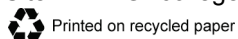




**This program has been suspended for the 2010 - 2011 academic year and is no longer available.**

Thank you,  
GSFC

2082 East Exchange Place, Suite 200 • Tucker, Georgia 30084  
(770) 724-9000 • FAX (770) 724-9004 • 1-800-505-GSFC (4732)  
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# **PROMISE TEACHER Scholarship Loan Program**

## **REGULATIONS – 3400.**

**2010 – 2011 Award Year**



**Effective Date – July 1, 2010**



2082 East Exchange Place  
Tucker, Georgia 30084

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### **3402. Program Overview.**

The PROMISE Teacher Scholarship Loan Program provides service cancelable loans to Undergraduate students enrolled in teacher education programs of study. The purpose of the program is to attract students into the teaching profession and provide them with financial assistance beginning their junior year and continuing through their senior year at a postsecondary institution. It is a merit-based program with specific academic and grade point average eligibility requirements.

An eligible student seeking a Baccalaureate Degree from a University System of Georgia institution or an eligible private postsecondary institution located in Georgia may receive a PROMISE award of up to \$3,000 per Academic Year. PROMISE funds may be used for tuition and fees, room and board, and other educational expenses. In return, students agree to teach after graduation in a Georgia Public School System at the preschool, elementary, middle, or secondary level up to a maximum of four years.

The PROMISE Teacher Scholarship Loan Program was created beginning with the 1995-1996 Award Year (State Fiscal Year 1996). The program is fully funded by the Georgia Lottery for Education and administered by the Georgia Student Finance Commission, in accordance with the Official Code of Georgia Annotated § 20-3-519.7. et. seq., in its entirety.

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### **3403. Definitions.**

“**Academic Year**” means a period of time, usually eight or nine months, during which a student be expected to complete the equivalent of two semesters or three quarters of postsecondary coursework.

“**Administrative Review**” means a review by Commission staff of an eligibility determination made by an Eligible Postsecondary Institution or by the Commission to determine if a PROMISE Teacher program rule, policy, or regulation was applied correctly in a student’s specific case.

“**Approved Teacher Education Program**” means a program of study, offered by an Eligible Postsecondary Institution, leading to a Baccalaureate Degree in teacher education, which is approved by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.

“**Award Year**” means four consecutive quarters or three consecutive semesters beginning with the summer term and ending with the spring term, or the Non-Standard Term or the Non-Term equivalent.

“**Award Year Reconciliation**” means a final student-by-student reconciliation for an Award Year conducted by Eligible Postsecondary Institutions with the Commission.

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

“**Board**” means Board of Commissioners, the governing body of the Georgia Student Finance Commission.

“**Board of Regents**” means the governing body of the University System of Georgia.

“**Commission**” means the Georgia Student Finance Commission, the agency responsible for administering certain postsecondary educational student financial aid programs offered by the State of Georgia, and other programs for which funds may be appropriated or assigned to it by the state legislature, or from other sources, from time to time.

“**Compliance Review**” means an assessment by the Commission of an Eligible Postsecondary Institution by evaluating the Eligible Postsecondary Institution’s compliance with the regulations governing programs administered by the Commission, in accordance with the Commission’s *Compliance Review Process and Procedures* document.

“**Cost of Attendance**” means the estimated expenses, both direct and indirect, which may be incurred by a student and the student’s family to finance the cost of receiving a postsecondary education. As determined by the student’s postsecondary institution and

as defined by Federal Title IV Regulations these expenses include Tuition, fees, room, meals, books, supplies, transportation, and personal expenses.

**“Deferment”** means a period of time approved by the Commission during repayment in which the borrower, upon meeting certain conditions, is not required to make payments on the loan and during which time interest does not accrue on the loan principal.

**“Eligible Non-Citizen”** means a person who, in accordance with the Federal Title IV Regulations, is a United States permanent resident with a Permanent Resident Alien 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”. Victims of human trafficking, in accordance with the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act, may also be considered Eligible Non-Citizens. Persons with an F1 or F2 student visa, a J1 or J2 exchange visitor visa, or a G series visa are not Eligible Non-Citizens.

**“Eligible Postsecondary Institution”** means a public or private postsecondary institution located in Georgia offering an Approved Teacher Education Program.

