

Excelsior Information

Scholarship

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

[Official Excelsior Scholarship Site](#)– includes fact sheet, FAQ and more information

Syracuse University is a private institution and does not participate in the New York State Excelsior Scholarship. However, students who earn Syracuse University credits through Project Advance are able to “bank” those credits and apply them to meet Excelsior requirements ([see Excelsior FAQs](#)).

The Excelsior Scholarship provides an opportunity for students and families to reduce the financial burden of higher education. Taking advantage of the Excelsior Scholarship program is not without risk and red tape however. Parents and students should carefully review the **full eligibility requirements** ([see below](#)) and FAQs.

Students are required to demonstrate continuous progress towards degree completion and be ‘on track to graduate’ within 2 or 4 years by maintaining 30 credit hours per year. For full-time students, usually this means taking 4-5 classes per semester. While many students should be able to maintain this work load, it is important to remember that things happen. Any disruption in a student’s life, be it financial, family

oriented or work related, can affect a student's ability to meet the 30-credit hour per year minimum. As the New York Times has reported, based on studies by NCES (National Center for Education Statistics) and elsewhere, "nationally, only about 60% of college students graduate with a B.A. degree in six years."

Students who have earned SU credits through Project Advance are able to apply these credits as needed to help maintain the 30-credit hour per year requirement, thereby potentially reducing their course load for a semester. If a student is unable to meet the requirements of the program, the "free" tuition basically turns into a low-interest loan- the money must be paid back. There are also post-award state residency requirements.

Other Benefits of Project Advance for Excelsior students:

- Syracuse University credits are typically recognized for transfer credit at SUNY and CUNY schools and other institutions across the country.
- Still a significant cost savings to students, at \$115 per credit hour.
- College courses taken in the high school can prepare students for the rigor and expectations of higher education.
- Although students should always check first with their postsecondary institution, credits from college courses taken during high school may be "bankable," i.e., applied beyond one's first year of college for future use towards the 30 credits per year. Since tuition for summer courses is not covered by the scholarship award and remedial courses do not count towards the 30-credit per year requirement, your SU credits could go a long way.

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.

Frequently Asked Questions

[View commonly asked questions pertaining to the Excelsior Scholarship.](#)

Questions?

Please contact the Scholarship Unit at scholarships@hesc.ny.gov or 888-697-4372.