

**Georgia Military College  
State Service Scholarship Program**

**REGULATIONS - 3200.**

**2013 - 2014 Award Year**



**Effective Date – July 1, 2013**



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

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### **3202. Program Overview.**

The Georgia Military College State Service Scholarship Program is a merit-based and competitive student financial aid program that provides funding covering the full cost of education for two years at Georgia Military College. Recipients incur an obligation to serve as a commissioned officer in the Georgia National Guard after graduation. This program enables outstanding Georgia students to attend Georgia Military College and then serve their state and country as officers in the Georgia National Guard. Applicants must have demonstrated academic achievement in high school and be nominated for the scholarship by a member of the Georgia General Assembly. A committee chooses a limited number of recipients each year from a pool of qualified applicants.

The Georgia Military College State Service Scholarship Program was created beginning with the 1994-1995 Award Year (State Fiscal Year 1995). State revenues provide the funding for this program, as authorized each year by the State of Georgia's Annual Operating Budget. The program is administered by the Georgia Student Finance Commission, in accordance with these regulations.

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### **3203. Definitions.**

**“Academic Excellence”** refers to an Applicant’s high school academic performance. The minimum scholastic achievement criterion for the State Service Scholarship is provided in *Section 3205.1.* of these regulations.

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

**“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 a State Service Scholarship program rule, policy, or regulation was applied correctly in a student’s specific case.

**“Applicant”** means a student who has applied to a Legislator for the State Service Scholarship.

**“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.

**“Award Year”** means four consecutive quarters or three consecutive semesters, beginning with the summer term and ending with the spring term.

**“Commission”** means the Georgia Student Finance Commission (GSFC), 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.

**“District”** means one of the thirteen geographic divisions of the State of Georgia for representation in the United States House of Representatives.

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**“Eligible High School”** means any private or public secondary educational institution, located within the state of Georgia, authorized to grant high school diplomas and is, or within the last two years has been, accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the Georgia Accrediting Commission, the Georgia Association of Christian Schools, the Association of Christian Schools International, the Georgia Private School Accreditation Council, or the Southern

Association of Independent Schools. If the institution is not located in the State of Georgia, then it must be currently accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools or one of the following entities: New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Northwest Accreditation Commission, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, the Alabama Independent School Association. Any high school not meeting the definition of an “Eligible High School” is considered to be an ineligible high school.

**“Eligible Non-Citizen”** means a person who , in accordance with the Federal Title IV Regulations, is a United States permanent resident with a Permanent Resident Alien Card (I-551); or a conditional permanent resident (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.

**“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)”** means 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.

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**“Fiscal Year”** means the twelve (12) month period from July 1 through June 30.

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**“Fiscal Year End Reconciliation”** means a final student-by-student reconciliation for a Fiscal Year conducted by Eligible Postsecondary Institutions with the Commission.

**“Freshman”** means a first-year postsecondary student who is fully admitted and Enrolled in a Matriculated status to seek a degree at a postsecondary institution, and has earned less than 30 semester or 45 quarter credit hours.

**“Forbearance”** means a delay in repayment for a specified period of time based on extenuating circumstances as described in these regulations.

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

**“GED”** means General Educational Development diploma awarded by the Technical College System of Georgia.

**“Georgia National Guard”** means the civilian militia of the State of Georgia, in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 38-2-3, which is a branch of the United States Armed Forces with both federal and state government responsibilities.

**“Georgia Military College” or “GMC”** means the postsecondary institution, with its main campus located in Milledgeville, Georgia, which grants Associate Degrees with a focus on liberal arts and military science.

**“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 criteria of the *Georgia Residency Requirements for State Programs Regulation*, as specified and limited by these regulations.

**“Home Study”** 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 § 20-2-690 (c).

**“Legislator”** means a member of the Georgia General Assembly who is an incumbent of the State of Georgia House of Representatives or Senate at the time of the Applicant’s nomination for the State Service Scholarship.

**“Matriculated”** means a student is fully admitted and Enrolled at a postsecondary institution in a unified academic program of study leading to a Degree, Diploma or Certificate.

**“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.

**“Nominee”** means an Applicant who has been nominated by a Legislator for a State Service Scholarship.

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



**“Partial Award”** means a State Service Scholarship award which becomes available when a recipient fails to maintain eligibility or chooses to terminate participation in the program.

**“Recipient”** means a Nominee who has been chosen by the Selection Committee to receive the State Service Scholarship.

**“Required Academic Standards”** refers to a Recipient’s scholastic performance at GMC. The minimum performance required to maintain State Service Scholarship eligibility is stated in *Section 3205.3.* of these regulations.