**“Exception”** means a formal action by the Board to waive a specific program regulation for a student.

**“Federal Title IV Programs”** means student financial aid programs administered by the United States Department of Education that are authorized by Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

**“Federal Title IV Regulations”** means federal regulations governing Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended by the Higher Education Amendments of 1998, found in Chapter Six of Title 34 of the Federal Register.

**“Forbearance”** means a period of time approved by the Commission during which the borrower, upon meeting certain conditions, is permitted to temporarily cease making payments on the loan. The borrower is liable for the interest that accrues on the loan during the forbearance period.

**“GCollege411”** means the website that provides information on careers, Georgia’s postsecondary institutions, student financial aid, and accesses electronic college and financial aid applications.

**“Georgia Professional Standards Commission”** means the State of Georgia agency, separate from the Georgia Department of Education, with the central responsibility for the teacher certification and licensure process, and to improve the level of preparation of Georgia’s educators.

**“Georgia Public School System”** means an employment site approved for PROMISE service-cancellation at a public preschool, elementary, middle, or secondary level school

under the authority of a city or county school system Board of Education. For purposes of the PROMISE Teacher Scholarship Loan Program, a Georgia Public School System also means a prekindergarten classroom wherein the lead teacher is funded and approved by the Office of School Readiness.

**“Georgia Resident” or “Georgia Residency”** means an individual or the status of such individual who is a United States citizen or Eligible Non-Citizen and meets the in-state Tuition requirements of the Board of Regents, as specified and limited by these regulations, or meets the criteria of the *Georgia Residency Requirements for State Programs Regulation*, as specified and limited by these regulations, if attending a private Eligible Postsecondary Institution.

**“Grace Period”** means a period in which the student is unable to find a qualifying position within the twelve (12) months immediately following the student’s completion of their approved teacher education program.

**“Home Institution”** means an Eligible Postsecondary Institution in which the student is enrolled and is in a Matriculated status working toward a Baccalaureate Degree.

**“HOPE Scholarship Program” or “HOPE Scholarship”** means a State of Georgia student financial aid program that provides merit-based scholarship assistance to Georgia Residents seeking Degrees from Eligible Postsecondary Institutions. The HOPE Scholarship Program is authorized by the O.C.G.A. § 20-3-519 et seq., funded by Georgia Lottery appropriations, and administered by the Commission in accordance with the *HOPE Scholarship Program Regulations*.

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

**“Incarcerated”** means to be confined by competent public authority or under due legal process. A student is considered Incarcerated if he or she is serving a criminal sentence in a federal, state, or local penitentiary, prison, jail, reformatory, work farm, half-way house, or similar correctional institution (whether operated by the government or a contractor) or is sentenced to home detention.

**“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.

**“Non-Standard Term”** means a term where all coursework is expected to begin and end within a set period of time, but is not a semester, trimester, or quarter term. Non-Standard terms may be of unequal length within an Award Year.

**“Non-Term”** means a program of study measuring progress in clock hours, or a program of study measuring progress in credit hours and has courses that do not begin and end within a set period of time, or has courses that overlap, or has sequential courses that do not begin and end within a term.

**“Postsecondary Cumulative Grade Point Average”** means the calculation of postsecondary grades earned in baccalaureate Degree coursework to establish eligibility for the PROMISE Teacher Scholarship Loan Program. The Postsecondary Cumulative Grade Point Average is calculated on a traditional 4.00 scale, to the hundredth decimal, without rounding. A traditional 4.00 scale is defined as 4.00 = A+, A, A-, 90.00 or above, 3.00 = B+, B, B-, 80.00 – 89.99, 2.00 = C+, C, C-, 70.00 – 79.99, 1.00 = D+, D, D-, 60.00-69.99 and 0 = F, 59.99 or below.

**“Professional Georgia Educator Certificate”** means a certificate verifying the student has completed all applicable requirements to qualify for a clear and renewable classification, as determined by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.

**“PROMISE Teacher Scholarship Loan Program” or “PROMISE”** means the service cancelable loan program provided by the State of Georgia for Undergraduate students enrolled in teacher education programs of study in accordance with the Official Code of Georgia Annotated § 20-3-519.7. et.seq, in its entirety.

