

NEW

DREAMS Scholarship Program

REGULATIONS – 1500.

2026 - 2027 Award Year



Effective Date – July 1, 2026

GSFA | Georgia Student
Finance Authority

**2082 East Exchange Place
Tucker, Georgia 30084**

1501. Table of Contents.

1501. Table of Contents..... 2

1502. Program Overview..... 5

1503. Definitions (Electronic Link) 6

1504. General Eligibility Requirements. 6

 1504.1. Citizenship. 6

 1504.2. Georgia Residency..... 6

 1504.3. Selective Service Registration..... 7

 1504.4. Defaulted Loan or Refund Due..... 8

 1504.5. Georgia Drug-Free Act. 9

 1504.6. Incarceration. 9

1505. Program Specific Academic Requirements. 10

 1505.1. Satisfactory Academic Progress..... 10

 1505.2. Postsecondary Calculated HOPE GPA..... 10

1506. Program Specific Eligibility Requirements. 11

 1506.1. Enrollment Status..... 11

 1506.2. Pell Grant and Financial Need. 11

 1506.3. Financial Toolkit..... 11

 1506.4. Work Requirement..... 11

 1506.5. Award Limit..... 12

 1506.6. Attainment of a Baccalaureate Degree. 12

1507. Eligibility Requirements by Institution..... 13

1508. Eligible and Ineligible Coursework.....	14
1508.1. Transient Coursework.....	14
1508.2. Distance Learning Coursework.....	14
1508.3. Study Away Coursework.....	14
1508.4. Joint Enrollment and Dual Credit Enrollment Coursework.....	14
1508.5. Learning Support Coursework.....	14
1508.6. Coursework Exemptions.....	14
1508.7. Continuing Education and Audit Coursework.....	15
1509. Student Application Requirements.....	16
1509.1. Application Forms.....	16
1509.2. Application Deadline Date.....	16
1510. Award Requirements.....	17
1510.1. Award Amounts.....	17
1510.2. Awards Per School Term.....	17
1511. Institution Allocation.....	18
1512. Invoicing Requirements.....	19
1512.1. Submission of Invoices.....	19
1512.2. Payment of Invoices.....	19
1513. Return of Funds Requirements.....	20
1513.1. Calculation of Return of Funds.....	20
1513.2. Emergency Military Duty.....	20
1514. Reconciliation Requirements.....	21
1514.1. Term Reconciliation.....	21
1514.2. Fiscal Year End Reconciliation.....	21
1515. Records Retention Requirements.....	22

1515.1. Length of Retention.....22

1515.2. Documentation.....22

1515.3. Extended Retention.....22

1516. Administrative Reviews and Exceptions.23

 1516.1. Administrative Reviews.23

 1516.2. Exceptions.23

1517. Compliance Reviews.....25

 1517.1. Compliance Review Policy.....25

 1517.2. Compliance Review Process.....25

 1517.3. Institutional Repayment.....25

1502. Program Overview.

Dedicating Resources to Educationally Advance More Students (DREAMS) Scholarship Program provides need-based aid to Pell Grant eligible students attending a USG or TCSG institution who are enrolled in an undergraduate degree program.

Eligible students may receive a DREAMS award of up to \$3,000 annually depending on the extent of their unmet financial need after all other scholarships and grants have been applied to the student's total cost of attendance.

DREAMS Scholarship recipients must be enrolled at an Eligible Institution within the University System of Georgia (USG) or the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) and be pursuing an Associate's or Baccalaureate's degree. In addition to maintaining enrollment, students must complete an online financial through GAfutures and must work or volunteer a minimum of 60 hours to qualify for a DREAMS Scholarship award per term. Students must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress with a 2.0 SAP GPA and a Calculated HOPE GPA of 2.0.

DREAMS Scholarship Program began State Fiscal Year 2026. The Georgia Student Finance Authority administers the DREAMS Scholarship Program in accordance with the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A.) § 20-3-367, et seq.

(The remainder of this page is intentionally blank.)

