Georgia Military College
State Service Scholarship Program

Regulations - 3200.

2021 - 2022 Award Year

Effective Date – July 1, 2021

GSFA | Georgia Student Finance Authority

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 (GMC). 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 funding for this program, as authorized each year by the Georgia General Assembly. The program is administered by the Georgia Student Finance Authority (GSFA), in accordance with these regulations.

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3203. Definitions. (Electronic Link)

3204. General Eligibility Requirements.

3204.1. Citizenship.

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

3204.2. Georgia Residency.

1. A student must meet the Georgia Residency criteria of the *Georgia Residency Requirements for State Programs at Private Institutions 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.

    a. 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.

2. 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.

    a. If such student later returns to Georgia, he or she must re-establish Georgia Residency for 12 consecutive months (refer to *Section 3204.2.1.*) before regaining State Service Scholarship eligibility.

    b. A student who has a break in Enrollment of two or more consecutive semesters or quarters and 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.

1. A student must be Enrolled at GMC in a Matriculated status leading to an Associate Degree.

2. 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.

1. A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) as defined and certified by GMC.

   a. For state aid programs, Eligible Postsecondary Institutions may establish an appeal process for students with dual-enrollment credit hours that fail to meet the quantitative standard (pace) for degree completion, generally identified as 150 percent of the published length of the program.

   b. The appeal should consider attempted hours toward the program in which the student is enrolled, satisfactory qualitative (grade-based) standards, and the student's satisfactory pace in pursuit of completing the program with and without the dual enrollment credits. Eligible Postsecondary Institutions have sole discretion and responsibility for evaluation and approval of any such appeals.

3204.5. Selective Service Registration.

1. A student must be in compliance with the United States Selective Service System requirements, where 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.

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; or

b. Complete an acceptable rehabilitation plan by making voluntary in time payments over a specified period agreed upon by GSFA.

5. If such student has repaid the defaulted loan or refund due in full, or resolved the default status, then he or she may be eligible to receive state scholarship, grant or loan funds beginning with the school term in which repayment was made in full but not retroactively for previous school terms.

3204.7. Georgia Drug-Free Act.

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

3204.8. Incarceration.

1. A student is ineligible to receive State Service Scholarship funding while incarcerated.

3205. Program Specific Eligibility Requirements.

3205.1. Eligibility Requirements for a Two-Year Award.

1. 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.* in addition to the following:

2. Qualify for regular admission to GMC.

3. [1]Have demonstrated Academic Excellence by:

    a. 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 with a minimum high school cumulative grade point average of 2.50 and a minimum combined math and reading score of 800 on a National Administration of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or minimum composite score of 17 on a National or State/District Administration of the American College Test (ACT); or

    b. Have previously completed high school graduation requirements and have earned no more than 30 semester or 45 quarter credit hours at a postsecondary institution with a minimum 2.50 postsecondary GPA; or

    c. Earning a composite score in the eightieth percentile or higher on a National or State/District Administration of the SAT or ACT, if such student:

        i. Completed a Home Study program; or

        ii. Graduated from a high school that is not an Eligible High School; or

        iii. Received a General Educational Development (GED) diploma that was awarded by the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG).

4. 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.

5. Meet the mental and physical health standards required for enlistment in the Georgia National Guard.

3205.2. Eligibility Requirements for a Partial Award.

1. 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 Sections

[1] Emergency Regulations to Assist Affected Students During COVID-19 Public Health Emergency refer to Section 3217.

3204 or 3205., or chooses to terminate his or her participation, therefore creating a vacancy in the State Service Scholarship Program.

2. The Selection Committee may choose an eligible student to fill a vacancy for the remaining period of the vacated State 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 Sections 3204 and 3205.

3205.3. Maintaining Eligibility.

1. Recipients must maintain membership in the Georgia National Guard.

2. Recipients must demonstrate qualities required of a member of the Georgia National Guard and the United States Armed Forces.

3. 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 terms 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.

4. If at any time a recipient fails to meet the requirements for continued eligibility as indicated above, the recipient shall lose eligibility for the State Service Scholarship.

    a. The Selection Committee shall promptly notify GSFA 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 GSFA according to the formula stated in *Section 3211.1.2.* of these regulations.

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3206. Student Application Procedures.

3206.1. Application Forms.

1. Students are informed of the State Service Scholarship through the combined efforts of GMC, GSFA, the Georgia National Guard, and the high school counselors.

2. Students may obtain an application from a Legislator, the GMC admissions office, GSFA or Georgia National Guard recruiters.

3. 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 student's Legislator, along with a full-length photograph.

