TRI-COUNTY TECHNICAL COLLEGE

PROCEDURE

PROCEDURE NUMBER:	3-2-1014.1
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TITLE:	Student Financial Aid
RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:	3–2–1014, Student Financial Aid Policy
ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY:	Chief Student Services Office

DATE APPROVED BY PRESIDENT:	July 1, 2004
DATE LAST REVIEW:	March 17, 2025
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Tri-County Technical College administers a variety of services/programs providing financial aid resources to students. These resources include monetary (grants, scholarships, employment, and loans), counseling, outreach, and programming. The Financial Aid Office also oversees and ensures adherence to Title IV federal aid and state aid statutes and regulations through a cross campus compliance effort.

I. Process to Receive Aid

All aid administered through the Financial Aid Office (FAO) requires the student to be admitted to the college as a regular student (see college admission policy for requirements) and annual student action through one or multiple application processes. The FAO communicates these requirements to all students to facilitate and ease the application process.

Completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the application for all federal aid (Pell Grant, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG), Federal Work Study (FWS) and Federal Direct Loans). State funds, including Lottery Tuition Assistance (LTA) and South Carolina Need Based (SCNB), also require the completion of the FAFSA.

LIFE Scholarship requires the submission of final official high school and all final official prior college transcripts (both of which are also admissions requirements) and completion of an annual LIFE affidavit.

Institutional Foundation Scholarships require students to complete an annual Scholarship Application.

Once appropriately completed applications are received, the FAO conducts all appropriate determinations before notifying students of their financial aid eligibility for the applicable aid year.

Deadlines for submission of all documentation required by the financial aid application process are established by the Tri-County Technical College Enrollment Calendar. Students who do not complete all requested application documentation by the priority date posted on the Enrollment Calendar for each term will still have their financial aid eligibility determined, but the determination could be delayed. This could cause students to need to secure their schedule by the tuition due date by other means.

II. Types of Aid

The following outlines general information and eligibility requirements for each type of aid available to students. Additional details and references to full student requirements can be found in the aid year specific Financial Aid Departmental level procedures.

A. Grants

Grants are aid awarded to a student that does not need to be repaid. Grants are typically based on financial need.

Federal Pell Grants

A grant provided by the federal government to qualified undergraduate students who demonstrate exceptional financial need. These students have a Student Aid Index (SAI below a threshold designated annually by the U.S. Department of Education. Annual awards are based on the amount of program funds appropriated by Congress.

Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (FSEOG)

A grant provided by the federal government to qualified students who demonstrate exceptional financial need. Priority is given to Pell Grant recipients and funds must be awarded by the school in lowest SAI order. (Limited amount appropriated and awarded by priority.)

South Carolina Need-based Grants (SCNB)

The South Carolina Need-based Grant Program is designed to provide additional financial aid assistance to South Carolina students demonstrating financial need. Funds are awarded to students who are determined to be eligible under Title IV Federal Financial Aid guidelines and meet all other State-established criteria.

South Carolina Lottery Tuition Assistance Grant (LTA)

South Carolina Lottery Tuition Assistance was created to assist South Carolina residents in meeting the cost of tuition at in-state two-year colleges.

Dual enrollment students, students in an ineligible Title IV program, students unable to get parental information on the FAFSA, and students who have previously received a bachelor's degree, can complete the Lottery Tuition Assistance Waiver form, since they are not eligible to receive federal grant funds. The amount of this grant is based on current funding levels established by the South Carolina Technical College System. Students receiving Pell Grant, SCNB, and SEOG funds that cover tuition are not eligible for Lottery Tuition Assistance, because LTA can only be applied towards tuition.

South Carolina Workforce and Industry Needs Scholarship (SC WINS)

The SC WINS covers any remaining tuition, fees, and required course-related expenses left after applying all other grants and scholarships for state residents. The students must be enrolled in an eligible program, maintain at least a 2.0 GPA, and either be employed, take a financial literacy course, or complete 100 hours of voluntary community service.

Other Grant Opportunities

Tri-County Technical College administers other federal, state, and local grant programs.

B. Scholarships

Aid awarded to the student that does not need to be repaid. Scholarships awards are typically based on merit or a combination of merit and need, such as academic distinction, talent, affiliation with various groups, or career goals.

-Tri-County Technical College Foundation Scholarships

The Tri-County Technical College Foundation actively solicits scholarship contributions from private sources to support the financial needs of students. These scholarships are primarily administered through the Financial Aid Office. Scholarship recipients are selected by designated College divisions/departments, or other donor-stipulated agents. Demonstrated academic achievement and financial need are considered when awards are made; however, many scholarships also have donor-stipulated criteria that must be adhered to.

Endowed scholarship values are determined by Foundation Office staff, using the Foundation's current spending policy; however, some donors choose to make annual scholarship gifts. These annual gifts are awarded at face value.

All scholarship recipients must write a thank you letter and maintain at least a half-time enrollment status in a certificate, diploma, or associate degree program.

Legislative Incentives for Future Excellence Scholarship (LIFE)

LIFE is a merit-based scholarship for residents of South Carolina attending a South Carolina College or University. LIFE may be used towards the cost of attendance for up to four consecutive terms based on the student's initial college enrollment date.

Eligibility criteria required for the LIFE scholarship are dictated by state statute in 62-900.1-70 and regulated by The Commission on Higher Education (CHE). The Student Data Center coordinates the evaluation of initial eligibility, and the Financial Aid Office coordinates the evaluation of continuing eligibility.

Palmetto Fellows Scholarship

Palmetto Fellows is a merit-based scholarship for residents of South Carolina attending a South Carolina College or University. Palmetto Fellows may be used towards the cost of attendance for up to four consecutive terms based on the student's initial college enrollment date.

