

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING RESIDENCY

The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education requires HGTC to determine the resident status of each student for tuition and fee purposes. Students claiming South Carolina resident status for tuition and fee purposes must complete the required residency section on the Application of Admissions.

The initial determination of a student's residency status is determined at the time of admissions. Students who fail to complete the residency section of the admission's application will be classified as non-residents. Additional information may be requested from students who have recently located to South Carolina or who fail to complete the residency section in its entirety. **The burden of proof rests with students to provide evidence to establish and maintain their residency status.**

If you have additional questions and need further clarification regarding your potential eligibility for South Carolina resident status, please contact HGTC's residency officer.

- **If I have lived in SC for one year or more, does that make me eligible for in-state tuition?**

No, nothing is automatic about residency. Students have to meet the requirements, and be approved before any changes are made.

- **What is the difference in applying for residency as dependent or independent?**

If you were claimed on someone else's federal taxes as an exemption, and/or if someone else (parents, guardians, spouse) provided more of your support than you did for the past twelve months, then you are considered dependent. If no one claimed you on federal taxes and you provided the majority of your support, then you may be eligible to apply as independent.

- **Am I required to provide over 50% of my total financial support to be considered independent?**

You must provide over 50% of your total support with earnings coming from employment, investments or payments from trusts, grants, scholarships, or payments made in accordance with court order. Your total support must also be greater than total expenses.

- **Do I have to have a SC driver's license and vehicle registration to be considered a resident?**

A student must obtain a SC driver's license or ID card within 90 days of the date they are claiming intent to become a SC resident. This law is strict; one day beyond the 90 days will delay the start date of the required 12 months status. A student must register the vehicle(s) in SC within 45 days of the date the student is claiming intent to become a SC resident. Again, this law is strict; one day beyond the 45 days will delay the start of the 12 months status. If a student owns a vehicle that is registered in another state, they will not be allowed to apply for instate residency until it is changed to SC. If a student has a

suspended license from another state, the student will not be eligible to apply for instate tuition until this suspension has been cleared and the student can get a SC driver's license. The student cannot have any connections to another state.

- **Does owning property in South Carolina allow students to receive in-state tuition?**

*For independent students, not by itself, the other requirements still have to be met. For parents of dependent students, SC has to be the primary state of residence. Living in a residence owned by parents does not, in and of itself, constitute a permanent residence; as an independent person, the student must either be listed as an owner on the deed and responsible for ½ the mortgage or a legal tenant with an official lease, paying a reasonable, market price for rent. The student **must** be responsible for utilities.*

- **If I move here and live with relatives, does that make me eligible?**

Not unless the relative has court-ordered guardianship and claims you on their taxes. Be aware that the law states that if it appears that steps have been taken just to obtain resident tuition, your application will be disapproved.

- **Am I eligible for residency if I use a South Carolina address on all of my records and legal documents?**

Not necessarily. You will still have to meet all of the other requirements.

- **Can I use the money I have saved in my savings and checking account to establish my independence?**

A student may be allowed to use money saved in a savings or checking account if he/she can prove that the funds are from allowable sources such as his/her own earnings or income from employment, investments, or payments from trusts, grants, scholarships, or payments made in accordance with a court order.

- **Can personal loans and gifts from parents and relatives be counted as support that students have provided to establish my independence?**

No. Gifts are considered money coming from elsewhere and do not count toward financial independence. Financial support has to come from the sources listed in the law/regulations.

- **If I work full-time, do I have to live in SC for 12 months before I am eligible to pay instate tuition?**

Full time employment is an exclusion to the 12 months status. You must work at least 37.5 hours per week, 50 weeks per year, at one job or have eligibility for full time benefits and this would have to be verified by your employer on their company letterhead. You would still need to provide all other documents required.

- **How does my being a member of the United States Armed Forces affect my SC residency?**

*Members of the military **permanently** assigned in SC on active duty and their dependents qualify under an exception category. Military members and their dependents may be charged in-state tuition and fees provided they can show their orders for being stationed in SC without having to establish a permanent home in SC. The United States Armed Forces is defined as the United States Army, Air Force, Navy, Coast Guard and Marine Corps.*