ACCEL PROGRAM

REGULATIONS – 900.

2012 - 2013 AWARD YEAR

Effective Date – July 1, 2012

Georgia Student Finance Commission
LOANS ◢ SCHOLARSHIPS ◢ GRANTS

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902. Program Overview**.**

The Accel Program offers Georgia public and private high school students the opportunity to earn credit hours toward an Associate or Baccalaureate Degree, as they simultaneously meet their high school graduation requirements as Dual Credit Enrollment students, by providing financial assistance toward their postsecondary educational costs. In order to be eligible for Accel funds, a high school student must be taking coursework leading to an Associate or Baccalaureate Degree. A high school student cannot receive assistance from the Accel Program for postsecondary courses that are part of a technical Certificate or Diploma program of study.

The award amount received by eligible students and the total amount of funds appropriated for the program are established each year by the Georgia General Assembly during the prior legislative session, and are subject to change during the Award Year.

The Accel Program was established beginning with the 2004-2005 Award Year (State Fiscal Year 2005) and is administered by the Georgia Student Finance Commission, in accordance with these regulations. Previously funded by the Georgia Lottery for Education, beginning with the 2011-2012 Award Year, State revenues will provide funding for this program, as authorized each year by the State of Georgia's Annual Operating Budget.

902.1. Student Participation Considerations.

Careful consideration should be taken before a decision is made to participate in the Accel Program. The high school student, his or her parents, the high school counselor and principal, and officials of the Eligible Postsecondary Institution should be confident that it is in the best interest of the student to participate in Accel. Beginning with Fall term 2011, the hours for which Accel payment was received will not be included in the HOPE Combined Paid-Hours limit. The following factors should be assessed before a student enters into the Accel Program.

It is important for the student and his or her parents to have a serious and open discussion of the student's postsecondary educational and career goals.

a. A high school student's social and emotional maturity can often be the major determinate of success as a Dual Credit Enrollment student.

b. The quality and quantity of the academic coursework the student has completed, as early as the 8th grade, should be evaluated to determine exactly what additional coursework is required to meet high school graduation requirements and what coursework the high school can offer the student for the remainder of his or her high school studies.

c. Although the Accel Program does not mandate specific academic requirements for participation, it is important for the student to understand that college credit hours earned as a Dual Credit Enrollment student, may not be accepted by certain postsecondary institutions. Each institution has its own specific academic requirements and policies as they relate to the acceptance of transfer credit.

d. As the student and his or her parents make this major decision, full advantage should be taken of the knowledge and experience of officials at the student's high school and at the Eligible Postsecondary Institution the student plans to attend.

Be sure to carefully read *Section 905.3. – Impact on Future HOPE Eligibility* of these program regulations.

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903. Definitions.

"Academic Year" means a period of time, usually nine months, during which a Full-Time student is expected to complete the equivalent of at least two semesters or three quarters of postsecondary coursework.

"Accel Program" or "Accel" means a student financial aid program administered by the Commission to assist students who are attending an Eligible High School and simultaneously taking Degree coursework from an Eligible Postsecondary Institution in Georgia as a Dual Credit Enrollment student.

"Administrative Review" means a review by Commission staff of an eligibility determination made by an Eligible Postsecondary Institution or by the Commission to determine if an Accel program rule, policy, or regulation was applied correctly in a student's specific case.

"Associate Degree" means a two-year Degree conferred on students by a postsecondary institution upon completion of a unified Undergraduate program of study in an academic discipline or major. Associate Degrees typically require a student to earn at least 60 semester or 90 quarter credit hours.

"Attempted-Hours" means Degree credit hours that are used to determine when the Postsecondary Cumulative Grade Point Average must be checked for HOPE Scholarship eligibility, and to determine when a student has reached his or her maximum hours of eligibility for the HOPE Scholarship Program.

"Audit" means the act of a student attending a course for personal development, with the understanding and agreement of his or her postsecondary institution that no credit hours or grade will be earned for that course.

"Award Year" means three consecutive quarters or two consecutive semesters, beginning with the fall term and ending with the spring term, or the Non-Standard or Non-Term equivalent.

"Award Year Reconciliation" means a final student-by-student reconciliation for an Award Year conducted by Eligible Postsecondary Institutions with the Commission.

"Baccalaureate Degree" means a four-year Degree conferred on students by a postsecondary institution upon completion of a unified Undergraduate program of study in an academic discipline or major. Baccalaureate (Bachelor's) Degrees typically require a student to earn at least 120 semester or 180 quarter credit hours.

"Board of Regents" means the governing body of the University System of Georgia.

"Carnegie Unit" means one unit of high school credit for a minimum of 150 clock hours of instruction.

"Certificate" means an academic credential granted by a postsecondary institution indicating satisfactory completion of training by a student in an organized technical Undergraduate program of study which is not a Diploma program of study, an Associate Degree, Baccalaureate Degree, Graduate Degree or Continuing Education. A Certificate program of study typically requires fewer credit hours than a Diploma program of study.

"Combined Paid-Hours" means the total number of Paid-Hours a student has accumulated as a result of payment from any combination of the Zell Miller Scholarship Program, plus HOPE Scholarship Program, plus HOPE Grant Program, plus, through FY2011, the Accel Program.

"Commission" means the Georgia Student Finance Commission, the agency responsible for administering certain postsecondary educational student financial aid programs offered by the State of Georgia, and other programs for which funds may be appropriated or assigned to it by the state legislature, or from other sources, from time to time.