**“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 Programs Regulations.

**“Selection Committee”** means the officials described in *Section 3207.1.c.* of these regulations.

**“State Service Scholarship”** means the Georgia Military College State Service Scholarship.

**“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.

**“Two-Year Award”** means a State Service Scholarship award to an eligible student for two Award Years, with a two-year service obligation.

**“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.

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## **3204. General Eligibility Requirements.**

### **3204.1. 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 State Service Scholarship payment is sought.

### **3204.2. Georgia Residency.**

- a. A student must meet the Georgia Residency criteria of the *Georgia Residency Requirements for State Programs Regulations* for 12 consecutive months immediately prior to the first day of classes of the school term for which State Service Scholarship payment is sought. However, a Freshman student with a non-resident Military Personnel Parent meets the Georgia Residency requirements, if such student graduated from a high school located in Georgia and his or her Military Personnel Parent was stationed in Georgia at the time of the student's high school graduation. In order to benefit from this provision, a student must be eligible for and begin receiving State Service Scholarship payment prior to earning 30 semester or 45 quarter credit hours.
- b. A student, who was correctly determined to meet the Georgia Residency requirements and began receiving State Service Scholarship payment, will continue to meet the Georgia Residency requirements for purposes of State Service 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. If such student later returns to Georgia, he or she must re-establish Georgia Residency for 12 consecutive months, (in accordance with *Section 3204.2.a.*), before regaining State Service Scholarship 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 then later returns to Georgia and Enrolls in GMC within 12 consecutive months from his or her most recent date of Enrollment at GMC, will continue to meet the Georgia Residency requirements for purposes of State Service Scholarship eligibility.

### **3204.3. Enrollment Status.**

- a. A student must be Enrolled at GMC in a Matriculated status leading to an Associate Degree.
- b. A student must be Enrolled as a Full-Time student for the school term, in order to be eligible to receive State Service Scholarship payment for the school term.

#### **3204.4. Satisfactory Academic Progress.**

A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress, as defined and certified by GMC.

#### **3204.5. 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 State Service Scholarship application deadline in order to be eligible for State Service Scholarship payment for that school term.

#### **3204.6. Defaulted Loan or Refund Due.**

A student must not be in default on a Federal Title IV or State of Georgia educational loan, or owe a refund 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 the Commission on behalf of the student. 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 Service Scholarship funds beginning with the school term in which repayment was made in full, but not retroactively for previous school terms. A student's default status can be resolved by one of four ways: 1) complete an acceptable rehabilitation plan, 2) having the loan repurchased by the original lender and the default status reversed, 3) by consolidating the loan out of a default status, or 4) by receiving an approved Title IV debt settlement, to include a compromised settlement.

#### **3204.7. Georgia Drug-Free Act.**

A student convicted of committing certain felony offenses involving marijuana, controlled substances, or dangerous drugs, is ineligible for State Service Scholarship 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.

## **3205. Program Specific Eligibility Requirements.**

### **3205.1. Eligibility Requirements for a Two-Year Award.**

In order for a student to be eligible for a Two-Year Award, he or she must meet all of the requirements of *Section 3204* and the following:

- a. Qualify for regular admission to GMC.
- b. Have demonstrated Academic Excellence by:
  1. Having a minimum high school cumulative grade point average of 2.50 and also have a minimum combined Math and Reading score of 800 on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), or 17 on the American College Test (ACT); *or*
  2. Earning a score from a single test administration in the national composite eighty-fifth percentile or higher on a standardized college admission test, such as the SAT or ACT, if such student at any time after June 30, 1993; **and**
    - a) Completed a Home Study program that is not an Eligible High School; or
    - b) Graduated from a high school that is not an Eligible High School; or
    - c) Did not graduate from a high school, or did not complete a Home Study program, but rather, received a General Educational Development (GED) diploma that was awarded by the Technical College System of Georgia.
- c. Be of high moral character and demonstrate good citizenship as evidenced in a letter of recommendation from an administrative official of the high school where the applicant is enrolled at the time the application is made, or from which the applicant had graduated.
- d. Meet the mental and physical health standards required for enlistment in the Georgia National Guard.
- e. Be scheduled to complete high school graduation requirements by the end of the school year in which the application is made for the State Service Scholarship, or must have completed high school but have not begun Enrollment at a postsecondary institution.