1503. Definitions (Electronic Link)

1504. General Eligibility Requirements.

1504.1. Citizenship.

1. A student must be a United States Citizen, born or naturalized, or an Eligible Non-Citizen according to the Federal Title IV Regulations as of the first day of classes of the school term for which payment is sought.

1504.2. Georgia Residency.

1. A student attending a USG or TCSG institution who meets the Georgia Residency requirements of the Board of Regents (BOR) or the State Board of TCSG at the time of his or her high school graduation, Home Study program completion, or earned a state-approved High School Equivalency diploma, must also meet such Georgia Residency requirements for 12 consecutive months immediately prior to the first day of classes of the school term for which the DREAMS Scholarship is sought.
 - a. A student who does not meet the Georgia Residency requirements of the BOR or TCSG at the time of high school graduation, Home Study program completion, or earned a High School Equivalency diploma must meet such Georgia Residency requirements for 24 consecutive months immediately prior to the first day of classes of the school term for which the DREAMS Scholarship is sought.
2. Military Personnel, Military Spouses, or Dependent Children, shall be treated as a Georgia Resident for purposes of DREAMS Scholarship eligibility if:
 - a. The Military Personnel is stationed in Georgia on active duty, or lists Georgia as his or her home of record; or
 - b. A USG or TCSG institution grants a Military Personnel Out-of-State Tuition Waiver or Exemption.
3. No other Out-of-State Tuition Waiver, other than for Military Personnel and their dependents, applies to students in the DREAMS Scholarship Program.
4. Members of the Georgia National Guard shall be treated as a Georgia resident for purposes of DREAMS Scholarship eligibility.
5. Members of a reserve component of the United States Armed Forces, assigned to a reserve unit located in Georgia, shall be treated as a Georgia resident for purposes of DREAMS Scholarship eligibility.

6. A student, who was correctly determined to meet the Georgia Residency requirements for purposes of DREAMS Scholarship eligibility and began receiving payment, will continue to meet the Georgia Residency requirements for purposes of DREAMS Scholarship eligibility, unless he or she has a break in Enrollment of two or more consecutive semesters or quarters and resides outside of Georgia for 12 or more consecutive months.
 - a. If such student later returns to Georgia, he or she must re-establish Georgia Residency for 12 consecutive months, (refer to *Section 1504.2.1.* or *1504.2.3.*), before regaining eligibility.
7. A student who has a break in Enrollment of two or more consecutive semesters or quarters, and who resides outside Georgia for less than 12 consecutive months, and then later returns to Georgia and Enrolls in an Eligible Postsecondary Institution within 12 consecutive months from his or her most recent date of Enrollment in an Eligible Postsecondary Institution will continue to meet the Georgia Residency requirements for purposes of DREAMS Scholarship eligibility.

1504.3. Selective Service Registration.

1. A student must be in compliance with Georgia state law requirements of having registered with the United States Selective Service System requirements, in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-3-519.1(b).
2. Selective Service registration, by required males, should be completed prior to the program application deadline in order to be eligible for payment for such school term.
 - a. A late disbursement is permitted if the student meets Selective Service requirements any time during the fiscal year.
3. GSFA will maintain Selective Service registration or exemption status information for state aid program applicants/recipients. The registration status will be available to the postsecondary institution in which the student is enrolled in order for the institution to determine program eligibility.
 - a. The Institution may collect documentation supporting a student's registration status and submit it to GSFA for consideration.
4. Male applicants required to register with the Selective Service System must have a registered or exemption status on file with GSFA for a disbursement invoice to be paid.