"Compliance Review" means an assessment by the Commission of an Eligible Postsecondary Institution by evaluating the Eligible Postsecondary Institution's compliance with the regulations governing programs administered by the Commission, in accordance with the Commission's *Compliance Review Process and Procedures* document.

"Continuing Education" means postsecondary courses designed for personal development, or an extension of the traditional on-campus learning process, and does not lead to credit toward a postsecondary Certificate, Diploma, or Degree.

"Cost of Attendance" means the estimated expenses, both direct and indirect, which may be incurred by a student and the student's family to finance the cost of receiving a postsecondary education. As determined by the student's postsecondary institution and as defined by Federal Title IV Program regulations, these expenses may include Tuition, fees, room, meals, books, supplies, transportation, and personal expenses.

"Course Directory" means a document produced and updated annually by the Georgia Department of Education of Eligible High School Courses that can be substituted with Degree courses and applied toward high school graduation requirements for Dual Credit Enrollment students.

"Degree" means an Associate Degree or Baccalaureate Degree conferred on students by a postsecondary institution, upon completion of a unified Undergraduate program of study in an academic discipline or major.

"Diploma" means an academic credential granted by a postsecondary institution indicating satisfactory completion of training by a student in an organized technical Undergraduate program of study which is not a Certificate program of study, an Associate Degree, Baccalaureate Degree or Graduate Degree. A Diploma program of study typically requires more credit hours than a Certificate program of study.

"Distance Learning" means an educational process that is characterized by the separation, in time or place, between instructor and student. It may include courses offered principally through the use of television, audio, video cassettes/discs, correspondence, audio/computer conferencing, and transmission by computer, Internet, open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, or satellite.

"Dual Credit Enrollment" means an arrangement whereby a high school student is Enrolled in postsecondary coursework with a postsecondary institution and earning postsecondary credit hours while continuing to pursue a high school diploma, and the student's high school has agreed to accept the postsecondary coursework as credit toward the student's high school graduation requirements.

"Early Admissions" means an act whereby a student, who has not yet graduated from high school, is fully admitted, Enrolled, and classified as a Full-Time Undergraduate student in a Matriculated status at a postsecondary institution and is pursuing an Associate Degree or Baccalaureate Degree.

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"Eligible High School" means any public or private secondary educational institution, including unaccredited Home Study or Home School programs. An Eligible High School may offer some or all of its coursework by methods of Distance Learning.

"Eligible High School Courses" means core curriculum courses of English Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Sciences, Science, and Foreign Language that could be used to satisfy graduation requirements and are identified in the Course Directory. Dual Credit Enrollment students participating in the Advanced Academy of Georgia, located at the University of West Georgia, and the Georgia Academy of Mathematics, Engineering, and Science (GAMES), located at Middle Georgia College, are not restricted, for purposes of Accel, to the core curriculum Eligible High School Courses identified in the Course Directory. The authorized officials of those two academies are responsible for approving coursework that is appropriate for inclusion in the Accel Program**.**

"Eligible Non-Citizen" means a person who, in accordance with the Federal Title IV Program regulations, is a United States permanent resident with a permanent resident alien card (I-551); or a conditional permanent resident alien card (I-551C); or the holder of an arrival-departure record (I-94) from the Department of

Homeland Security showing any one of the following designations: “refugee”, “asylum granted”, “parolee” (I-94 confirms paroled for a minimum of one year and status has not expired); or “Cuban-Haitian entrant”. Victims of human trafficking, in accordance with the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act, may also be considered Eligible Non-Citizens. Persons with an F1 or F2 student visa, a J1 or J2 exchange visitor visa, or a G series visa are not Eligible Non-Citizens.

“Eligible Postsecondary Institution” means an institution that is:

(1) a unit of the University System of Georgia; or
(2) a branch of the Technical College System of Georgia; or
(3) a private non-proprietary (non-profit) postsecondary institution located in Georgia that is eligible to participate in the Tuition Equalization Grant program, which is not a unit of the University System of Georgia, which is not a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia, which is not a four year or Graduate level institution of higher education, that is, or is a part of, a college or university system that is owned and operated by a state other than Georgia, which is not a Graduate school or college of theology or divinity, and which is accredited or holds candidate status for accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, or was previously accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools within the last seven years and which otherwise meets the requirements of this definition, except for the lack of accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools; or
(4) a private proprietary (for-profit) postsecondary institution located in Georgia that is eligible to participate in the Tuition Equalization Grant program, which is a Baccalaureate Degree granting postsecondary institution, which is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, which is not a Bible school or college, which is not a Graduate school or college of theology or divinity, which admits as regular students only persons who have a high school diploma, a General Education Development (GED) diploma, or a Degree from an accredited postsecondary institution, whose students are eligible to participate in the Federal Pell Grant program, which has been reviewed and approved for operation and for receipt of Tuition Equalization Grant funds by the Georgia Nonpublic Postsecondary Education Commission, and which is domiciled and incorporated in the State of Georgia and which has been in existence in Georgia for at least ten years and which met all these requirements by January 1, 2011. A proprietary institution which was an approved institution prior to January 1, 2011 will continue to be an eligible institution as long as it continues to meet all requirements which were in place prior to January 1, 2011.

“Enroll”, “Enrolled” or “Enrollment” means a student has completed the registration requirements, as defined by the postsecondary institution, except for payment of Tuition and fees.

"Exception" means a formal action by the Commission to waive a specific program regulation for a student.

