GEORGIA PUBLIC SAFETY MEMORIAL GRANT PROGRAM

REGULATIONS – 1200.

2012 - 2013 AWARD YEAR

Effective Date – July 1, 2012

Georgia Student Finance Commission
LOANS ◢ SCHOLARSHIPS ◢ GRANTS

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Tucker, Georgia 30084

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1202. Program Overview.

The Georgia Public Safety Memorial (GPSM) Grant Program provides financial assistance toward the postsecondary educational costs of the children of Public Safety Officers of the State of Georgia who were Permanently Disabled or killed in the line of duty.

An eligible student must attend a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia or a unit of the University System of Georgia or an eligible private college or university located in Georgia in order to receive payment from the GPSM Grant Program. The award amount received by an eligible student is equal to the Cost of Attendance, minus other student financial aid, at the Georgia eligible postsecondary institution the student attends. The total amount of funds appropriated for the program is established each year by the Georgia General Assembly during the prior legislative session, and are subject to change during the Award Year.

The GPSM Grant 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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1203. Definitions.

"Academic Year" means a period of time, usually eight or 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 Georgia Public Safety program rule, policy, or regulation was applied correctly in a student's specific case.

"Application Deadline Date" means the last date on which a student can file an application for the program.

"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.

"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 four consecutive quarters or three consecutive semesters, beginning with the summer term and ending with the spring term, or the Non-Standard equivalent, or the 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.

"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 or Graduate Degree. A Certificate program of study typically requires fewer credit hours than a Diploma program of study.

"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.

"Degree" means an Associate Degree, Baccalaureate Degree, or Graduate Degree conferred on students by a postsecondary educational institution upon completion of a unified postsecondary 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.

"Eligible Non-Citizen" means a person who, in accordance with the Federal Title IV Program definition, 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 or Approved School” means:

(1) A unit of the University System of Georgia; or
(2) A unit of the Technical College System of Georgia; or
(3) A private 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 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
(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 a regional accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education, 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 has been in existence for at least ten years and which met all requirements of part 4 of this definition 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; or
(5) A nonprofit hospital school of nursing located in Georgia.

“Emergency Medical Technician” means a person employed by the State of Georgia or by a county, municipality, or other political subdivision of the State of Georgia whose principal duties are to access an emergency patient’s health condition and perform certain medical procedures as needed until the patient can be transported to a hospital or other appropriate destination for advanced medical treatment.

"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 administered by the United States Department of Education that is authorized by Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

"Firefighter" means a person employed by the State of Georgia or by any county or municipal fire department in Georgia whose duties include extinguishing fires or investigating cases of suspected arson.

"Freshman" means a first-year student who is fully admitted and Enrolled in a Matriculated status to seek an Undergraduate Degree at an Eligible Postsecondary Institution. Typically, a student is classified as a Freshman until he or she has earned at least 30 semester or 45 quarter hours of postsecondary credit.

"Full-Time" means Enrollment for the equivalent of at least 12 semester or 12 quarter credit hours, of Undergraduate coursework during a term, at an Eligible Postsecondary Institution, or the equivalent of at least 9 semester or 9 quarter credit hours of Graduate coursework during a term at an Eligible Postsecondary Institution.

"Georgia Board of Public Safety" means the governing body that establishes the general policies to be followed by the Georgia Department of Public Safety. The board membership includes representatives from the Governor's Office, Department of Corrections, Georgia Sheriffs Association, Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police, District Attorneys Association, Georgia State Fireman's Association and three members from the state-at-large.

"Georgia Public Safety Memorial Grant" or "GPSM Grant" means the State of Georgia postsecondary educational student aid program that provides grant assistance to Georgia Residents who are the children of Public Safety Officers who were Permanently Disabled or killed in the line of duty.

"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 the postsecondary program of study beyond the Baccalaureate Degree.
"GSFAPPS" means the Georgia Student Financial Aid Application System, the Commission's web-based electronic application process by which students can apply for the scholarship and grant programs administered by the Commission.

"Home Institution" means an Eligible Postsecondary Institution in which the student is Enrolled and is in a Matriculated status working toward a Degree, Diploma, or Certificate.

