Excelsior Scholarship Program

College Administrator Guidelines

NEW YORK STATE EXCELSIOR EVER UPWARD

Excelsior Scholarship Program

Chapter 1: Eligibility and Application Procedures

1.01 STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility for the Excelsior Scholarship is determined by an applicant meeting requirements found in New York State Education Law §661 and §669 –h and 8 NYCRR §2201.1 and 8 NYCRR §2201.18. Approval for an award is based on information reported by the applicant and subject to verification by HESC and the college the applicant is attending.

For purposes of the Excelsior Scholarship, references to "term" means Fall or Spring terms only, unless otherwise specified. Terms must meet the 15-week requirement for semester-based institutions as indicated in the Commissioner's regulations Section 145-2.1 for full-time study. Students enrolled in late start/short term modules must meet "Fast Track" requirements to meet the full-time study term requirements. This requires the student to be enrolled in at least 12 semester hours in a semester of not less than 15 weeks or 100 calendar days, inclusive of examination periods. Though some credits may be earned through enrollment in late start course, the student **must be enrolled in at least one course that meets the full 15 weeks of the semester**. Students must register for *all coursework* at the start of the term for late start courses/modules to be included in the full-time study requirement. Any late addition of late start courses/ modules after the add/drop date will not be considered in the full-time study requirement.

To be considered for an Excelsior Scholarship an applicant must meet the following eligibility requirements by the start date of the term in which they are seeking an award:

a. New York State Residency

A recipient must be a legal resident of NYS and have resided in NYS for 12 continuous months prior to the beginning of the term for which an Excelsior Scholarship award is being sought; or meet residency requirements under the NYS Jose Peralta Dream Act (Dream Act).

Note: Residency determinations are made by HESC; however, college officials should notify HESC if they have additional information indicating that an award recipient does not reside in NYS or has not resided in NYS for 12 continuous months prior to the term in which they are receiving an award or does not meet Dream Act residency requirements.

b. Citizenship

A recipient must be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen or meet Dream Act eligibility requirements.

Note: This determination is based on information provided by the student on the ISIR or Dream Act application; however, college officials should notify HESC if they have additional information indicating that an award recipient is not a citizen, eligible non-citizen or does not meet Dream Act requirements.

c. Secondary Education

A recipient must have either a certificate of graduation from a high school within the United States; or the recognized equivalent of such certificate (e.g. earned a high school equivalency diploma); or received a passing score on a federally approved ability to benefit test (taken and passed by the add/drop date) that has been identified by the State Education

Department Board of Regents and has been independently administered and evaluated as defined by the Commissioner; or beginning with the 2026-27 academic year, received a high school diploma, or the equivalent thereof, from an online high school program located within the United States that is accredited in accordance with paragraph four of appendix three hundred two of the Job Corps Policy and Requirements Handbook (Guidelines for the Ongoing Quality Monitoring of Job Corps High School Diploma (HSD) Programs), as amended from time to time. See TAP Coach: High School Diploma | HESC for more information on secondary education requirements.

Note: The secondary education requirement determination is made by the college listed by the applicant on the Excelsior Scholarship application, unless the applicant has updated their HESC account with a new college code.

d. Income

A recipient must have a combined federal adjusted gross income of $125,000 or less for academic years 2019-20 and thereafter. Income requirements prior to 2019-20 were set at $100,000 or less for the 2017-18 academic year, $110,000 or less for the 2018-19 academic year.

Note: The income determination is made by HESC in partnership with the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance; however, college officials should notify HESC if they have additional information regarding income.

e. Post-secondary Education

A recipient must be matriculated in an approved program(s) of study and be pursuing their undergraduate degree at a SUNY or CUNY college, including community colleges and the statutory colleges at Cornell University and Alfred University. Students who have earned an associate degree, and who enroll immediately after completing their associate degree in a bachelor's degree program, may receive an award for purposes of completing a bachelor's degree.

Note: This determination is made by the college listed by the applicant on the Excelsior Scholarship application unless the applicant has updated their HESC account with a new college code.

f. Credits Earned While an Excelsior Scholarship Recipient

A recipient must be enrolled in at least 12 credits in their program(s) of study each term and successfully complete 30 credits in their program(s) of study each evaluation year, or the equivalent with no break in attendance, unless such break in attendance is allowable, pursuant to program regulations. A recipient who has not completed 30 credits in their program(s) of study in the evaluation year is deemed to have the equivalent of 30 credits if they have earned credits in their current program(s) of study, including credits earned prior to matriculation, per the schedule below:

Term(s) Completed	2-, 4-, and 5-Year Programs	Approved Opportunity Programs
1	15 credits	12 credits
2	30 credits	24 credits
3	45 credits	36 credits
4	60 credits	48 credits
5	75 credits	60 credits
6	90 credits	72 credits
7	105 credits	84 credits

8	120 credits	96 credits
9	135 credits*	108 credits
10	150 credits*	120 credits

*5-year programs of study

Note: Data used to determine if a recipient was enrolled in the requisite credits towards their program(s) of study is evaluated and reported at the time of certification by the college in which the student was enrolled. The determination regarding an allowable break in attendance is made by the college in partnership with HESC, when required.

g. Credits Earned Prior to Becoming an Excelsior Scholarship Recipient

An applicant, who was a matriculated student at any point prior to applying for an Excelsior award, must have earned sufficient credits to be on track to completing an associate degree within two years or a bachelor's degree within four years with no break in attendance, unless such break in attendance was allowable, pursuant to program regulations. Sufficient credits to be on track are defined as a student earning the equivalent of 15 credits per term in their program of study (30 credits in each academic year). Students enrolled in an approved opportunity program (HEOP, EOP, SEEK, CD) must earn the equivalent of 12 credits per term in their program of study (24 credits in each academic year).

Term(s) Completed	2-, 4-, and 5-Year Programs	Approved Opportunity Programs
1	15 credits	12 credits
2	30 credits	24 credits
3	45 credits	36 credits
4	60 credits	48 credits
5	75 credits	60 credits
6	90 credits	72 credits
7	105 credits	84 credits
8	120 credits	96 credits
9	135* credits	108 credits
10	150* credits	120 credits
* 5 Year Programs of Study		

If a college code change is processed for an Excelsior Scholarship applicant prior to their eligibility determination, the applicant's record is removed from the original credit verification file and added to the new college's credit verification file.

Note: Data used to determine if an applicant has earned sufficient prior credits towards their program(s) of study with no break in attendance is provided by the college listed by the applicant on the Excelsior Scholarship application, unless

the applicant has updated their HESC account with a new college code. The determination regarding an allowable break in attendance is made by HESC in partnership with the college, when required.

h. Catching Up on Credits

An applicant who is not on track to complete an associate degree in two consecutive years or a bachelor's degree in four consecutive years (which requires the completion of an average of 30 credits each academic year) can catch up on missing credits to become eligible for an Excelsior Scholarship.

Applicants who have not yet signed the Excelsior Contract and are not on track to complete an associate degree in two years or a bachelor's degree in four years may still become eligible by catching up on missing credits in the required timeframe. Once the credit requirement is met, students must reapply. See chart above.

i. Default and Compliance Status

An applicant must 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.

An applicant must be in compliance with the terms of any service condition(s) imposed by a NYS award that they have previously received (e.g. STEM).

Note: This determination is made by HESC; however, college officials should notify HESC if they have additional information indicating that an award recipient is 1. in default on a student loan made under any NYS or federal education loan program or on the repayment of any NYS award, or 2. noncompliant with the terms of any service conditions imposed by a NYS award previously received.

Excelsior Contract

Upon approval, an applicant must execute an Excelsior Contract agreeing to reside in NYS for the length of time the award is received, and, if employed during such time, be employed in NYS. An applicant who has been determined to be eligible for an award will be instructed to sign and submit the contract by a specified deadline. Failure to sign or submit the contract by the deadline will result in the denial of the award.

Note: This determination is made by HESC.

Length of Awards and Prior Degrees

Excelsior Scholarship recipients are eligible to receive award payments for not more than two years of full-time undergraduate study in a program leading to an associate degree or four years of full-time undergraduate study in a program leading to a bachelor's degree (or five years for an approved five-year undergraduate degree program or an approved opportunity program).

Students may not receive an Excelsior award to pursue a certificate, second associate or a second bachelor's degree. Students who have earned a bachelor's degree may not use an award to earn an associate's degree.

Students who earn an associate degree and choose to enroll in a bachelor's degree program must enroll in the next regular term of the academic year to meet the continuous enrollment requirement.

Appeals

Applicants may request a review if their income was adversely affected due to disability, divorce, or separation of the applicant, parent or spouse or death of parent or spouse. Requests must be submitted to HESC by the prescribed deadline.

Students may request a review regarding on time completion determinations within the prescribed deadline.

Post Award Requirements

By signing the service contract, recipients of an Excelsior scholarship award agree to reside in NYS for a duration equal to the number of years they received the scholarship and if employed during such time, must be employed in NYS. Recipients who move out of NYS before they complete their residency requirements will have all or part of their award converted to a no-interest loan.

Military: Recipients who enter the military as a NYS resident and are deployed out of state meet the program residency requirements if they maintain their NYS residency. This allowance is not extended to the Excelsior recipients who are the spouse of a military member who is deployed out of state.

Excelsior recipients who enlist/are commissioned into the military can be credited for meeting the NYS residency requirement. Example: If an Excelsior recipient was enlisted/commissioned in the military for two years but received an Excelsior award for four years, the recipient would need to return to live/work in NYS for the 2 years remaining of their commitment or repay half the Excelsior award.

1.02. STUDENT APPLICATION

a. Excelsior Scholarship Applicants and Recipients

An Excelsior scholarship applicant is someone who has completed the Excelsior scholarship application but has not signed the Excelsior contract. Their eligibility is pending until they are deemed to meet the eligibility requirements and complete the contract.

An Excelsior scholarship recipient is any person who was, in any year, determined to be eligible for an award and who signed the Excelsior contract, regardless of whether award dollars were disbursed on the recipient's behalf. Such recipients appear on the college's Student Status Listing and an award amount of $0 or more would then be calculated by the college.

Any person who is *not* an Excelsior scholarship recipient (including students who applied in the previous year and were determined to be ineligible due to factors such as income, residency, default status or insufficient credits) must apply by taking the following steps:

Complete the FAFSA and NYS Payment/TAP application or Dream Act application. Wait 3-5 days for the FAFSA and NYS Payment application to process before completing the Excelsior application.

b. Returning Excelsior Scholarship Recipients

Returning Excelsior scholarship recipients are not required to complete the Excelsior scholarship application in any subsequent year, even if they have received a $0 award in any previous year. In each year following initial eligibility, Excelsior scholarship recipients must take the following steps:

- Complete the FAFSA and NYS Payment/TAP application or Dream Act application:
    - Each academic year, returning Excelsior scholarship recipients have until June 30th to complete the FAFSA and NYS Payment/TAP applications. Payment cannot occur until the FAFSA and NYS Payment/TAP applications have been filed and processed, and all other available awards (such as Pell and TAP) have been exhausted. An Excelsior scholarship recipient who misses the June 30 deadline will receive no payment for the academic year but remains eligible for future payments if they meet credit and eligibility requirements.

College Code Changes: Returning Excelsior scholarship recipients who transfer colleges can log into their HESC account and change their college code to reflect the new college; or notify their new college, who will update HESC's records.

c. How to Apply / When to Apply

The application period for the Excelsior Scholarship is made available each year at hesc.ny.gov/Excelsior. HESC will also notify college financial aid administrators of the open application period when the dates have been established. In addition to the annual application period, HESC may release a spring only application for students who missed the annual application deadline or are matriculating in the spring. The release of a spring only application is an annual determination.

1.03. HESC EXCELSIOR SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION PROCESSING

a. New York State Residency

Residency will be assessed by HESC in the same manner as TAP. A student must be a legal resident of NYS and have lived in NYS for 12 continuous months prior to the beginning of the term they are seeking an award to be eligible for Excelsior or meet residency requirements under the NYS Dream Act.

The residency of a dependent student is that of the parent. Parents of dependent students must have lived in New York State for 12 or more continuous months prior to the beginning of the term for which the award is being sought or applicants must meet requirements under the NYS Dream Act.

b. Income

Generally, income eligibility for the Excelsior Scholarship is based on the Federal Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) filed for the tax year two years prior to the academic year for which an award is being sought. This is the same year used on the FAFSA and NYS Payment/TAP application.

i. For dependent students, eligibility is based on both the student and parent(s) combined Federal AGI.

ii. For dependent students, whose parents are divorced or separated, eligibility is based on the custodial parent's income, any support payments received from the noncustodial parent and the student's Federal AGI, as determined during the income verification process with NYS Department of Taxation & Finance.

iii. For independent students, eligibility is based on the student's Federal AGI and, if applicable, the combined Federal AGI of the student and their spouse.

