

Georgia Tuition Equalization Grant Program

REGULATIONS

2007-2008 Award Year



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**Georgia Student Finance Commission
2082 East Exchange Place, Suite 200
Tucker, Georgia 30084**

2007 – 2008 AWARD YEAR

GEORGIA TUITION EQUALIZATION GRANT REGULATIONS

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GEORGIA TUITION EQUALIZATION GRANT

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Georgia Tuition Equalization Grant (GTEG) program was initiated in the 1972-73 Award Year, as authorized by the Georgia General Assembly. The program is governed by the Official Code of Georgia Annotated §20-3-410 et. seq., and these regulations approved by the Board of Commissioners of the Georgia Student Finance Commission. The Georgia Student Finance Commission authorized to define terms and prescribe such rules, regulations, and procedures as may be necessary to administer the GTEG program.

The GTEG program is a result of the Georgia General Assembly's recognition that "facilities of accredited independent colleges and universities located within the state can be used more effectively in the public interest by the grant of financial assistance to citizens who choose to attend such colleges and universities and that the provision of such assistance will reduce the costs to the taxpayers of the state below the cost of providing similar instruction to such citizens within the university system." The program was expanded beginning with the 1982-83 Award Year to provide this grant to residents of Georgia attending out-of-state public colleges and universities as juniors or seniors whose home residence is within 50 miles of the out-of-state campus, but not within 50 miles of the nearest four-year college of the University System of Georgia.

The award amount received by the students each Award Year, and the total amount of funds appropriated for the program, are established each year by the Georgia General Assembly during the preceding legislative session, and subject to change during the Award Year.

I. STUDENT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

1. CITIZENSHIP

To be eligible to receive payment from the Georgia Tuition Equalization Grant (GTEG) program, a student must be a United States Citizen or an Eligible Non-citizen according to Federal Title IV requirements for a minimum of 12 consecutive months immediately preceding the first day of classes of the school term for which GTEG payment is sought.

2. RESIDENCY

A student must be a resident of Georgia, as defined by the Commission, for a minimum of 12 consecutive months immediately preceding the first day of classes of the school term for which GTEG payment is sought. An exception is provided for the dependent children of non-resident military personnel stationed in Georgia. Such dependent children meet the residency requirements if they graduated from a Georgia high school while their non-resident military parent was stationed in Georgia. In order to benefit from this exception, students who meet these criteria must begin receiving GTEG assistance prior to attempting 30 semester or 45 quarter hours of college credit after high school graduation

3. SELECTIVE SERVICE REGISTRATION

A student must comply with United States Selective Service System requirements for registration, if such requirements are applicable, prior to the application deadline in order to receive GTEG payment for that school term.

4. ENROLLMENT STATUS

- a. A student must be a Full-Time Undergraduate student in a Matriculated status at a private independent Eligible Postsecondary Institution located within the State of Georgia or a public Eligible Postsecondary Institution located outside the State of Georgia and within 50 miles of Georgia's borders.
- b. A student in Full-Time attendance may be enrolled in learning support (remedial) courses undertaken to remove entrance conditions. If such learning support (remedial) course work is required or recommended by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution as part of the regular instructional program for that student, he or she may be considered eligible for GTEG payment. Non-credit courses taken entirely on a personal or voluntary basis by the student shall not be included in determining Full-Time status of the student.
- c. A student must be classified as enrolled Full-Time for two weeks following the last day of the Eligible Postsecondary Institution's drop/add period. After that date, the institution may submit a GTEG payment request to the Commission. To be considered enrolled Full-Time, a student must be registered for and attending classes through 14 calendar days after the institution's drop/add period. The fifteenth day after the drop/add period is referred to as the Award Date. If the

institution is unable to document the student's class attendance to the Award Date, the student is considered to have unofficially withdrawn and is ineligible for a GTEG payment. If the student officially or unofficially withdraws, drops out, or is expelled before the Award Date, he or she is not eligible to receive GTEG payment for that school term.

- d. Full-Time enrollment is required during a student's final school term prior to graduation in the same manner as any other school term, even if the student needs less than 12 credit hours in order to complete his or her graduation requirements.

5. SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

A student must maintain satisfactory academic progress in a course of study in accordance with the standards and practices used for Federal Title IV programs by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution at which the student is enrolled. To determine student eligibility, the institution must apply the same satisfactory progress policy as used for Federal Title IV programs.

6. DEFAULT AND REFUND

A student must not be in default on a Federal Title IV or State of Georgia educational loan, nor owe a refund on a Federal Title IV or State of Georgia student financial aid program, nor in any other way be in violation of the Federal Title IV or State of Georgia student aid regulations. If the student has repaid the defaulted loan or refund in full, he or she is eligible to receive HOPE assistance beginning with the term in which repayment was made in full, but not retroactively.

7. DRUG-FREE ACT

A student is ineligible if, in accordance with the Drug-Free Postsecondary Education Act of 1990, he or she has been convicted for committing certain felony offenses involving marijuana, controlled substances, or dangerous drugs. A student is ineligible to receive GTEG payment from the date of conviction to the completion of the next school term. Eligible Postsecondary Institutions are not required to obtain criminal justice records of GTEG applicants.

8. ACTIVITY DETRIMENTAL TO THE INSTITUTION

A student who knowingly promotes or engages in any activity that is determined by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution's governing body to be detrimental to the institution is not eligible for GTEG payment.

9. JOINT ENROLLMENT, DUAL ENROLLMENT AND EARLY ADMISSIONS

A student meeting all of the eligibility requirements of the GTEG program, including Full-Time and Matriculated status requirements, who is enrolled in a secondary educational institution (high school) and who is also permitted to enroll in an Eligible Postsecondary Institution as a Joint Enrollment, Dual Enrollment, or an Early Admissions student, is eligible to receive GTEG payment.

10. AUDIT, CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRANSIENT STUDENTS

An Audit student, Continuing Education student, Transient student, and any student deemed by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution not to be in a Matriculated status is not eligible for GTEG payment. However, a student may be eligible for GTEG payment as a Transient student if the private independent Eligible Postsecondary Institution in which he or she is normally enrolled (Home Institution) has a written agreement with another private independent Eligible Postsecondary Institution (Host Institution) to transfer such credits from the Host Institution for application toward the student's Degree at the Home Institution. In this situation, GTEG payment for the Transient student must take place through the Host Institution. In order for a Transient student to be eligible for GTEG payment, he or she must be enrolled Full-Time (12 hours) at the Host Institution. Less than Full-Time enrollment at the Home Institution and less than Full-Time enrollment at the Host Institution during the same school term cannot be combined in order to establish Full-Time enrollment status.

11. DISTANCE LEARNING STUDENTS

A Distance Learning student is eligible to receive GTEG payment if all other GTEG eligibility requirements are met. The institution offering the Distance Learning course work must be an Eligible Postsecondary Institution. In order to be eligible for GTEG payment, a student taking some or all of his or her course work through Distance Learning must meet the Full-Time enrollment requirements as prescribed in these regulations for any GTEG recipient.

12. STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS

A student enrolled in a Matriculated status at Eligible Postsecondary Institution may qualify for GTEG payment while participating in a Study Abroad program. Study Abroad programs (International-Intercultural Studies programs) are college credit-earning programs of study that include travel outside the United States. The student's Eligible Postsecondary Institution, which is his or her Home Institution, must approve the Study Abroad program for credit toward the student's Degree program prior to the student's departure. A Study Abroad student must meet all of the GTEG eligibility requirements prescribed in these regulations, including Full-Time enrollment. The GTEG award for a Study Abroad student must be the amount the student would normally receive at the Home Institution. GTEG payment must take place through the Home Institution, unless the student is participating in a Study Abroad program via another private independent Eligible Postsecondary Institution serving as the student's Host Institution. In this situation, the Host Institution should treat a Study Abroad student as a Transient student, as prescribe by these regulations. The Home Institution may also coordinate the Study Abroad program through institutions that are not private independent Eligible Postsecondary Institutions. The student's Home Institution may have an arrangement with a Study Abroad program offered by an out-of-state postsecondary institution or Georgia postsecondary institution that is not a private independent Eligible Postsecondary Institution. In this situation, GTEG payment for the Study Abroad student must take place through the Home Institution.