**“Satisfactory Academic Progress”** means the academic standards required of students by their postsecondary institutions in order to be eligible to receive payment from Federal Title IV Programs, in accordance with Federal Title IV Regulations

**“Transient”** means temporary admission to a Host Institution for the purpose of completing coursework and earning postsecondary credit that the Home Institution has agreed to accept as transferable postsecondary credit.

**“Tuition”** means the charges to a student for postsecondary academic instruction without regard to other fees such as technology, activity, athletic, health, etc.

**“Undergraduate”** means coursework that is included in a postsecondary program of study leading to a Baccalaureate Degree.

**“University System of Georgia” or “USG”** means the State of Georgia’s unified system of public colleges and universities, which is governed by the Board of Regents.

**“Withdrawal Date”** means the date the student withdraws, as determined by the institution, in accordance with the procedures set forth for determining Withdrawal Date under the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended.

## **3404. General Eligibility Requirements.**

### **3404.1. Citizenship.**

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

### **3404.2. Georgia Residency.**

A student is not required to be a Resident of Georgia in order to qualify for PROMISE.

### **3404.3. Enrollment Status.**

- a. There is no minimum number of hours of enrollment required for eligibility.
- b. A student must have earned a minimum overall Postsecondary Cumulative Grade Point Average of 3.00 based on a 4.00 scale and be academically classified as being a college level junior or senior by his or her Eligible Postsecondary Institution.
- c. A student must be fully accepted for enrollment into an Approved Teacher Education Program leading to initial certification. The program must be at an Eligible Postsecondary Institution approved by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.
- d. A student must be certified by the college of education Teacher certification official at the Eligible Postsecondary Institution to be accepted for enrollment into a Teacher education program leading to initial certification.
- e. A student who terminates enrollment at an Eligible Postsecondary Institution or who is otherwise dropped from enrollment therein by an eligible institution will not be eligible to continue receiving assistance from PROMISE, following receipt of information of such event.

### **3404.4. Satisfactory Academic Progress.**

A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress as defined and certified by his or her Eligible Postsecondary Institution.

### **3404.5. Selective Service Registration.**

A student must be in compliance with United States Selective Service System requirements, if such requirements are applicable, prior to the PROMISE Teacher application deadline (Refer to *Section 3406.*) in order to be eligible for PROMISE Teacher payment for such school term.

#### **3404.6. Defaulted Loan or Refund Due.**

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 Federal Title IV 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 the Commission on behalf of the student. 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 PROMISE funds beginning with the school term in which repayment was made in full, but not retroactively for previous school terms. A student's default status can be resolved by one of four ways: 1) complete an acceptable rehabilitation plan, 2) having the loan repurchased by the original lender and the default status reversed, 3) by consolidating the loan out of a default status, or 4) by receiving an approved Title IV debt settlement.

#### **3404.7. Georgia 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 PROMISE funds from the date of conviction to the completion of the next academic term.

#### **3404.8. Incarceration.**

Individuals who are incarcerated are not eligible to receive a PROMISE Teacher Scholarship Loan.

### **3405. Program Specific Eligibility Requirements.**

#### **3405.1. Postsecondary Cumulative Grade Point Average.**

- a. The Postsecondary Cumulative Grade Point Average used to determine junior or senior year eligibility must be based on all Baccalaureate Degree credit hours attempted after high school graduation.
- b. All Baccalaureate Degree credit hours attempted at all postsecondary institutions the student attended after high school graduation and their corresponding grades must be included in the Postsecondary Cumulative Grade Point Average, regardless of what hours are accepted or not accepted by the institution the student is currently attending. Such coursework that was repeated or “forgiven” by the institution must be included.
- c. Credit hours attempted as part of a technical diploma or certificate program of study are not considered to be credit hours and therefore should not be counted, unless those hours are accepted as Baccalaureate Degree credit hours by a postsecondary institution.
- d. All credit hours and corresponding grades, including learning support or remedial coursework must be included in the Postsecondary Cumulative Grade Point Average.
- e. The Postsecondary Cumulative Grade Point Average must be calculated to the hundredth decimal (for example 2.99), without rounding
- f. The student must have a minimum, overall Postsecondary Cumulative Grade Point Average of 3.00 based on a 4.00 scale at the beginning of the first term for which PROMISE funds are requested.
- g. The student must have been accepted for enrollment in a teacher education program leading to initial certification before beginning eligibility under PROMISE.
- h. The student must be seeking his or her first Baccalaureate Degree in education. This includes students whose first Baccalaureate Degree was not in education and are seeking a second Baccalaureate Degree in education. Generally, it requires an additional two years of study to complete a second Baccalaureate Degree in education if the first Baccalaureate Degree was not in education.