Excelsior Scholarship income limits:

2019-20 academic year and thereafter: combined Federal AGI $125,000 or less using prior prior year income.

Previous years:

- 2017-18 academic year: combined Federal AGI $100,000 or less using 2015 calendar year income.
- 2018-19 academic year: combined Federal AGI $110,000 or less using 2016 calendar year income.

c. Income Verification

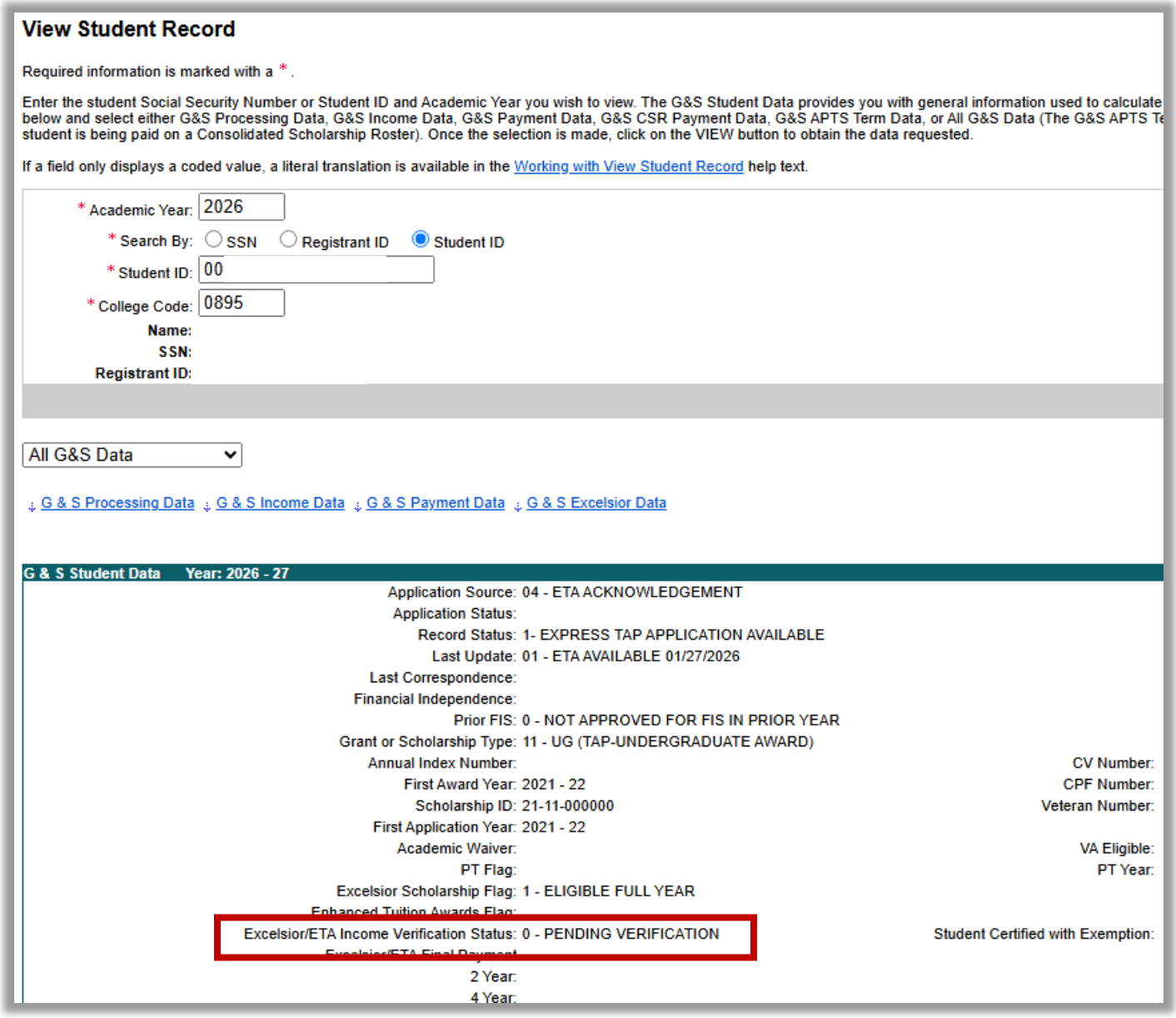
Income information is verified as part of the application process. HESC sends a daily file to the NYS Department of Taxation and Finance to verify the income information provided on the Excelsior Scholarship application. If discrepancies are found, the verified amount will be updated on the application and student record.

If income cannot be verified by the NYS Department of Taxation and Finance, the Excelsior Scholarship **applicant** should use the online Change Form to update their information and submit a copy of the necessary IRS federal income tax transcripts by the deadline indicated.

Income verification for **returning** Excelsior recipients will be completed once the NYS Payment/TAP application is received. If discrepancies are found, the verified amount will be updated. If the income cannot be verified with NYS Department of Taxation and Finance, a student should use the online Change Form to update their information and submit a copy of the necessary IRS federal income tax return(s).

Excelsior recipients will not appear on the Student Status Listing or an Excelsior Manifest if income verification is pending.

Colleges can go to the "View Student Record" screen on HESC transaction processing web pages to determine if a current Excelsior recipient has successfully completed the IVP process. See example below.



View Student Record

Required information is marked with a *.

Enter the student Social Security Number or Student ID and Academic Year you wish to view. The G&S Student Data provides you with general information used to calculate
below and select either G&S Processing Data, G&S Income Data, G&S Payment Data, G&S CSR Payment Data, G&S APTS Term Data, or All G&S Data (The G&S APTS Te
student is being paid on a Consolidated Scholarship Roster). Once the selection is made, click on the VIEW button to obtain the data requested.

If a field only displays a coded value, a literal translation is available in the Working with View Student Record help text.

* Academic Year: 2026
* Search By: SSN Registrant ID Student ID
* Student ID: 00
* College Code: 0895
Name:
SSN:
Registrant ID:

All G&S Data

G & S Processing Data | G & S Income Data | G & S Payment Data | G & S Excelsior Data

G & S Student Data Year: 2026 - 27

Application Source: 04 - ETA ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
Application Status:
Record Status: 1- EXPRESS TAP APPLICATION AVAILABLE
Last Update: 01 - ETA AVAILABLE 01/27/2026
Last Correspondence:
Financial Independence:
Prior FIS: 0 - NOT APPROVED FOR FIS IN PRIOR YEAR
Grant or Scholarship Type: 11 - UG (TAP-UNDERGRADUATE AWARD)
Annual Index Number: CV Number:
First Award Year: 2021 - 22 CPF Number:
Scholarship ID: 21-11-000000 Veteran Number:
First Application Year: 2021 - 22
Academic Waiver: VA Eligible:
PT Flag: PT Year:
Excelsior Scholarship Flag: 1 - ELIGIBLE FULL YEAR
Enhanced Tuition Awards Flag:
Excelsior/ETA Income Verification Status: 0 - PENDING VERIFICATION Student Certified with Exemption:
Excelsior/ETA Final Payment:
2 Year:
4 Year:

Excelsior/ETA Income Verification Status Codes

Excelsior/ETA income verification statuses:

- 00 - Not Verified
- 01 - Verified - T&F
- 02 - Error - T&F one or more of the following may have been returned from T&F:
  - Earner not found
  - Name Mismatch
  - Audit Status
- 03 - Verified HESC
- 04 - Verified - New Applicant from CSR

05 - Pending Verification by School
06 - Verified - ISTS Dreamer

d. Income Review Request and Income Eligibility Determination

Current year income or prior year income may be used to establish income eligibility for the Excelsior Scholarship in the event of the death, disability, divorce or legal separation of a household member whose income is used in determining program eligibility, which occurred prior to the start of the academic year*. Applicants seeking to use current or prior year income must submit a completed income eligibility determination form and copies of either the current year W-2's or the prior year federal tax returns and W-2s, along with documentation supporting either the death, disability, divorce or legal separation of a household member before any income adjustment is made. Review requests should be submitted within the academic year that the review is requested for.

*Implemented in the 2018-19 academic year.

e. Declining an Excelsior Scholarship Award

An Excelsior Scholarship applicant may withdraw their application prior to being offered an award or decline the award offer as part of the Excelsior Scholarship Contract process.

1.04. ON TIME COMPLETION

a. Change in Major and College Transfers and Registered ADA Recipients

The Excelsior Scholarship program is designed to encourage students to complete their college degrees on time. For students without disabilities, this requires the completion of an associate degree in two years and completion of a bachelor's degree in four years (or five years for an approved five-year undergraduate degree program or an approved opportunity program).

Students with disabilities, registered with the college disability office prior to the start of the term, can take longer to complete their degree and retain their Excelsior Scholarship eligibility if their disability requires them to attend less than full time (at least 12 credits per semester earning 30 credits per year, or its equivalent, in their approved program(s) of study) or if they need to pause their studies due to their disability. ADA students attending part-time must successfully complete all credits they enrolled in for each term.

b. Double Majors/Dual Degrees

Students pursuing double majors/dual degrees need only be on track to timely completion of one degree to be eligible for the Excelsior Scholarship or to receive payment of the Excelsior Scholarship award. Though students may enroll in coursework from both degrees to meet the credit requirements, completion of both degrees is not required.

c. Declaring a Major

Excelsior scholarship recipients who do not declare a major by the required timeframe (e.g., no later than 30 days after the institution's add/drop period of the first semester of their Junior year in a four year program, no later than 30 days after the add/drop period of the first semester of their sophomore year in a two year program), as required under SED regulations applicable to State financial aid awards, are not eligible for an Excelsior Scholarship award payment until such recipient has declared a major. Award payments are not retroactive to semesters in which the declaration of major was required but not submitted. The college should enter certification code 9 in the certification field for such students.

d. Special Sequencing for Degree Completion

There are a few programs leading to an associate degree in two years or a bachelor's degree in four years that follow different sequencing which do not enable students to meet the requirements outlined for the Excelsior Scholarship. A student who enrolls in such a program and adheres to the program's prescribed credit requirements is eligible for an Excelsior Scholarship. This does not apply to students who are in standard degree programs that find themselves out of sequence.

e. Federal Verification

Students selected for federal verification do not need to complete the verification process prior to certification of the Excelsior Scholarship award. Federal verification has no bearing on eligibility for Excelsior and regardless of a student's verification status, the student is eligible for the Excelsior Scholarship if there is a valid ISIR with an SAI and NYS Payment/TAP application on file, if applicable, for the term/year the student is seeking an award. If there are changes in the value of the Excelsior Scholarship after federal verification, the college can adjust the award amount based on new financial aid information available to them.

f. Repeat Classes

If the grade received for a previously taken class was not accepted for credit toward the student's program(s) of study, the student may repeat the class and credits for the repeated class may count toward both the full-time status and the 30-credit per year requirement.

If the grade received for a previously taken class was accepted for credit toward the student's program(s) of study, the repeat the class will not count toward the full-time status or the 30-credit per year requirement unless the student is enrolled in their final term. If the student is in the final term of study, the 30-credit requirement is waived. For more details on the Final Year of Study requirements, see How to Verify Credits Chapter 2.02 b.

g. Enrollment in Late-Start Classes

Students enrolled in fewer than 12 credits and charged part-time tuition are not eligible for an Excelsior Scholarship award even if they add a late-start class – a class starting after the point of 100% tuition liability to bring them to 12 credits (See How to Calculate Awards). The college should enter certification code 9 in the certification field.

h. Remedial Classes

Remedial classes cannot be counted toward the requirement to be enrolled in 12 credits per semester. If a student's enrollment in remedial classes prevents them from meeting this requirement in the first term of matriculated study, the student will be decertified for an award at the end of that term but has opportunity to be eligible for payment for the second term by enrolling in 12 or more credits in their program of study for the second term and successfully completing 30 credits (for students not in an approved remedial program) in their program of study by the end of the 365-day period. Students in **approved opportunity programs** are required to complete at least 24 credits in their program(s) of study by the end of the 365-day period.