13. ALTERNATIVE STUDY PROGRAMS

A student enrolled in a Matriculated status at Eligible Postsecondary Institution may qualify for GTEG payment while participating in an Alternative Study program. Alternative Study programs are college credit-earning programs of study that include travel outside the State of Georgia, but within the United States. Alternative Study programs may be in conjunction with postsecondary institutions in other states. For example, an Eligible Postsecondary Institution may have an arrangement with a postsecondary institution in another state in which a group of their students spend the summer term at the out-of-state institution to take advantage of unique resources available to that institution. An Alternative Study student must meet all of the GTEG eligibility requirements prescribed in these regulations, including Full-Time enrollment. The GTEG award for an Alternative Study student must be the amount the student would normally receive at his or her Home Institution, which must be a private/independent Eligible Postsecondary Institution. GTEG payment must take place through the Home Institution, unless the student is participating in an Alternative Study program via another private independent Eligible Postsecondary Institution serving as the student's Host Institution. In this situation, the Host Institution should treat an Alternative Study student as a Transient student, as prescribe by these regulations. The Home Institution may also coordinate the Alternative Study program through institutions that are not private/independent Eligible Postsecondary Institutions. The student's Home Institution may have an arrangement with an Alternative Study program offered by an out-of-state postsecondary institution or Georgia postsecondary institution that is not a private independent Eligible Postsecondary Institution. In this situation, GTEG payment for the Alternative Study student must take place through the Home Institution.

14. PAID-HOURS LIMIT

In no event shall a student receive GTEG payment for more than 127 semester or 190 quarter hours of postsecondary course work, referred to as Paid-Hours

- a. The Commission shall maintain a database containing the award history of each GTEG recipient and the postsecondary credit hours attempted by such student for which he or she received GTEG payment, referred to as Paid-Hours.
- b. GTEG recipients with payments on the Commission's system for school terms prior to Winter quarter or Spring semester of 2004 shall be considered to have attempted 12 semester or 12 quarter hours for each term for which GTEG payment was made.
- c. Eligible Postsecondary Institutions must report to the Commission the actual hours attempted, not just hours earned, by each student for which GTEG payment is requested for a school term. Hours reported as attempted are added to the Commission's database as Paid-Hours.

If the total Paid-Hours is less than 127 semester or 190 quarter hours, then such student is eligible for GTEG payment, and the Commission's system will allow payment for the term until the total number of Paid-Hours recorded in the

Commission's system is equal to or greater than 127 semester or 190 quarter hours. A student is eligible to receive full GTEG payment for the term in which he or she crosses over the 127 semesters or 190 quarter Paid-Hours limit. For example, if a student has a total of 120 semester Paid-Hours at the end of a school term and the following term he or she attempts 12 semester hours, the student is eligible for the full GTEG award for that term

15. ACADEMIC LEVELS OF ELIGIBLE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

A student enrolled in a program of study such as engineering and pharmacy, which are typically designed to be five-year Baccalaureate Degree programs, is eligible for GTEG payment as Undergraduate student. A student entering a school of pharmacy that does not grant a Baccalaureate Degree, is considered to be an Undergraduate student, for purposes of the GTEG program, and is eligible for GTEG payment. Upon entering the fifth year, such student is no longer considered to be an Undergraduate student, for purposes of the GTEG program, and is not eligible for GTEG payment. In no event shall a student receive GTEG payment for more than 127 semester hours or 190 quarter hours, after Winter quarter or Spring semester of 2004, referred to in these regulations as the Paid-Hours limit.

A student enrolled in medicine, dentistry, law, optometry, veterinary, chiropractic, or podiatry programs of study is not considered to be an Undergraduate student, and is ineligible for GTEG payment, even though the student may not have yet received an Undergraduate Degree.