"Federal Title IV Program(s)" the student financial aid programs administered by the United States Department of Education that are authorized by Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

"Full-Time" means Enrollment for the equivalent of at least 12 semester or 12 quarter credit hours, during a term at a postsecondary institution.

"Georgia Resident" or "Georgia Residency" means an individual or the status of such individual who is a United States citizen or Eligible Non-Citizen and meets the in-state Tuition requirements of the Board of Regents or the governing body of the TCSG Eligible Postsecondary Institution he or she attends, as specified and limited by these regulations, or for students attending private Eligible Postsecondary Institutions, meets the criteria of the *Georgia Residency Requirements for State Programs Regulation,* as specified and limited by these regulations.

"Graduate" means a postsecondary program of study beyond the Baccalaureate Degree.

"Half-Time" means Enrollment for the equivalent of at least 6 semester or 6 quarter credit hours, but not more than 11 semester or 11 quarter credit hours during a term at a postsecondary institution.

"Home Institution" means an Eligible Postsecondary Institution in which the student is Enrolled.

"Home Study" or "Home School" means an arrangement whereby a school-age child is involved in a course of study in which instruction is carried out at home rather than in a classroom and is governed by and operating in accordance with the requirements of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690 (c).

"HOPE" means Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally, a State of Georgia student financial aid program that provides non-repayable scholarship and grant assistance to Georgia Residents attending Eligible Postsecondary Institutions in Georgia. The components that comprise HOPE are the Zell Miller Scholarship HOPE Scholarship Program, HOPE Grant Program, and HOPE GED Grant Program. HOPE is authorized by the Official Code of Georgia Annotated § 20-3-519, funded by Georgia Lottery appropriations, and administered by the Commission in accordance with the *Zell Miller Scholarship Program Regulations, HOPE Scholarship Program Regulations, HOPE Grant Program Regulations, and HOPE GED Grant Program Regulations*.

"HOPE Grant Program" or "HOPE Grant" means a State of Georgia student financial aid program that provides grant assistance to Georgia Residents seeking technical Certificates or Diplomas from TCSG and USG Eligible Postsecondary Institutions. The HOPE Grant Program is authorized by the Official Code of Georgia Annotated § 20-3-519, funded by Georgia Lottery appropriations, and administered by the Commission in accordance with the *HOPE Grant Program Regulations*.

"HOPE Scholar" means a student who graduated from an Eligible High School as a member of the 1993 High School Graduating Class, or any High School Graduating Class thereafter, meeting the academic requirements for the HOPE Scholarship.

"HOPE Scholarship Program" or "HOPE Scholarship" means a State of Georgia student financial aid program that provides merit-based scholarship assistance to Georgia Residents seeking Degrees from Eligible Postsecondary Institutions. The HOPE Scholarship Program is authorized by the Official Code of Georgia Annotated § 20-3-519, funded by Georgia Lottery appropriations, and administered by the Commission in accordance with the *HOPE Scholarship Program Regulations*.

"Host Institution" means a postsecondary institution a student is temporarily attending as a Transient student.

"Incarcerated" means to be confined by competent public authority or under due legal process. A student is considered Incarcerated if he or she is serving a criminal sentence in a federal, state, or local penitentiary, prison, jail, reformatory, work farm, half-way house, or similar correctional institution (whether operated by the government or a contractor) or is sentenced to home detention.

"Invoicing Deadline Date" means a date set by the Commission and on which all invoices for Accel must be submitted and approved for payment, including the resolution of any reject, for each term.

"Joint Enrollment" means an arrangement whereby a high school student is Enrolled in postsecondary coursework with a postsecondary institution while continuing to pursue a high school diploma, and the high school has not agreed to accept the postsecondary coursework as credit toward the student's high school graduation requirements.

"Learning Support" means remedial or developmental coursework required by the postsecondary institution or chosen by the student that does not count toward program requirements for the Degree the student is seeking and for which Accel payment is sought.

"Military Personnel" means an active member of the Armed Forces of the United States, including members of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. Commissioned officers of the Public Health Service or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on active duty are also considered to be Military Personnel.

"Non-Standard Term" means a term where all coursework is expected to begin and end within a set period of time, but is not a semester, trimester, or quarter term. Non-Standard terms may be of unequal length within an Award Year.

"Non-Term" means a program of study measuring progress in clock hours, or a program of study measuring progress in credit hours and has courses that do not begin and end within a set period of time, or has courses that overlap, or has sequential courses that do not begin and end within a term.

"Paid-Hours" means the postsecondary credit hours attempted by a student, for which he or she received payment from the Accel Program. Paid-Hours are used to determine when a student has reached the maximum number of hours for which he or she can receive payment from the Accel Program.

"Parent" means the natural/biological mother or father, adoptive parent, or United States court-appointed legal guardian of a student.

"Part-Time" means Enrollment for the equivalent of 1 through 11 quarter or semester hours, per term, of postsecondary credit at a postsecondary institution.