4. If a Legislator chooses to nominate an Applicant, the Legislator must sign the application and send it to GSFA along with the student's essay and photograph.

5. 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 GSFA and to GMC.

3206.2. Application Deadline Date.

1. 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 Eligible Postsecondary Institution, whichever occurs later.

    a. Supplemental documentation required by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution or GSFA 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.

1. GSFA must receive the application information from the student's Legislator by February 1 each year.

2. 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 GSFA.

3. The information on the qualified Nominees shall be provided for review to the Selection Committee no later than February 8 each year. The Selection Committee shall consist of the following members: a representative of the President of 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 GSFA.

4. GSFA 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.

5. 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 at their discretion.

6. 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.

7. The Selection Committee must name the State Service Scholarship recipients by March 10 each year.

8. 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.

9. 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 GSFA.

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

3207.2. Vacant Slots.

1. 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.

2. 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.

1. The maximum State Service Scholarship award amount per school term is set by GSFA for each Award Year. The maximum award amount shall be no greater than the Eligible Postsecondary Institution's costs for tuition, fees, books, supplies, uniform deposits and on-campus room and meal charges, based upon available funds.

3208.2. Award Amount Reductions.

1. 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.

2. Each individual recipient's award amount per term shall be determined by GMC, at the time of invoicing GSFA, by subtracting from the maximum award amount established by GSFA, 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 GSFA.

3. 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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3209. Invoicing Requirements.

3209.1. Submission of Invoices.

1. GSFA must be notified by GMC of the dollar amount of each State Service Scholarship.

2. 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 *Sections 3211.1 and 3211.2* of these regulations before funds will be disbursed.

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3209.2. Payment of Invoices.

1. Recipients are entitled to receive an annual State Service Scholarship award for each of the two academic years of study at GMC, prorated for each term.

   a. For each of these terms, the recipient's maximum entitlement is 1/4 the annual award for the Academic Year.

   ~~b.~~ A recipient may receive the State Service Scholarship for a maximum of eight academic terms.

   c. State Service Scholarship funds are paid, on behalf of eligible students each school term to GMC by electronic transfer of funds.

2. GMC must return any undisbursed award funds to GSFA within 30-calendar days following the school term registration process.

3209.3. Payment to Students.

1. State Scholarship funds may be applied to any of GMC's direct charges, such as tuition, fees, books, supplies, uniform deposits and on-campus room and meal charges upon verification that the recipient is meeting the standards for maintaining eligibility as stated in *Section 3205.3.* of these regulations.

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3210. Loss of the State Service Scholarship.

1. If at any time a recipient fails to meet the Required Academic Standards for continued eligibility as provided by *Section 3205.3.3.* of these regulations, the recipient shall thereby lose eligibility for the State Service Scholarship, subject to the discretionary waiver by the Selection Committee under *Section 3205.3.3.* The Selection Committee shall promptly notify GSFA when a recipient loses eligibility.

2. If a recipient loses the State Service Scholarship, the total dollar amount received by the recipient must be repaid to GSFA according to the formula stated in *Section 3211.1.2.* of these regulations.

3210.1. Emergency Military Duty.

1. If a recipient is called to active duty while serving in the United States Armed Forces while Enrolled at GMC and otherwise maintaining eligibility, GSFA 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.

    a. Upon return from active duty, the recipient should advise GSFA of re-enrollment plans as soon as possible.

        i. 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. Refund Requirements.

3211.1. 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 State Service Scholarship fund.

2. If the student received Federal Title IV Program funds, in addition to State Service Scholarship funds, GMC must first apply the Federal Title IV return of funds policy for any federal aid received. To determine the refund to the State Service Scholarship Program, GMC must then apply the institution's refund policy, if different from Federal Title IV return of funds policy to the student's original State Service Scholarship award.

    a. If the student received State Service Scholarship funds, but did not receive Federal Title IV Program funds, GMC must apply the institution's refund policy, if different from Federal Title IV return of funds policy to the student's original State Service Scholarship award.

3. GMC must determine the amount of the refund due back to the State Service Scholarship Program. The amount of the State Service Scholarship award not determined to be owed back to the State Service Scholarship Program is retained by GMC to cover the institutions' cost for the portion of the school term that the recipient was Enrolled.

4. GMC must adjust the recipient's invoice to the new award amount remaining after the refund is calculated within 45-calendar days of the determination.