16. ADDITIONAL UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES

A student is eligible for GTEG payment if he or she meets all GTEG eligibility requirements, regardless of whether he or she has already earned a Baccalaureate Degree. Such student must be in a Matriculated status working toward a second Undergraduate Degree.

17. OUT-OF-STATE GTEG PAYMENT

A student meeting the GTEG eligibility requirements who is attending an out-of-state Eligible Postsecondary Institution is eligible for GTEG payment if he or she meets the following additional requirements:

- a. Must be in a Matriculated status at an out-of-state Eligible Postsecondary Institution that is a four-year Baccalaureate Degree granting public institution;
- b. Must be classified as a junior or senior level student by the out-of-state Eligible Postsecondary Institution;
- c. Must be paying out-of-state tuition to the Eligible Postsecondary Institution;
- d. Must be attending an out-of-state Eligible Postsecondary Institution located within 50 road miles of his or her home residence by the nearest practical route of travel; and

- e. Must not have a home residence located with 50 road miles of the nearest four-year Baccalaureate Degree granting unit of the University System of Georgia.

II. APPLICATION PROCESS

1. PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

An Eligible Postsecondary Institution must enter into a GTEG Participation Agreement with the Commission in order for the benefits of the GTEG program to be made available to eligible students attending such institution. The institution shall provide the Commission with such assurances, performances, reports, information, and documents as may be required by the terms of the Participation Agreement, these regulations, or the Commission.

2. STUDENT APPLICATION

In order to apply for the GTEG program, a student must complete and submit either a GSFAPPS electronic application or a paper Georgia Tuition Equalization Grant Application (printable from the GAcademy411 website. The GSFAPPS and Georgia Tuition Equalization Grant Applications are intended to be "lifetime" applications so long as there is activity on them. As such, a student's GSFAPPS and/or Georgia Tuition Equalization Grant Application will remain active so long as the student has awards invoiced on the application within 18 months of the submission date and at least once every 18 months thereafter. If a student completed and submitted a GSFAPPS or Georgia Tuition Equalization Grant Application, and no invoice or award has been applied to such application for 18 consecutive months, then that application will expire and the student must reapply. In addition, if an invoice or award has been applied to a student's application and then no additional invoice or award is recorded for 18 consecutive months, the student's application will expire and he or she must reapply.

3. APPLICATION DEADLINE

A student must file an application for the GTEG program online or with the Eligible Postsecondary Institution's financial aid office on or before the last day of the school term (semester or quarter) or the student's withdrawal date, whichever occurs first, in order to be paid for that school term. The last day of the school term is the last day of classes or exams for the institution, whichever occurs later. Supplemental documentation required by the institution or the Commission to support or verify a student's application information may be submitted after the deadline without jeopardizing the student's eligibility.

4. ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

A student's eligibility must be determined by an authorized official of his or her Eligible Postsecondary Institution. The authorized official must review the student's application

information, and institutional records, consult with the applicant, as may be necessary, and otherwise make any necessary inquiries or investigations to determine the applicant's eligibility for GTEG payment.

III. INVOICING AND RECONCILIATION

1. AWARD AMOUNTS

The amount payable to an eligible student from the GTEG program is determined by the Commission each year based on state appropriations for the program and projected numbers of eligible students. The award amount is equal to the student's Tuition or the award amount determined by the Commission, whichever is less. GTEG payments are provided on a school-term basis, as follows:

2007-2008 Academic Year Award Amount - \$1100

	<u>Maximum Semester Award:</u>	<u>Maximum Quarter Award:</u>
Summer 2007	\$550	\$366
Fall 2007	\$550	\$367
Winter 2008	-	\$367
Spring 2008	\$550	\$366

IMPORTANT: For the 2007-2008 Award Year (Fiscal Year 2008), eligible students can receive GTEG payment for **four quarters or three semesters (beginning with summer of 2007 and ending with spring term of 2008)**, and therefore receive payment exceeding \$1100 for the Award Year. Award amounts per school term are subject to change during the Award Year.