1504.4. Defaulted Loan or Refund Due.

1. A student must not be in default on a Federal Title IV or State of Georgia educational loan or owe a refund due to an over-award on a Federal Title IV or State of Georgia student financial aid program, or in any other way be in violation of Federal Title IV Programs Regulations or State of Georgia student financial aid program regulations. A student must meet the requirements of this section at the time funds are disbursed by GSFA on behalf of the student.
2. A student's federal default status can be resolved in one of five ways:
 - a. Completing an acceptable rehabilitation plan; or
 - b. Having the loan repurchased by the original lender and the default status reversed; or
 - c. Consolidating the loan out of a default status; or
 - d. Receiving an approved Title IV debt settlement, to include a compromised settlement; or
 - e. Making monthly payments over a specified period agreed upon with the lender of the student's federal loan; each payment must be on time and voluntary to be in a satisfactory repayment plan.
3. A student's State of Georgia refund due status can be resolved by:
 - a. Paying the refund due to the Eligible Postsecondary Institution at which the over-award occurred. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution will then forward the payment to GSFA.
4. A student's default status on a State of Georgia loan can be resolved in one of two ways:
 - a. Paying off the defaulted loan in full; or
 - b. Completing an acceptable rehabilitation plan by making voluntary on-time payments over a specified period agreed-upon with GSFA.
5. If such student has repaid the defaulted loan or refund due in full, or resolved the default status, then he or she may be eligible to receive state scholarship, grant, or loan funds beginning with the school term in which repayment was made in full but not retroactively for previous school terms.

1504.5. Georgia Drug-Free Act.

1. A student convicted of committing certain felony offenses involving marijuana, controlled substances, or dangerous drugs, may be ineligible for DREAMS Scholarship funding payment from the date of conviction to the completion of the following school term, in accordance with the Georgia Drug-Free Postsecondary Education Act of 1990, O.C.G.A. § 20-1-20, et seq.

1504.6. Incarceration.

1. A student is ineligible to receive DREAMS Scholarship funding while incarcerated. Upon release from incarceration, if such student meets all eligibility requirements, he or she may be eligible for DREAMS Scholarship funding.

(The remainder of this page is intentionally blank.)

1505. Program Specific Academic Requirements.

1505.1. Satisfactory Academic Progress.

1. In accordance with Title IV requirements, a student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) as defined and certified by the eligible postsecondary institution. Regardless of the institution's SAP standards, the student must maintain a minimum SAP GPA of 2.0 when SAP is evaluated by the PSI.
 - a. For state aid programs, Eligible Postsecondary Institutions may establish an appeal process for students with dual-enrollment credit hours that fail to meet the quantitative standard (pace) for degree completion, generally identified as 150 percent of the published length of the program.
 - b. The appeal should consider attempted hours toward the program in which the student is enrolled, satisfactory qualitative (grade-based) standards, and the student's satisfactory pace in pursuit of completing the program with and without the dual enrollment credits. Eligible Postsecondary Institutions have sole discretion and responsibility for evaluation and approval of any such appeals.

1505.2. Postsecondary Calculated HOPE GPA.

1. A student must maintain a Postsecondary Calculated HOPE GPA of 2.0 or higher at the end of each term to remain eligible for the DREAMS Scholarship.
 - a. The College HOPE Eligibility Calculation Service (CHECS) provides Postsecondary Calculated HOPE GPAs for students with transcript data submitted by eligible postsecondary institutions and meet HOPE calculation requirements.
2. A student who has no attempted postsecondary credit hours that count towards a degree is eligible to receive the DREAMS Scholarship, provided the student meets all other applicable eligibility requirements.
3. For the purposes of DREAMS Scholarship, an Eligible Postsecondary Institution (PSI) may manually calculate the Postsecondary Calculated HOPE GPA in accordance with the *HOPE Scholarship Program Regulations for Public Institutions, Section 105.15..*

1506. Program Specific Eligibility Requirements.

1506.1. Enrollment Status.

1. A student must be Enrolled six hours or more at a USG or TCSG Eligible Postsecondary Institution in a Matriculated status leading to an Undergraduate Degree. The Degree program of study must be approved by the USG Board of Regents or the State Board of TCSG.

1506.2. Pell Grant and Financial Need.

1. A student must qualify for the Federal Pell Grant and have unmet Financial Need in order to be eligible to receive the DREAMS Scholarship
 - a. Unmet Financial Need means the Cost of Attendance minus the Student Aid Index minus all other scholarship and grant aid.