Eligibility criteria required for the Palmetto Fellows scholarship are dictated by state statute in 62-900.1-70 and regulated by The Commission on Higher Education (CHE). The Financial Aid Office coordinates the evaluation of both initial and continuing eligibility.

Third Party/Outside Scholarships

In partnership with the Cashier's Office, TCTC applies third party scholarships to appropriate students bills upon receipt of scholarship funds per directions from the scholarship provider.

C. Veterans' Educational Benefits

The College is approved for veterans' educational benefits by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education License Division for training veterans and dependents under Title 38 of the U.S. Code, Chapter 30-Montgomery GI Bill, Chapter 31-Disabled Veterans, Chapter 32-VEAP, Chapter 35-Children and Widows of Disabled or Deceased Veterans Resulting from Service-Connected Conditions, and Chapter 33-Post 911 GI Bill as well as under Title 10 of the U.S. Code, Chapter 1606-Members of the Selected Reserve.

It is the responsibility of The College to certify enrollment of veterans and dependents upon their request. The College does not administer Veterans' Education benefits, as that is the role of Veteran Affairs.

Federal Work Study Program (FWS)

FWS provides part-time employment to students who need the earnings to help meet their cost of postsecondary education. The program provides monthly wages to students and encourages students to participate in community service activities.

In order to be eligible for employment under FWS, a student must meet all the general eligibility requirements for Title IV Financial Aid Programs established each academic year. Awards are based on need. It is the practice of the college to disburse these limited funds to the maximum number of eligible students on a first come-first served basis until these funds are exhausted. Students may be employed at the College, or in community service by a third party that meets the qualifications of the work study program. To the extent possible, the College will attempt to employ students in areas that complement and reinforce their educational program or vocational goals.

It is the role of the FAO to ensure individual student and overall program eligibility and regulatory compliance of FWS. Students, supervisors, Human Resources, Payroll, and Work Based Learning all play critical roles in the operation and success of the program.

D. Loans

Federal Direct Loan (Direct Loan)

Loan funds provided to a student by the U.S. Department of Education, via Tri-County Technical College. The application for a loan is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Acceptance is confirmed by completing and submitting a Federal Direct Student Loan Affirmation form. There are two types of Federal Direct Student Loans: subsidized and unsubsidized.

- Students who demonstrate financial need may qualify for subsidized loans. The government pays the interest on the loan while the student is in school, at least half-time.
- Students who do not demonstrate financial need qualify for unsubsidized loans and interest accrues while the student is in school.

Federal Parent Loan (PLUS)

Federal loan program that allows parents to borrow through the U.S. Department of Education. Parents who have no adverse credit history can borrow up to the cost of attendance each year, less any financial aid. Acceptance is confirmed by completing the online PLUS application and submitting the Federal Parent PLUS Affirmation Form, as

well as a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
PLUS loans must be repaid with interest.

Student Eligibility

- All students borrowing a federal Direct loan for the first time at Tri-County Technical College are required to complete Entrance Loan Counseling and a Master Promissory Note through www.studentaid.gov before loan funds will be disbursed.

- Students must be enrolled in an eligible program of study and attending at least six (6) credit hours per term a loan is received.
- Students with high aggregate loan debt must complete an aggregate loan review which creates a funding and loan plan to support the student's unique educational goals. Federal student loans have annual and aggregate loan limits which are evaluated for funding eligibility prior to a student receipt of loan funds.

Loan Denials and Loan Reductions

- Per the Department of Education, on a case-by-case basis, schools may refuse to certify/originate a loan for a borrower. Similarly, schools may certify/originate a loan for an amount less than the borrower's maximum eligibility. However, schools must ensure their decisions are made on a case-by-case basis, and do not constitute patterns or practices that deny access to borrowers based on race, sex, color, income, religion, national origin, age, handicapped status, or selection of a particular lender or guarantor.
- Academics (GPA, completion rate, grade level), total loan debt, classes enrolled, etc., are all considered when denying/reducing loans.
- If a loan is denied or reduced, the student is notified in writing and a copy is kept on file.

Appeals for Loan Denials

Students who have been denied a loan or had their loan reduced may appeal the decision. A letter and supporting documentation are required to override the denial/reduction. All letters of appeal for loan denial or reduction should be sent to Financial Aid Management. The decision reached on the appeal is final.

Exit Loan Counseling
Students who graduate, withdraw below six (6) credit hours, or stop attending college are notified by e-mail of the exit counseling requirement. Students complete this requirement at [www.studentaid.gov.](http://www.studentaid.gov)

III. Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

Many of the different financial aid funds students are eligible for have different academic eligibility requirements in order to continue to receive those funds. Federal financial aid funds however have one set of academic standards for continued eligibility called Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP).

Eligibility Requirements

- Grade Point Average (GPA) - Institutional GPA of 2.0.
- Completion Rate - Maintain a 67% cumulative completion rate.
- Maximum Time Frame- Complete your degree/diploma/certificate within 150% of the required program hours of study. Example: a student enrolled in a 60 credit hour program is eligible until 90 credit hours are attempted (60 x 1.5 = 90).

Students who fail to meet one or all of these standards are first placed into a warning status, which can last no more than one semester, where the student is still eligible for their qualifying aid. If at the end of the warning term all of the standards are not met the student becomes ineligible for future aid.

Students have the ability to submit an appeal to the FAO if circumstances occurred outside of the students control during the term(s) of unsuccessful completion.

IV. Non-Financial Resources

The Money Management Center (MMC) is part of the financial aid office in which financial education counseling, presentations, workshops, and events are held for all TCTC students. Financial education topics include budgeting, credit, loans, and smart spending habits.