

FAQs – New York Excelsior Scholarship

Q. What is the Excelsior Scholarship?

A. In the fall of 2017, the state of New York will begin offering the Excelsior Scholarship, under which families and individuals earning up to \$100,000 a year will qualify to attend college tuition-free at all City University of New York (CUNY) and State University of New York (SUNY) two- and four-year colleges. The Excelsior Scholarship is a last-dollar program, meaning students must first use their Pell grants and existing state Tuition Assistance funds to cover tuition. The program will be funded through \$163 million in taxpayer revenues in its first year.

The plan calls for the scholarship to be phased in over three years, beginning in fall 2017. In the first phase, the scholarship would be available to students with a household income of \$100,000 or less. In 2018, students from households earning \$110,000 or less would be eligible. Students from households with earnings of \$125,000 or less would be eligible for the scholarship in 2019. The household income calculation is based on federal adjusted gross income, as reported on federal income tax forms, for the student and their family.

Q. What are the requirements of the Excelsior Scholarship?

A. In order to qualify for the Excelsior Scholarship students must meet the following requirements:

- Students are required to live and work in New York State for the number of years equal to the duration of the scholarship. If they do not, students will be obligated to sign a contract with the New York Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC) to have their full award converted to a student loan.
- Eligible students who do not complete the required 30 credits will receive payment for their first semester only and will not qualify for payments for additional semesters.
- Students must maintain a certain grade point average (GPA) to continue the scholarship. The required GPA is unclear at this time.
- Students must qualify for admission, or be admitted to a CUNY or SUNY college. Students are required to attend college full time, and maintain an average 30 credits a year.
- Students must finish their degrees on time, graduating in two years for an associate's degree, or in four years for a bachelor's degree. The plan does not cover tuition for any additional semesters that might be required for a degree.
- The Excelsior Scholarship does not cover costs for room and board, textbooks, food or transportation.
- Students cannot be in default on existing federal or state student loans.

Q. Is there an age limit for the Excelsior Scholarship?

A. There is no age limit for students interested in the scholarship.

Q. How does the Excelsior Scholarship impact Berkeley College students?

A. The implementation of the Excelsior Scholarship will not impact Berkeley College students.

Q. Will Berkeley College offer the Excelsior Scholarship?

A. Only students attending CUNY and SUNY two- and four-year colleges in New York will be eligible for the Excelsior Scholarship.

Q. What scholarships or other benefits are offered by Berkeley College?

A. More than \$64 million in Berkeley College grants and scholarships was provided to qualified students during the 2015-2016 award year. Institutional aid at Berkeley College does not require a New York State residency or New York State employment component after a student graduates. [Click here](#) for a full list of grants and scholarships offered by Berkeley College.

Q. Are part-time students eligible to receive the Excelsior Scholarship?

A. To be eligible for the Excelsior Scholarship, students are required to enroll full time. This includes maintaining an average 30 credits a year. However, students with disabilities will not be required to register full time to be eligible for the scholarship.

Q. The New York State Legislature added another tuition assistance program known as the Enhanced Tuition Award. Does this program apply to Berkeley College students?

A. The Enhanced Tuition Award is available to students who are enrolled in approved programs at certain private colleges. Berkeley College is not included among these colleges, though we continue to work with lawmakers to try to make this program available to all colleges.