"Postsecondary Cumulative Grade Point Average" means the calculation of postsecondary grades earned in Degree coursework (including grades for Learning Support courses attempted through Summer term 2011) to determine eligibility for the HOPE Scholarship at the End-of-Spring Checkpoint, Three-Term Checkpoint, and all Attempted-Hours Checkpoints. The Postsecondary Cumulative Grade Point Average is calculated, by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution, on a traditional 4.00 scale, to the hundredth decimal, without rounding. A traditional 4.00 scale is defined as 4.00 = A+, A, A-, 90.00 or above, 3.00 = B+, B, B-, 80.00 – 89.99, 2.00 = C+, C, C-, 70.00 – 79.99, 1.00 = D+, D, D-, 60.00-69.99 and 0 = F, 59.99 or below. If a student meets the academic requirements to be a HOPE Scholar, then all Degree hours (Attempted-Hours) and corresponding grades attempted after high school graduation, and only Degree hours and corresponding grades attempted after high school graduation, must be included in the calculation. If a student does not meet the academic requirements to be a HOPE Scholar, then all Degree hours (Attempted-Hours) attempted prior to high school graduation, but after July 1, 2008, must be included in the calculation, but not the corresponding grades, if such credit hours are accepted by the student's Eligible Postsecondary Institution prior to Fall term 2011.

"Satisfactory Academic Progress" means the academic standards required of students by their postsecondary institutions in order to be eligible to receive payment from Federal Title IV Programs, in accordance with Federal Title IV Program regulations.

"Study Away" means postsecondary credit-earning coursework approved by an Eligible Postsecondary Institution for its students in locations outside the State of Georgia, including locations in foreign countries**.**

"SURFER" means the Commission's web-based system used by Eligible Postsecondary Institutions to electronically transmit and receive student data, award information, and conduct other administrative activities related to the Commission's scholarship and grant programs.

"Technical College System of Georgia" or "TCSG" means the State of Georgia's unified system of public technical colleges, formerly known as the Department of Technical and Adult Education (DTAE), which is governed by the Board of Commissioners of the Technical College System of Georgia.

"Term-Reconciliation" means an official acknowledgement by an authorized official of an Eligible Postsecondary Institution, at the end of each term, that the number of students submitted for payment and amount invoiced by the institution, and the number of students awarded and amount issued by the Commission, according to the SURFER system, are accurate on the date of such acknowledgement.

"Transient" means temporary admission to a Host Institution for the purpose of completing coursework and earning postsecondary credit that the Home Institution has agreed to accept as transferable postsecondary credit.

"Tuition" means the charges to a student for postsecondary academic instruction without regard to other fees such as technology, activity, athletic, health, etc.

"Undergraduate" means coursework that is included in a postsecondary program of study leading to an Associate Degree, Baccalaureate Degree, Diploma or Certificate, and is not included in a Graduate program of study.

"University System of Georgia" or "USG" means the State of Georgia's unified system of public colleges and universities, which is governed by the Board of Regents.

"Withdrawal Date" means the date the student withdraws, as determined by the institution in accordance with the procedures set forth for determining Withdrawal Date under the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended.

"Zell Miller Scholar" means a student who is Academically Eligible to receive the Zell Miller Scholarship.

"Zell Miller Scholarship Program" or "Zell Miller Scholarship" or "Zell Miller" means a State of Georgia student financial aid program that provides merit-based scholarship assistance to Georgia Residents seeking Degrees from Eligible Postsecondary Institutions. The Zell Miller Scholarship Program is authorized by the O.C.G.A. § 20-3-519 et seq., funded by Georgia Lottery appropriations, and administered by the Commission in accordance with the *Zell Miller Scholarship Program Regulations*.

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904. General Eligibility Requirements**.**

904.1. Citizenship.

A student must be a United States citizen or an Eligible Non-Citizen for 12 consecutive months immediately prior to the first day of classes of the school term for which the Accel payment is sought.

904.2. Georgia Residency**.**

a. A student attending a USG or TCSG institution must meet the requirements to be classified as a Georgia Resident, in accordance with the in-state Tuition policy of the Board of Regents or the governing body of the Technical College System of Georgia, for 12 consecutive months immediately prior to the first day of classes of the school term for which funds are sought. If the TCSG or USG institution grants a Military Personnel out-of-state Tuition waiver to a student whose Parent is stationed in Georgia, then he or she meets the Georgia Residency requirements of the Accel Program. No other out-of-state Tuition waivers granted by TCSG or USG institutions qualify a student for Accel eligibility.

b. A student attending a private Eligible Postsecondary Institution must meet the requirements to be classified as a Georgia Resident, in accordance with the Commission's *Georgia Residency Requirements for State Programs Regulations, for* 12 consecutive months immediately proceeding the first day of classes of the school term for which funds are sought. In addition, a student Enrolled in an Eligible High School in Georgia, whose Parent is stationed in Georgia as Military Personnel, meets the Georgia Residency requirements of the Accel Program.

c. A student who was correctly determined to meet the Georgia Residency requirements for purposes of Accel eligibility and began receiving Accel payment, will continue to meet the Georgia Residency requirements for purposes of Accel 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. If such student later returns to Georgia, he or she must re-establish Georgia Residency for 12 consecutive months before regaining Accel eligibility. 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 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 Accel eligibility.

904.3. Enrollment Status.

a. A student must be admitted and classified as a Dual Credit Enrollment student by an Eligible Postsecondary Institution.

b. A student is eligible for the Accel Program regardless of the number of credit hours for which he or she is Enrolled during a school term. Half-Time or Full-Time Enrollment is not a requirement.

904.4. Satisfactory Academic Progress**.**

A student is not required to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress.

904.5. Selective Service Registration**.**

A student must be in compliance with the United States Selective Service System requirements, if such requirements are applicable, prior to the Accel Program application deadline in order to be eligible for Accel payment for such school term.