5. If GMC has sufficient funds on hand to return to GSFA the refund owed to the State Service Scholarship Program, it should return the funds within 45- calendar days of the refund determination. GMC would then collect the refund amount from the recipient. However, the recipient should not be reported with a refund due status to GSFA since the funds have been repaid to GSFA.

    a. If GMC does not have sufficient funds on hand to return to GSFA the refund owed to the State Service Scholarship Program, the recipient is considered to have a refund due to GSFA and the Eligible Postsecondary Institution must report the recipient to GSFA with a refund due status.

3211.2. 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.

3211.3. Emergency Military Duty.

1. A recipient who is called to emergency military duty while serving in the United States Armed Forces during a school term that is already in progress should not have his or her State Service Scholarship eligibility negatively impacted.

2. If GMC allows the recipient to totally withdraw and receive a grade such as "WM" for "military withdrawal" or the Eligible Postsecondary Institution totally removes all coursework for that term (grades and corresponding credit hours) from the recipient's records, the Eligible Postsecondary Institution should cancel the recipient's State Service Scholarship award and return the full amount of the award to the State Service Scholarship account.

3. If a recipient is called to active duty while serving in the United States Armed Forces while Enrolled at GMC, and otherwise maintaining eligibility for the State Service Scholarship Program, GSFA will reserve, to the fullest extent permitted from such funds appropriated by the Georgia General Assembly, such recipient's State Service Scholarship eligibility for reinstatement upon his or her return to GMC.

    a. Such recipient is expected to Enroll again at GMC no later than the second semester beginning after his or her return from active duty or to show cause why Enrollment was postponed.

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3212. Service Cancellation and Cash Repayment Obligations.

3212.1. Obligation Upon Loss or Surrender of State Service Scholarship.

1. If, while participating in the State Service Scholarship Program, a recipient of a Two-Year Award, or a Partial Award fails to meet the standards and requirements for continued eligibility and retention, in accordance with *Sections 3204. and 3205.*, or otherwise surrenders his or her participation in the State Service Scholarship Program, the Selection Committee shall promptly notify GSFA of the recipient's removal from participation in the State Service Scholarship Program.

2. Such recipient shall fulfill his or her State Service Scholarship obligation by either one of the following two methods, at the option of the recipient:

    a. Such recipient shall serve on active duty in the Georgia National Guard or the United States Armed Forces for not less than the number of years corresponding to the period or number of years of his or her State Service Scholarship award as stipulated on the recipient's State Service Scholarship promissory note.

    b. Such recipient shall pay to GSFA a dollar amount equal to the amount of State Service Scholarship funds received by the recipient, plus 8% per annum simple interest, within five years after terminating enrollment. Interest begins to accrue from the date that participation in the State Service Scholarship Program ends.

3. If such recipient is unable to honor his or her service or payment obligation, for bona fide reasons of health, as jointly verified by GSFA and the Selection Committee, then GSFA shall cancel and forgive the recipient's Repayment obligation.

    a. If it can be determined on the basis of a death certificate or other evidence acceptable to GSFA, that a former State Service Scholarship recipient is deceased, GSFA shall cancel and forgive the recipient's Repayment obligation.

3212.2. Obligation Upon Graduation.

1. Upon graduation from GMC, a recipient who maintained eligibility for the duration of his or her Two-Year Award or Partial Award shall provide active duty service in the Georgia National Guard and fulfill his or her State Service Scholarship service obligation by:

    a. Serving on active duty in the Georgia National Guard for at least the number of years corresponding to the period or number of years of his or her State Service Scholarship award as stipulated on the recipient's State Service Scholarship promissory note.

b. Upon certification of the adjutant general of the Georgia National Guard that no need exists in the Georgia National Guard at the time of the commencement of the recipient's period of service, such recipient may fulfill his or her obligation by a combination of service on active duty in the Georgia National Guard and the United States Armed Forces that totals at least the number of years corresponding to the period or number of years of his or her State Service Scholarship award, as stipulated on the recipient's State Service Scholarship promissory note.

2. If a recipient fails to honor his or her obligation to serve on active duty in the Georgia National Guard or the United States Armed Forces, such recipient shall fulfill his or her State Service Scholarship obligation by:

   a. Paying GSFA a dollar amount equal to the amount of State Service Scholarship funds received by the recipient, plus 8% per annum simple interest, within five years after graduation from GMC. Interest begins to accrue from the date that participation in the State Service Scholarship Program ends.

3. If such recipient is unable to honor his or her State Service obligation, for bona fide reasons of health or permanent and total disability as jointly verified by GSFA and the Selection Committee, then GSFA shall cancel and forgive the recipient's Repayment obligation.

   a. If it can be determined on the basis of a death certificate or other evidence acceptable to GSFA, that a former State Service Scholarship recipient is deceased, GSFA shall cancel and forgive the recipient's Repayment obligation.

