

**Scholarship for Engineering Education  
For Minorities  
Service Cancelable Loan Program**

**REGULATIONS – 1700.  
2016 - 2017 Award Year**



**Effective Date – July 1, 2016**

**GSFA** | Georgia Student  
Finance Authority

2082 East Exchange Place  
Tucker, Georgia 30084

## **1701. TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

1701. Table of Cointents.	2
1702. Program Overview.	4
1703. Definitions. (Electronic Link)	5
1704. General Eligibility Requirements.	5
1704.1. Citizenship.	5
1704.2. Georgia Residency.	5
1704.3. Enrollment Status.	5
1704.4. Satisfactory Academic Progress.	5
1704.5. Selective Service Registration.	6
1704.6. Defaulted Loan or Refund Due.	6
1704.7. Georgia Drug-Free Act.	7
1704.8. Incarceration.	7
1705. Program Specific Eligibility Requirements.	8
1705.1. Minority Status.	8
1705.2. Enrollment Status.	8
1705.3. Academic Eligibility.	8
1705.4. Length of Eligibility.	8
1705.5. Credit Courses.	9
1706. Repayment Obligation.	10
1706.1. Repayment Obligation.	10
1707. Student Application Requirements.	11
1707.1. Application.	11
1707.2. Application Process.	11
1708. Award Requirements.	12
1708.1. Award Amount.	12
1708.2. Cost of Attendance and Other Aid.	12
1709. Authorizing and Disbursing Funds.	13
1709.1. Authorization of Funds.	13
1709.2. Disbursement.	13
1710. Student Refund Requirements.	14
1710.1. Calculation of Refund Amounts.	14

1710.2. Collection of Refunds.	15
1710.3. Emergency Military Duty.	15
1711. Reconciliation Requirements.	16
1711.1. Fiscal Year End Reconciliation.	16
1712. Records Retention Requirements.	17
1712.1. Length of Retention.	17
1712.2. Documentation.	17
1712.3. Extended Retention.	18
1713. Administrative Reviews and Exceptions.	19
1713.1. Administrative Reviews.	19
1713.2. Exceptions.	19
1714. Compliance Reviews	20
1714.1. Compliance Review Policy.	20
1714.2. Compliance Review Process.	20
1714.3. Institutional Repayment.	20
1715. Service and Cash Repayment Obligations	21
1715.1. Loss of Eligibility.	21
1715.2. Service Repayment.	21
1715.3. Cash Repayment.	21
1715.4. Deferment of Repayment.	22
1715.5. Forbearance of Repayment.	23
1715.6. Cancellation of Repayment Obligation.	23
1715.7. Promissory Note Supersedes Regulations.	24

## **1702. Program Overview.**

The Scholarship for Engineering Education for Minorities (MSEE) was created beginning with the 2015-2016 Award Year (State Fiscal Year 2016). The purpose of the program is to attract minority Undergraduate students into the engineering profession by offering financial assistance and to provide qualified engineers for the State of Georgia. In return, students agree to work for a period of time after graduation in an engineering-related field in Georgia for an opportunity to have a portion of the loan canceled. MSEE is a Service-Cancellable Loan that may be used for tuition, fees, room and board, and other educational expenses at an Eligible Postsecondary Institution in Georgia offering accredited engineering programs of study approved by the Engineering Accreditation Commission of the Accrediting Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET).

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### **1703. Definitions. (Electronic Link)**

### **1704. General Eligibility Requirements.**

#### **1704.1. Citizenship.**

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

#### **1704.2. Georgia Residency.**

1. A student attending a University System of Georgia (USG) institution who meets the Georgia Residency requirements of the Board of Regents (BOR) at the time of his or her high school graduation, Home Study program completion or successful GED test, must also meet such Georgia Residency requirements for 12 consecutive months immediately prior to the first day of classes of the school term for which the MSEE is sought.
2. A student attending a private Eligible Postsecondary Institution who meets the Georgia Residency requirements of the *Georgia Residency Requirements for State Programs at Private Institutions Regulations* at the time of his or her high school graduation, Home Study program completion or successful GED test, must also meet such Georgia Residency requirements for 12 consecutive months immediately prior to the first day of classes of the school term for which the MSEE is sought.
3. Military Personnel, Military Spouses, or Dependent Child, shall be treated as a Georgia Resident for purposes of MSEE eligibility, if the Military Personnel is stationed in Georgia on Active Duty or lists Georgia as his or her home of record.