### **3405.2. Junior Year Eligibility.**

A student is eligible to participate in PROMISE beginning with his or her junior or senior year at the postsecondary Undergraduate level. The student must be classified as a junior or senior by the Eligible Postsecondary Institution he or she is attending.

### **3405.3. Senior Year Eligibility.**

- a. A student is eligible to continue receiving PROMISE for the senior year, if he or she received PROMISE his or her junior year and is maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress. A PROMISE recipient is not required to have a 3.00 Postsecondary Cumulative Grade Point Average at the beginning of the senior year in order to renew.
- b. A student may enter PROMISE for the first time as a senior if he or she has a Postsecondary Cumulative Grade Point Average of a 3.00 on a 4.00 scale and is seeking his or her first Baccalaureate Degree in education.

### **3405.4. Maintaining Eligibility.**

- a. A student may receive PROMISE funds for his or her junior year (maximum of \$3,000), and may also receive PROMISE funds for his or her senior year (maximum of \$3,000), for a total combined maximum of \$6,000. PROMISE funds are not available for study beyond the attainment of a Baccalaureate Degree.
- b. A student's eligibility for PROMISE expires if he or she has a break in enrollment of more than 12 months. In such event, a student is obligated under the "Repayment of Scholarship" conditions in *Section 3408.* of these regulations.

### **3405.5. HOPE Scholarship Recipients.**

A student can be eligible for and receiving PROMISE funds, while also being eligible for and receiving HOPE Scholarship funds, during the same school term or terms.

### **3405.6. Transient Students.**

A Transient student may receive payment upon the discretion of the Home Institution and must provide documentation from the college of education at the Home Institution that the credit hours attempted at the Host Institution will count toward the student's program of study at the Home Institution. The Home Institution and Host Institutions must have a written agreement, which prohibits payment at the Host Institution and provides the Home Institution with the information necessary to obtain payment from the Commission. The student's PROMISE award must be owed or paid through the Home Institution.

### **3405.7. Transfer Students.**

A recipient of PROMISE, who transfers to another Eligible Postsecondary Institution, must meet all the eligibility requirements in order to continue receiving PROMISE funds. Such recipient must complete a renewal application. Award amounts will not be adjusted if the transfer institution requires additional hours for the student to complete his or her program of study.

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## **3406. Student Application Procedures.**

### **3406.1. PROMISE Application Procedures.**

- a. The application for PROMISE is available on the GAcollge411 website.
- b. An applicant must complete his or her portion of the application and deliver it to the college of education teacher certification official for completion and certification. The application is then forwarded to the financial aid office for completion and certification. The financial aid office sends the completed application directly to the Commission for final determination of eligibility.
- c. A student must file the application online or in the institution's financial aid office on or before the last day of the academic term (semester or quarter) or the student's withdrawal date, whichever occurs first, in order to be paid for that academic term. The last day of the academic 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.
- d. All completed applications will be taken into full consideration and awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.

### **3406.2. FAFSA Application.**

A student is not required to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) in order to apply for PROMISE.

### **3406.3. Institutional Financial Aid Application.**

An institution may require students to complete the institution's application for financial aid. A student is advised to check with the institution he or she plans to attend for the appropriate forms.

### **3406.4. Deadline Dates.**

- a. A renewal applicant must complete a renewal application to apply for any unused PROMISE funds remaining for his or her program of study.
- b. A renewal applicant must file a renewal application before the last day of the academic term or the student's withdrawal date, whichever occurs first, in order to be paid for that academic term.

- c. A renewal applicant must continue to meet all of the eligibility requirements in Section 3404. of these regulations.

