The Excelsior Scholarship, in combination with other student financial aid programs, allows students to attend a SUNY or CUNY college tuition-free.

ELIGIBILITY

An applicant must:

- be a resident of NYS and have resided in NYS for 12 continuous months prior to the beginning of the term;
- be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen;
- have either graduated from high school in the United States, earned a high school equivalency diploma, or passed a federally approved “Ability to Benefit” test, as defined by the Commissioner of the State Education Department;
- have a combined federal adjusted gross income of $100,000 or less;
- be pursuing an undergraduate degree at a SUNY or CUNY college, including community colleges and the statutory colleges at Cornell University and Alfred University;
- be enrolled in at least 12 credits per term and complete at least 30 credits each year (successively), applicable toward his or her degree program;
- if attended college prior to the 2017-18 academic year, have earned at least 30 credits each year (successively), applicable toward his or her degree program prior to applying for an Excelsior Scholarship;
- be in a non-default status on a student loan made under any NYS or federal education loan program or on the repayment of any NYS award;
- be in compliance with the terms of the service condition(s) imposed by a NYS award that you have previously received; and
- execute a Contract agreeing to reside in NYS for the length of time the award was received, and, if employed during such time, be employed in NYS.

CATCH-UP YEAR

Applicants who first entered college as a freshman student in the 2015-16 and who have earned 54 credits, or who first entered college as a freshman student in 2016-17 academic year and who earned 24 credits can make up those 6 credits in 2017-18. Students who successfully earn 36 credits in the 2017-18 academic year can become eligible for the Excelsior Scholarship beginning in the 2018-19 academic year.

AWARD AMOUNT*

The Excelsior Scholarship provides awards up to $5,500.

To determine the award amount, the resident tuition rate charged by SUNY (currently $6,470) or CUNY (currently $6,330) will be reduced by the amount of certain other student financial aid awards which an applicant has or will receive for the academic year, including a NYS Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) award and/or federal Pell grant. The Excelsior Scholarship will cover any remaining tuition liability up to $5,500; and a tuition credit will cover any remaining tuition expenses not covered by the Excelsior Scholarship.

*Note: Any award payment received may have tax implications. Any questions regarding this should be directed to a tax professional, the Internal Revenue Service, or the NYS Department of Taxation and Finance.
Excelsior Scholarship Fact Sheet

DURATION

A recipient of an Excelsior Scholarship is eligible to receive award payments for not more than two years of full-time undergraduate study in a program leading to an associate’s degree or four years of full-time undergraduate study, or five years if the program of study normally requires five years, in a program leading to a bachelor’s degree.

PAYMENT

To receive payments each subsequent year (after the initial application year), Excelsior Scholarship recipient must annually complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the TAP-on-the-Web Application.

HOW TO APPLY

The application for the 2017 Excelsior Scholarship will be available on June 7, 2017.

Go to NYS Higher Education Services Corporation - Excelsior Scholarship to apply.

TIPS WHEN APPLYING

View common questions that you may have when completing the Excelsior Scholarship application.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

View commonly asked questions pertaining to the Excelsior Scholarship, or contact the Scholarship Unit at scholarships@hesc.ny.gov or 888-697-4372.