1506.3. Financial Literacy Requirement.

1. DREAMS Scholarship applicants must complete the required online Financial Toolkit sessions through GAfutures before the student receives their first disbursement.
2. All DREAMS Scholarship applicants must have a GAfutures Student account to sign into the DREAMS Financial Toolkit.
3. PSIs will have access to confirmations of students having completed the required Financial Toolkit sessions through GAD application file and PSF DREAMS module.

1506.4. Work Requirement.

1. DREAMS Scholarship applicants/recipients must complete a minimum of 60 hours of paid or unpaid work for each term disbursement.
 - a. A student receiving the DREAMS Scholarship for the first time does not have to meet the work requirement prior to their first disbursement.
2. Paid and unpaid work that meets the DREAMS Work Requirement includes but are not limited to:
 - a. Paid work (with an employer or federal/institutional work study)
 - b. Internship, externship, student teaching, clinical, practicum
 - c. Volunteer or community service
 - d. Military Service

3. The required work hours must be reported through GAfutures and documentation to verify for paid or unpaid work must be submitted.
 - a. Additionally, PSIs may receive the work hours and verification of work and submit them through PSF Document Upload.

1506.5. Award Limit.

1. A student may receive a DREAMS Scholarship for a maximum of eight semesters.

1506.6. Attainment of a Baccalaureate Degree.

1. Regardless of the number of terms a student has received the DREAMS Scholarship, such student is ineligible for DREAMS Scholarship payment if he or she has attained a Baccalaureate Degree, at any time, from any postsecondary institution, including the equivalent of a Baccalaureate Degree from a foreign institution as indicated by the foreign academic transcript and/or foreign academic transcript translation.

(The remainder of this page is intentionally blank.)

1507. Eligibility Requirements by Institution.

1. Eligible Postsecondary Institutions shall be required to determine the eligibility of students for the DREAMS Scholarship Program for a term or terms in accordance with the eligibility requirements set forth in *Sections 1505 and 1506* of these regulations.
2. In addition to the eligibility criteria, as set forth in the DREAMS Scholarship Regulations, Eligible Postsecondary Institutions have the authority to implement institutional policies to set additional eligibility criteria including requiring an institutional application.

(The remainder of this page is intentionally blank.)

1508. Eligible and Ineligible Coursework.

1508.1. Transient Coursework.

1. A Transient student must have an unmet financial aid need at the Home and/or Host Institution in order to be eligible to receive DREAMS Scholarship payment at the Home and/or the Host Institution if he or she meets all eligibility requirements.
2. The Home Institution and the Host Institution must both be Eligible Postsecondary Institutions and are responsible for determining a student's eligibility for DREAMS Scholarship payment. Coursework taken at the Host Institution must be approved by the Home Institution and applied toward credit requirements for the degree program the student is pursuing at the Home Institution. DREAMS Scholarship funds shall be credited toward the allocation of the Postsecondary Institution that submits the invoice for the award.
3. A student taking coursework through the Home and Host Institutions during the same term is eligible to receive DREAMS Scholarship payment from each Eligible Postsecondary Institution, provided the total award does not exceed the maximum term award of \$1,500.00.

1508.2. Distance Learning Coursework.

1. A student participating in Distance Learning coursework is eligible to receive DREAMS Scholarship payment if all other eligibility requirements are met.

1508.3. Study Away Coursework.

1. A student is eligible for DREAMS Scholarship payment while participating in a Study Away program.

1508.4. Joint Enrollment and Dual Credit Enrollment Coursework.

1. A student is ineligible for DREAMS Scholarship payment for degree coursework attempted while participating in Joint Enrollment or Dual Credit Enrollment.

1508.5. Learning Support Coursework.

1. A student seeking a degree who enrolls in Learning Support coursework is eligible for DREAMS Scholarship payment for such coursework.

1508.6. Coursework Exemptions.

1. A student is ineligible to receive DREAMS Scholarship payment for coursework that was exempted or given credit by examination, testing, training, or experience.