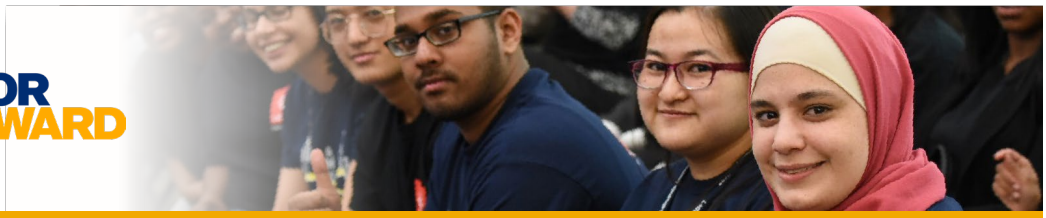
Students who are not in an approved remedial program who do not successfully earn 30 credits after the 365-day period would no longer be eligible for the program.

i. Allowable Interruptions

Applicants who are determined to be ineligible for failure to meet the annual credit or continuous enrollment requirements and who can demonstrate they have approved extenuating circumstances may request a review of the decision by completing and submitting the Excelsior Scholarship Program *Allowable Interruption form* to HESC.

Once the college certifies an applicant is not credit eligible, HESC will send a notification to the applicant with guidance advising the applicant can complete an 'Allowable Interruption form' linked in the notification.

Recipients who are determined to be ineligible for failure to meet the annual credit or continuous enrollment requirements and who can demonstrate they have approved extenuating circumstances may request a review of the decision by completing and submitting the college's Excelsior Scholarship Program *Allowable Interruption form*.



Excelsior Scholarship Program
Chapter 2: How to Verify Credits

The "How to Verify Credits" section applies to establishing initial eligibility only.

To be deemed an Excelsior scholarship recipient an applicant must be on track to completing an associate degree in two years or a bachelor's degree in four years (five years in an approved five-year program or approved opportunity program).

Credit verification, through HESC, is performed by the college submission to establish initial eligibility of the applicant. Once an eligible recipient, the college will use the certification process to determine whether recipients remain on-track to timely completion of their degree.

Definitions:

1. Current college. When referring to transfer students, the current college is the college to which the student has newly transferred. This college is responsible for verifying credits.
2. On track to timely completion of a degree. To be on track to timely completion of a degree, a student must meet both the credit requirement and be continuously enrolled, except in special circumstances as allowed by Excelsior law and regulation.
3. Term. Fall or Spring terms only, unless otherwise specified.

2.01. CREDIT VERIFICATION

a. CREDIT VERIFICATION REQUIREMENT

First-time, returning and transfer students are eligible to apply for the Excelsior Scholarship. Each college must verify credits for all students who have applied for an Excelsior Scholarship award to determine whether such applicants are on track as prescribed by the Excelsior Scholarship program.

i. First-time Students

A first-time student is one who has never matriculated (i.e., pursued a degree) prior to the term or academic year for which the Excelsior Scholarship award is first sought.

For the fall term Excelsior application, applicants who identify themselves as a new (recent) high school graduate and under the age of 20, HESC will send their information to the NYS Education Department (SED) for verification. If SED cannot verify the applicant is a first-time freshman based on recent high school graduation, HESC will send the credit verification to the college.

For the spring term Excelsior applications, all credit verifications are sent to the college.

Colleges must verify credits to determine whether an Excelsior Scholarship applicant is a first-time student; however, a first-time student will always meet the initial credit requirement regardless of the number of college

credits earned prior to matriculation. Any credits earned while in high school through AP or college courses, courses taken as part of job training and/or the military, and other non-matriculated classes should not be included as part of the initial credit verification. Credits earned while nonmatriculated may be used to meet term and annual credit requirements once matriculated.

ii. Returning and Transfer Students

A 'returning student' is one who matriculated prior to the term or year for which the Excelsior Scholarship award is being sought.

A 'transfer student' is one who was matriculated at one college or university and who now seeks to attend a different college or university.

Colleges must verify credits for returning and transfer students applying for an Excelsior Scholarship to determine whether such applicants are on track to complete their associate degree in two years and their bachelor's degree in four years by:

- Earning an average of 30 or more credits per year towards their program(s) of study since first matriculating in accordance with Section b. below.
- For transfer students, credits earned at the previous college must be accepted by the current college in accordance with Section b. below. Terms completed must be assessed from the date the student first matriculates at any college.
- Being continuously enrolled with no break in attendance since first matriculating in college, except in special circumstances as allowed by Excelsior law and regulation.

iii. Students in P-TECH Programs

A student in a P-TECH program is not eligible to receive an Excelsior Scholarship while attending the P-Tech program. Credits earned prior to receiving their high school diploma should not be used in assessing credit eligibility once they are matriculated in college. Once matriculated, these students are considered first-time recipients regardless of whether the P-Tech program or college had deemed them to be matriculated while in high school.

This includes P-Tech students who complete an associate degree while in the P-Tech high school and apply to a 4-year college AND students who exit the P-Tech program before completing the degree once they complete high school diploma requirement.

b. DETERMINING ON-TIME COMPLETION (SCHEDULE)

To be deemed initially eligible for an Excelsior Scholarship, students must: (1) be on track for on-time completion, (2) have no break in attendance since first matriculating at any college (except in special circumstances as described in Section 2.02 and (3) have earned credits in their current program(s) of study per the schedule below:

Term(s) Completed	2, 4-, and 5-Year Programs	Opportunity Programs
1	15 credits	12 credits
2	30 credits	24 credits
3	45 credits	36 credits
4	60 credits	48 credits
5	75 credits	60 credits
6	90 credits	72 credits
7	105 credits	84 credits

8	120 credits	96 credits
9	135 credits*	108 credits
10	150 credits*	120 credits

*5-year programs of study

In accordance with the schedule, a matriculated student who has been enrolled for one term must have a total of 15 credits towards their program(s) of study prior to being an Excelsior Scholarship recipient.

i. Five-Year Programs of Study, Opportunity Programs
Students enrolled in a program of study normally requiring five years or an approved opportunity program will be entitled to complete their degree within 5 years, pursuant to the above schedule.

ii. Credits Earned While a Nonmatriculated Student/Use of Banked Credits

For purposes of determining on-time completion, Excelsior Scholarship applicants may have earned college credits toward their program(s) of study through a combination of classes taken in previous Fall, Winter, Spring and/or Summer term(s), and/or earned prior to matriculation in college. Any credits earned while a non-matriculated student through high school AP,IB or college classes, courses taken as part of job training and/or the military, and other non-matriculated classes may be used to fulfill the requirements above. Such credits must be accepted by the college and applicable to the student's program(s) of study. These credits may only be used once during a student's college career.

For purposes of verifying credits, colleges may use college credits earned while a nonmatriculated student to meet the above schedule requirements for returning or transfer student.

c. VERIFYING CREDITS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES UNDER THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

For on-time degree completion, ADA students must meet the following requirements:

- If enrolled part-time, successfully completed the number of credits for which they enrolled each semester in their program(s) of study, and maintained continuous enrollment, unless failure to complete attempted (enrolled) credits or maintain continuous enrollment unless they meet one of the approved reasons for an allowable interruption/special circumstance as described in Section 2.02 below.
- If enrolled full time, taking a combination of 30 credits, must successfully complete at least 30 credits in their program(s) of study in a 365-day period, and maintained continuous enrollment, unless they meet one of the approved reasons for an allowable interruption/special circumstance as described in Section 2.02 below.
- If enrolled full-time, taking fewer than a combination of 30 credits (e.g. 12 credits per term), must successfully complete all attempted credits.

i. Registration

Students who self-identify as having a disability under the ADA on the Excelsior Scholarship application must register with their college office for students with disabilities prior to the start of the term where they are seeking an award.

Students not identified as ADA students by the college will be evaluated using the credit schedule for students without disabilities requiring an average of 30 credits per year.

ii. Determining On-Time Completion for Students with Disabilities Under the ADA

To determine eligibility for new applicants, HESC provides each college with a file list of self-identified ADA students using web file transfer (HE9078) and requests the following information be returned using web file transfer (HE9079):

- College
- Student's name
- Student's ID
- Designated as ADA student at the school – Y/N
- Terms enrolled
- # of credits enrolled per term
- # of credits completed per term
- Leave of Absence (LOA) date
- LOA due to disability – Y/N

Upon receipt of the HE9079 form, HESC will review and make a determination of eligibility.

iii. ADA Appeals

ADA applicants who are denied, are sent an email indicating they may sign in to their HESC account and complete the *Excelsior Scholarship Allowable Interruption* form. Once this form is completed and submitted, HESC will review and make a determination.

d. APPLICANTS WHO HAVE EARNED A PRIOR CERTIFICATE, DEGREE OR CREDITS

Applicants who have earned a certificate can receive an Excelsior Scholarship award to pursue an associate or bachelor's degree, provided:

- they immediately enroll in a two-year or four-year program upon completion of their certificate program; and
- credits earned (30 credits or 24 for students in an approved opportunity program) at the previous college are accepted by the current college and are applicable to their program(s) of study.

Applicants who have earned an associate's degree can receive an award to pursue a bachelor's degree, provided:

- they immediately enroll in a four-year program upon completion of their associate's degree;
- at least 60 credits* are accepted by the current college and are applicable to their program(s) of study; and
- they are not pursuing a second associate's degree.

Applicants who have previously earned a bachelor's degree (foreign or domestic) are ineligible to receive an Excelsior award.

Applicants who have earned credits at a foreign college that have been accepted toward the approved program must meet continuous enrollment requirements. Foreign credits accepted by the college cannot be used as banked credits. Students who previously matriculated at a foreign college are not considered first time students once enrolled at a NYS college.

Applicants who have previously attended college as a matriculated student and are not on track for on-time completion of their degree are ineligible for the Excelsior Scholarship.

*See Chapter and section 1.01, subsection f. for *recipient* credit requirements.

e. METHODS FOR VERIFYING CREDITS

There are two methods available for credit verification. HESC will generate and send files containing Excelsior Scholarship applicants to colleges for verification of attendance and credits earned. For each student record on the

files, colleges must report the total number of credits earned by students toward their program(s) of study. Files are sent and received using the file transfer system.

1. Outgoing file- HE8838 Excelsior Credit Certification Request file to College
2. Incoming files from colleges (college decision to use form that meets their needs):
    - HE8839 – Excelsior Student Credit Verification Response
    - HE8869- Excelsior Student Credit Verification Response Spreadsheet

Per subsection 'c.' above, students who self-identify as ADA on their Excelsior application will be placed on an ADA Excelsior Spreadsheet and emailed to the college for verification of ADA designation and credit verification. Colleges will complete and send back to HESC.

2.02. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

a. LEAVE OF ABSENCE/BREAK IN ATTENDANCE

Approved leaves of absence (LOA) may not jeopardize students' eligibility for the Excelsior Scholarship award. Reasons for an approved LOA may include a death in the immediate family, student's medical illness, caring for immediate family member due to illness, parental leave or military deployment.

An applicant for whom the college has identified as having a break in study, as indicated on the credit verification, may complete an Excelsior scholarship Allowable Interruption form, located in their HESC student account. The Allowable Interruption form must be submitted by the end of the academic year in which the student is seeking an award.

Colleges will be asked to provide HESC with a detailed credit history. HESC will review the Allowable Interruption form and any supporting documentation submitted by the applicant. A final determination regarding the student's eligibility will be made by HESC's and the applicant will be notified of the determination.

Neither students with disabilities nor students without disabilities can receive or retain an Excelsior Scholarship award if they take longer to complete due to a change of majors or a transfer to another college. In other words, a student is only eligible for eight payments (10 in an approved five-year program).

b. FINAL YEAR OF STUDY

Students who are on track to graduate and need fewer than 12 credits in their final two terms prior to graduation must enroll in 12 credits each term but only six credits must be in their program of study in the second to last term and one course must be in their program(s) of study in their last term. These students do not need to meet the 30 credit per year requirement for the final year of study.

i. Repeat Classes

A student can repeat a course and have the course count toward full-time status and the required 30 credits per year requirement if the grade received for a previously taken class was <u>not</u> accepted for credit toward the student's program(s) of study.

In the final term, as indicated in Section 2.02 b, students are required to enroll in at least 12 credits and at least one course must be toward their program(s) of study. In the second-to-last term, students are required to enroll in at least 12 credits and at least six credits must be toward their program(s) of study. Any excess credits enrolled in beyond those deemed necessary to meet their program(s) of study requirements may be in any credit bearing course offered by the college, including repeated courses even if the grade received for the previously taken course was accepted for credit toward the student's program(s) of study (e.g. to earn a better grade). The 30-credit requirement is waived for students in their final year of study.

c. COURSE STRUCTURE FOR CERTAIN PROGRAMS

Students enrolled in programs leading to an associate degree in two years or a bachelor's degree in four years that follow specific sequencing, which does not enable students to meet the requirements outlined for the Excelsior Scholarship, are eligible provided they adhere to the approved programs' prescribed credit requirements. This does not apply to students who are in standard degree programs that find themselves out of sequence.

