



Excelsior Scholarship Fact Sheet

The Excelsior Scholarship, in combination with other student financial aid programs, allows students to attend a SUNY or CUNY college tuition-free.

ELIGIBILITY

An applicant must:

- be a resident of NYS and have resided in NYS for 12 continuous months prior to the beginning of the term;
- be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen;
- have either graduated from high school in the United States, earned a high school equivalency diploma, or passed a federally approved “Ability to Benefit” test, as defined by the Commissioner of the State Education Department;
- have a combined federal adjusted gross income of \$100,000 or less;
- be pursuing an undergraduate degree at a SUNY or CUNY college, including community colleges and the statutory colleges at Cornell University and Alfred University;
- be enrolled in at least 12 credits per term and complete at least 30 credits each year (successively), applicable toward his or her degree program;
- if attended college prior to the 2017-18 academic year, have earned at least 30 credits each year (successively), applicable toward his or her degree program prior to applying for an Excelsior Scholarship;
- be in a non-default status on a student loan made under any NYS or federal education loan program or on the repayment of any NYS award;
- be in compliance with the terms of the service condition(s) imposed by a NYS award that you have previously received; and
- execute a Contract agreeing to reside in NYS for the length of time the award was received, and, if employed during such time, be employed in NYS.

CATCH-UP YEAR

Applicants who first entered college as a freshman student in the 2015-16 and who have earned 54 credits, or who first entered college as a freshman student in 2016-17 academic year and who earned 24 credits can make up those 6 credits in 2017-18. Students who successfully earn 36 credits in the 2017-18 academic year can become eligible for the Excelsior Scholarship beginning in the 2018-19 academic year.

AWARD AMOUNT*

A recipient of an Excelsior Scholarship may receive up to \$5,500 or actual tuition, whichever is less.

The maximum Excelsior Scholarship (\$5,500) will be reduced by the amount of certain other student financial aid awards which an applicant has or will receive for the academic year, including a NYS Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) award and/or federal Pell grant. A tuition credit will cover any remaining tuition expenses not already covered by other forms of financial aid.

**Note: Any award payment received may have tax implications. Any questions regarding this should be directed to a tax professional, the Internal Revenue Service, or the NYS Department of Taxation and Finance.*

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DURATION

A recipient of an Excelsior Scholarship is eligible to receive award payments for not more than two years of full-time undergraduate study in a program leading to an associate's degree or four years of full-time undergraduate study, or five years if the program of study normally requires five years, in a program leading to a bachelor's degree.

PAYMENT

To receive payments each subsequent year (after the initial application year), Excelsior Scholarship recipient must annually complete the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#) and the [TAP-on-the-Web Application](#).

HOW TO APPLY

The application for the 2017 Excelsior Scholarship will be available on June 7, 2017.

Go to [NYS Higher Education Services Corporation - Excelsior Scholarship](#) to apply.

TIPS WHEN APPLYING

[View common questions that you may have when completing the Excelsior Scholarship application.](#)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

[View commonly asked questions pertaining to the Excelsior Scholarship](#), or contact the Scholarship Unit at scholarships@hesc.ny.gov or 888-697-4372.