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

"Law Enforcement Officer" means a sheriff, deputy sheriff, police officer, policeman, peace officer or member of the Georgia Department of Public Safety, or other official who has the power of arrest and who is responsible for enforcing the criminal laws of the State of Georgia or its political subdivisions.

"Learning Support" means remedial coursework provided by a postsecondary institution to a student whose entrance or placement evaluation has identified deficiencies in the student's academic preparation or readiness for specific core curriculum postsecondary coursework.

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

"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 <u>not</u> 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 <u>not</u> begin and end within a set period of time, or has courses that overlap, or has sequential courses that do <u>not</u> begin and end within a term.

"Parent" means the natural/biological mother or father, or adoptive parent. A legal guardian does not meet the definition of a Parent.

"Permanent Disability" or "Permanently Disabled" means physical incapacity to perform the duties of a Public Safety Officer, as determined by the Public Employer, provided that such incapacity is likely to be permanent based upon current medical standards.

"Prison Guard" means a person employed by the State of Georgia or by a county, municipality, or other political subdivision of the State of Georgia whose principal duties relate to supervision and incarceration of persons accused or convicted of violation of the criminal laws of the State of Georgia or any county, municipality, or other political subdivision thereof.

"Public Employer" means the State of Georgia or any county, municipality, department, board, bureau, branch, agency, commission, authority, or political subdivision of the State of Georgia that provides services related to public safety.

Public Safety Officer" means a Law Enforcement Officer, Firefighter, Emergency Medical Technician, or Prison Guard employed by the State of Georgia or other Public Employer thereof.

"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.

"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.

"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, Certificate or Diploma 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.

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1204. General Eligibility Requirements.

1204.1. 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 GPSM Grant is sought.

1204.2. Georgia Residency.

a. A student attending a Technical College System of Georgia institution or University System of Georgia institution meets the Georgia Residency requirements for purposes of GPSM Grant eligibility, if he or she meets the requirements to be classified as a Georgia Resident according to the TCSG or USG in-state Tuition policy 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 for a Freshman student, and such student graduated from a high school located in Georgia, then the student meets the Georgia Residency requirements of the GPSM Grant Program. No other out-of-state Tuition waiver granted by TCSG or USG institutions qualifies student for GPSM Grant eligibility.

b. A student attending a private Eligible Postsecondary Institution meets the Georgia Residency requirements for purposes of GPSM Grant eligibility if he or she meets the requirements to be classified as a Georgia Resident according to 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 funds are sought. A Freshman student with a Military Personnel Parent, who is not a resident of Georgia, 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.

c. A student who was correctly determined to meet the Georgia Residency requirements for purposes of GPSM Grant eligibility and began receiving GPSM Grant payment, will continue to meet the Georgia Residency requirements for purposes of GPSM Grant 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 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 GPSM Grant eligibility.

1204.3. Enrollment Status.

a. A student must be Enrolled in an Eligible Postsecondary Institution as a Matriculated student.

b. A student must be Enrolled as a Full-Time student for the school term, in order to be eligible to receive GPSM Grant payment for the school term.

1204.4. Satisfactory Academic Progress.

A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress, as certified by his or her Eligible Postsecondary Institution.

1204.5. 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 Application Deadline Date in order to be eligible for payment for such school term.

1204.6. Defaulted Loan or Refund Due.

A student must <u>not</u> be in default on a Federal Title IV Program or State of Georgia educational loan, nor owe a refund on a Federal Title IV Program or State of Georgia student financial aid program, nor in any other way be in violation of Federal Title IV Program 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 GPSM Grant funds beginning with the school term in which repayment was made in full, but <u>not</u> 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 Program debt settlement, to include a compromised settlement.

1204.7. Georgia Drug-Free Act.

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

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1205. Program Specific Eligibility Requirements.

1205.1. Parent Eligibility Requirements.

A student's Parent, who is a deceased or Permanently Disabled former Public Safety Officer, must have been an employee, either full or part-time, or an officer or official, whether elected or appointed, of a Public Employer on the date of the accident or event from which death or Permanent Disability resulted.

1205.2. Student Eligibility Requirements.

a. A student must be the natural or adopted child of a Public Safety Officer who is Permanently Disabled or was killed in the line of duty, or while performing the duties as to which he or she was assigned in the normal course of employment.

b. If a student is the adopted child of a former Public Safety Officer, then any final order of adoption must have been issued prior to the date of the event or accident causing the death or Permanent Disability of such Parent.