Students who enroll in a program structured to begin only in a Spring or Fall term and who had an approved break in attendance for the term prior to the start of such program, will be considered to have an allowable interruption of study.

Excelsior Scholarship Program

Chapter 3: How to Calculate Awards

3.01 Excelsior Scholarship Award Calculation

The Excelsior Scholarship is a last dollar tuition award as indicated in NYS Education law. As such, any financial aid award that is not specifically designated for non-tuition costs (for all recipients of the award) is required to be applied toward a recipient's tuition costs prior to Excelsior. This includes any institutional or private financial aid where the provider indicates other tuition awards must be applied before their award. The policy of the non-State award does not override the statutory requirement of Excelsior.

The maximum Excelsior Scholarship award is $ actual tuition not to exceed the resident undergraduate tuition at a SUNY state operated campus.

An Excelsior Scholarship Recipient is any person who, in any year, is determined to be eligible for an award and who signed the Excelsior Contract, regardless of whether award dollars were disbursed on the recipient's behalf.

a. Determining an Excelsior Scholarship Recipient's Award Amount

To determine a recipient's award amount, the **resident undergraduate tuition rate** (at SUNY State-operated colleges or CUNY Senior colleges or actual tuition at SUNY and CUNY community colleges, whichever is less) is **reduced by the amount of certain other student financial aid** the recipient has or will receive for the academic year.

- To determine the amount of a recipient's Excelsior Scholarship award, colleges must deduct all aid listed below from the resident undergraduate tuition rate charged by SUNY or CUNY. Funds that are identified for cost of attendance (COA), tuition, or funds with no designation must be included in the calculation of an Excelsior Scholarship award.

- Pell Grant
- TAP Award
- TAP Tuition Credit
- SEOG Grant
- ACCESS/VR
- Institutional Scholarship (unless specifically designated as a non-tuition award only for all recipients)
- Outside scholarships (unless specifically designated as a non-tuition award only for all recipients)
  - The outside scholarship's "non-tuition award" designation must apply to both recipients of the Excelsior Scholarship and non-Excelsior Scholarship recipients (all recipients).
- Financial assistance paid to opportunity program students through the EOP, SEEK or College Discovery program should be deducted if the aid is used to pay the students' tuition expense.
  - If such financial assistance is used for transportation, books or other nontuition expenses, it should not be deducted when calculating the Excelsior Scholarship award amount.
- Military funding such as Chapter 33 benefits
- TRIO funds designated for nontuition costs should not be included in the Excelsior calculation
- AmeriCorps awards should only be included for students who use it for an education award where the funds are intended to pay the cost of attendance. AmeriCorps awards should be excluded for those students who select that the funds be used exclusively for housing or student loans.

b. How to Calculate the Excelsior Scholarship Award Amount

Excelsior Scholarship awards are determined on a term basis for each Fall and Spring semester. Summer and/or Winter sessions are not eligible for Excelsior Scholarship award payments.

SUNY State-operated Colleges, CUNY Senior Colleges and SUNY and CUNY Community Colleges: The award should be calculated for a term by deducting all applicable financial aid, as described in section 3.01 a. above, from the term resident undergraduate tuition. (one half of the annual resident tuition)

In all instances, if the remaining term tuition liability is greater than zero and less than or equal to one-half of the annual maximum award), the Excelsior Scholarship will cover the remaining tuition expense.

Unequal Distribution of Award Between Terms

Awards that may be unequally split between terms should be reflected as applied to each term and the Excelsior scholarship amount will reflect the difference, by term.

For example, if a student will receive a $500 private scholarship in which $300 is awarded for the first term and $200 is awarded for the second term, the college should subtract $300 from the term tuition charge when calculating the first term Excelsior Scholarship amount and subtract $200 from the term tuition charge when calculating the second term Excelsior Scholarship amount.

c. Excelsior Scholarship Recipients Whose Tuition is Covered by Other Aid

Recipients whose tuition is fully covered by other financial aid remain Excelsior Scholarship Recipients but receive $0 for that term. Recipients who have a $0 award do not need to submit an Excelsior Scholarship application again in subsequent years because they are already considered to be a recipient.

d. Excelsior Scholarship Recipients Whose Tuition is *Not* Covered by Other Aid

Recipients whose tuition is *not* covered by the above resources will receive an Excelsior Scholarship award up to the annual resident undergraduate SUNY tuition per year.

3.02. TUITION RATES/TUITION FREEZE AND AWARD CALCULATION

Excelsior Scholarship award amounts should be calculated using the current SUNY undergraduate annual resident tuition rate or actual tuition, whichever is less.

a. Tuition Rate

For recipients appearing on the Student Status Listing, colleges should charge the tuition rate when the student incurs a full tuition liability (Note: this may be referred to as the drop/add deadline date or certification status date if that's the date when the college determines enrollment status for financial aid purposes).

b. Supplemental Assistance Provided to Opportunity Program Students and the Excelsior Award Calculation

Though NYS Education law indicates funds provided by NYS approved opportunity programs can only be applied to non-tuition costs, please note any other financial assistance paid to opportunity program students through the EOP, SEEK or College Discovery program should be deducted if the aid is used to pay a recipient's tuition. Any opportunity program financial assistance that is used for transportation, books or other nontuition expenses, should not be deducted when calculating the Excelsior Scholarship award amount.

c. Issues Affecting Tuition Rates

i. Community College Non-Resident Tuition Rates

Excelsior Scholarship awards cover SUNY resident undergraduate tuition only. Students attending a community college outside their home county and who are charged a higher non-resident tuition rate must submit a valid Certificate of Residency from their home county to the college they are attending to be eligible for the resident tuition rate. Students are liable for the remaining tuition charges above the resident rate.

ii. University Centers and SUNY Statutory Colleges

The Excelsior Scholarship award covers the standard undergraduate resident tuition rate at the State University of New York. Excelsior Scholarship Recipients attending a university center or statutory college and who are charged a higher tuition rate will receive a maximum award equal to the standard resident undergraduate tuition rate through the Excelsior Scholarship award.

iii. Credits Beyond the Full-time Undergraduate Resident Standard Amount

The Excelsior Scholarship will not cover the extra tuition amount for students who choose to take extra classes that result in a higher tuition rate (typically in excess of 18 credits per term).

iv. Summer or Winter/Intersession Terms

The Excelsior Scholarship does not apply to Summer or Winter/Intersession courses. The credits earned in Summer or Winter/Intersession may be used to fulfill the 30-credit per year requirement.

v. ADA Students

ADA students receiving an Excelsior Scholarship are charged tuition based on the actual number of credits taken using the resident undergraduate per-credit tuition rate.

vi. Study Abroad

The resident undergraduate tuition rate should be charged for Excelsior Scholarship Recipients participating in study abroad programs. Excelsior Scholarship recipients are eligible to use their awards towards tuition whether the study abroad program host college is a public college, private college, located with New York State or outside of New York State or outside of the United States.

vii. Full-time Attendance with Banked Credits

Students may use college credits earned while a high school student and/or in other non-matriculated status toward their enrollment in 12 credits per semester. Students who were enrolled in fewer than 12 credits should be deemed to be meet the definition of full-time attendance if they have "banked" college credits that were earned prior to matriculated status that would bring them to 12 credits if the credits are accepted at the college in the student's approved program(s) of study. The Excelsior Scholarship award amount should be calculated based on the resident undergraduate tuition rate but should not exceed the actual tuition charged for the term.

Banked credits can also be used to provide continual enrollment even if the student is not enrolled for the term. For example, if a student brings in 12 credits from high school and completes an associate's degree in three semesters, banked credits may be used as a placeholder should the student decide to wait another semester to begin their bachelor's degree.

Note: Banked credit can only be used once per credit.

viii. Students Enrolled in Coursework Not Applicable Towards Their Program of Study- Full-time Status

Recipients who are enrolled in coursework that is not part of their program of study can use banked credits to meet the full-time requirements if the credits are accepted by the college and are accepted toward their program of study. These recipients must be making satisfactory progress toward timely completion of their program of study.:

- Students **who are not able to** enroll in 12 credits in their program of study due to the acceptance of banked credits as a non-matriculated student and scheduling issues: If a student is using banked credits to meet the credit requirement, the award is based on the full-time resident tuition charge.
- Students **who are able to** enroll in 12 credits towards their program of study and choose not to and then use banked credits to meet the credit requirement, are paid up to the per-credit cost of the number of credits applicable to the program of study, not to exceed the SUNY resident undergraduate full-time tuition charge. They are not eligible for the full-time resident tuition because they chose not to enroll in the required credits when the coursework was available to them.

Excelsior Scholarship Program

Chapter 4: How to Certify

4.01. CERTIFICATION GUIDELINES

a. Assessing Transfer Credits

i. Excelsior Scholarship Recipients Who Transfer

Students who transfer within the SUNY/CUNY system may retain their Excelsior Scholarship if they continue to meet the credit requirement. College code changes must be made to update the student's record to reflect the new college.

Once the college code change is processed, a recipient will be included in the Student Status Listing (SSL) for the new college if HESC has the new student ID for the student. The "Excelsior Indicator" on the Student Record will be set to 'Y". There will be no dollar value displayed for the award as the college must calculate the amount after other aid is factored into the calculation.

Credit verification for these students will be completed as part of the certification process at the end of the term. New colleges must review the academic history (total number of terms attended) of the students to ensure that the appropriate number of credits are accepted for them to meet the on-time completion requirement.

ii. How to Identify Transfer Students Receiving Excelsior

In addition to the SSL, colleges may check online through hesc.ny.gov (Partner Access/Financial Aid Administrators, Transaction processing, G & S Student Data) to determine if a student was an Excelsior recipient prior to the transfer to the new college.

Check the 'Scholarship ID' for the first-year scholarship ID indicator. Additionally, the 'Excelsior Scholarship flag' will reflect eligibility based on the prior year certification. Values for the Excelsior Scholarship flag include:

- 0 = Not Applicable
- 1 = Eligible
- 2 = Ineligible post initial award (student declined award)
- 7 = Ineligible, over the income level
- 8 = Declined by student after contract signed
- 9 = Eligible Spring term only
- 10 = Ineligible post initial award (receives other scholarship)
- 97 – ineligible due to break in attendance
- 98 = School certification resulted in loss of award eligibility
- 99 = Ineligible HESC determined, other reason.

A transfer college can package an Excelsior award for a student who is deemed as '1' eligible if they are taking 12 or more credits in their program of study for term 1 or 12 or more credits in their program of study for term 2 and will meet the annual 30 credit requirement. The student must make up any lost credits in transfer over the winter and summer terms.

b. Use of Banked Credits- (see also 3.02 C vii for when to charge full-time or part-time tuition)

Credits earned by a student prior to college matriculation, through AP and IB or college classes in high school, non-matriculated classes etc., that are accepted by the college in the student's program(s) of study may be used to meet these credit requirements. The treatment of tuition charges is determined by whether the student is able to take 12 credits in their program of study or through no fault of their own is unable to take 12 credits in their program of study. "Banked" credits may be used only once. Examples:

1. A part-time student is choosing to enroll in 9 credits applicable to the program(s) of study and is using 3 unused banked credits
    - Actual tuition reported is based on 9 credits
    - Excelsior award calculated based on part-time tuition
    - Students may use 3 banked credits to meet the 12-credit requirement for the term

2. A full-time student is enrolled in 12 credits, with 9 credits applicable to the program(s) of study due to an inability to enroll in 12 credits in their program of study because of credits earned and accepted by the college in their program of study, and is using 3 unused banked credits
    - Full-time tuition is reported
    - Excelsior award is based on full-time tuition
    - Students meet the 12-credit requirement using the banked credits

It may be possible that a college accepts a significant number of credits earned prior to matriculation which results in a student fulfilling all program of study requirements early and, in the remaining (last) term, enrolls in coursework outside the program(s) of study. If this student is on track for on-time completion they are eligible for an Excelsior award payment if they take at least one course in their program of study. The award amount should be calculated based on the annual tuition rate and should not exceed the actual tuition charged.

c. Use of Additional Credits from a Prior Year for Students 'On Track for On Time Completion'

Students who are on track for on-time completion with additional applicable credits from a prior year may be eligible for payment in the current year if their total number of credits meets the threshold based on the number of terms in their college career.