### **3205.2. Eligibility Requirements for a Partial Award.**

A Partial Award may become available to an eligible student if a recipient of the State Service Scholarship fails to maintain eligibility in accordance with *Section 3204.*, or chooses to terminate his or her participation, therefore creating a vacancy in the State Service Scholarship program. The Selection Committee may choose an eligible student to fill a vacancy for the remaining period of the vacated State

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Service Scholarship award. In order for a student to be eligible for a Partial Award, he or she must meet all of the eligibility requirements of *Section 3204*.

**3205.3. Maintaining Eligibility.**

- a. Recipients must maintain membership in the Georgia National Guard.
- b. Recipients must demonstrate qualities required of a member of the United States Armed Forces and the Georgia National Guard.
- c. Recipients must maintain a minimum, cumulative grade point average of 2.50. If a Recipient's cumulative grade point average drops below 2.50 for two consecutive quarters, then the Required Academic Standards are not met, and the Recipient is no longer eligible to receive the State Service Scholarship. The requirement may be waived upon a majority vote of the Selection Committee.
- d. Recipients may qualify for and receive other financial aid authorized by federal and state laws. Financial aid received from federal and state grants will be credited toward a Recipient's tuition and fees first, and then the State Service Scholarship amount awarded under these regulations shall be credited toward the remaining balance of a Recipient's charges. However, in no case shall a Recipient be due a refund or directly receive any monies as a result of having been awarded a scholarship or grant created by or provided for under the laws of the State of Georgia.

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## **3206. Student Application Procedures.**

### **3206.1. Application Forms.**

- a. Students are informed of the State Service Scholarship through the combined efforts of GMC, the Commission, the Georgia National Guard, and the high school counselors.
- b. Students may obtain an application from a Legislator, the GMC admissions office, the Commission, or Georgia National Guard recruiters.
- c. Students must complete an application and write an essay stating why they consider themselves to be deserving of the State Service Scholarship and describe their career goals. Both the application and the essay must be submitted to the students Legislator, along with a full-length photograph.
- d. If a Legislator chooses to nominate an Applicant, the Legislator must sign the application and send it to the Commission along with the student's essay and photograph.
- e. Students must have an official copy of their high school transcript, as well as an official copy of their Scholastic Aptitude Test or American College Testing scores submitted to the Commission and to the GMC.

### **3206.2. Application Deadline Date.**

A student must complete and submit an application with the GMC financial aid office on or before the last day of the school term 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.

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## **3207. Selection Process and Duties.**

### **3207.1. Selection of Recipients.**

- a. The Commission must receive the application information from the student's Legislator by February 1 each year.
- b. Students who do not meet the eligibility requirements as set forth in *Section 3204. and 3205.* of these regulations, shall be eliminated from consideration by the Commission.
- c. The information on the qualified Nominees shall be provided for review of a Selection Committee no later than February 8 each year. The Selection Committee shall consist of the following members: a representative of the President of the GMC, a member of the Georgia House of Representatives, a member of the Georgia Senate, a representative of the Georgia National Guard, a representative of the GMC Military Science Department, a GMC civilian faculty member, the GMC Director of Admissions, and a staff member of the Commission.
- d. The Commission shall send a copy of all applications and supporting documents of those persons eliminated by the selection process to the Selection Committee. The Selection Committee shall notify the eliminated Nominees.
- e. The Selection Committee shall select the 42 most qualified Nominees, three from each District, to be recipients of the State Service Scholarship, plus alternates. The Selection Committee may interview all or some of the Nominees upon their own discretion.
- f. In the event that a District does not have three qualified Nominees, the Selection Committee may select a Nominee from alternate Nominees, without regard to District residence, but not to exceed 42 total Nominees.
- g. The Selection Committee must name the State Service Scholarship Recipients by March 10 each year.
- h. The Recipients and alternates, as necessary, must be given a physical by the Georgia National Guard to verify mental and physical health requirements. Enlistments in the Georgia National Guard must be completed no later than May 1 each year.
- i. The Selection Committee must notify all 42 Nominees selected to receive a State Service Scholarship. In addition, they shall provide a list of the names and addresses of all Recipients to: each Legislator who makes a nomination, the GMC Director of Admissions at GMC, the Adjutant General of the Georgia National Guard, and the Commission.

j. Nominees not selected are notified by the Selection Committee.

**3207.2. Vacant Slots.**

In the event that a Recipient fails to meet the Required Academic Standards for retention or terminates participation in the program, the Selection Committee shall award the remainder of that recipient's award to another qualified candidate as appropriate to fill the vacancy. The State Service Scholarship shall begin in the term immediately following the award.