### **3406.5. Eligible Postsecondary Institutions.**

The following institutions currently offer Approved Teacher Education Programs:

#### Public

Albany State University  
Armstrong Atlantic State University  
Augusta State University  
Clayton State University  
Columbus State University  
Dalton State College  
Fort Valley State University  
Georgia College and State University  
Georgia Southern University  
Georgia Southwestern State University  
Georgia State University  
Gordon College  
Kennesaw State University  
Macon State College  
North Georgia College and State University  
University of West Georgia  
University of Georgia  
Valdosta State University

#### Private

Agnes Scott College  
Atlanta Christian College  
Berry College  
Brenau University  
Brewton-Parker College  
Clark Atlanta University  
Covenant College  
Emmanuel College  
Emory University  
LaGrange College  
Mercer University  
Oglethorpe University  
Paine College  
Piedmont College  
Reinhardt College  
Shorter College  
Spelman College  
Thomas College  
Toccoa Falls College  
Wesleyan College

## **3407. Selection Process and Duties.**

### **3407.1. Selection of Recipients.**

- a. An applicant must meet all of the eligibility requirements detailed in Section 3404. and 3405. of these regulations.
- b. The maximum award will be \$3,000 per Academic Year for a student taking six or more hours each term, and \$1,500 per Academic Year for students taking five or fewer hours each term. The institution will disburse the award for each term based on the number of quarter or semester hours the student is enrolled. Any other scholarships and grants would first be applied to the student's Cost of Attendance before applying PROMISE funds.
- c. PROMISE funds are awarded to cover an Academic Year of three quarters or two semesters. The student may choose to attend any three quarters or two semesters during the Award Year.
- d. PROMISE funds may be used to cover direct and indirect costs including Tuition and fees, room and board, and any other part of the student's Cost of Attendance. PROMISE funds may not be used for costs over and above the student's Cost of Attendance.
- e. PROMISE funds may not be used for study beyond the attainment of a Baccalaureate Degree.
- f. Students who are awarded PROMISE will receive an award letter and promissory note to be signed and notarized acknowledging the service or cash repayment obligation. Awards for each school term will be sent to the financial aid office at the appropriate institution.
- g. All applicants who do not qualify will receive a denial letter from the Commission.

### **3407.2. Loss of Scholarship.**

If at any time a student fails to meet the requirements for continued eligibility for PROMISE, the student would be obligated under the "Repayment of Scholarship" conditions in Section 3408. of these regulations.

## **3408. Repayment of Scholarship.**

### **3408.1. Teaching Obligation.**

All students who are awarded PROMISE will be provided with a promissory note when completing the application process. The promissory note must be signed and notarized in order to receive PROMISE funds. The general terms and conditions of the promissory note are as follows:

- a. The student must graduate with a Baccalaureate Degree in teacher education and obtain a clear and renewable Professional Georgia Educator Certificate, unless the student is participating in a five-year program that leads to a clear and renewable T-5 certification.
- b. The student must teach, on a full-time basis, as an employee in a Georgia Public School System at the preschool, elementary, middle or secondary level one academic year for each \$1,500 awarded by PROMISE. PROMISE recipients must find qualifying employment within 12 months immediately after completing the Approved Teacher Education Program.
- c. The student must fulfill the teaching obligation within 5 years after completing the Baccalaureate Degree program for which PROMISE was awarded. The teaching obligation may be extended only if the student has received a deferment approved by the Commission. Exceptions qualifying for a deferment are listed in the "Deferment of Payment" in Section 3408.3 and 3408.4.
- d. The student must provide the Commission, as it requires, evidence of compliance of the teaching obligation.
- e. Annual service cancellation will not begin until recipients have fully completed their program of study and obtained a Professional Georgia Educator Certificate.

### **3408.2. Service Default.**

If the student fails to meet the teaching obligation in Section 3408.1. or fails to obtain a clear and renewable Professional Georgia Educator Certificate, or if the Commission determines, in its sole discretion, the student is no longer pursuing the program for which the student was awarded, and the PROMISE Teacher Scholarship Loan was intended, the student must:

- a. Repay in full the amount of PROMISE funds received, reduced by the dollar amount that coincides with the years of service that have been performed;
- b. Make payments to the Commission, which cover principal and interest. At the time a recipient enters repayment status, the interest rate shall be fixed for the cash repayment term based on the prime rate in the Wall Street Journal as of the second

day of January of the then-current calendar year, plus one percentage (1%) point. In no event shall the interest rate exceed ten (10%) per annum; and

- c. Pay all reasonable collections costs as determined by the Commission.