For example, if a matriculated Excelsior recipient earned 33 credits in the first year of their program, and enrolls in 12 credits in fall and 15 credits in spring in their second year, the college can use the 3 extra credits from year 1 to add to the 27 credits. For the current year, the student would then have 30 credits for evaluation term 2 and a total of 60 credits for the 4 terms enrolled in college and receive the payment.

4.02. METHODS FOR CERTIFYING AWARDS

Colleges can choose one of two methods to certify Excelsior Scholarship awards: (A) Electronic Certification File Process, or (B) "HESCWeb" Certification:

a. Electronic Certification File Process

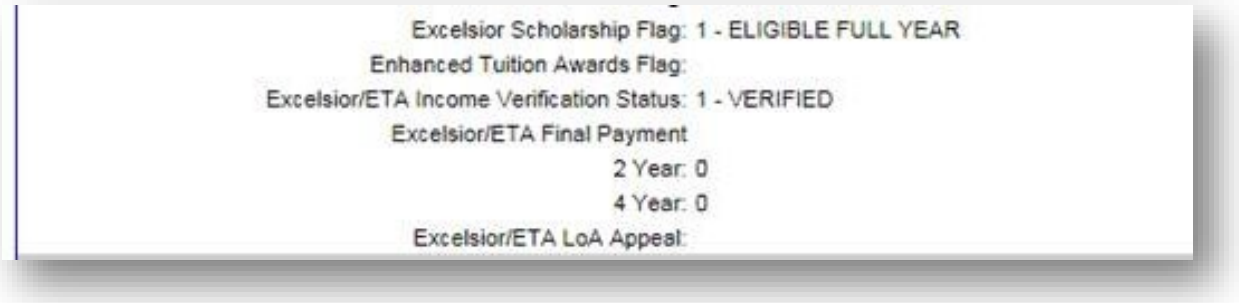
For colleges choosing to certify through the electronic certification file process, HESC provides an initial Excelsior Manifest - HE8976 ("Manifest") at the end of each term, listing all students ready to be certified for that term.

The following steps must then be taken:

1. The college loads the HE8976 Manifest to their system.
2. Once downloaded, the college enters all required data in all fields on the HE8976 Manifest.
3. The college sends the Excelsior Certification File – HE8977 ("Certification File") containing the data to HESC using HESC's secure web file transfer system.
4. HESC processes the HE8977 Certification Files daily (each evening) for the current academic year. If multiple files for an individual student are submitted in single day, the last version sent during that day will be processed that evening.
5. After processing the HE8977 Certification Files each evening, HESC loads the subsequent HE8976 Manifest each morning, containing:
    a. Awards ready to be certified for the first time
    b. Certifications that were unable to be processed due to errors
    c. Results of the college's prior successful certifications; and
    d. Awards that need to be re-certified because the student's TAP award changed.
6. After downloading the subsequent HE8976 Manifest, colleges should review the data, update student records, and send back any new certifications or corrections to prior certifications.

As you receive these files, please note:

- Only those students who were identified as eligible for an Excelsior payment will be included.
- Any student who was deemed ineligible in a prior year will not be displayed on the subsequent manifest file.
- Students who did not complete the income verification process (IVP) with the NYS Department of Taxation and Finance will not be added to the manifest until IVP is completed.
    - First-time applicants: income is verified prior to final approval of Excelsior.
    - Returning recipients: HESC runs a daily file verifying income.
        - Income verified: student will display on manifest for certification.
        - Income cannot be verified: student will receive an email to review their account where they will find an 'Income Questionnaire' to be completed and returned to HESC. Income information will be manually updated. You will be able to see the income status on view student record, as shown below:

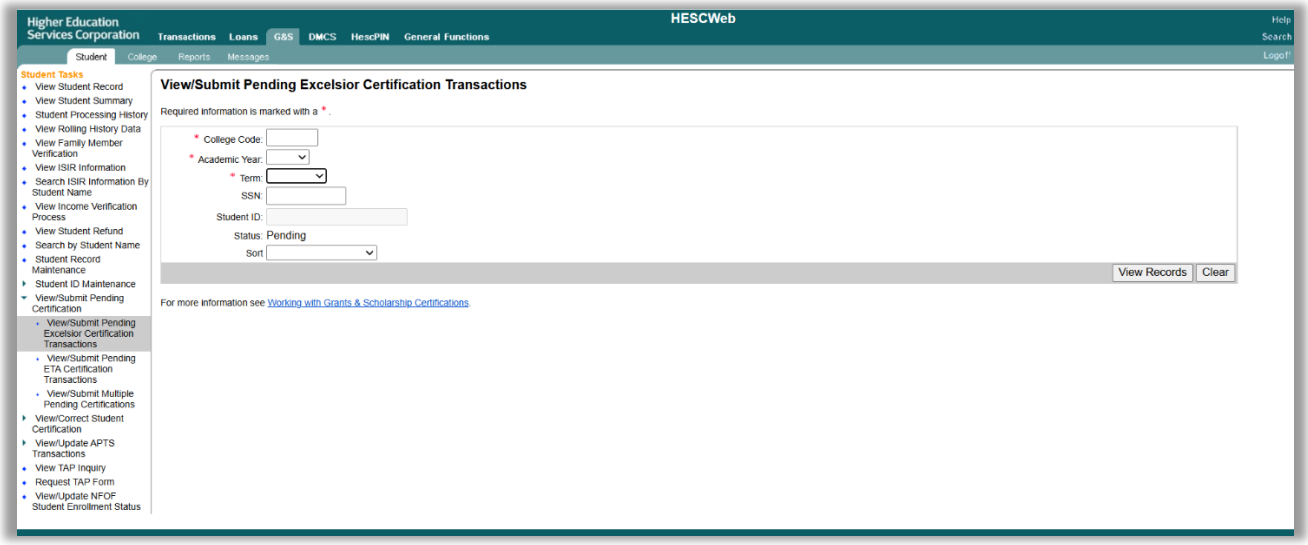


b. HESCWeb Certification

Colleges choosing to certify online via HESCweb follow these steps:

1. At the end of each term, log into Transaction Processing: webapps.hesc.ny.gov/hescweb/public

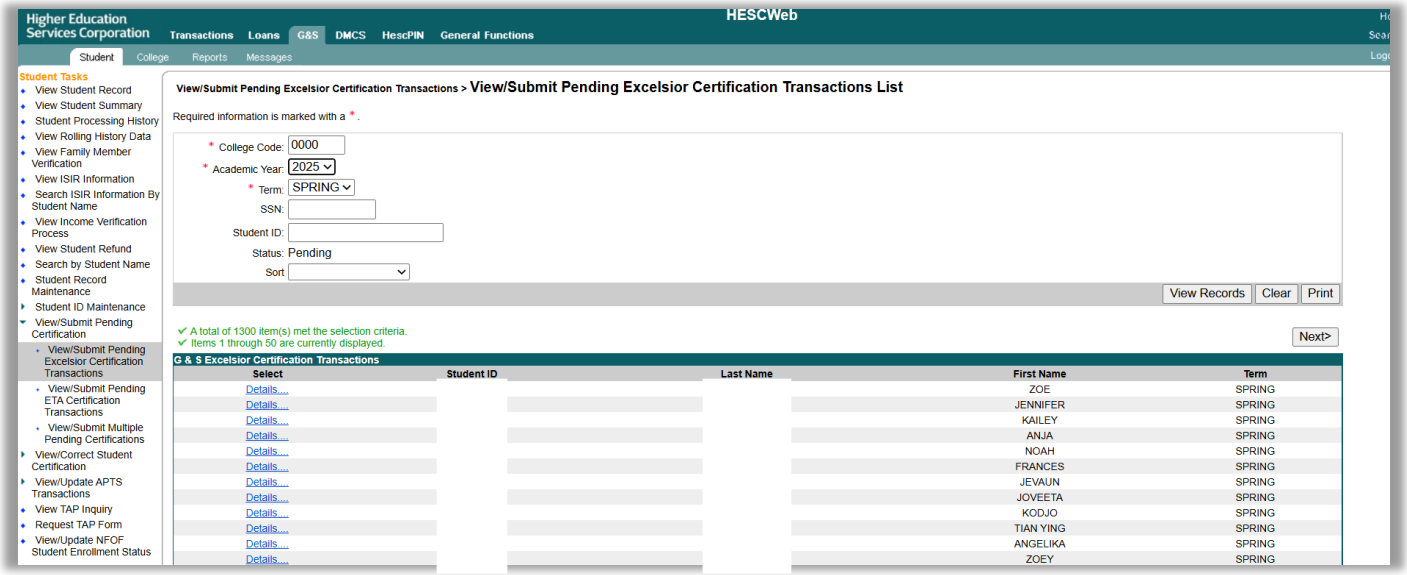
2. Click on "**View/Submit Pending Certification"** to expand available options.
3. **Click on** "View/Submit Pending Excelsior Certification Transactions**."**



4. On the next screen:
   a. Enter your HESC college code (if not prefilled), academic year and term. If the Student ID field is:
      i. populated, only the student for the ID entered will be listed.
      ii. blank, click on the View Records button in the lower right-hand side of this screen to see a list of all pending Excelsior certifications.

   Note: Income verification must be successfully completed before the pending Excelsior certification will be displayed.

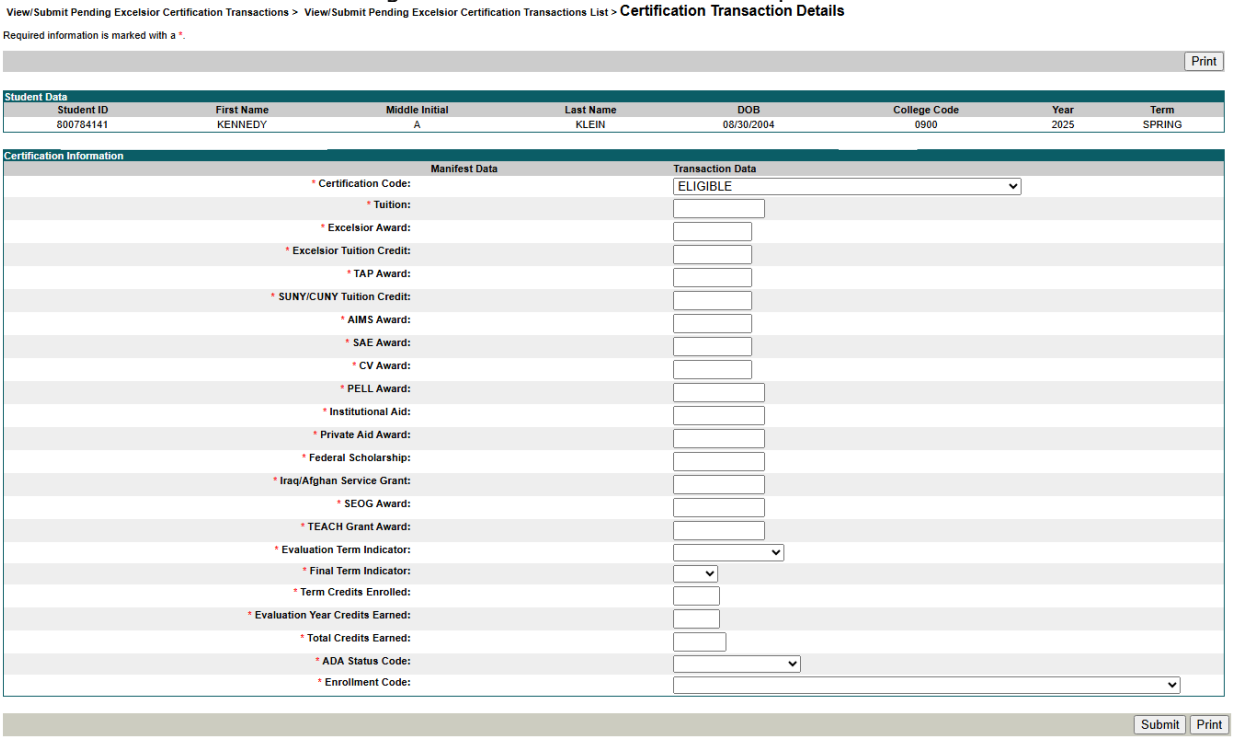
   b. Click on **Details** and you will be brought to the Certification Page.



5. On the Certification page, enter information in all required fields.
   a. Each field used to report other aid, tuition, SUNY/CUNY Tuition Credit must contain a dollar value.

b. "0" must be entered when there is no amount to be reported.