904.6. Defaulted Loan or Refund Due**.**

A student must not owe a refund on a State of Georgia student financial aid program, nor in any other way be in violation of State of Georgia student financial aid program regulations. A student must meet the requirements of this section at the time funds are disbursed by the Commission on behalf of the student. If such student has repaid the refund due in full, then he or she may be eligible to receive Accel funds, beginning with the school term in which repayment was made in full, but not retroactively for previous school terms.

904.7. Georgia Drug-Free Act**.**

A student convicted for committing certain felony offenses involving marijuana, controlled substances, or dangerous drugs, is ineligible for Accel 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. § 20-1-24.

904.8. Incarceration.

An otherwise eligible student, who is currently committed to the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice System, may receive Accel funding. All other incarcerated individuals are ineligible for Accel payment, but, upon release from Incarceration, may begin receiving Accel payments, if all other eligibility requirements are met.

905. Program Specific Eligibility Requirements.

905.1. Student Participation Criteria.

a. A student must be approved and classified, by the Eligible High School and the Eligible Postsecondary Institution at which he or she is Enrolled, as a Dual Credit Enrollment student.

b. A student must not have already received a high school diploma or General Education Development (GED) diploma.

c. A student must abide by the rules of both the Eligible High School and the Eligible Postsecondary Institution the student is attending, and can be denied participation at any time in the Accel Program by either the Eligible High School or the Eligible Postsecondary Institution for violations of such rules.

905.2. Length of Eligibility.

Students may receive Accel payments for two semesters or three quarters per Award Year while enrolled in high school regardless of the number of credits received during each semester or quarter.

A student's Accel eligibility is not limited to a specific number of semesters or quarters over the course his or her high school enrollment.

905.3. Impact on Future HOPE Eligibility.

a. The postsecondary credit hours taken as a Dual Credit Enrollment student, for which Accel payment was made, are not counted as Attempted-Hours and the corresponding grades are not included in the Postsecondary Cumulative Grade Point Average for purposes of the Zell Miller or HOPE Scholarship Programs.

b. Credit hours for which a student received Accel payment, through FY2011, are included in the Combined Paid-Hours limit. A student is ineligible to receive Zell Miller or HOPE Scholarship payment once he or she reaches the Combined Paid-Hours limit of 127 semester or 190 quarter hours from any combination of HOPE Scholarship Paid-Hours, Zell Miller Scholarship Paid-Hours, plus HOPE Grant Paid-Hours, plus, through FY2011, Accel Program Paid-Hours.

905.4. Responsibilities of the Georgia Department of Education.

a. It is the responsibility of the Georgia Department of Education to annually update the Course Directory and provide the updated information to the Commission by February 1st. Otherwise, the Course Directory information will roll forward for the next Award Year.

b. The Georgia Department of Education serves as a resource for advisement to high school and college officials regarding appropriate coursework for Dual Credit Enrollment students.

905.5. Responsibilities of the Eligible High School.

a. If the student has not reached the age of 18, written consent of a Parent must be obtained by the high school to allow the student to participate as a Dual Credit Enrollment student in the Accel Program.

b. Regardless of the student's age, written approval must be obtained from the Eligible High School to allow the student to participate as a Dual Credit Enrollment student in the Accel Program.

c. The Eligible High School must agree to accept toward state, local, or school graduation requirements the postsecondary credit of an eligible Dual Credit Enrollment student who successfully completes an approved course at an Eligible Postsecondary Institution.

d. The Eligible High School must record on the student's high school transcript each approved course name, grade, and amount of credit hours earned for each course taken as a Dual Credit Enrollment student.

905.6. Responsibilities of the Eligible Postsecondary Institution.

a. It is the responsibility of the Eligible Postsecondary Institution to annually update and provide to the Commission the list of eligible courses by March 1st. Otherwise, the Course Directory information will roll forward to the next Award Year.

b. The postsecondary credit hours earned in the Accel Program must be transferred from one Eligible Postsecondary Institution to another Eligible Postsecondary Institution on the same basis as such credit hours are customarily transferred.

c. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution must notify the Eligible High School of each student's Enrollment and grade(s) earned in the coursework.

d. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution must verify Georgia Residency, citizenship, Selective Service registration, and Drug-Free Act eligibility requirements for each of their Accel recipients.

e. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution must invoice Accel Program payment from the Commission by the same method as used for the HOPE Scholarship Program (Refer to *Section 909.).*

906. Eligible and Ineligible Coursework**.**

906.1. Joint Enrollment Coursework.

A student seeking a high school diploma who is simultaneously Enrolled in Degree coursework as a Joint Enrollment student at a postsecondary institution is ineligible for Accel Program payment for such postsecondary Degree coursework.

906.2. Learning Support Coursework.

A student who Enrolls in Learning Support (remedial) coursework is ineligible for Accel payment for such coursework.

906.3. Exemption by Examination Coursework.

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

906.4. Distance Learning Coursework.

A student participating in Distance Learning coursework is eligible to receive Accel payment. The institution offering the Distance Learning coursework must be an Eligible Postsecondary Institution.

906.5. Transient Coursework**.**

a. A Transient student is eligible to receive Accel payment. Both the Home Institution and the Host Institution must be Eligible Postsecondary Institutions.

b. The Host Institution awards Accel funds to the Transient student based on certification of eligibility from the Home Institution. The Home Institution is responsible for verifying the eligibility of their Transient students. Upon the student's return to the Home Institution, the Host Institution must provide information necessary for the Home Institution to determine continued Accel eligibility.

c. A student taking coursework at his or her Home Institution and a Host Institution during the same school term is eligible for Accel payment at both institutions.

d. The Home Institution is liable for the return of funds the student receives at the Host Institution, if the Home Institution erroneously certifies the student's eligibility to the Host Institution.