### **3408.3. Deferment of Repayment.**

A student may apply for a deferment of repayment under certain conditions listed below. To qualify for a Deferment, a student shall notify the Commission in writing of his or her claim and provide supporting documentation as required by federal law, state law or program regulations.

- a. Enrolled for 12 hours per term in Undergraduate course work, or 6 hours per term for Graduate coursework at a postsecondary institution; or
- b. Serving, not in excess of four (4) years, on active duty as Military Personnel; or
- c. Temporarily disabled as established by sworn affidavit of a qualified physician satisfactory to the Commission; or
- d. Unable to secure employment for a period not to exceed twelve (12) months by reason of the full-time care required by a disabled child of which the student is the legal guardian, a student's spouse, or a student's parent; or
- e. The recipient is still within the Grace Period, which is defined as a period in which the student is unable to find a qualifying position within twelve (12) months immediately following the student's completion of his or her approved teacher education program: or
- f. The Deferment options available under the Federal Family Education Loan Program or the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program as authorized by Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 as amended.

### **3408.4. Forbearance of Repayment**

A student may apply for a forbearance of repayment under certain conditions listed below. To qualify for a Forbearance, a student shall notify the Commission in writing of his or her claim and provide supporting documentation as required by federal law, state law or program regulations.

- 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 as amended.

### **3408.5. Cancellation of Repayment.**

The Commission shall cancel a student's repayment obligation if it determines:

- a. On the basis of a sworn affidavit of a qualified physician satisfactory to the Commission, the student is unable to teach on a full-time basis because the student is permanently and totally disabled; or
- b. On the basis of a death certificate or other evidence of death that is conclusive under State law, the student has died.

### **3408.6. Promissory Note.**

The complete service and cash repayment requirements are provided in the PROMISE Teacher Scholarship Loan promissory note. For purposes of the service or cash repayment obligations, if any discrepancy exists between the content of these regulations and the PROMISE Teacher Scholarship Loan promissory note that the student signed, the promissory note shall control.

## **3409. Procedures for Disbursing Funds.**

### **3409.1. Submission of Disbursement.**

The Commission will disburse PROMISE funds on a quarter-by-quarter or semester-by-semester basis to each Eligible Postsecondary Institution, no earlier than 14 days before the first day of classes of each term. A student who is enrolled six or more hours will be eligible to receive a full award each term (\$1,500 at a semester institution or \$1,000 at a quarter institution). A student who is enrolled five or fewer hours can receive one-half of a full award each term (\$750 at a semester institution or \$500 at a quarter institution). The Commission will disburse the funds to the institution based on full awards. The institution is responsible for verifying enrollment hours and disbursing the correct amount to each student. Reporting procedures below detail how the expenditures will be recorded.

#### **Per Semester Awards**

5 or Fewer Hours: \$750  
6 or More Hours: \$1,500

#### **Per Quarter Awards**

5 or Fewer Hours: \$500  
6 or More Hours: \$1,000

### **3409.2. Award Adjustments.**

An institution may adjust the student's award each school term to reflect the appropriate award amount based on the actual number of hours the student enrolled after the drop/add period. If the award amount needs to be adjusted to a lesser amount, the institution has the authority to reduce the award; however, if the award amount for the school term needs to be increased to a higher award amount than is provided on the award letter from the Commission, the student must request, in writing, the additional award amount for that school term from the Commission. If the student is eligible for an increased award for that school term, the Commission will send an amended award letter to the student for signature. Once the amended award letter has been signed and returned to the Commission, the Commission will send the requested funds to the institution.

### **3409.3. Report of Awards to Commission.**

- a. Monthly or within 30 days of making system decreases in the number of hours or for a full cancellation; the school will remit back to the Commission either by check or by wire with student by student detail, the refund dollar amounts associated with full refunds or partial refunds. Failure to comply with the return of funds may delay future award disbursements.
- b. Procedures and Forms will be provided for detailed refund processing and wiring instructions.

For example: PROMISE funds were awarded for 10 students at a USG institution for fall semester. The Commission disbursed a total of \$15,000 to the institution to cover full awards for 10 students. All 10 students did not receive full awards (six students enrolled six or more hours and four students enrolled five or fewer hours). Therefore, the institution actually awarded a total of \$12,000 for fall semester. The \$3,000 difference will need to be refunded back to the Commission within 30 days either by check or by wire with student-by-student detail.