The GTEG is available to students for the standard school terms of Summer, Fall, and Spring semesters or Summer, Fall, Winter, and Spring quarters. An institution may combine mini-terms or modules to form the equivalent of a standard semester or quarter. An institution may offer non-standard school terms, in which courses or modules are taken consecutively to form the equivalent of a standard semester or quarter. Regardless of the structure of an Eligible Postsecondary Institution's school terms, a student may be awarded GTEG funds for a maximum of three semesters or four quarters per Award Year.

2. INVOICING PROCESS

- a. As early as 15 days after the drop/add period of each school term (referred to in these regulations as the Award Date), an authorized official of an Eligible Postsecondary Institution may submit an invoice to the Commission for GTEG payment.
- b. Requests for payment are transmitted from the institution to the Commission through use of the SURFER Internet system. Institutions can use either SURFER to data-enter the student information and transmit it individually to the Commission, or extract the student information from their computer system's database and use SURFER to transmit the file to the Commission. Regardless of which of these two methods the institutions use, the data transmitted in a given day will be processed

by the Commission that night and an award/denial report will be available the next day for the institution to download.

- c. Payment for school terms, where the terms are split into two sessions, shall be requested after the final designated registration date of the second session. Students so invoiced shall be eligible for GTEG payment only if the cumulative, credit hours attempted total at least the minimum academic load of a Full-Time student. Other non-traditional school term systems or course work structures must be approved by the Commission before payments can be requested.
- d. Upon receipt of GTEG payments from the Commission, the institution must credit the amount of each GTEG award on behalf of an eligible student to the account of the student, if the student owes a balance to the school. Otherwise, the school shall pay over the same or any remaining surplus amount to the student.
- e. Payment of GTEG funds for those students approved as eligible by the authorized official of the institution are subject to sufficient funds being made available to the Commission by the State of Georgia from state appropriations.

3. INSUFFICIENT FUNDING

Should GTEG funds available to the Commission from state appropriations be insufficient to fulfill all GTEG payments for eligible students during the Fiscal Year, it will become necessary to reduce GTEG award amounts payable to students for a particular school term or terms. No GTEG award shall be paid on behalf of any students for any such school term or terms until certified invoices from all Eligible Postsecondary Institutions have been received by the Commission. In this event, such school term or terms will be eliminated for purposes of GTEG payment or the GTEG award amount will be otherwise reduced on a prorata basis, as may be necessary.

4. RECONCILIATION

- a. A Term-Reconciliation must be conducted by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution near the end of each term. A Term-Reconciliation consists of an official acknowledgement by an authorized school official that the number of students and amount invoiced and the number of students and amount disbursed, according to the SURFER system, is accurate on that date. GTEG funds for the following school term will not be disbursed until the Term-Reconciliation is complete. Surplus funds are not returned to the Commission as part of the Term-Reconciliation process.
- b. After the completion of the Award Year, each Eligible Postsecondary Institution will access a reconciliation report, from the SURFER system, that provides a detailed payment record for the Award Year.
- c. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution must conduct a complete student-by-student reconciliation with the Commission, using the reconciliation report, and submit a Reconciliation Certification Form to the Commission by June 30th of the Award Year.

- d. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution must return to the Commission any GTEG funds not utilized according to the final reconciliation within 30 days of completing the reconciliation process.

IV. REFUNDS

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 GTEG program. The Eligible Postsecondary Institution must determine the amount of GTEG refunds, if any, that should be returned to the GTEG program. The remainder of the GTEG award, if any, is retained by the institution to cover the institution's cost for the portion of the school term that the student was enrolled. Refund procedures are as follows:

1. GTEG-ONLY REFUND

If a refund is due and the student only received GTEG funds (no federal aid), then such amounts must be refunded to the GTEG program by applying the Eligible Postsecondary Institution's refund policy to the student's original GTEG award.