906.6. Study Away Coursework.

A student Enrolled in an Eligible Postsecondary Institution may qualify for Accel payment while participating in a Study Away program. The student's Home Institution must be an Eligible Postsecondary Institution and must approve the Study Away program for credit toward the student's Degree program prior to the student's departure. The Accel payment must take place through the Home Institution, unless the student is participating in a Study Away program via another Eligible Postsecondary Institution, then the process for Transient students is used. (Refer to *Section 906.5*.) The Home Institution may coordinate the Study Away program through institutions that are not eligible to participate in the Accel program. For example, the student's Home Institution may have an arrangement with an out-of-state institution's Study Away program.

906.7. Continuing Education and Audit Coursework**.**

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

906.8. Total Withdrawal from Coursework**.**

A student is ineligible for Accel payment for coursework from which he or she totally withdrew if, as a result, such coursework does not appear on the student's academic transcript as a "Withdrawal" or any other similar identification. (Refer to *Section 910.1*.)

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907. Student Application Requirements.

NEW

Beginning with the 2013-2014 Award Year, in addition to the application requirements indicated below, if the student is 18 years of age prior to the beginning of the term for which funding is sought or will turn 18 during the term for which funding is sought, he or she must complete a notarized affidavit and provide documentation to the Commission to prove lawful presence in the United States.

907.1. Application Process.

a. A student must complete an Accel Program Application and submit it to his or her Eligible High School for each school term (semester or quarter) for which he or she participates in the Accel Program.

NEW

1. Students who attend an Eligible High School that does not have access to transmit transcripts electronically to GSFC must complete the paper Accel application.

2. Students who participate in Accel through the GAMES Academy or the Advanced Academy of Georgia must complete the paper Accel application.

3. Students who attend an Eligible High School that has access to transmit transcripts electronically to GSFC should complete the online Accel Application.

b. An authorized high school official will list on the application each Eligible High School Course the student will be substituting with a Degree course from the Eligible Postsecondary Institution the student will be attending as a Dual Credit Enrollment student. The authorized high school official will also certify that:

1. The student has not yet received a high school diploma or GED;

2. The student is Enrolled in good standing at the high school; and

3. The student has been approved to be a Dual Credit Enrollment student through the advisement process at both the Eligible High School and the Eligible Postsecondary Institution, so that the postsecondary credit hours earned are applied to the student's high school graduation requirements.

c. The completed Accel Program Application must be forwarded by the Eligible High School to the Eligible Postsecondary Institution the student will attend. An authorized postsecondary official will list each Degree course the student will take in place of an Eligible High School Course and certify that:

1. The courses listed on the application are Degree courses that match the appropriate Eligible High School Courses, in accordance with the Course Directory. However, Dual Credit Enrollment students participating in the Advanced Academy of Georgia, located at the University of West Georgia, and the Georgia Academy of Mathematics, Engineering, and Science (GAMES), located at Middle Georgia College, are not restricted, for purposes of Accel Program, to the core curriculum Eligible High School courses identified in the Course Directory. The authorized postsecondary officials of those two academies are responsible for approving coursework that is appropriate for inclusion in the Accel Program.

2. The student is accepted as a Dual Credit Enrollment student at the Eligible Postsecondary Institution.

3. The student meets federal Selective Service registration requirements.

4. The student is in compliance with the Drug-Free Postsecondary Act of 1990.

5. The student meets Georgia Residency and citizenship requirements of *Section 904*. of these regulations.

d. An authorized official of the Eligible Postsecondary Institution must determine the number of Degree credit hours for which the student is Enrolled, calculate the correct Accel award amount, in accordance with *Section 908*., and invoice the Commission, in accordance with *Section 909*.

907.2. Application Deadline Date.

An application deadline date may be set by the Eligible High School or the Eligible Postsecondary Institution the student is attending. At a minimum, a student must file the application online or with the Eligible Postsecondary Institution's financial aid office on or before the last day of the school term (semester or quarter) or the student's Withdrawal Date, whichever occurs first, in order to be paid for that school term. The last day of the school term is the last day of classes or exams for the institution, whichever occurs later. Supplemental documentation required by the institution or the Commission to support or verify a student's application information may be submitted after the deadline without jeopardizing the student's eligibility.

907.3. Application Renewal.

A student must complete an Accel Program Application and adhere to the requirements of *Sections 907.1. and 907.2*. for <u>each</u> school term (semester or quarter) for which he or she participates in the Accel Program.

908. Award Requirements**.**

908.1**. Award Amounts at Public Eligible Postsecondary Institutions.**

a. The Accel Program, at USG and TCSG Eligible Postsecondary Institutions, covers Tuition. The Accel award amount for Tuition must not be greater than the in-state Tuition rate for the specific program of study of the public Eligible Postsecondary Institution or $257.27 per semester hour or the corresponding quarter-hour equivalent, whichever is less. Award amounts may include cents and must not be rounded. The Accel funds awarded can only be applied to Tuition, not other Cost of Attendance expenses.