#### **1704.3. Enrollment Status.**

1. A student must be Enrolled in an engineering program of study leading to a Baccalaureate Degree at an Eligible Postsecondary Institution, currently approved by the Engineering Accreditation Commission of the Accrediting Board for Engineering and Technology.
2. A student must be registered, Enrolled, and attending classes as a Full-Time student during the drop/add period and through 14 calendar days after the drop/add period.

#### **1704.4. Satisfactory Academic Progress.**

1. A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP), as defined and certified by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution.

### **1704.5. Selective Service Registration.**

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

### **1704.6. Defaulted Loan or Refund Due.**

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

A green rounded rectangular badge with a dark border and the word "NEW" in white capital letters.

**1704.7. Georgia Drug-Free Act.**

1. A student convicted of committing certain felony offenses involving marijuana, controlled substances, or dangerous drugs, may be ineligible for MSEE 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, Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A.) §20-1- 20, et seq.

**1704.8. Incarceration.**

1. A student is ineligible to receive MSEE Program funding while incarcerated.

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## **1705. Program Specific Eligibility Requirements.**

### **1705.1. Minority Status.**

1. Each student must meet one of the following definitions of a minority in accordance with Titles VI and IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1964: female, Hispanic, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian American, Black or African American, or Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.

### **1705.2. Enrollment Status.**

1. An applicant may enter the MSEE Program after earning a minimum of 60 semester hours toward his or her engineering degree. Such earned coursework must have been taken as part of, or accepted into, an accredited engineering Baccalaureate Degree program currently approved by the Engineering Accreditation Commission of the Accrediting Board for Engineering and Technology.
2. An applicant must be Enrolled as a Full-Time student at an Eligible Postsecondary Institution in an engineering Baccalaureate Degree program currently approved by the Engineering Accreditation Commission of the Accrediting Board for Engineering and Technology for each term he or she is requesting MSEE funds. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution must be verified with GSFA for the MSEE program.
  - a. A student enrolled in an engineering Baccalaureate degree program accredited by the Computing Accreditation Commission or Technology Accreditation Commission of the Accrediting Board for Engineering and Technology is ineligible to receive MSEE.

### **1705.3. Academic Eligibility.**

1. An applicant must have a Postsecondary Cumulative Grade Point Average of at least a 2.50, based on a 4.00 scale, in an engineering Baccalaureate Degree program upon entry into the MSEE Program, and must maintain a 2.50 cumulative GPA to remain eligible.

### **1705.4. Length of Eligibility.**

1. A student may receive MSEE funds for a maximum of nine semesters to be completed within four academic years from the initial term in which he or she first received MSEE funds.
2. MSEE funds are not available for study beyond the attainment of a Baccalaureate Degree and cannot be used toward the cost of a Graduate program of study.



### **1705.5. Credit Courses.**

1. A student enrolled Full-Time at an Eligible Postsecondary Institution in an engineering Baccalaureate Degree program currently approved by the Engineering Accreditation Commission of the Accrediting Board for Engineering and Technology is eligible for MSEE payment.
  - a. A student who enrolls in independent study coursework is eligible for MSEE payment for such coursework.
  - b. Co-op studies are ineligible for MSEE payment.

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## **1706. Repayment Obligation.**

### **1706.1. Repayment Obligation.**

1. A student must commit to work in Georgia in an Engineering-Related Field for one calendar year for each \$3,500 received from the MSEE Program to be canceled, or must otherwise repay by cash, plus interest, the MSEE funds received, in accordance with the MSEE Promissory Note he or she signed.

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## **1707. Student Application Requirements.**

### **1707.1. Application.**

1. The MSEE Application and Promissory Note will be available from GSFA.
2. A student must apply for MSEE by completing and submitting to the Eligible Postsecondary Institution a Scholarship of Engineering Education for Minorities Loan Program Application and Promissory Note with his or her notarized legal signature.
3. A student may reapply annually by completing an Application and Promissory Note, and must continue to meet all of the eligibility requirements in *Sections 1704 and 1705*.

### **1707.2. Application Process.**

1. An applicant must complete his or her portion of the Application and submit it to the financial aid office of the Eligible Postsecondary Institution for certification.
  - a. The financial aid office certifies eligibility and forwards the completed Application directly to GSFA for final determination of eligibility.
2. All completed Applications received by GSFA will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis and funds availability.
3. Awards will be made until funds are exhausted.

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## **1708. Award Requirements.**

### **1708.1. Award Amount.**

1. The maximum MSEE award amount is \$1,750 per semester. A student is not eligible for MSEE payment unless he or she is Enrolled Full-Time during the drop/add period and through 14 calendar days following the drop/add period.
2. An eligible student may receive MSEE payment for a maximum of three semesters (Fall, Spring and Summer) per Award Year, for a maximum total of \$5,250 per Award Year.