1508.7. Continuing Education and Audit Coursework.

1. A student is ineligible to receive a DREAMS Scholarship payment for coursework classified by his or her Eligible Postsecondary Institution as Continuing Education or Audit coursework.

(The remainder of this page is intentionally blank.)

1509. Student Application Requirements.

1509.1. Application Forms.

1. A student is required to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) each academic year he or she intends to apply for the DREAMS Scholarship.
 - a. FAFSAs selected for verification must be verified before a student can be awarded DREAMS.
2. In addition to the FAFSA, an Eligible Postsecondary Institution may require students to complete an institutional application or request to provide supplemental information for the purpose of determining DREAMS Scholarship eligibility.

1509.2. Application Deadline Date.

1. The FAFSA must be completed on or before the last day of the Eligible Postsecondary Institution's school term (semester or quarter) in order for the student to be awarded the DREAMS Scholarship for that term.

(The remainder of this page is intentionally blank.)

1510. Award Requirements.

1510.1. Award Amounts.

1. The maximum semester award amount is \$1,500.
2. A student can receive DREAMS Scholarship for up to 3 semesters within the fiscal year; however, the annual maximum award amount is \$3,000.

1510.2. Awards Per School Term.

1. DREAMS scholarship award must be applied towards unmet Financial Need after all other scholarships and grants have been applied by the institution.
 - a. DREAMS Scholarship may be made for a previous term within the aid year if the student had a completed FASFA on file by the last day of the term for the award.
 - b. Students may be awarded for the standard school terms of Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters.
 - c. Summer term is a trailer for awarding purposes of the DREAMS Scholarship.
 - d. An Eligible Postsecondary Institution may combine mini-terms or modules to form the equivalent of a standard term.
 - e. An Eligible Postsecondary Institution may offer Non-Standard Terms or Non-Terms, in which courses or modules are taken consecutively to form the equivalent of a standard semester. Regardless of the structure of an Eligible Postsecondary Institution's school terms, a student may be awarded DREAMS Scholarship funds for a maximum of three semesters per Award Year.

1511. Institution Allocation.

1. GSFA will determine annual allocation amounts for DREAMS Scholarship to be awarded to each Eligible Postsecondary Institution.
2. The annual allocation for each fiscal year shall be based on the percentage of Federal Pell Grant recipients at each Eligible Postsecondary Institution as reported to the National Center for Education Statistics' Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).
 - a. IPEDS data published on May 15 of each year shall be used to determine the institutional allocation for the upcoming fiscal year.
3. Each institution will be notified of their annual allocation through GAfutures Postsecondary Function (PSF).
4. Each Eligible Postsecondary Institution must complete the annual Allocation Commitment form by March 1.
5. The Allocation Commitment form is each eligible institution's official communication with GSFA of their intent to award their annual DREAMS allocation.
 - a. The Allocation Commitment form is used by the institution to confirm all allocated funds will be disbursed to eligible students by the annual invoice deadline, forfeit some or all of the allocated funds, and to request additional funds, if available.
 - b. Failure to complete the Allocation Commitment Form may affect additional funds being available.
6. Each Eligible Postsecondary Institution must manage their allocation, awards, invoices, disbursements, and Allocation Commitment through PSF.