6. Select **Submit** in the lower right-hand corner of the screen to process the transaction.


View/Submit Pending Excelsior Certification Transactions > View/Submit Pending Excelsior Certification Transactions List > **Certification Transaction Details**

Required information is marked with a *.

Print

Student Data

Student ID	First Name	Middle Initial	Last Name	DOB	College Code	Year	Term
800784141	KENNEDY	A	KLEIN	08/30/2004	0900	2025	SPRING

Certification Information

	Manifest Data	Transaction Data
* Certification Code:		ELIGIBLE
* Tuition:		
* Excelsior Award:		
* Excelsior Tuition Credit:		
* TAP Award:		
* SUNY/CUNY Tuition Credit:		
* AIMS Award:		
* SAE Award:		
* CV Award:		
* PELL Award:		
* Institutional Aid:		
* Private Aid Award:		
* Federal Scholarship:		
* Iraq/Afghan Service Grant:		
* SEOG Award:		
* TEACH Grant Award:		
* Evaluation Term Indicator:		
* Final Term Indicator:		
* Term Credits Enrolled:		
* Evaluation Year Credits Earned:		
* Total Credits Earned:		
* ADA Status Code:		
* Enrollment Code:		

Submit Print

7. A message then appears at the top of the screen indicating if the transaction has been successfully submitted or if there are errors in any of the fields.

4.03. DATA FIELDS FOR CERTIFICATION

The Excelsior Certification File and HESCweb certification screens contain multiple data fields.

All fields are required and reported by term, except Evaluation Year Term Credits Earned and Total Credits Earned. For colleges submitting Certification Files, invalid or missing entries will error. For more information about valid values, please see the Certification File EFAN Layout.

For colleges using HESCweb, HESC will auto-fill zeros if they are missing. Colleges must correct their errors and resubmit the certification as described in Section 4.

4.04. EXCELSIOR SCHOLARSHIP FIELDS AND CODES

Below are the field names, descriptions and codes used to populate the required fields, and important points for Excelsior certification:

Financial Aid Program Code – Identifies the program being certified.

- Value must equal "58" for Excelsior Scholarship awards.
- Required for all certifications.
- Incorrect, invalid or missing values will error.

Certification Code – Indicates student certification status.

- Missing or invalid entries will cause errors.

- Excelsior codes include:

NUMBER	CODE	DESCRIPTION
1	Certified as eligible	The student meets all eligibility requirements, and the college is entitled to an Excelsior award payment on their behalf. The award will be paid if your college's certification transaction passes HESC's edits. All other fields are required and must contain valid values. If HESC determines the student is ineligible for the award prior to processing the college's certification, HESC will change the certification code to 9 (ineligible). Students whose tuition is fully funded should be certified using this certification code and the other aid should be reported in the available fields. Students who withdraw with 100% liability may be certified eligible. Students who are below 100% liability are not eligible.
4	Not registered	The student is not enrolled at your institution and will not be paid.
5	Not full time	The student was not enrolled for at least 12 credits at the 100% tuition liability date of the term being certified and will not be paid. Note: do not use this code for failure to meet the 30- credit requirement – see Code 8. Note that the following fields must have an entry even if the student is not eligible for an award. • Evaluation Term Indicator • Final Term Indicator • Term Credits Enrolled • Evaluation Year Credits Earned • Total Credits Earned
6	Not matriculated	The student is not matriculating in their program(s) of study and will not be paid.
8	Does not meet program credit requirements	The student did not earn at least 30 credits in their Evaluation Year and have no pending Summer/Winter credits or unused college credits earned while in high school. The student will not be paid. This assessment should only be made with your certification of Evaluation Term 2. Note that the following fields must have an entry even if the student is not eligible for an award. • Evaluation Term Indicator • Final Term Indicator • Term Credits Enrolled • Evaluation Year Credits Earned • Total Credits Earned

9	Miscellaneous	The student is not eligible for payment. Used only when no other certification codes are appropriate. DO NOT use as a default code for ineligible certifications. Note that the following fields must have an entry even if the student is not eligible for an award. • Evaluation Term Indicator • Final Term Indicator • Term Credits Enrolled • Evaluation Year Credits Earned • Total Credits Earned

ADA Status Code – Identifies ADA students (enter Y / N).

- ADA students will be paid for the first term even if they did not complete the credits enrolled in. ADA students will need to make up the credits not earned in term 1 and/or term 2 during the winter or summer term to be paid for term 2
- Part-time ADA students will only be paid for term 2 if they earned the number of credits for which they were enrolled at the point of 100% liability for term 1 and 2. ADA students may make up credits for term 2 in the summer term.
- ADA students who are enrolled in more than 30 credits and complete 30 credits toward their program of study in a 365-day period will be certified as eligible for a payment even if they do not successfully complete all the credits enrolled in.
- Students transferring to your institution who were previously certified as ADA by their prior colleges may lose their awards if your college's certifications do not also identify them as ADA students.
- Without ADA designation, students are subject to the full-time (12 credits) enrollment and 30-credit annual completion minimum requirements.
- Students who do not earn credits for all courses attempted may use winter/summer sessions and credits earned as a non-matriculated student to get back on track.

Tuition Amount – Ensures Excelsior recipients are assessed the correct tuition amount (enter tuition amount for the term).

- Eligible certifications reporting incorrect or invalid tuition amounts will cause an error.

TAP Award Amount –Ensures correct calculation of the Excelsior award (enter the TAP award amount).

- For Certification Code 1, report the same TAP award amount that is currently on HESC's systems. If these values differ, the transaction will error.
- For all other Certification Codes, enter 0.

SUNY/CUNY Tuition Credit Amount – Reports the college's calculation of the SUNY / CUNY Tuition Credit.

- Excelsior certifications where a Tuition Credit is expected will error if a value greater than zero is not provided.
- Excelsior certifications with a value greater than 0 in this field but no reported TAP award will error.

Evaluation Term Indicator – Identifies whether the term being certified is the first or second term in the student's Evaluation Year.

- The Evaluation Term Indicator enables HESC to accurately monitor if students are meeting the 30-credit minimum requirement and are on track for completing their program(s) of study on time.
- An Evaluation Year begins with the first term the student began attending college as a matriculated student and may span academic years.
- An Evaluation Term is either Fall or Spring semester.
- The correct value must be reported for transactions using certification codes 1, 5, 8, or 9.
- Students are always paid for the first term in their Evaluation Year (Evaluation Term Indicator = 1) if they are certified as eligible and were enrolled for at least 12 credits in their program(s) of study.
- Students who started college in a Fall Term should always have their Fall terms identified as Evaluation Term 1 and their Spring terms identified as Evaluation Term 2, even if the student did not receive an Excelsior award for Evaluation Term 1.
- Students who started college in a Spring Term should always have their Spring terms identified as Evaluation Term 1 and their Fall terms identified as Evaluation Term 2, even if the student did not receive an Excelsior award for Evaluation Term 1.
- Colleges must ensure this logic continues for transfer students who started college at another institution in a prior term.
- Excelsior certifications incorrectly identifying the Evaluation Term number will error or may adversely affect the student's eligibility for payment.

Final Term Indicator – Indicates the student's last term and confirms that fewer than 30 credits are needed to complete his/her program(s) of study.

- Students must be enrolled in 12 credits for the Evaluation Term but, as with TAP, not all enrolled credits need apply toward their program(s) of study. The student must be enrolled in at least one course in their program of study in the final term.

Term Credits Enrolled – Indicates the number of credits the student was enrolled in their program(s) of study at the time of 100% tuition liability.

- All credits reported must be applicable to the student's program(s) of study, unless this is the student's final term.
- College credits earned in high school applicable to the student's program(s) of study may be included.
- Used to determine if the student was enrolled in 12 credits, and for assessing ADA students.
- Values must be reported for transactions using certification codes 1, 5, 8, or 9.
- Use of partial credits- All partial credits should be rounded down. For example, if a student earned 11.5 credits, this should be rounded down to 11 credits; if a student earned 29.25 credits, this should be rounded down to 29 credits.

Evaluation Year Term Credits Earned – Indicates the total number of credits earned during the Evaluation Year upon conclusion of the Evaluation Term being certified.

- All reported credits must be applicable toward the student's program(s) of study. If the student did not earn any credits indicate zero.

- Upon conclusion of Evaluation Term 2 the student must have earned credits in their current program(s) of study per the schedule below:

Term(s) Completed	2-, 4-, and 5- Year Programs	Opportunity Programs
1	15 credits	12 credits
2	30 credits	24 credits
3	45 credits	36 credits
4	60 credits	48 credits
5	75 credits	60 credits
6	90 credits	72 credits
7	105 credits	84 credits
8	120 credits	96 credits
9	135 credits*	108 credits
10	150 credits*	120 credits

*5-year programs of study

If the student fails to earn the requisite number of credits, he or she loses the award unless this term has been identified as the student's final term.

- Values must be reported for transactions using certification codes 1, 5, 8, or 9.
- Total credits reported must be the sum value of A, B, and C below:
  - A. All credits the student earned toward their program(s) of study during the Evaluation Year at the time of certification.
  - B. College credits the student earned in high school (such as AP credit) used to meet the 30-credit minimum; provided they are applicable toward their program(s) of study.
    - College credits earned in high school being reported must only be used once – either when establishing initial Excelsior eligibility ("look back") or for one Evaluation Term.
  - C. Credits earned in a Summer or Winter term (make-up credits), within the student's Evaluation Year, used to meet the 30-credit requirement.
    - These credits would be earned in terms that are not part of the regular academic year.
    - Colleges should wait to certify an Evaluation Term until make-up credits are finalized. These make-up credits must never be reported as Term Credits Enrolled.
    - Transfer credits must never be reported here; rather, these are reported in the Total Credits Earned field with the very first Evaluation Term your college submits.

Total Credits Earned – Indicates the total of all credits earned toward the student's program(s) of study – from the start of their college career through completion of the Evaluation Term being certified.

- Sum value of all Evaluation Year Term Credits earned, college credits earned in high school which are being used, and transfer credits applicable to the student's program(s) of study.

- Determines whether the student is on track to graduate within the times prescribed.
- Colleges must report any transfer credits applicable to the student's program(s) of study in this field with their very first Excelsior certification using certification codes 1, 5, 8, or 9.

Enrollment Code – Indicates an approved five-year program of study or enrolled as an approved opportunity program student.

- Set for an Evaluation Term being certified that will result in the student receiving an Excelsior award payment for a 9th or 10th term of study that is required for the student's program(s) of study. Enrollment Code = 5
- Enter 'Enrolled in an approved opportunity program (HEOP, EOP, SEEK, CD)' for each term it is applicable. This allows the student to complete 24 credits per evaluation period. Enrollment Code = 6.

Other Aid – Reports other aid that must first be credited toward tuition before the Excelsior Scholarship Program award.