1205.3. Award Limit.

A recipient of the GPSM Grant is eligible to receive payment for no more than eight semesters or twelve quarters of Full-Time study.

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1206. Eligible and Ineligible Coursework.

1206.1. Undergraduate and Graduate Coursework.

A student in a Matriculated status, who meets all other requirements, is eligible for GPSM Grant payment for Undergraduate and/or Graduate coursework.

1206.2. Learning Support Coursework.

A student who is required by his or her Eligible Postsecondary Institution to participate in Learning Support (remedial) coursework is eligible for GPSM Grant payment for such coursework, if he or she meets all other eligibility requirements.

1206.3. Coursework Exemptions.

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

1206.4. Distance Learning Coursework.

A student participating in Distance Learning coursework is eligible to receive GPSM Grant payment if all other eligibility requirements are met. The institution offering the Distance Learning coursework must be an Eligible Postsecondary Institution.

1206.5. Transient Coursework.

a. A Transient student is eligible to receive GPSM Grant payment if all other eligibility requirements are met. Both the Home Institution and the Host Institution must be Eligible Postsecondary Institutions.

b. The Host Institution awards GPSM Grant 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 eligibility.

1206.6. Study Away Coursework.

A student Enrolled in an Eligible Postsecondary Institution may qualify for GPSM Grant 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 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 1206.5.*) The Home Institution may coordinate the Study Away program through institutions that are ineligible to participate in the GPSM Grant Program. For example, the student's Home Institution may have an arrangement with an out-of-state institution's Study Away Program.

1206.7. Continuing Education and Audit Coursework.

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

1206.8. Total Withdrawal from Coursework.

A student is ineligible for GPSM Grant 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 1210.1*.)

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1207. Student Application Requirements.

1207.1. Initial Application.

a. A student must apply for a PSM Grant by completing the *Georgia Public Safety Memorial Grant Application,* which is printable from the GAcollege411.org website. After completing the "student section", the student should forward the application and supporting documentation to the financial aid office of his or her Eligible Postsecondary Institution for certification. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution then forwards the completed application and supporting documentation to the Commission.

b. The Commission shall review the completed application and all supporting documentation to verify and determine the student's eligibility and award. The Commission will notify the student and the institution of the determination.

c. The Commission may request additional documentation of the circumstances surrounding the death or claim of Permanent Disability of the Parent while in the line of duty. The Commission may also require the student or Parent to authorize the Georgia Board of Public Safety to release directly to the Commission any information and documentation regarding the case on file with the Georgia Board of Public Safety.

1207.2. Application Deadline Date.

A student must file the application 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 Application Deadline Date without jeopardizing the student's eligibility. (Refer to *Section 1205.2*).

1207.3. Application Renewal.

a. A student must file a renewal application for each Award Year. An application on file from a student for a previous Award Year cannot be used to renew a Public Safety Memorial Grant award for subsequent Award Years.

b. A student must have successfully completed the coursework of the prior school period, be a student in good standing, continue to meet Georgia

Residency requirements, and remain otherwise qualified to receive a GPSM Grant.

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1208. Award Requirements.

1208.1. Award Amounts.

a. The GPSM Grant award amount is equal to the student's Cost of Attendance, as determined by the eligible postsecondary institution in which the student is enrolled, minus any other student financial aid the student is receiving, but may not exceed a total of $18,000 for the equivalent of one Academic Year.

b. A student who Enrolls for three Full-Time semesters or four Full-Time quarters during the Award Year may receive payment for three semesters or four quarters for the Award Year.

c. GPSM Grant awards are not made or disbursed for Enrollment as a less than Full-Time student.

d. The GPSM Grant award amounts per semester or quarter are subject to change during the Award Year.

1208.2. Award Amount Reductions.

A student's GPSM Grant award amount must be reduced or withheld if the student is receiving other student financial aid, which in combination with the student's GPSM Grant award exceeds the student's Cost of Attendance.

1208.3. Awards Per School Term.

The GPSM Grant is available to students for the standard school terms of Summer, Fall, and Spring semesters or Summer, Fall, Winter, and Spring quarters. 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 payment for more than three semesters or four quarters per Award Year.