1512. Invoicing Requirements.

1512.1. Submission of Invoices.

1. Invoices must be submitted through GSFA's online invoicing system SURFER, processed and approved by GSFA by the Invoicing Deadline Date as established by GSFA. Each invoice submitted by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution must include Enrolled-Hours and Paid-Hours and the student's program of study information, when applicable to the program.
2. Eligible Postsecondary Institutions may submit DREAMS invoices to GSFA as early as fifteen (15) calendar days prior to the first day of classes for the school term.
3. Prior to the beginning of any award year and no later than June 30 of each year, GSFA shall establish and publish the Invoicing Deadline Dates for each school term for the upcoming Award Year.
 - a. In the event invoices are submitted to GSFA by an Eligible Postsecondary Institution after the Invoicing Deadline Date for a school term, GSFA may issue a notice of failure to meet the Invoicing Deadline Date to the President and/or governing body of the Eligible Postsecondary Institution, and the invoices may not be honored.
4. Invoices submitted after the Invoicing Deadline Date during the current fiscal year may be honored or paid if the failure to meet the date was because of:
 - a. The need for supplemental documentation required by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution or GSFA to support or verify a student's eligibility; or
 - b. Late grades, late completions, grade changes; or
 - c. Other adjustments made to the student's official academic transcript that resulted in a change in eligibility, and the student met all other eligibility requirements prior to the deadline.
5. The President of GSFA has sole discretion in the determination of invoice deadlines and extensions. The decision of the President of GSFA shall be final.

1512.2. Payment of Invoices.

1. DREAMS Scholarship funds are paid to Eligible Postsecondary Institutions by electronic transfer of funds on behalf of eligible students each school term, upon submission to GSFA of a DREAMS Scholarship invoice.
2. Upon receipt of DREAMS Scholarship payments from GSFA, the Eligible Postsecondary Institution must credit the amount of payment on behalf of an eligible student to the student's account and for the unmet financial aid need the award was based upon.

1513. Return of Funds Requirements.

1513.1. Calculation of Return of Funds.

1. A student is ineligible for the DREAMS for coursework from which he or she totally withdrew, if as a result, coursework does not appear on the student's academic transcript as a "W" or any other code or type of identification for such a withdrawal.
 - a. If the Eligible Postsecondary Institution received the disbursement prior to a student's total withdrawal, in which the coursework does not appear on the student's academic transcript, then the Institution must cancel or return the award to GSFA.
2. If a student officially withdraws, drops out, drops hours, is expelled, or otherwise fails to complete a period of Enrollment and the coursework is included on the student's academic transcript, the Institution must determine if a return of funds is necessary based on the Institution's refund policy. The award or a portion of the award may need to be returned to GSFA.
 - a. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution must determine if the award or portion of the award exceeds the adjusted unmet Financial Need. The award or portion of the award that exceeds the adjusted unmet Financial Need must be returned to GSFA within forty-five (45) calendar days of the determination.

1513.2. Emergency Military Duty.

1. A student who is a member of the United States Armed Forces, National Guard, or Military Reserve Forces receiving funds from the DREAMS Program who is called to emergency military duty during a school term that is already in progress should not have his or her DREAMS eligibility negatively impacted.
2. If the Eligible Postsecondary Institution the student attends allows the student to totally withdraw and receive a grade such as "WM" for "military withdrawal" or the Eligible Postsecondary Institution totally removes all grades for that term and corresponding credit hours from the student's records, the Eligible Postsecondary Institution should return the full amount of the DREAMS Scholarship award to GSFA.
3. This regulation may also be applied to students who are not members of the military but are otherwise unusually and detrimentally affected by the emergency activation of members of the United States Armed Forces, as determined by the president of the Eligible Postsecondary Institution that such student is attending.

1514. Reconciliation Requirements.

1514.1. Term Reconciliation.

1. Eligible Postsecondary Institutions must conduct a Term Reconciliation by the end of each term. A Term Reconciliation consists of an official acknowledgement by an authorized school official, through PSF, that the number of students submitted for payment, total invoiced, the number of invoices paid, and total disbursed by GSFA to the Eligible Postsecondary Institution, according to PSF, is accurate on that date.
 - a. GSFA will not issue any state scholarship or grant funds for the following term until the Term Reconciliation is complete.
 - i. Invoices in an academically ineligible status must be addressed and fully resolved before term reconciliation can be completed.
 - b. Funds are not returned to GSFA as part of the Term Reconciliation process.