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## **3410. Reconciliation.**

### **3410.1. Award Year Reconciliation.**

The institution must conduct a complete student-by-student Award Year Reconciliation with the Commission and submit a Reconciliation Certification Form to the Commission by May 15 following the completion of the Award Year.

The Commission will provide the institution with a letter to confirm that reconciliation is complete and final for the Award Year.

### **3410.2. Return of Funds.**

The institution must return to the Commission any PROMISE funds not utilized according to the final reconciliation within 30 days of completing the reconciliation process. The institution must have a procedure in place to ensure that the PROMISE funds do not go to an unintended third party (i.e. State, institution).

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## **3411. Records Retention Requirements.**

### **3411.1. Length of Retention.**

An Eligible Postsecondary Institution shall maintain accurate records, books, documents and other evidence concerning the loan, including, but not limited to individual student files for the later of three years after the Award Year in which the aid was awarded; or for such other period as required by an applicable statute, rule, or regulation; or such other time as requested in writing by the Commission.

### **3411.2. Documentation.**

- a. Documentation contained within an individual student file or record, which supports the original determination of a student's eligibility, must be retained by the institution and available for review by the Commission on the 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 PROMISE funds. 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.
- b. 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. Documentation regarding a student's eligibility is not limited to files, records, and other information received and maintained by the institution's student financial aid office. Documentation supporting a student's eligibility that is received and maintained by the institution's admissions office, registrars office, business office, and other administrative operations of the institution must be available to the Commission for review. It is the institution's responsibility to resolve any inconsistencies or conflicting information within a student's records, prior to awarding or disbursing loan funds to the student.

### **3411.3. Extended Retention.**

An Eligible Postsecondary Institution may be required to retain student records involved in a Compliance Review, audit, or investigation for more than the three-year retention period 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.

## **3412. Administrative Reviews and Exceptions.**

### **3412.1. Administrative Reviews.**

*The PROMISE Teacher Scholarship Loan Program Regulations* are applied to each student considered for PROMISE Teacher Scholarship Loan funds by appropriate officials and by the administrative staff of the Commission. If a student believes a PROMISE Teacher Scholarship Loan 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 the Commission. The Commission will review the case and determine whether the rule or regulation was applied correctly and notify the student and institution of the determination.

In order for an Administrative Review to be considered, the student must submit a written request for an Administrative Review to the Commission office within 45 days of receiving notice of denial. If additional information is requested from the student, it must be provided within the time frame specified by the Commission. The Commission decides a case based only on documentation provided, rather than a personal presentation.

### **3412.2. Exceptions.**

Requests for Exceptions to the PROMISE Teacher Scholarship Loan Program Regulations cannot be considered, reviewed, or granted under any circumstances.

### **3413. Compliance Reviews.**

#### **3413.1. Compliance Review Policy.**

The Commission may conduct Compliance Reviews of the *PROMISE Teacher Scholarship Loan Program* in order to assess an institution's administration of the program and compliance with the program's regulations. Compliance Reviews are conducted in accordance with the Commission's *Compliance Review Process and Procedures* document, which is available at the [gsfc.org](http://gsfc.org) website under *School and Lender Information-Compliance Documents*.

#### **3413.2. Compliance Review Process.**

The Commission selects a sampling of an institution's recipients, for the Award Year under review, and the institution's files and records for the sample are examined to assure compliance. The institution must have all student-records, which document and support the eligibility of that institution's recipients, available for review by the Commission on the institution's campus.

#### **3413.3. Institutional Repayment.**

- a. If a recipient is has been determined, by the Commission, to be ineligible for payment, the institution may be required to repay to the Commission the funds awarded to the recipient.
- b. If later evidence, not available at the time of awarding, indicates that a student should not have received PROMISE Teacher Scholarship Loan payment, then all future awards must be canceled. An institution is held harmless by the Commission, if the student's file is appropriately documented with available evidence and it is determined by the Commission that the institution was not at fault. 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.). The institution must notify the student and the Commission of a refund due. The student will be ineligible to receive additional state aid from the Commission until the refund is paid in full, in accordance with Section 3408. If the student's file is determined not to be adequately documented by the Commission while conducting a Compliance Review, then the institution may be responsible for the repayment.