1208.4. Student Notification of Award.

Eligible Postsecondary Institutions should notify each recipient of the amount of GPSM Grant funds he or she is awarded for the Award Year, and identify such funds as a Georgia Public Safety Memorial Grant award.

1209. Disbursement of Funds.

1209.1. Methods of Disbursement.

The Commission disburses funds in one of three ways, determined by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution.

a. Individual checks made payable to each recipient, for each school term covered by the recipient's award.

b. Single check made payable to the Eligible Postsecondary Institution for all students receiving the GPSM Grant at the institution.

c. Electronic transfer of funds to the Eligible Postsecondary Institution for all students receiving the GPSM Grant at the institution.

1209.2. Crediting of Student Accounts.

Upon receipt of a GPSM Grant payment from the Commission, the Eligible Postsecondary Institution shall deliver the funds to the eligible student or credit the student's account toward the Cost of Attendance.

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1210. Student Refund Requirements.

1210.1. 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 GPSM Grant fund. A student is ineligible for GPSM Grant 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.

b. If applicable, the Eligible Postsecondary Institution must first apply the Federal Title IV Return of Funds policy for any federal aid the student may have received. To determine the refund to the GPSM Grant program, the institution must then apply the institution's refund policy, which may or may not be identical to the Federal Title IV Return of Funds policy, to the student's GPSM Grant award amount.

c. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution must determine the amount of the GPSM Grant refund, post the refund on the student's record in the Commission's system within 45 days of the determination, and return that amount to the Commission at the time of the End-of-Year Reconciliation. The remainder of the award amount is retained by the institution to cover the institution's cost for the portion of the school term that the student was Enrolled.

1210.2. Collection of Refunds.

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.

1210.3. Emergency Military Duty.

A student who is a member of the United States Armed Services, National Guard, or Armed Forces Reserve receiving funds from the GPSM Grant program who is called to emergency military duty during a school term that is already in progress should not have their eligibility negatively impacted. If the Eligible Postsecondary Institution the student attends allows the student to totally withdraw and receive a grade such as "WM" for "military withdrawal" or the institution totally removes all grades for that term and corresponding credit hours from the student's records, the institution should return the full amount of the

award to the GPSM Grant program. This regulation may also be applied to students who are not members of the military but are otherwise unusually and detrimentally affected by the emergency activation of members of the military, as determined by the president of the Eligible Postsecondary Institution that such student is attending.

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1211. Reconciliation Requirements.

1211.1. Award-Year Reconciliation.

The Eligible Postsecondary 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 1st immediately following the completion of the Award Year.

1211.2. Return of Funds.

The institution must return to the Commission any GPSM Grant Program 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 funds do not go to an unintended third party (i.e. State, institution)].

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1212. Records Retention Requirements.

1212.1. Length of Retention.

An Eligible Postsecondary Institution shall maintain accurate records, books, documents and other evidence concerning the GPSM Grant 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.

1212.2. 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 years after the most recent Award Year for which the student received GPSM funds. (Refer to *Section 1214*.) 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 GPSM funds to the student.

1212.3. Extended Retention.

An institution 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.

1213. Administrative Reviews and Exceptions.

1213.1. Administrative Reviews.

a. The GPSM Grant Program Regulations are applied to each student considered for GPSM Grant funds by appropriate officials of Eligible Postsecondary Institutions and by the administrative staff of the Commission. If a student believes a GPSM Grant 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.

1213.2. Exceptions.

Requests for Exceptions to the GPSM Grant Program Regulations will not be considered, reviewed, or granted under any circumstances.

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1214. Compliance Reviews.

1214.1. Compliance Review Policy.

The Commission may conduct Compliance Reviews of Eligible Postsecondary Institutions participating in the GPSM Grant 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 *Program Review Process and Procedures* document, which is available on the *gsfc.org* website, under *School and Lender Information-Compliance Documents*.

1214.2. 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. 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 1212*.)

1214.3. Institutional Repayment.

a. If a recipient is determined 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 GPSM Grant funds, then all future GPSM Grant 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 1210.2*. If the student's file is determined not to be adequately documented by the Commission, then the institution may be responsible for the repayment.