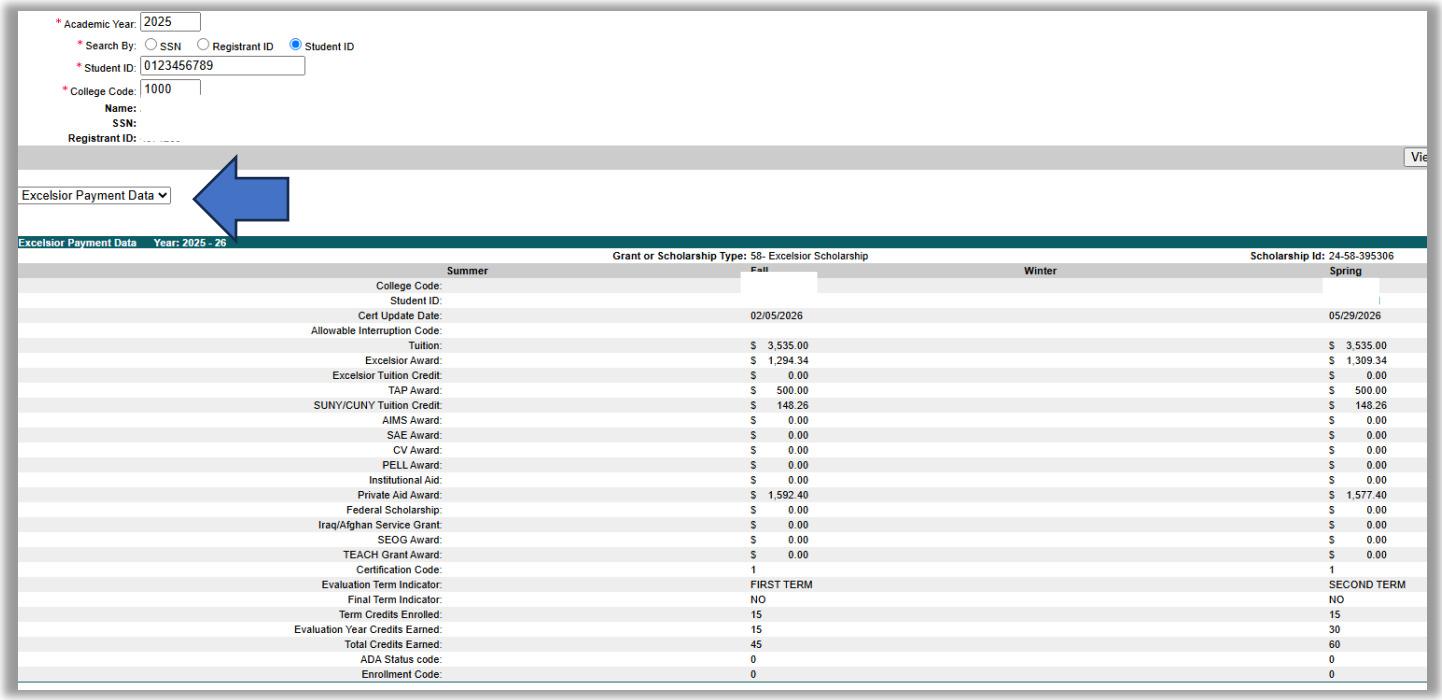
- 10 fields available to indicate other aid sources.
- Must be reported whenever certification code 1 is used.
- All aid must be provided even if a student's tuition is covered by other aid, resulting in an Excelsior award of zero.
- Values in these fields may reduce a student's award amount, depending on the tuition charged.
- Missing or invalid entries will result in an error.
- Reporting Miscellaneous Tuition Aid – colleges should use the *Institution Aid Amount* field to report the following types of other aid if they are not non-tuition award specific:
  - NYS Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge (SEEK) aid
  - Education Opportunity Program (EOP) aid
  - Access-Vocational Rehabilitation (Access-VR) aid

Excelsior Award Amount –Reports the award calculation made by the college.

- Award amount for the Evaluation Term being certified in this field.
- HESC verifies the college's calculations and reports back the final award amount on the following Manifest and in HESCWeb.

4.05. PROCESSING CERTIFICATIONS

HESC processes certifications daily. Results are reported on the next Manifest and on HESCweb. Results of the processed certification can be seen in View Student Record, Excelsior Payment Data section reflected below:

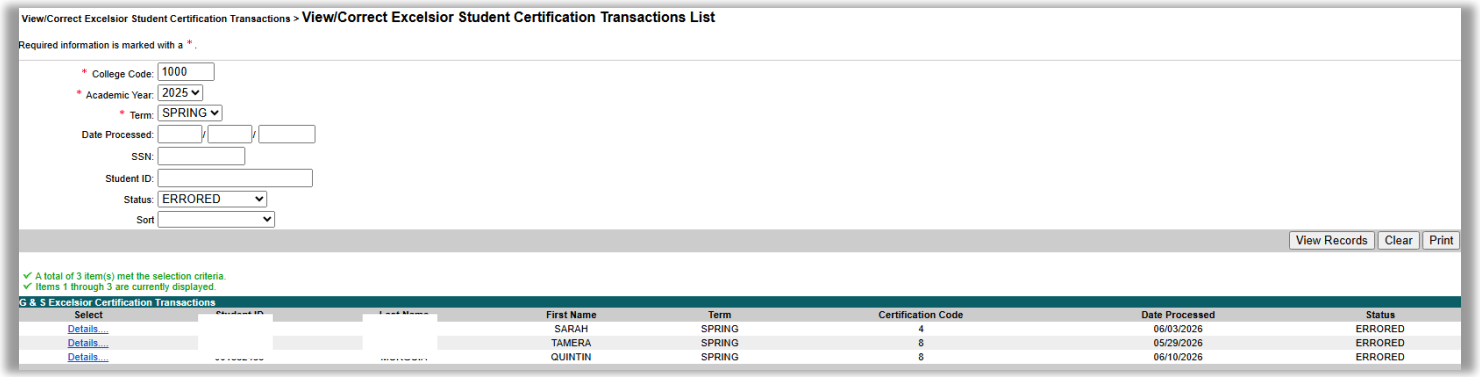


4.06. CORRECTING EXCELSIOR CERTIFICATION ERRORS

Error messages can only be found on HESCweb Transaction Processing, View Correct Excelsior Student Certifications Transactions web screens.:

1. Click on the **View Correct Student Certification** link and then **View / Correct Excelsior Student Certification Transaction** link in the left menu. This will bring you to the search screen below:

2. In the "Status" field, select "Errored" from the drop down.
   - Errors can be sorted by Student ID, Name, or Certification Code.
   - Sorting by Certification Code allows college to identify and prioritize corrections.
3. Click on the **Details** link for each record you wish to correct.
4. Correct errors and click the **Submit** button.



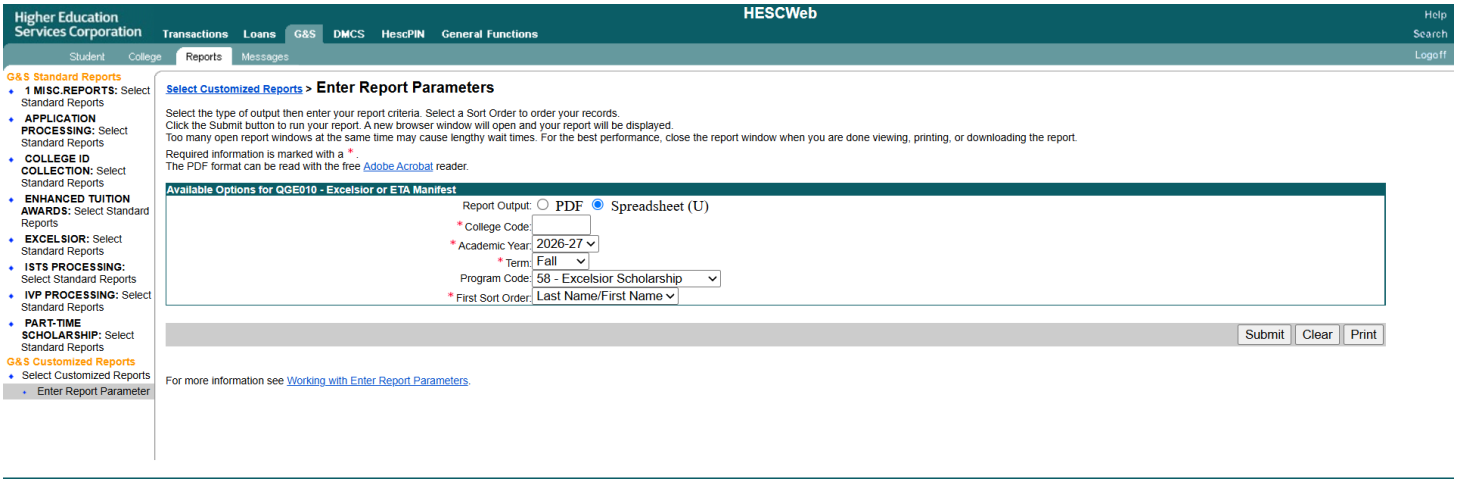
4.07. PAYMENTS

Certifications and payments are processed nightly Monday-Friday.

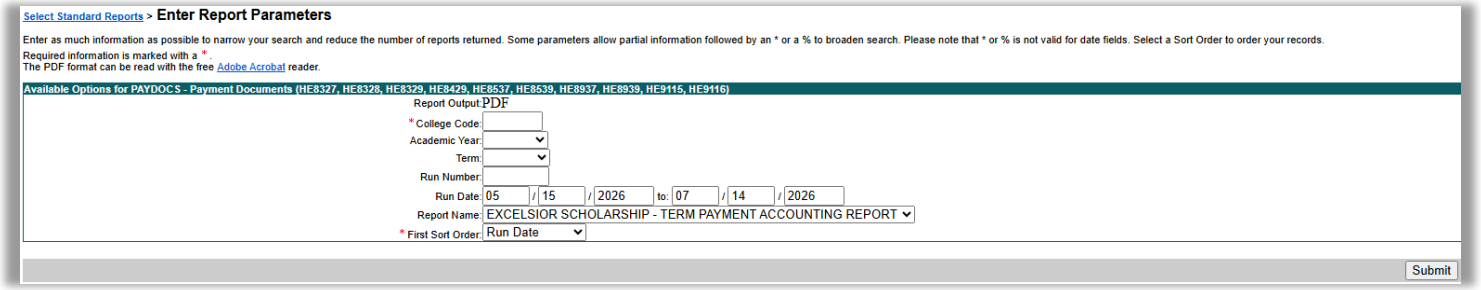
Once the certification is processed at HESC, it will be submitted for payment. Funding is sent via the SFS system and funds will be deposited into the college's account. There will be no special notation on the transmittal for Excelsior. Payments will reflect all certifications processed for the day. Colleges can download the Excelsior Term Payment Accounting report to view payment details in Standard Reports PayDocs.

To Reconcile Excelsior payments:

1. Go to customized reports and select QGE010 Excelsior or ETA Manifest as an Excel document:



2. Sort the records on the Excel spreadsheet report by certification code (column 'R') and total the EXC Award amounts (column 'W') for all certifications = 1.
3. Then go to the G&S Standard Reports and select 1 Misc Reports, then PAYDOCS
4. Select the Excelsior Scholarship Term Payment Accounting Report and sort it by run date. The Excelsior payment amount Total should equal the manifest total of all certified eligible awards.



Excelsior Scholarship Program

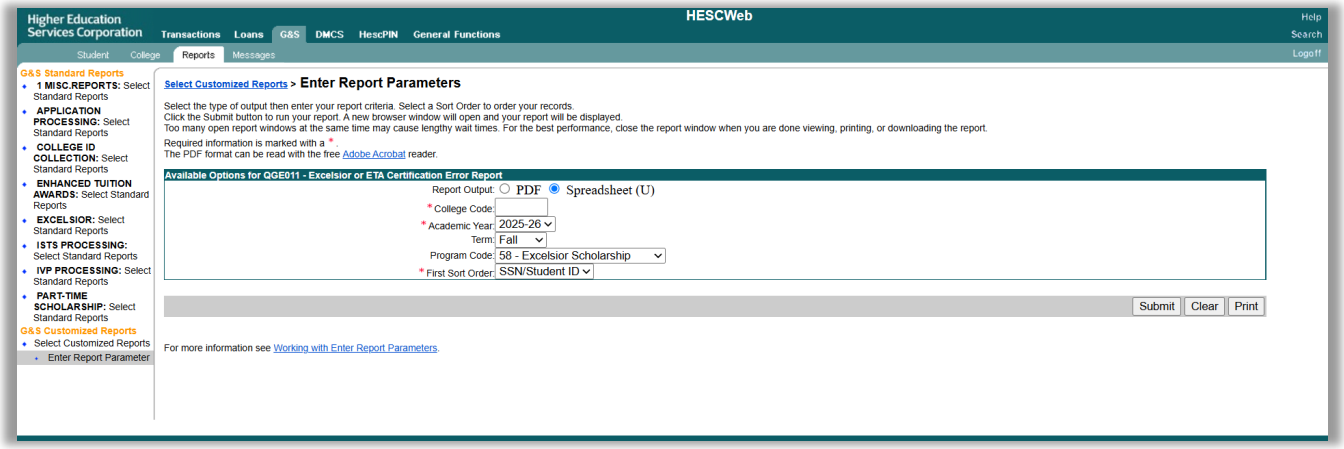
Chapter 5: Excelsior Customized Reports

5.01. QGE011 Excelsior Error Report

a. Review and Update any Excelsior Certifications Currently in Error Status

To find your errors:

- Go to the Financial Aid Professionals page
- Go to "Secure Transaction Processing" link
- Click on the "G & S" tab
- Go to the "Reports" tab
- Select Customized Reports – QGE011 "Excelsior or ETA Certification Error Report"



The Report results will display the information submitted as well as the error message.