908.2**. Award Amounts at Private Eligible Postsecondary Institutions.**

a. The Accel award amount is a maximum of $4,000 per Academic Year for students Enrolled at least 12 hours at a private Eligible Postsecondary level, as follows:

Full-Time	Semester System	Quarter System
Fall:	$2,000	$1,334
Winter:	-	$1,333
Spring:	$2,000	$1,333

b. The award amount is prorated for students Enrolled at private Eligible Postsecondary Institutions for 1 through 11 hours, as follows:

Part-Time	Semester System	Quarter System
Fall	$166.66 per hour	$111.11 per hour
Winter:	-	$111.11 per hour
Spring:	$166.66 per hour	$111.11 per hour

908.3. Award Amount Reductions.

a. Accel funds can only be applied to Tuition, not other expenses such as room and board. If a student is receiving student aid from a source other than the Accel Program and such aid is required by the donor to be applied to the student's Tuition and fee charges, and such award plus the Accel funds are equal to or greater than the student's Tuition and fee charges, then the student's Accel award must be reduced, so that the total aid is equal to the Tuition charges.

b. A student's Accel award amount is not reduced if the student is receiving aid that is applied to educational expenses other than Tuition, even if the student's total aid exceeds the Cost of Attendance budget.

908.4. Awards Per School Term**.**

The Accel Program is available to students for the standard school terms of fall, and spring semesters or fall, winter, and spring quarters. Accel funds are not available for summer terms. An institution may combine mini-terms or modules to form the equivalent of a standard semester or quarter. An 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 or quarter. Regardless of the structure of an Eligible Postsecondary Institution's school terms, a student must not receive Accel payment for more than two semesters or three quarters per Award Year.

908.5. Student Notification of Award.

Eligible Postsecondary Institutions should notify each Accel recipient of the amount he or she is awarded for the Award Year, and identify such funds as an Accel Program award.

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909. Invoicing Requirements.

909.1. Submission of Invoices.

a. Eligible Postsecondary Institutions may submit Accel Program invoices to the Commission as early as 15 calendar days prior to the first day of classes for the school term.

b. Invoices must be submitted, processed and approved by the Commission by the Invoicing Deadline Date as established by the Commission. In the event invoices are submitted to the Commission by Eligible Postsecondary Institutions after the Invoicing Deadline Date for a school term, the Commission 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.

c. Prior to the beginning of any award year and no later than June 30 of each year the Commission shall establish and publish the Invoicing Deadline Dates for each school term for the upcoming Award Year.

d. An Invoice may be honored or paid after the Invoicing Deadline Date if the failure to meet the date was due to the need for supplemental documentation required by the institution or the Commission to support or verify a student's eligibility or late grades, late completions, grade changes or 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.

e. The President of GSFC has sole discretion in the determination of deadline extensions.

909.2. Payment of Invoices.

Accel funds are paid to Eligible Postsecondary Institutions by check or electronic transfer of funds on behalf of eligible students each school term upon submission to the Commission of an Accel Program invoice.

909.3. Crediting of Student Accounts.

a. Upon receipt of Accel payments from the Commission, a public (USG or TCSG) Eligible Postsecondary Institution must credit the amount of payment on behalf of an eligible student to the account of the student, toward Tuition.

b. Upon receipt of Accel payments from the Commission, a private Eligible Postsecondary Institution must credit the amount of payment on behalf of an eligible student to the account of the student, toward Tuition.

910. Student Refund Requirements.

910.1. Calculation of Refund Amounts**.**

a. If the student officially withdraws, drops out, drops hours, is expelled, or otherwise fails to complete a period of Enrollment, and is entitled to a refund, a portion of such refund may need to be returned to the Accel fund. A student is ineligible for the Accel funds for coursework from which he or she totally withdrew if, as a result, such coursework does not appear on the student's academic transcript as a "Withdrawal" or any other code or identification for such a withdrawal. If the Eligible Postsecondary Institution invoiced the Commission prior to the student's total withdrawal, then the institution must cancel the student's Accel award for that term, through the SURFER system.

b. To determine the refund to the Accel Program, the institution must apply the institution's refund policy to the student's Accel award amount.

c. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution must determine the amount of the refund due back to the Accel program. The amount of the Accel award not determined to be owed back to the Accel program is retained by the institution to cover the institutions' cost for the portion of the school term that the student was enrolled.

    1. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution must adjust the student's invoice in SURFER to the new award amount remaining after the refund is calculated within 45 days of the determination.

    2. If the student only received Accel funds, the Eligible Postsecondary Institution should return the funds determined to be owed to the Accel program within 45 days of the refund determination. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution would then collect the refund amount from the student. However, the student should not be reported with a "Refund Due" status to the Commission since the funds have been repaid to the Commission.

    3. If the student received a combination of federal Title IV funds and Accel funds, the Eligible Postsecondary Institution may not have sufficient funds on hand from the student's award disbursements to return to the Commission the refund owed to the Accel program, after applying the Federal Title IV Return of Funds policy. In this instance, the student is considered to have a "Refund Due" to the Commission and the institution must report the student to the Commission with a "Refund Due" status.

910.2. Collection of Refund Amounts**.**

A student who owes a refund to the Commission should pay the Eligible Postsecondary Institution and the Eligible Postsecondary Institution should pay

the Commission or, at its sole discretion, the Commission may require the student to pay the refund directly to the Commission. Nothing herein shall be deemed to prohibit the Commission or the Eligible Postsecondary Institution from using all available legal and equitable remedies to collect the refund.