2. FEDERAL TITLE IV AND HOPE REFUND

If the student received Federal Title IV funds in addition to GTEG funds, the Eligible Postsecondary Institution must follow the Federal Title IV Return of Funds policy for any federal aid received. To determine the refund to the GTEG fund, the institution must follow its institutional refund policy, if different from Federal Title IV Return of Funds policy. If all or part of the student's Federal Title IV aid was disbursed directly to the student, the institution may not have funds on hand for the GTEG refund. In this case, the institution must bill the student for the refund. The notice to the student must show all financial aid received, the amount earned by the student, and the amount to be returned by the student to the institution. The bill to the student should not just indicate a GTEG refund due by the student. The institution should leave the GTEG award on SURFER at the original award amount less any refund paid by the institution. The institution must notify the Commission of the amount of refund due the GTEG program, and the Commission will put a refund due on the student's record. This will prevent the student from receiving any additional scholarships or grants from the Commission until the refund is paid in full.

3. BY REASON OF WRONGFUL OR ERRONEOUS PAYMENTS

If at any time, it shall be determined, by the State Auditor or by a Commission Program Review, that an institution has received payments from the Commission for an ineligible student, the amount of such payments wrongfully paid to the institution shall be immediately returned to the Commission by the institution. If funds owed are not returned immediately upon request, no subsequent grant awards for students attending that institution will be paid to the institution until the refund due the Commission has been received.

4. EMITTANCE OF REFUND

In remitting funds due the Commission, the following information should be given:

- a. The name of the student, and the name of the award being returned.
- b. The Social Security Number of the student.
- c. The date the student withdrew or dropped a course, and the term being repaid.

The institution must have a procedure in place to ensure that the GTEG funds do not go to an unintended third party.

V. RECORDS RETENTION

- a. An Eligible Postsecondary Institution shall maintain accurate records, books, documents and other evidence concerning the Georgia Tuition Equalization Grant program, including, but not limited to individual student files for the later of:
 1. Three years after the award year in which the aid was awarded; or
 2. For such other period as required by an applicable statute, rule, or regulation; or
 3. Such other time as requested in writing by the Commission.
- b. Documentation contained within an individual student file or record, which supports the original determination of a student's eligibility made by the institution, should be transferred to the student's file or record for the most current award year. Such documentation may include, but is not limited to, copies of Alien Registration Receipt Cards, Georgia State Income Tax Returns, and applications. As an alternative to the original hard copies, 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.
- c. An institution may be required to retain student records involved in a program review, audit, or investigation for more than the three-year retention period described above. If the three-year retention period expires before the issue in question is resolved, the institution must continue to retain all associated records until resolution is reached.

VI. PROGRAM REVIEWS

The Commission shall conduct Program Reviews of Eligible Postsecondary Institutions participating in the Georgia Tuition Equalization Grant Program in order to assess institutional administration of the program and compliance with the program's regulations. The Commission selects a sampling of the institution's GTEG recipients, for the Award Year under review, and the institution's files and records for the sample are examined to assure compliance. If a recipient is determined to have been ineligible for payment, the institution or the recipient may be required to repay to the Commission the GTEG funds awarded to the recipient.

The Commission's State Program Review Policy and Procedure document provide detailed information regarding the Program Review process.

VII. GTEG DEFINITIONS

As used in these regulations, and unless the context requires a different meaning:

“Academic Year” means a period of time, usually eight or nine months, during which a Full-Time student would normally be expected to complete the equivalent of two semesters or three quarters of instruction.

“Accrediting Agency” means an association or agency recognized and approved by the Commission to function as an evaluator of the quality of the educational institutions and programs as described in these regulations.

“Application Deadline Date” means the last date on which a student can file an application for GTEG assistance.

“Associate Degree” means a two-year college level Degree conferred on students by a postsecondary institution upon completion of a unified program of study in an academic discipline or major at the Undergraduate level. Associate Degrees typically require a student to earn at least 60 semester or 90 quarter hours of college credit.

“Audit Student” means a student who enrolls in a course for personal development and who does not earn college credit or a grade for the course.

“Award Date” means the 15th calendar day after the end of an Eligible Postsecondary Institution’s drop/add period for each school term. A student is not eligible for a GTEG award unless he or she has maintained Full-Time status through the drop-add period and for 14 consecutive calendar days after the drop/add period.