Candidates for such Award must be submitted to the Selection Committee by GMC Officials. The candidates shall be required to meet all criteria established for the Two-Year Award, and they shall incur the same obligations as a Two-Year Award Recipient; provided, however, that such Recipients of Scholarships of less than two years shall be required to serve the number of years that corresponds to the period or number of years of such scholarships. The total number of Recipients for an Award Year shall **not** exceed 84 (42 first year Recipients and 42 renewal Recipients).

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## **3208. Award Requirements.**

### **3208.1. Award Amounts.**

The maximum State Service Scholarship award amount per school term is set by the Commission for each Award Year. The maximum award amount shall be established by the Commission based upon the institution's costs for tuition, fees, books, supplies, uniform deposits and on-campus room and meal charges.

### **3208.2. Award Amount Reductions.**

Each individual Recipient's award amount per term shall be determined by GMC, at the time of invoicing the Commission, by subtracting from the maximum award amount established by the Commission, the amount of any non-repayable scholarship or grant awards received by the student. Under no circumstances shall a Recipient's State Service Scholarship award amount exceed the maximum award amount set by the Commission.

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## **3209. Invoicing Requirements.**

### **3209.1. Submission of Invoices.**

- a. The Commission must be notified by GMC of the dollar amount of each State Service Scholarship.
- b. A Recipient must sign a promissory note annually acknowledging the terms of the State Service Scholarship, and obligating the student to serve or repay as provided in *Section 3211.* of these regulations before a check will be disbursed.

### **3209.2. Payment of Invoices.**

- a. Recipients are entitled to receive an annual State Service Scholarship award for each of the two academic years of study at the GMC, prorated for each quarter or term. For each of these terms, the Recipient's maximum entitlement is 1/3 the annual award for the Academic Year. A Recipient may receive the State Service Scholarship for a maximum of 6 academic quarters.
- b. The Commission's check transmittal letter lists each Recipient for the school term by name and Social Security Number. During the registration process, the Recipient picks up the award check, signing the check stub and thereby certifying receipt of the check.
- c. GMC must return any un-disbursed award checks to the Commission within 30 days following the school term registration process.
- d. In the event GMC loses a check prior to delivery to the student, GMC must contact the Commission and request that a replacement check be issued. If a student claims loss of an award check, which has been delivered to the student by GMC, the Commission will verify delivery of the check to the student by GMC. After following normal verification procedures that the check has not been cashed, the Commission will place a "stop payment" order on the original check and a replacement check will be issued and forwarded to the GMC for delivery to the student.

### **3209.3. Payment to Students.**

The Commission prepares individual Recipient checks for each school term, made payable to the Recipient and mailed to the GMC financial aid office with a check transmittal letter for disbursement to the Recipient upon verification that the Recipient is meeting the standards for maintaining eligibility as stated in *Section 3205.3.* of these regulations.

### **3210. Loss of the State Service Scholarship.**

- a. If at any time a Recipient fails to meet the Required Academic Standards for continued eligibility as provided by *Section 3205.3.c* of these regulations, the Recipients shall thereby lose eligibility for the State Service Scholarship, subject to the discretionary waiver by the Selection Committee under *Section 3205.3.c*. The Selection Committee shall promptly notify the Commission when a Recipient loses eligibility.
- b. If a Recipient loses the State Service Scholarship, the total dollar amount received by the Recipient must be repaid to the Commission according to the formula stated in *Section 3211.1*. of these regulations.

#### **3210.1. Emergency Military Duty.**

If a Recipient is called to active duty while Enrolled at GMC and otherwise maintaining eligibility, the Commission will reserve the State Service Scholarship for reinstatement to the fullest extent permitted by appropriations from the Georgia General Assembly, upon the Recipient's return to Enrollment after active duty. Upon return from active duty, the Recipient should advise the Commission of re-enrollment plans as soon as possible. The Recipient is expected to re-enroll no later than the second term beginning after his or her return from active duty or show cause why re-enrollment was postponed further.

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### **3211. Repayment of the State Service Scholarship.**

A Recipient may meet the terms of the State Service Scholarship by providing active duty service in the United States Armed Forces not less than the number of years indicated on his or her contract or a combination of services in active duty and the Georgia National Guard, upon certification by the Adjutant General that no need exists in the Georgia National Guard at the time of the commencement of the period of active service.