### **1708.2. Cost of Attendance and Other Aid.**

1. MSEE funds may be applied to any portion of a student's Cost of Attendance (COA).
2. A student's MSEE award amount, in combination with HOPE Scholarship funds and/or other scholarship and grant aid, must not exceed the student's COA. Such student's MSEE award amount must be reduced so that the combination of aid is equal to or less than the student's COA.

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## **1709. Authorizing and Disbursing Funds.**

### **1709.1. Authorization of Funds.**

1. As early as 15 calendar days prior to the first day of classes each semester, GSFA authorizes the disbursement of MSEE funds to the Eligible Postsecondary Institution, on behalf of eligible students.

### **1709.2. Disbursement.**

1. MSEE funds are disbursed by GSFA to the Eligible Postsecondary Institution by method of electronic transfer.

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## **1710. Student Refund Requirements.**

### **1710.1. Calculation of Refund Amounts.**

1. 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 MSEE fund.
  - a. A student is ineligible for MSEE 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 "W", or any other code or identification for such a withdrawal.
2. 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.
  - a. To determine the refund due, the Eligible Postsecondary 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 MSEE award amount.
3. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution must determine the amount, if any, of the refund due back to the MSEE Program. The amount of the MSEE award not determined to be owed back to the MSEE Program is retained by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution to cover the institution's cost for the portion of the school term that the student was Enrolled.
  - a. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution must adjust the student's invoice to the new award amount remaining after the refund is calculated within 45 calendar days of the determination.
  - b. If the Eligible Postsecondary Institution has sufficient funds on hand to return to GSFA the refund owed to the MSEE Program, it should return the funds within 45 calendar days of the refund determination. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution would then collect the refund amount from the student.
  - c. The student should not be reported with a refund due status to GSFA since the funds have been repaid to GSFA.
4. If the Eligible Postsecondary Institution does not have sufficient funds on hand to return to GSFA the refund owed to the MSEE Program, the student is considered to have a refund due to GSFA and the Eligible Postsecondary Institution must report the student to GSFA with a refund due status.

### **1710.2. Collection of Refunds.**

1. A borrower in default or who owes a refund may be subject to garnishment of their pay, loss of a professional license, offset of lottery winnings, and/or offset of a state tax refund. GSFA will notify the borrower that they are in default and GSFA intends to proceed with any of the remedies listed in this subsection. The borrower will be given 60 days from the date of notification to make the loan current or to put in place a satisfactory payment plan.

### **1710.3. Emergency Military Duty.**

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

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## **1711. Reconciliation Requirements.**

### **1711.1. Fiscal Year End Reconciliation.**

1. In addition to the Term-Reconciliations, the Eligible Postsecondary Institution must conduct the Fiscal Year End Reconciliation through GSFA's online invoicing system, Scholarship Up-to-date Records for Electronic Reporting (SURFER).
  - a. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution must conduct a complete student-by-student Fiscal Year End Reconciliation with GSFC that includes:
    - i. Submission of a reconciliation certification form by July 15, immediately following the completion of the Fiscal Year for each State Program verifying accuracy of each invoice submitted by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution with respect to Enrolled-Hours, Paid-Hours, Learning Support and the student's program of study information, when applicable to the program; and
    - ii. Return to GSFC any funds not utilized according to the Fiscal Year End Reconciliation by August 15 after the beginning of the new Fiscal Year.
  - b. GSFC will not issue any state scholarship or grant funds for the Fall term until the previous Fiscal Year End Reconciliation process is complete.
  - c. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution must have a procedure in place to ensure that the state scholarship and grant funds do not go to an unintended third party (i.e., state, postsecondary institution).

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## **1712. Records Retention Requirements.**

### **1712.1. Length of Retention.**

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

### **1712.2. Documentation.**

1. Documentation contained within an individual student's file or record, which supports the original determination of a student's eligibility, must be retained by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution and available for review by GSFA on the Eligible Postsecondary Institution's campus, located within the State of Georgia, for at least three calendar years after the most recent Award Year for which the student received funds (refer to *Section 1713*).
2. Eligible Postsecondary Institutions are permitted to maintain these documents in an imaged media format. The imaged media format must be capable of reproducing an accurate, legible, and complete copy of the original document.
  - a. Such documentation may include, but is not limited to, copies of permanent resident alien cards, Georgia state income tax returns, student financial aid applications or academic transcripts from previous institutions.
    - i. Documentation regarding a student's eligibility is not limited to files, records, and other information received and maintained by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution.
    - ii. 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 must be available to GSFA for the purpose of Compliance Reviews.
3. It is the Eligible Postsecondary Institution's responsibility to resolve any inconsistencies or conflicting information within a student's records, prior to awarding or disbursing MSEE funds to the student.