1514.2. Fiscal Year End Reconciliation.

1. Eligible Postsecondary Institutions must conduct the Fiscal Year End Reconciliation consisting of an official acknowledgement by an authorized school official, through PSF, verifying, student by student, the accuracy of each invoice submitted by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution with respect to the student's Enrolled-Hours, Paid-Hours, Learning Support, academic eligibility status as determined by the CHECS calculations, and program of study information, when applicable to the program.
 - a. Any pending rejected or academically ineligible invoices must be fully resolved prior to Fiscal Year End Reconciliation.
 - b. Reconciliation certification forms must be completed and submitted electronically, through PSF, by July 15, immediately following the completion of the Fiscal Year for each State Program.
 - c. Return to GSFA any funds not utilized according to the Fiscal Year End Reconciliation by August 15 after the beginning of the new Fiscal Year.
 - d. GSFA will not issue any state scholarship or grant funds for the Fall term until the previous Fiscal Year End Reconciliation process is complete.
 - e. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution must have a procedure in place to ensure that the state scholarship and grant funds do not go to an unintended third party (i.e., state, postsecondary institution).

1515. Records Retention Requirements.

1515.1. Length of Retention.

1. An Eligible Postsecondary Institution shall maintain accurate records, books, documents, and other evidence concerning the DREAMS Scholarship Program, including, but not limited to, individual student files for whichever is longer:
 - a. Three years after the Award Year in which the aid was awarded; or
 - b. For such other period as required by an applicable statute, rule, or regulation; or
 - c. Such other time as requested in writing by GSFA.

1515.2. Documentation.

1. Documentation contained within an individual student file or record which supports the original determination of a student's eligibility must be retained by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution and available for review by GSFA on the Eligible Postsecondary Institution's campus in Georgia, for at least three calendar years after the most recent Award Year for which the student received DREAMS Scholarship funds (refer to *Section 1517.*).
2. Eligible Postsecondary Institutions are permitted to maintain these documents in an imaged media format. The imaged media format must be capable of reproducing an accurate, legible, and complete copy of the original document.
 - a. Such documentation may include, but is not limited to, copies of permanent resident alien cards, Georgia state income tax returns, student financial aid applications, and academic transcripts from previous institutions.
 - b. Documentation regarding a student's eligibility is not limited to files, records, and other information received and maintained by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution's financial aid office.
 - c. Documentation supporting a student's eligibility that is received and maintained by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution's admissions office, registrar's office, business office, and other administrative operations must be available to GSFA for the purpose of Compliance Reviews.
3. It is the Eligible Postsecondary Institution's responsibility to resolve any inconsistencies or conflicting information within a student's records, prior to awarding or disbursing DREAMS Scholarship funds to the student.

1515.3. Extended Retention.

1. An Eligible Postsecondary Institution may be required to retain student records involved in a Compliance Review, Audit, or investigation for more than the three-year retention period set forth in *Section 1515*. If the three-year retention period expires before the issue in question is resolved, the Eligible Postsecondary Institution must continue to retain all associated records until resolution is reached.

1516. Administrative Reviews and Exceptions.

1516.1. Administrative Reviews.

1. The DREAMS Scholarship regulations are applied to each student considered for funds by appropriate officials of Eligible Postsecondary Institutions and by the administrative staff of GSFA.
2. If a student believes a DREAMS Scholarship rule or regulation was incorrectly applied in his or her case, the student has the right to file a request for an Administrative Review with GSFA and must follow the DREAMS Scholarship Administrative Review process as set forth in these regulations.
3. In order for a request for an Administrative Review to be considered, the student must submit a written request for an Administrative Review to GSFA's office within forty-five (45) calendar days of receiving notice of denial from the Eligible Postsecondary Institution. If additional information is requested from the student, it must be provided within the time frame specified by GSFA.
 - a. GSFA will review the case and determine whether the rule or regulation was applied correctly and notify the student and Eligible Postsecondary Institution of the determination.
 - b. GSFA decides a case based only on documentation provided, rather than a personal presentation.

