

Excelsior Scholarship FAQ's

Will I be able to attend college at CUNY tuition free?

You may be eligible for the Excelsior Scholarship, if you are an undergraduate who is a U.S. citizen or permanent resident and reside in NY state for one year prior to enrollment and whose family adjusted gross income (as filed on your 2015 federal tax returns) does not exceed \$100,000 and you complete 30 credits per year. The Excelsior Scholarship you will be able to attend CUNY tuition free for the 2017-18 academic year.

Are graduate students eligible for the Excelsior Scholarship?

No, they are not.

What are the requirements for the Excelsior Scholarship?

Potential recipients must have an income that does not exceed \$100,000 for the 2017-18 academic year and must file the FAFSA and TAP applications. There will also be an Excelsior Scholarship application that is not yet available. However, you can register to be contacted as soon as it becomes available at www.hesc.ny.gov/excelsior. You must register full-time for both the fall and spring semesters and enroll in and complete a minimum of 30 credits for the academic year, which may include fall, spring, and summer semesters. All coursework must be applicable to your major.

Do I qualify for the Excelsior Scholarship if I begin enrollment in the spring semester?

If you began attending in the spring you must complete 30 credits by the start of the following spring term.

Are continuing students eligible for the Excelsior Scholarship?

Yes, you will be required to complete 30 credits for each academic year you attended.

How much can I receive from the Excelsior Scholarship?

An Excelsior Scholarship recipient can receive up to \$5,500 from the Excelsior Scholarship, minus any amounts received for TAP, Pell, New City Merit Scholarship or other scholarships. The remainder of your tuition charge will be covered through a tuition credit paid through CUNY.

Will I be able to get an Excelsior Scholarship for fall 2017?

Yes. Eligible students will receive awards to attend CUNY tuition free beginning fall 2017.

How much income can my family earn to be eligible for the Excelsior Scholarship?

For the 2017-18 academic year, your federal household adjusted gross income can total up to \$100,000 to be eligible. For 2018-19, that amount increases to \$110,000, and beginning in 2019-20 and beyond, your family's adjusted gross income can total up to \$125,000.

How long can I get the Excelsior Scholarship?

You are eligible to get an Excelsior Scholarship for up to 2 years for students pursuing an associate's degree and up to 4 years for students pursuing a bachelor's degree. Students in an undergraduate program of study normally requiring 5 years are eligible to receive the award for 5 years.

Do I need a certain grade point average to get or to keep the Excelsior Scholarship?

Award recipients need to earn a minimum of a 2.0 GPA to maintain their Excelsior Scholarship award provided they earn 30 credits over the course of a year.

Recipients should keep in mind that they might have other awards, which also carry academic standards that differ from those required for the Excelsior Scholarship.

Can I get an Excelsior Scholarship award if I'm a transfer student?

A student who transferred between colleges is eligible for an Excelsior Scholarship if they are on track to complete on time based on the number of credits accepted by their current college.

How do I maintain my eligibility?

You will continue to receive the Excelsior Scholarship providing you enroll full time and complete 30 credits in an academic year. In addition, you will continue to meet the income requirements from year to year and maintain a minimum of 2.0 GPA.

If I completed my Associate's degree, can I receive this award to get my Bachelor's degree?

Yes, provided the college that you are attending accepted all of the credits you earned in completing your Associate's degree, and meet all other requirements for the Excelsior Scholarship. However, you will not be able to use the scholarship for another Associate's degree.

If I no longer meet the requirements can I regain my eligibility?

Generally, no, however there is an appeal process.

Will there be accommodations for students with disabilities?

Yes, the requirements will be forthcoming.

Are there any other requirements that I must meet after I complete my degree?

Yes. You must live and work in New York State for time equal to the duration of the award. You will be required to sign a contract with HESC agreeing to these terms. Failure to meet Excelsior Scholarship program requirements will result in the conversion of your award to a loan.

What are the credit requirements of the Excelsior Scholarship?

Students must be enrolled full-time and take 30 credits per year including summer in order to receive the Excelsior Scholarship. Students facing hardship are able to take fewer credits.

How is the income threshold determined?

The adjusted gross income is determined by the income of the student, the spouse and/or parents where applicable.