3212.3. Service Cancellation.

1. Any period of time that a recipient serves in the Georgia National Guard or the United States Armed Forces prior to or while participating in the State Service Scholarship Program shall not reduce or cancel any portion of the recipient's State Service Scholarship obligation.

2. Any period of time that a recipient serves in the Georgia National Guard or the United States Armed Forces after participation in the State Service Scholarship Program shall reduce, on a prorated basis, the dollar amount owed, provided that the recipient notifies GSFA of his or her service in the Georgia National Guard or the United States Armed Forces.

   b. Recipients must annually submit a verification of status (VOS) form to GSFA upon serving in the Georgia National Guard or the United States Armed Forces.

c. A recipient converting from cash Repayment to Service Cancellation will not receive a refund on cash payments made prior to approval of Service Cancellation.

   i. Service Cancellation is effective upon receipt of complete documentation and approval by GSFA.

d. The dollar amount which is canceled for each month of service is determined by dividing the total dollar amount of the original obligation by the number of months of the original service obligation.

e. Interest on the remaining dollar amount owed begins to accrue from the date that service in the Georgia National Guard or United States Armed Forces ends.

3212.4. Deferment of Repayment.

1. Deferments may be granted on a case-by-case basis upon the approval of GSFA and the Selection Committee.

2. Each deferment must be in accordance with the intent and purpose of the State Service Scholarship Program.

3. Such deferments would extend the five-year Repayment period by the length of the deferment.

4. Interest would continue to accrue during the deferment period. The option to cancel the obligation through service, including accrued interest, would continue to remain available.

5. To qualify for a deferment, a student shall notify GSFA in writing of his or her claim and provide supporting documentation as required by federal law, state law or program regulations.

3212.5. Forbearance of Repayment.

1. A student may apply for a forbearance of Repayment under certain conditions:

   a. The Forbearance 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 asamended.

   b. To qualify for Forbearance, a student shall notify GSFA in writing of his or her claim and provide supporting documentation as required by federal law, state law or program regulations.

3213. Reconciliation Requirements.

3213.1. Fiscal Year End Reconciliation.

1. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution must conduct the Fiscal Year End Reconciliation.

    a. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution must conduct a complete student-by-student Fiscal Year End Reconciliation with GSFA thatincludes:

        i. Submission of a reconciliation certification form by July 15, immediately following the completion of the Fiscal Year for each state program; and

        ii. Return to GSFA any funds not utilized according to the Fiscal Year End Reconciliation by August 15 after the beginning of the new FiscalYear.

    b. GSFA will not issue any state scholarship or grant funds for the Fall term following the Fiscal Year 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, postsecondaryinstitution).

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3214. Records Retention Requirements.

3214.1. Length of Retention.

1. GMC must maintain accurate records, books, documents and other evidence concerning the State Service Scholarship, including, but not limited to individual student files for whichever is longer:

    a. The later of 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.

3214.2. Documentation.

1. Documentation contained within an individual student file or record, which supports the original determination of a student's eligibility must be retained by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution and available for review by GSFA on the Eligible Postsecondary Institution's campus, 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.

2. Eligible Postsecondary Institutions are permitted to maintain these documents in an imaged media format. The imaged media format must be capable of reproducing an accurate, legible, and complete copy of the original document.

    a. Such documentation may include, but is not limited to, copies of permanent resident alien cards, Georgia State income tax returns, student financial aid applications and academic transcripts from previous institutions.

    b. Documentation regarding a student's eligibility is not limited to files, records, and other information received and maintained by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution's student financial aid office.

    c. Documentation supporting a student's eligibility that is received and maintained by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution's admissions office, registrar's office, business office, and other administrative operations must be available to GSFA for review.

    d. 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 State Service Scholarship funds to the student.

3214.3. Extended Retention.

1. 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 Eligible Postsecondary Institution must continue to retain all associated records until resolution is reached.

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3215. Administrative Reviews and Exceptions.

3215.1. Administrative Reviews.

1. 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 GSFA.

2. 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 GSFA.

3. In order 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.

    a. GSFA will review the case and determine whether the rule or regulation was applied correctly and notify the student and Eligible Postsecondary Institution of the determination.

4. If additional information is requested from the student, it must be provided within the time frame specified by GSFA. GSFA decides a case based only on documentation provided, rather than a personal presentation.

3215.2. Exceptions.

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

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3216. Compliance Reviews.

