** (GPAs must be reported with at least two decimal places and may not be rounded). See above for SAT/ACT scoring. *Students registered for the*

*November test administration should have their scores sent directly to the Commission using the following codes: SAT 4313; ACT 6326. Official scores MUST be in receipt of the Commission by 5:00 pm December 15, 2014.*

### **Out-of-State High Schools**

Out-of-State High Schools must submit their official grading policy to determine if it meets the SC UGP. If the grading policy substantially deviates from the SC UGP, students must use the alternate criteria, as stated above. The guidance counselor/school representative would need to convert the official transcript to demonstrate that the SC UGP GPA was met. The guidance counselor/school representative does have the option to use the first criteria if the counselor converts the whole academic class being used for rank to the SC UGP and submit a ranking report on the whole academic class to demonstrate class rank based on the SC UGP. The ranking report must include all students in the class and their respective GPA, and their GPA based on the SC UGP. An official converted transcript to demonstrate that the SC UGP GPA was met will also need to be completed. Should the out-of-state school wish to use rank as an eligibility criteria the school must contact the CHE.

### **Small Class Sizes/Home Schools/Private/Independent High Schools**

In order to use rank as an eligibility criteria, the high school or home school association must have a policy on rank which has been reviewed to verify compliance with the SC UGP and established Regulations for the State Scholarship programs. If your high school or home school association **does not rank as a policy, or the student does not meet the rank eligibility requirement**, then the student will need to use the Alternate Criteria of eligibility for the State scholarship programs.

**Small Class Sizes:** For high schools that rank as an official policy and have fewer than twenty students in the class, the top two students (the students who ranked number one or number two at the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> or the 11<sup>th</sup> grade) are able to use rank as an eligibility requirement. These students must meet all other eligibility criteria. Those students who ranked number three through number twenty may be a part of the application process if they met the Alternate Criteria of eligibility.

If using rank as an eligibility criterion, all applicants, including home school students, are required to provide class rank verification in order to be eligible to apply. Home school students must be a member of an approved home school program (as defined in relevant State Statute) that provides an official class rank for its members. **Private schools and home school associations MUST provide a ranking report to verify eligibility for their students.** The rank report must be date calculated June 15<sup>th</sup> or earlier of the academic year being used for rank. Rank must also be demonstrated on the official transcript.

Please contact the CHE program staff (see last page) if you have any questions regarding the format for the ranking report. If a student cannot obtain rank verification, then the student may also qualify by meeting the Alternate Criteria of eligibility by scoring 1400 on the SAT (32 on ACT) and earning a 4.0 cumulative GPA on the UGP, without regard to rank. Students must meet all other eligibility criteria.

### **Counselor Website Address**

**Please note that the website for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship online applications are different from the Early Award deadline to the Late Award deadline even though the addresses may be the same or similar.**

Counselor Website                      <https://www.applyweb.com/apply/scpfsc/>

This is the website guidance counselors should use to access the electronic application information for the Early Award, including detailed instructions. **The counselor website address should not be given to students or parents.**

**Complete Submission Application Includes:**

- 1. Electronic application** by the counselor must be completed **BEFORE submitting any documentation to CHE.**
  - a.** When completing the on-line sections of the application, please **capitalize the first letter of the first and last names and use lowercase for all other letters**. Do NOT use all lowercase or all uppercase letters as this will affect the correct placement when placed in alphabetical order.
  - b. Students must use legal names** on all application documents (including on-line portions). If a student normally uses his/her middle name or a nickname as the first name, the student must still use his/her official first name. Also, if a student's legal name includes a hyphenated last name, please use the hyphen as well (i.e., Smith-Jones).
  - c.** Please recheck all **social security numbers**. If SSN's do not match between the student and the guidance counselor, it delays the processing of the application and could potentially affect awarding.
- 2. Required documentation** to CHE must include: 1) Eligible Applicant Form; 2) Electronic application that must be completed by the guidance counselor/school representative for every eligible applicant; 3) Signed Certification and Authorization Form on each student (under step #3 on the electronic application); 4) Official transcript(s); 5) Official SAT or ACT scores; and 6) Rank Report (if applicable). For those schools wishing to use rank as an eligibility criteria, the rank policy and rank materials must be reviewed by the Commission for compliance if not submitted for review for compliance in a prior application period.
  - a.** ALL transcripts must be based on the SC UGP. All transcripts and rank reports (if rank report is required) regardless of academic year must display a **June 15<sup>th</sup> date calculated date or earlier and include the SC UGP GPA on the transcript regardless of academic year. No exceptions.** For schools that do not utilize the SC UGP, transcripts **must** be converted with the conversion attached to the original official transcript. You may find directions to do the conversion on the SC Department of Education's website at <http://ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/131/documents/SCUniformGradingPolicy.pdf>
  - b.** Please highlight the qualifying GPA, qualifying rank (if appropriate), and highest SAT (math and critical reading only) or ACT score used for eligibility. *Only the qualifying ACT or qualifying SAT need to be submitted for application purposes.*
  - c. ALL STUDENTS WILL HAVE A JUNIOR YEAR TRANSCRIPT.** Students who qualify using a sophomore rank must submit the sophomore transcript in addition to their junior transcript. Please ensure a valid date calculated of June

15<sup>th</sup> or earlier for the academic year that is being used is located on the transcript.

- d. Do not send a student e-mail printout of SAT/ACT scores, student reports, or score rosters as they are not official scores and will not be accepted. Should student wish to have their scores sent directly to the Commission, please use the following codes: SAT 4313; ACT 6326.
- e. All signatures should be done using either blue or black ink. **Do not use pencil or other colors of ink.**
- f. All required documentation must be organized by student name as listed on the Eligible Applicant Form.

You must adhere to the established deadline of **Monday, December 15, 2015** (All application materials must be in receipt of the Commission by 5:00 pm of the established deadline). The electronic application must be submitted and all required documentation must be in receipt of the Commission office by the established deadline date. You should contact the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship staff as soon as an issue arises to prevent any last minute problems. Please be aware that contacting Commission staff regarding an issue does not waive the established deadline date nor does it guarantee that application materials are considered complete or accepted.

The Commission on Higher Education appreciates your continued assistance with the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program, which allows the State to retain the “best and brightest” students in South Carolina. We believe that this is a tremendous opportunity for college-bound seniors in South Carolina.

If you should have any questions about the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship eligibility criteria or the application process you may do the following: 1) visit [www.sccango.org](http://www.sccango.org); 2) contact the Program Manager, Ms. Elizabeth Caulder, at 803.737.2262 or by e-mail at [ecaulder@che.sc.gov](mailto:ecaulder@che.sc.gov) ; or 3) Ms. Leslie Williams, at 803.737.2290 or by e-mail at [lwilliams@che.sc.gov](mailto:lwilliams@che.sc.gov) .