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911. Reconciliation Requirements**.**

911.1. Term-Reconciliation**.**

The Eligible Postsecondary Institution must conduct a Term-Reconciliation near the end of each term. A Term-Reconciliation consists of an official acknowledgement by an authorized school official that the number of students submitted for payment, the amount invoiced by the institution, the number of students awarded and the amount issued by the Commission, according to the SURFER system, is accurate on that date. The Commission will not issue Accel funds for the following term until the Term-Reconciliation is complete. Funds are not returned to the Commission as part of the Term-Reconciliation process.

911.2. Award-Year Reconciliation**.**

In addition to the Term-Reconciliations, the Eligible Postsecondary Institution must conduct the Award-Year Reconciliation. The institution must conduct a complete student-by-student Award-Year Reconciliation with the Commission, and submit a Reconciliation Certification Form to the Commission by July 15 immediately following the completion of the Award Year.

911.3. Return of Funds.

The institution must return to the Commission any Accel funds not utilized according to the Award-Year Reconciliation within 30 days of completing the Award-Year Reconciliation process. The institution must have a procedure in place to ensure that the Accel funds do not go to an unintended third party (i.e. state, institution).

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912. Records Retention Requirements.

912.1. Length of Retention.

An Eligible Postsecondary Institution shall maintain accurate records, books, documents and other evidence concerning the Accel Program, including, but not limited to, individual student files for the later of three years after the Award Year in which the aid was awarded, or for such other period as required by an applicable statute, rule, or regulation or such other time as requested in writing by the Commission.

912.2. Documentation.

a. Documentation contained within an individual student file or record, which supports the original determination of a student's eligibility, must be retained by the institution and available for review by the Commission on the institution's campus, located within the State of Georgia, for at least three calendar years after the most recent Award Year for which the student received Accel funds. (Refer to *Section 914*.) 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.

b. 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. Documentation regarding a student's eligibility is not limited to files, records, and other information received and maintained by the institution's student financial aid office. Documentation supporting a student's eligibility that is received and maintained by the institution's admissions office, registrars office, business office, and other administrative operations of the institution must be available to the Commission for the purpose of Compliance Reviews. It is the institution's responsibility to resolve any inconsistencies or conflicting information within a student's records, prior to awarding or disbursing Accel funds to the student.

912.3. Extended Retention.

An institution may be required to retain student records involved in a Compliance Review, Audit, or investigation for more than the three-year retention period described above. If the three-year retention period expires before the issue in question is resolved, the institution must continue to retain all associated records until resolution is reached.

913. Administrative Review and Exceptions.

913.1. Administrative Review**.**

a. The Accel Program Regulations are applied to each student considered for Accel funds by appropriate officials of Eligible Postsecondary Institutions and by the administrative staff of the Commission. If a student believes an Accel Program 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 the Commission. The Commission will review the case and determine whether the rule or regulation was applied correctly and notify the student and institution of the determination.

b. In order for an Administrative Review to be considered, the student must submit a written request for an Administrative Review to the Commission office within 45 days of receiving notice of denial. If additional information is requested from the student, it must be provided within the time frame specified by the Commission. The Commission decides a case based only on documentation provided by the student, rather than a personal presentation.

913.2. Exceptions**.**

No requests for Exceptions to the Accel Program Regulations will be considered, reviewed, or granted by the Commission or an Eligible Postsecondary Institution under any circumstances.

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914. Compliance Reviews**.**

914.1. Compliance Review Policy.

The Commission may conduct Compliance Reviews of Eligible Postsecondary Institutions participating in the Accel Program in order to assess institutional administration of the program and compliance with the program's regulations. Compliance Reviews are conducted in accordance with the Commission's *Compliance Review Process and Procedures* document, which is available on the *gsfc.org* website, under *School and Lender Information - Compliance Documents*.

914.2. Compliance Review Process.

a. The Commission selects a sampling of the institution's recipients, for the Award Year under review, and the institution's files and records for the sample are examined to assure compliance. Each Eligible Postsecondary Institution must have all student-records, which document and support the eligibility of that institution's recipients, available for review by the Commission on the campus of the Eligible Postsecondary Institution, and such campus must be located within the State of Georgia. (Refer to *Section 912*.)

b. The Commission will exclude from review the Residency determinations, as they relate to *Section 904.2.a.* of these regulations, made for Accel recipients in the selected sample of any USG or TCSG Eligible Postsecondary Institution which has submitted to the Compliance Department of Georgia Student Finance Commission a certification signed by the President of the Eligible Postsecondary Institution that 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 requirements, and that the Residency determinations have been fairly and consistently applied with respect to all students receiving the Accel awards. Such certification must be submitted annually to the Compliance Department of Georgia Student Finance Commission.

Failure to provide such certification will result in a review of Residency determinations made for Accel recipients in the selected sample.

914.3. Institutional Repayment.

a. If a recipient is determined, by the Commission, to be ineligible for payment, the institution may be required to repay to the Commission the Accel funds awarded to the recipient.

b. If later evidence, not available at the time of awarding, indicates that a student should not have received Accel funds, then all future Accel awards must be canceled. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution is held harmless by the Commission, if the student's file is appropriately documented with available evidence and it is determined by the Commission that the institution was not at fault. 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.). The institution must notify the student and the Commission of a refund due. The student will be ineligible to receive additional state aid from the Commission until the refund is paid in full, in accordance with *Section 910.2*. If the student's file is determined not to be adequately documented by the Commission, then the Eligible Postsecondary Institution may be responsible for the repayment.

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