### **1712.3. Extended Retention.**

1. An Eligible Postsecondary Institution may be required to retain student records involved in a Compliance Review, audit, or investigation for more than the three-year retention period set forth in *Section 1712.1*. If the three-year retention period expires before the issue in question is resolved, the Eligible Postsecondary Institution must continue to retain all associated records until resolution is reached.

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## **1713. Administrative Reviews and Exceptions.**

### **1713.1. Administrative Reviews.**

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

### **1713.2. Exceptions.**

1. No requests for Exceptions to the MSEE regulations will be considered, reviewed, or granted under any circumstances.

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## **1714. Compliance Reviews.**

### **1714.1. Compliance Review Policy.**

1. GSFA shall conduct Compliance Reviews of Eligible Postsecondary Institutions in order to assess institutional administration of the program and compliance with the program's regulations. Compliance Reviews shall be conducted in accordance with GSFA's *Compliance Review Process and Procedures* document, which is available on *gsfc.org*, under *Information for School Compliance*.

### **1714.2. Compliance Review Process.**

1. GSFA selects a sampling of the Eligible Postsecondary Institution's recipients for the Award Year under review, and the Eligible Postsecondary Institution's files and records for the sample are examined to assure compliance. Records which document and support a student's eligibility must be available for review at the Georgia campus of the Eligible Postsecondary Institution.

### **1714.3. Institutional Repayment.**

1. If a recipient is determined to be ineligible for payment, the Eligible Postsecondary Institution may be required to repay to GSFA the funds awarded to the recipient.
2. If evidence, not available at the time of awarding, indicates that a student should not have received MSEE funds, then all future MSEE awards must be canceled.
  - a. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution is held harmless by GSFA, if the student's file is appropriately documented with available evidence and it is determined by GSFA that the Eligible Postsecondary Institution was not at fault.
  - b. Evidence is considered unavailable at the time of awarding if it is not available in the student's institutional files (i.e., financial aid, admissions, registrar, etc.).
3. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution must notify the student and GSFA of a refund due.
4. The student will be ineligible to receive additional state aid from GSFA until the refund is paid in full, in accordance with *Section 1710.2*.
5. If GSFA determines the student's file is not adequately documented, the Eligible Postsecondary Institution may be responsible for the Repayment.

## **1715. Service and Cash Repayment Obligations.**

### **1715.1. Loss of Eligibility.**

1. If an MSEE recipient changes his or her major to a program of study other than engineering, or withdraws from the Eligible Postsecondary Institution prior to completion of his or her second semester, for any award year, the Eligible Postsecondary Institution shall repay to GSFA the total amount of MSEE funds awarded to such student. Full Repayment must occur prior to the end of the Award Year in which the MSEE funds were disbursed.
2. In the event that a recipient of MSEE fails to meet the requirements for continued eligibility for MSEE, including graduation from the approved Baccalaureate Degree, such student must repay to GSFA the total amount of MSEE funds received, plus interest, in accordance with the MSEE Promissory Note the student signed.

### **1715.2. Service Repayment.**

1. In order to repay by service, a former MSEE recipient must be employed on a full-time basis in an Engineering-Related Field in Georgia.
  - a. The former MSEE recipient must be physically located and working at a Georgia work site and employed in an Engineering-Related field for one calendar year for each \$3,500 awarded, and canceled, by the MSEE Program.
2. A former MSEE recipient must fulfill the service obligation within six years immediately following the completion of the Engineering Baccalaureate Degree program for which MSEE funds were awarded.
  - a. The employment obligation may be extended only if a Deferment is approved by GSFA.
3. The former MSEE recipient must provide GSFA, in the form and at the times specified by GSFA, evidence of compliance with the service Repayment requirements.
  - a. Service Repayment is effective upon approval by GSFA.

### **1715.3. Cash Repayment.**

1. GSFA shall convert a former MSEE recipient from a service Repayment status to a cash Repayment status if GSFA, in its sole discretion, determines that the former MSEE recipient is not meeting his or her service obligation in accordance with the Promissory Note.
  - a. A recipient converting from cash Repayment to service Repayment will not receive a refund on cash payments made prior to approval of service Repayment. Service Cancellation is effective upon receipt of complete documentation.