“Award Year” means four consecutive quarters or three consecutive semesters that begins with the summer term and ends with the spring term.

“Baccalaureate Degree” means a four-year college level Degree conferred on students by a postsecondary institution upon completion of a unified program of study in an academic discipline or major at the Undergraduate level. Baccalaureate (Bachelor’s) Degrees typically require a student to earn at least 120 semester or 180 quarter hours of college credit.

“Board” means Board of Commissioners of the Georgia Student Finance Commission.

“Commission” means the Georgia Student Finance Commission

“Continuing Education” means postsecondary level courses designed for personal development or an extension of the traditional on-campus learning process and does not lead to a postsecondary technical certificate, diploma, or Degree.

“Degree” means a two-year Associate Degree or four-year Baccalaureate Degree conferred on students by a postsecondary institution upon completion of a unified program of study in an academic discipline or major at the Undergraduate level.

“Department of Technical and Adult Education or DTAE” means the system comprised of thirty-four technical colleges located in the State of Georgia that receive public funding and are overseen by the State Board of Technical and Adult Education and the Commissioner of the Department of Technical and Adult Education.

“Distance Learning” means an educational process that is characterized by the separation, in time or place, between instructor and student. It may include courses offered principally through the use of television, audio, or computer transmission, such as open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, or satellite transmission; audio or computer conferencing; video cassettes or discs; or correspondence.

“Dual Credit Enrollment” means a situation whereby an agreement has been established between a secondary institution (high school) and an Eligible Postsecondary Institution wherein a student enrolls in postsecondary courses and earns Carnegie units of credit that count toward both high school graduation requirements and hours of postsecondary credit.

“Early Admissions” means a situation whereby a student who has not yet graduated from high school is fully admitted, enrolled, and classified as a Full-Time Undergraduate student in a Matriculated status at an Eligible Postsecondary Institution and is pursuing an Associate Degree or Baccalaureate Degree in lieu of a high school diploma.

“Eligible Non-citizen” means a person who, in accordance with the Federal Title IV definition, is a U.S. permanent resident with a Permanent Resident Card (I-551); or a conditional permanent resident (I-551C); or the holder of an Arrival-Departure Record (I-94) from the Department of Homeland Security showing any one of the following designations: “Refugee”, “Asylum Granted”, “Parolee” (I-94 confirms paroled for a minimum of one year and status has not expired); or “Cuban-Haitian Entrant”. Persons with an F1 or F2 student visa, a J1 or J2 exchange visitor visa, or a G series visa do not meet the definition of an Eligible Non-citizen.

“Eligible Postsecondary Institution” means a private independent non-proprietary institution of higher education located in Georgia, accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and approved or applied for approval from the U.S. Department of Education to participate in the Federal Pell Grant program. All units of the University System of Georgia are excluded, as well as any branch of the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education. An institution which otherwise meets the requirements of this definition except for lack of accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, but which is a candidate for accreditation, may also be considered eligible if approval is requested from the Commission. Or the institution is a private independent proprietary institution of higher education located in the State of Georgia which is a Baccalaureate Degree-granting institution; which is accredited by a regional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education; which is not a Bible college; which admits as regular students only persons who have a high school diploma, General Education Development (GED) diploma, or Degree from an accredited postsecondary institution; whose students are eligible to participate in the Federal Pell Grant program; which has

been reviewed and approved for operation and for receipt of Georgia Tuition Equalization Grant funds by the Georgia Nonpublic Postsecondary Education Commission; and which has been in existence for at least ten years. An Eligible Postsecondary Institution also means a four-year Baccalaureate Degree granting public college or university located outside the State of Georgia, but within 50 miles of Georgia's borders. Once an Eligible Postsecondary Institution has been approved by the U.S. Department of Education for participation in the Federal Pell Grant Program and then such approval is suspended or revoked by the U.S. Department of Education; the postsecondary institution is ineligible to participate in the GTEG program until approval by the U.S. Department of Education has been reinstated.