1516.2. Exceptions.

1. GSFA may grant an exception to the Work Requirements in very limited and exceptional cases. GSFA has sole discretion to grant an Exception based on the circumstances presented by a student who was not able to complete the minimum 60-hour Work Requirement per term.
2. No other requests for Exceptions to the DREAMS Program can be considered, reviewed, or granted under any circumstances.
3. Exceptions to the Work Requirement may be granted for extenuating circumstances such as:
 - a. Serious Illness, Psychiatric Disorder, or Serious Injury, experienced by the student;
or
 - b. Death of an Immediate Family Member and/or stepparent, stepchild, or stepsibling;
or

- c. Immediate Family Member and/or stepparent, stepchild, or stepsibling experienced a Serious Illness, Psychiatric Disorder, or Serious Injury and the student had to provide temporary care for an Immediate Family Member and/or stepparent, stepchild, or stepsibling.
- d. In cases where a Serious Illness, Psychiatric Disorder or Serious Injury is the basis for an Exception request, the Serious Illness must have been treated, Psychiatric Disorder must have been diagnosed, or Serious Injury must have been sustained within the semester the Work Requirement exception is requested.
- e. In cases where death of a family member, as listed above, is the basis for an Exception request, the family member's death must have occurred within the semester the Work Requirements is requested.

(The remainder of this page is intentionally blank.)

1517. Compliance Reviews.

1517.1. Compliance Review Policy.

1. GSFA may conduct Compliance Reviews of Eligible Postsecondary Institutions in order to assess administration of the program and compliance with the program's regulations. Such Compliance Reviews may be conducted no less frequently than once every three years in accordance with GSFA's *Compliance Review Process and Procedures* document, which is available at GSFA.georgia.gov, under *Information for School Compliance*.

1517.2. Compliance Review Process.

1. GSFA selects a sampling of the Eligible Postsecondary Institution's DREAMS Scholarship recipients, for the Award Year under review, and the Eligible Postsecondary Institution's files and records for the sample are examined to assure compliance. Records which document and support a student's eligibility must be available for review at the Georgia campus of the postsecondary institution.
 - a. GSFA will exclude Residency determinations for DREAMS Scholarship recipients, as they relate to *Section 1504.2.1.* and SAP determinations, in the selected sample for any USG or TCSG institution, that has submitted a signed certification to GSFA's Compliance Department by the President of the Eligible Postsecondary Institution that:
 - i. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution is in compliance with its policies and procedures in the determination and the administration of the financial aid award process relative to Residency and SAP requirements; and
 - ii. The Residency and SAP determinations have been fairly and consistently applied with respect to all students receiving DREAMS Scholarship awards.
 - b. Such certification must be submitted annually to GSFA's Compliance Department in the format required by GSFA.
 - i. Failure to provide such certification will result in a review of Residency determinations and SAP determinations made for DREAMS Scholarship recipients in the selected sample.

1517.3. Institutional Repayment.

1. In the event it is determined that an Eligible Postsecondary Institution knowingly or through error certified an ineligible student to be eligible for DREAMS, the amount of such scholarship shall be refunded by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution to GSFA.
2. GSFA may suspend an Eligible Postsecondary Institution from receiving DREAMS payments if it fails to timely refund any monies deemed due based on the Compliance Review.

3. Any person who knowingly makes or furnishes any false statement or misrepresentation, or who accepts such statement or misrepresentation knowing it to be false, for the purpose of enabling an ineligible student to wrongfully obtain a DREAMS Scholarship shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. GSFA shall refer such matters to appropriate law enforcement agencies for investigation.
4. If evidence is not available at the time of awarding, it indicates that a student should not have received the DREAMS payment, then all future DREAMS awards for that student must be canceled.
 - a. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution is held harmless by GSFA, if the student's file is adequately documented with available evidence and it is determined by GSFA that the Eligible Postsecondary Institution was not at fault.
 - b. Evidence is considered unavailable at the time of awarding if it is not available in the student's institutional files (i.e., financial aid, admissions, registrar, etc.).
5. If GSFA determines the student's file is not adequately documented, then the Eligible Postsecondary Institution may be solely responsible for the repayment.
6. GSFA may suspend a qualified institution from receiving payments under this program if it fails to refund any monies as required by statute and these regulations.