2. Upon designation by GSFA that a former MSEE recipient is in a cash Repayment status, he or she shall have the option of fulfilling the obligation by either of the following two alternatives:
  - a. Repay in full the amount of the MSEE funds received, reduced by the dollar amount that coincides with the years of service that the former MSEE recipient has been performed, as specified in the Promissory Note; or
  - b. Make monthly payments to GSFA of the outstanding principal, plus interest, in accordance with the Promissory Note. In no event shall the interest rate due exceed 10% per annum.

#### **1715.4. Deferment of Repayment.**

1. A former MSEE recipient may apply for a Deferment of Repayment under certain conditions listed below:
  - a. The former MSEE recipient is Enrolled for at least 12 hours of Undergraduate coursework or six hours of Graduate coursework per term at a postsecondary institution; or
  - b. The former MSEE recipient is serving as Military Personnel, not in excess of four years; or
  - c. The former MSEE recipient is serving as a volunteer in the United States Peace Corps; or
  - d. The former MSEE recipient is temporarily disabled as established by sworn affidavit of a qualified physician satisfactory to GSFA; or
  - e. The former MSEE recipient is unable to secure employment for a period not to exceed 12 months by reason of the full-time care required by a disabled child of which the student is the Legal Guardian, student's spouse, or student's parent; or
  - f. The former MSEE recipient is in the Grace Period, which is defined as a period in which the student is unable to find a qualifying position within 12 months immediately following the student's completion of an engineering program of study.
  - g. The former MSEE recipient meets the requirements for a Deferment under any Deferment options available under the Federal Family Education Loan Program or the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program as authorized by Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 as amended.
2. During the period of a Deferment, approved by, the former MSEE recipient shall not be required to meet the cash Repayment or service Repayment requirements and interest will not accrue on the outstanding principal.

### **1715.5. Forbearance of Repayment.**

1. A former MSEE recipient may apply for a Forbearance of Repayment under certain conditions listed below:
  - a. The former MSEE recipient meets the requirements for Forbearance under any Forbearance options available under the Federal Family Education Loan Program or the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program as authorized by the Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 as amended.
2. During the period of a Forbearance, approved by the former MSEE recipient shall not be required to meet the Repayment requirements; however, interest will accrue on the outstanding principal balance and the former MSEE recipient will be liable for such interest.

### **1715.6. Cancellation of Repayment Obligation.**

1. GSFA shall cancel a Borrower's Repayment obligation if it determines:
  - a. On the basis of a death certificate, or other evidence acceptable to GSFA, that the Borrower is deceased; or
  - b. That the Borrower possesses a Total and Permanent Disability. In order to be relieved of a monetary or service obligation to GSFC/GSFA, a Borrower must affirm the presence of a Total and Permanent Disability in one of the following ways:
    - i. If the Borrower is a veteran, submit documentation from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) showing that the VA has determined that the Borrower is unemployable due to a service-connected disability; or
    - ii. If the Borrower is receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits, the Borrower can submit a Social Security Administration (SSA) notice of award for SSDI or SSI benefits stating that the Borrower's next scheduled disability review will be within five to seven years from the date of the Borrower's most recent SSA disability determination; or
    - iii. The Borrower can submit certification from a physician that he or she is totally and permanently disabled. The physician must certify that the Borrower is unable to engage in any substantial gainful activity by reason of a medically determinable physical or mental impairment that:
      1. Can be expected to result in death; or

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2. Has lasted for a continuous period of not less than 60 months; or
  3. Can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than 60 months.
- iv. The Borrower's condition or illness must not have existed at the time the loans were made, unless the condition has substantially deteriorated so that the borrower is now Totally and Permanently Disabled.
2. A Borrower of a previous Student Access Loan Program that receives a discharge due to Total and Permanent Disability is not eligible to receive future state loans unless:
- a. The Borrower produces to GSFA an affidavit from a qualified physician which certifies that the Borrower is now able to engage in substantial gainful activity; and
  - b. The Borrower signs a statement acknowledging that a new loan cannot be discharged in the future on the basis of any injury or illness present at the time the new loan is made unless the condition substantially deteriorates so that he is again totally and permanently disabled.

**1715.7. Promissory Note Supersedes Regulations.**

1. The complete Repayment requirements of the MSEE Program are provided in the Promissory Note signed by each individual MSEE recipient. If any discrepancy exists between the content of these program regulations and the Promissory Note signed by the MSEE recipient, the Promissory Note shall control and prevail.

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