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#### **3211.1. Obligation Upon Loss or Surrender of State Service Scholarship.**

- a. If a Recipient elects to terminate participation in this program or is declared ineligible for continuation in the program, the student must serve in the Georgia National Guard for at least the number of years indicated on his or her contract from the date of termination of his or her participation in the program.
  1. The provisions of *Section 3211*. shall not apply to any person who, for bona fide reasons of health or permanent and total disability as jointly verified by the Commission and the Selection Committee, is unable to honor the obligation of the State Service Scholarship. A sworn affidavit of a qualified physician is required prior to such determination.
  2. If it can be determined on the basis of a death certificate or other evidence acceptable to the Commission, that a former State Service Scholarship recipient is deceased, the Commission shall cancel and forgive the recipients repayment obligation.
- b. If a Recipient becomes ineligible for continuation of the State Service Scholarship or does not meet the service obligation, he or she must pay to the Commission an amount equal to the dollar value received, plus interest, within five (5) years after terminating enrollment at GMC. Time served in the Georgia National Guard or the United States Armed Forces after termination from the State Service Scholarship program shall reduce the amount owed on a prorated basis. The total amount owed shall be divided by the total number of months of the original service obligation. The resulting quotient is the amount canceled per month of service. Interest on the remaining amount owed begins to accrue from the date the former Recipient terminated his or her service. The interest rate shall correspond to the current rate of the state-sponsored loan program, administered by the Commission.

#### **3211.2. Deferments.**

Deferments may be granted on a case-by-case basis upon the approval of the Commission and the Selection Committee. Each deferment must be in accordance with the intent and purpose of the State Service Scholarship program. Such deferments would extend the five-year repayment period by the length of the deferment. Interest would continue to accrue during the deferment period. The

option to cancel the obligation through service, including accrued interest, would remain available.

**3211.3. Forbearance of Repayment.**

A student may apply for Forbearance of repayment under certain conditions:

- a. The Forbearance options available under the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP) or the William D. Ford Federal Loan Program as authorized by Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 as amended.
- b. To qualify for Forbearance, a student shall notify the Authority in writing of his or her claim and provide supporting documentation as required by federal law, state law or program regulations.

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**3212. Reconciliation Requirements.****3212.1. Term-Reconciliation.**

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 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, is accurate on that date. The Commission will not issue state scholarship, grant or service cancelable loan 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.

**3212.2. Fiscal Year End 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 Fiscal Year End Reconciliation with the Commission, that includes: 1) submission of a Reconciliation Certification by July 15, immediately following the completion of the Fiscal Year for each state program, and 2) return any funds not utilized according to the Fiscal Year End Reconciliation by August 15 after the beginning of the new Fiscal Year. The Commission will not issue state scholarship, grant or service cancelable loan funds for the Fall term following the Fiscal Year until the Fiscal Year Reconciliation process is complete.

The 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).

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### **3213. Records Retention Requirements.**

#### **3213.1. Length of Retention.**

GMC must maintain accurate records, books, documents and other evidence concerning the State Service Scholarship, 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.

#### **3213.2. 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 State Service Scholarship funds. 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, registrar's office, business office, and other administrative operations of the institution must be available to the Commission for review. It is the institution's responsibility to resolve any inconsistencies or conflicting information within a student's records, prior to awarding or disbursing State Service Scholarship funds to the student.

#### **3213.3. Extended Retention.**

GMC may be required to retain student records involved in a program 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.

## **3214. Administrative Reviews and Exceptions.**

### **3214.1. Administrative Reviews.**

*The Georgia Military College State Service Scholarship Program Regulations* are applied to each student considered for State Service Scholarship funds by appropriate officials of GMC and by the administrative staff of the Commission. If a student believes a State Service 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 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.

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, rather than a personal presentation.

### **3214.2. Exceptions.**

Requests for Exceptions to the State Service Scholarship Program Regulations cannot be considered, reviewed, or granted under any circumstances.

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## **3215. Compliance Reviews.**

### **3215.1. Compliance Review Policy.**

The Commission may conduct Program Reviews of the State Service Scholarship program at GMC in order to assess the institution's administration of the program and compliance with the program's regulations. Program Reviews are conducted in accordance with the Commission's *Program Review Process and Procedures* document, which is available on the *gsfc.org* website under *School and Lender Information-Compliance Documents*.

### **3215.2. Compliance Review Process.**

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. The 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 institution's campus.

### **3215.3. 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 funds awarded to the recipient.
- b. If later evidence, not available at the time of awarding, indicates that a student should not have received State Service Scholarship payment, then all future awards must be canceled. GMC 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 is ineligible to receive additional state aid from the Commission until the refund is paid in full, in accordance with Section 3210.b. If the student's file is determined not to be adequately documented by the Commission while conducting a Program Review, then the institution may be responsible for the repayment.

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