3216.1. Compliance Review Policy.

1. GSFA may conduct Program Reviews of the State Service Scholarship Program at GMC in order to assess the Eligible Postsecondary Institution's administration of the program and compliance with the program's regulations. Program Reviews are conducted in accordance with GSFA's *Program Reviews Process and Procedures* document, which is available at gsfc.georgia.gov, under *Information for School Compliance*.

3216.2. 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.

3216.3. Institutional Repayment.

1. If a recipient is determined, by GSFA, 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 State Service Scholarship payment, then all future awards must be cancelled.

    a. GMC 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 is ineligible to receive additional state aid from GSFA until the refund is paid in full, in accordance with *Section 3204.6.3.*

5. If GSFA determines the student's file is not adequately documented while conducting Program Reviews, the Eligible Postsecondary Institution may be responsible for the Repayment.

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3217. Emergency Regulations to Assist Affected Students During COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.

3217.1. Temporary Extension of Time for students to Obtain Qualifying SAT or ACT Score Due to COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, Relief Options.

1. Eligible students for a Two-Year Award who graduated from an Eligible High School between January 1, 2021 and June 30, 2021 and otherwise meet the academic requirements qualifying for GMC Military Scholarship but have been prevented from taking the ACT or SAT due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, shall have until June 30, 2022 to obtain and submit to GMC a qualifying ACT or SAT score required for the GMC Military Scholarship Program and shall be granted the relief set forth herein. Such students described in this subsection, 3217., shall be referred to as "Affected Students."

    a. A qualifying score is: a composite scale score of at least 17 on a single National or State/District Administration of the ACT or a minimum score of 800 on the combined critical reading and math portions on a single National Administration of the SAT.

2. Once an Affected Student has earned a qualifying score and submits the test score transcript to GMC by June 30, 2022, the Affected Student may be retroactively awarded the GMC Military Scholarship, so long as the Affected Student meets all other qualifications and requirements.

3. Affected Students shall be bound by and must fully satisfy all academic requirements and abide by and satisfy other laws, regulations, requirements, policies, terms, and conditions pertaining to the GMC Military Scholarship Program, and all other applicable scholarship, grant, and loan programs administered by GSFC and GSFA.

4. Nothing within this emergency regulation shall be interpreted as a change in State of Georgia law, regulation or GSFC policy pertaining to the GMC Military Scholarship, or any other scholarship, grant, or loan program administered by GSFC or GSFA with the limited exception of implementing the temporary emergency relief measures described herein.

5. This regulation in enacted in accordance with Executive Order 03.12.21.01 and shall automatically expire on June 30, 2022 unless otherwise extended by the Board of Commissioners. GSFC is authorized to issue policies, procedures, and technical guidance to Affected Students and Eligible Postsecondary Institutions to implement and administer this regulation and its intent.

3217.2. Temporary Extension of Time for Graduates from Home Study Programs and non-Eligible High Schools to Obtain Qualifying SAT or ACT Score.

1. Students who complete a Home Study Program, graduate from a high school which is not an Eligible High School or receive a General Educational Development (GED) diploma between January 1, 2021 and June 30, 2021 (such students shall be referred to as “Affected Students” in Section 3217.2) shall have until June 30, 2022 to obtain and submit to GMC a qualifying SAT or ACT score, described as follows:

    a. A composite scale score in the eightieth percentile or higher on a single National or State/District Administration of the ACT; or

    b. A total score in the eightieth percentile or higher on the combined critical reading and math portions on a single National Administration of the SAT.

2. Once an Affected Student has earned a qualifying score and submits the test score transcript to GMC by June 30, 2022, the Affected Student may be retroactively awarded the GMC Military Scholarship, so long as the Affected Student meets all other qualifications and requirements.

3. Students who receive a qualifying ACT or SAT score shall be bound by and must fully satisfy all academic requirements, and abide by and satisfy other laws, regulations, requirements, policies, terms, and conditions pertaining to the GMC Military Scholarship Program, and all other applicable scholarship, grant, and loan programs administered by GSFC and GSFA.

4. Nothing within this emergency regulation shall be interpreted as a change in State of Georgia law, regulation or GSFC policy pertaining to the GMC Military Scholarship or any other scholarship, grant, or loan program administered by GSFC or GSFA with the limited exception of implementing the temporary emergency relief measures described herein.

5. This regulation is enacted in accordance with Executive Order 03.12.21.01 and shall automatically expire on June 30, 2022 unless otherwise extended by the Board of Commissioners. GSFC is authorized to issue policies, procedures, and technical guidance to Affected Students and Eligible Postsecondary Institutions to implement and administer this regulation and its intent.