"Federal Title IV Programs" means the student financial aid programs administered by the U.S. Department of Education that are authorized by Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

"Fiscal Year" means a 12-month period of time commencing on July 1 of a given calendar year and extending through June 30 of the next succeeding calendar year.

"Full-Time Student" means enrollment for the equivalent of at least 12 quarter or 12 semester hours of college credit of a Matriculated student at an Eligible Postsecondary Institution. For inmates incarcerated by the Georgia Department of Corrections, 10 quarter or 10 semester hours is considered a Full-Time load. A student is not considered to be Full-Time, for purposes of GTEG eligibility, unless he or she is enrolled for 12 quarter or 12 semester hours at one Eligible Postsecondary Institution during a school term. A student is not eligible for a GTEG award by attending two different institutions as a less than Full-Time student during the same term, even if the combined enrollment hours equal 12 or more quarter or semester hours.

"GSFAPPS" means the Commission's web-based electronic application process by which students can apply for the scholarship, grant, and service-cancelable loan programs administered by the Commission.

"GTEG" means the Georgia Tuition Equalization Grant, a State of Georgia student financial aid program to provide non-repayable grant assistance to residents of Georgia who are Full-Time Undergraduate students attending private independent Eligible Postsecondary Institutions in Georgia or college level juniors or seniors attending public Eligible Postsecondary Institutions outside the State of Georgia, but within 50 miles of Georgia's borders. The GTEG program is authorized by the Official Code of Georgia Annotated § 20-3-410 and is funded by state appropriations.

"Graduate Student" means a student who is in the process of attaining an academic Degree beyond the Baccalaureate Degree.

"Home Institution" means an Eligible Postsecondary Institution in which a student is normally enrolled and is in a Matriculated status working toward a Degree.

"HOPE" means Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally, a State of Georgia student financial aid program administered by the Commission to provide non-repayable scholarship and grant assistance to residents of Georgia attending Eligible

Postsecondary Institutions in Georgia. HOPE is authorized by the Official Code of Georgia Annotated § 20-3-519 and is funded by State of Georgia Lottery appropriations.

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

“Joint Enrollment” means a situation whereby a secondary (high school) student is enrolled in postsecondary level course work with an Eligible Postsecondary Institution while continuing to pursue his or her high school diploma, but the student’s high school has **not** agreed to accept the postsecondary level course work as credit toward the student’s high school graduation requirements.

“Matriculated” means a student is fully admitted and enrolled in an Eligible Postsecondary Institution in a unified academic program of study leading to an Associate or Baccalaureate Degree. Retroactively gaining Matriculated status will not establish retroactive eligibility for GTEG payment.

“Military Personnel” means an active member of the Armed Forces of the United States, including members of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. Commissioned officers of the Public Health Service or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on active duty are also considered to be Military Personnel.

“Paid-Hours” means the total semester or quarter credit hours attempted, not just hours earned, for which a student received GTEG payment.

“Parent” means the natural mother or father, adoptive parent or United States court-appointed legal guardian of a student.

“Program Review” means an assessment by the Commission of an institution by evaluating the institution’s compliance with the regulations governing state programs.

“Resident of Georgia” means a United States Citizen or Eligible Non-citizen who is domiciled in the State of Georgia and meets all of the other residency requirements in the Commission’s State Scholarships and Grants Residency Regulations.

“Transient” means a student is attending a Host Institution and is granted temporary admission for the purpose of completing course work and earning college credit to transfer back to his or her Home Institution toward a Degree.

“Tuition” means the charges to a student for instruction without regard to other fees such as technology, lab, activity, athletic, health, book and supplies, etc.

“Undergraduate” means a student who is in attendance at an Eligible Postsecondary Institution and who is in the process of obtaining an Associate Degree or a Baccalaureate Degree.

“University System of Georgia” means the system comprised of thirty-five colleges and universities located in the State of Georgia that receive public funding and are overseen by the Board of Regents and the Chancellor of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia.

“Withdrawal Date” means the date the student withdraws, as determined by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution. The institution must determine the withdrawal date in accordance with the procedures set forth for determining withdrawal date under the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended.

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