Error messages include:

- **INVALID EVALUATION TERM INDICATOR**
  - Certifications must reflect term 1 or term 2
    - Check to be sure you entered a 1 or 2 only
    - Any other value or character will result in an error, including spaces or zeros

- **EVALUATION TERM INDICATOR NOT IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER**

- The evaluation term indicator identifies whether a student is in the term in which they must (1) be enrolled in 12 credits or (2) be enrolled in 12 credits and have completed 30 credits.
- Certifications must be processed in order (for students who first matriculated in fall will require that fall be reflected as term 1; students who first matriculated in spring will require that spring be reflected as term 1)

- The first evaluation term must be successfully processed before second evaluation term can be processed. To resolve the error, check the prior term certification to see what evaluation term was used and report the correct value in the evaluation term indicator

- **PRIOR TERM PENDING**
  - This error will occur if a college is attempting to certify the spring 2025-26 term when the fall 2025-26 term has not been successfully processed.
  - To correct this error, colleges must submit or correct the certification for the fall term. Once the fall term has been successfully processed, the college can resubmit the spring term certification.

- **INVALID SUNY/CUNY TUITION CREDIT ENTRY**
  - This error occurs if the college reports (1) a SUNY/CUNY tuition credit and the student does not have a TAP award or (2) a zero SUNY/CUNY tuition credit but HESC has calculated a tuition credit amount for the student.
  - To correct the error if the student does not have a TAP award, the tuition credit amount must be entered as "0"
  - To correct the error if HESC has calculated a tuition credit amount greater than zero, the college must report a value greater than "0" for the SUNY/CUNY tuition credit. This value does not need to match HESC's value.

- **ENTRY REQUIRED FOR 5YR OR REMEDIAL PROGRAM**
  - This is a mandatory field
    - Valid entries are:
      - 0 = enrolled in a 4-year program
      - 2 = enrolled in a 2-year program (and not in an opportunity program)
      - 5 = enrolled in a 5-year program
      - 6 = enrolled in an approved opportunity program (HEOP, EOP, SEEK or CD)

- **5YR PROGRAM ENTRY INVALID**
  - This is a mandatory field
    - Valid entries are:
      - 0 = enrolled in a 4-year program
      - 2 = enrolled in a 2-year program (and not in an opportunity program)
      - 5 = enrolled in a 5-year program
      - 6 = enrolled in an approved opportunity program (HEOP, EOP, SEEK or CD)

- **COLLEGE DOES NOT HAVE A 5YR PROGRAM**
  - This error occurs when a college indicates a student is enrolled in a five-year program and HESC's system does not reflect the existence of a five-year program for that college.
  - To correct the error, the college must correct the Enrollment Code on the certification transaction.

- **COLLEGE DOES NOT HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM**
  - This error occurs when a college indicates a student is enrolled in an approved opportunity program and HESC's system does not reflect the existence of an approved opportunity program for that college.
  - To correct the error, the college must correct the Enrollment Code on the certification transaction or contact HESC.

- **STUDENT NOT ELIGIBLE FOR PROGRAM**
  - This error occurs when (1) an award was revoked in a prior term, (2) the student is not eligible for the current term, and (3) the college is attempting to submit a certification for the current term.
    - For example, a student who first matriculated in spring 2025 fails to earn 30 credits by December 31, 2026. The error message would occur if the college reported less than 30 cumulative credits after the fall 2026 term and is now attempting to submit a certification for the spring 2027 term.
  - If the student was revoked correctly in the prior term, the college does not need to certify the student for the current term and should ignore the error.
  - If the student was revoked in error, the college must first correct the information for the prior term (as part of the post certification process). Once the post certification has been successfully processed, the college can make the correction for the current term.

- **MAX 2YR AWARD ALREADY RECEIVED**
  - This error occurs when a student was previously certified as final term by a two-year college, and a two-year college is attempting to certify the student for a subsequent term.
  - The college does not need to certify the student for the current term and should ignore the error.

- **MAX 4YR AWARD ALREADY RECEIVED**
  - This error occurs when a student was previously certified as final term by a four-year college, and a four-year college is attempting to certify the student for a subsequent term.
  - The college does not need to certify the student for the current term and should ignore the error.

- **INVALID CERTIFICATION CODE**
  - This error occurs when a value not identified below is submitted.
  - Valid certification codes are:
    - 1- Certified as eligible
    - 4- Not registered
    - 5- Not full time
    - 6- Not matriculated
    - 8- Does not meet program credit requirements
    - 9- Miscellaneous
  - To correct the error, a college must enter one of the valid codes above and resubmit

- **INVALID COLLEGE CODE**
  - This error occurs when the college code on the certification transaction is not valid
  - To correct the error, a college must enter the correct TAP code for their college and resubmit.

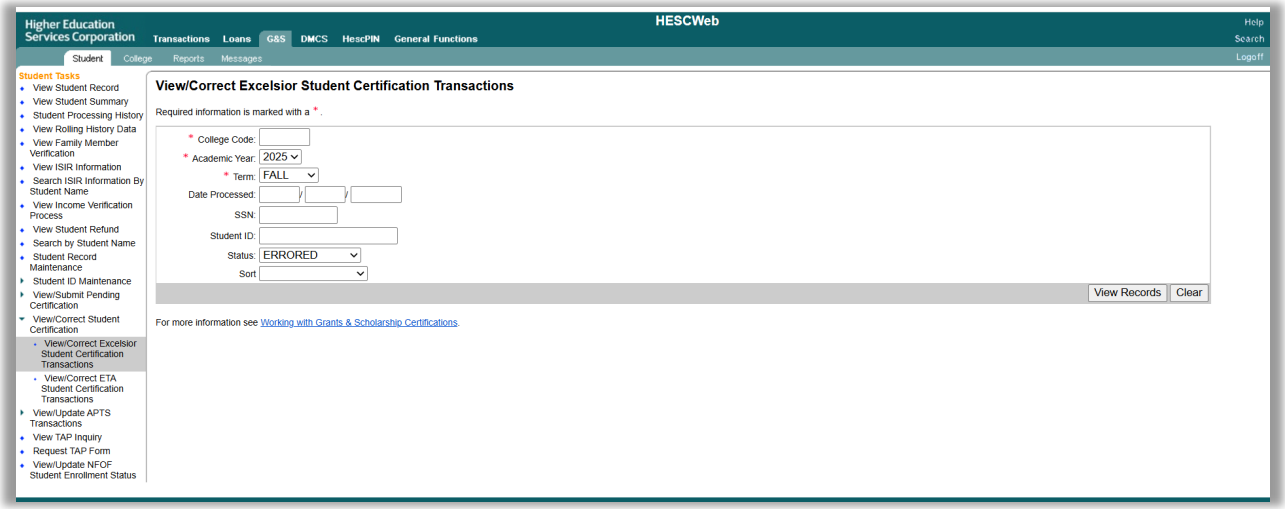
- **CERTIFICATION CODE DOES NOT RECONCILE WITH TAP CERTIFICATION CODE**
  - This error occurs when the Excelsior and TAP certification codes do not reflect the same enrollment status for the student
    - For example, if the TAP certification code indicates that the student was not registered, the student cannot be certified as registered for Excelsior
  - To correct the error, the college must review the certification codes for TAP and Excelsior and:
    - If TAP was certified incorrectly, resubmit the TAP certification with the correct code. After the TAP certification has been reprocessed, the college must then resubmit the Excelsior certification.
    - If TAP was certified correctly, the college must resubmit the Excelsior certification with the correct code.

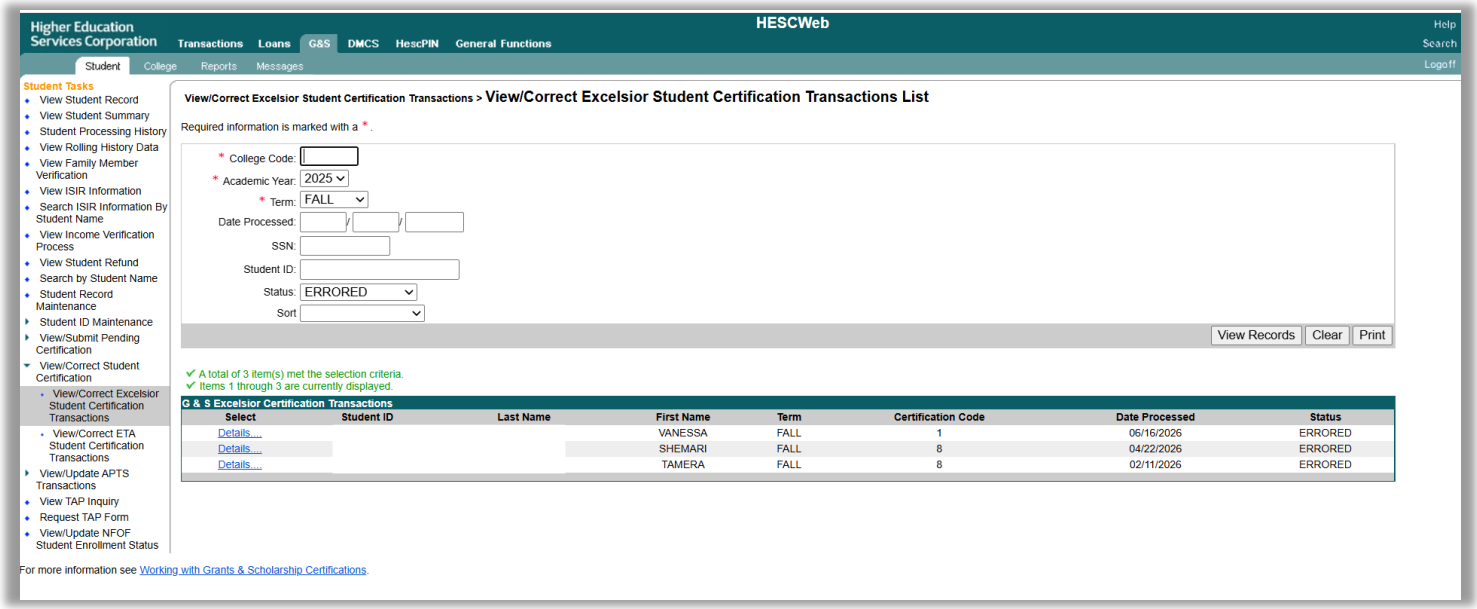
- **HESC REVIEW (Post-Certifications)**
  - Changes to successfully processed certification transactions will be reprocessed in mid- to late-November when technical fixes are made.
  - Colleges that submitted post-certification changes do not need to resubmit their certification transactions, as they will be reprocessed once programming is in place.
  - If a college has submitted multiple changes for a single student within a given year, term and program, only the last transaction will be reprocessed. Therefore, each time a change is made to a certification transaction for a single student, it should include all changes for the student for the given year, term and program.

b. Submitting Corrections on HESCWeb

To process online corrections:

- Go to View/Correct Excelsior Student Certification Transactions
  - Enter college code
  - Academic Year
  - Term
  - Status = Errored
    - This will display all students in error status.
    - Choose details, input all fields, save.



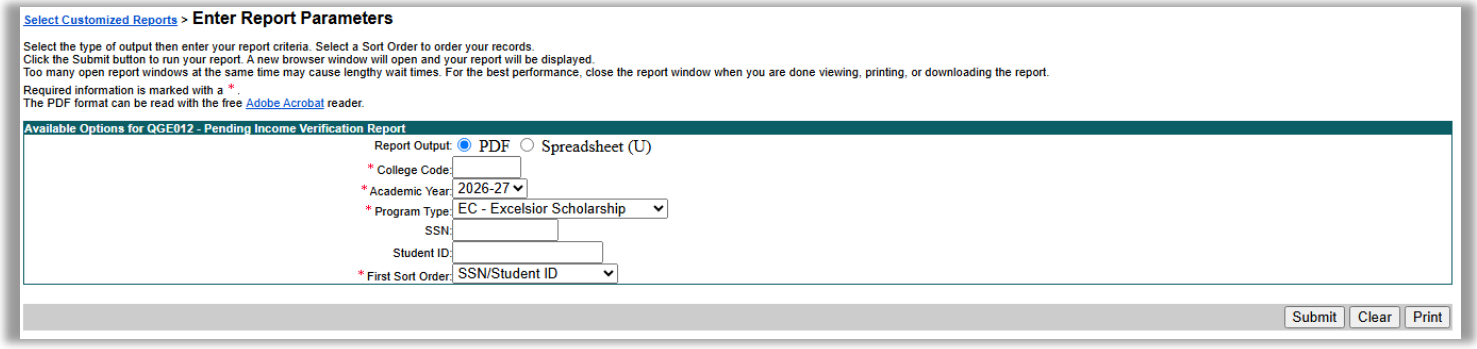


5.02. QGE012 Pending Income Verification Report

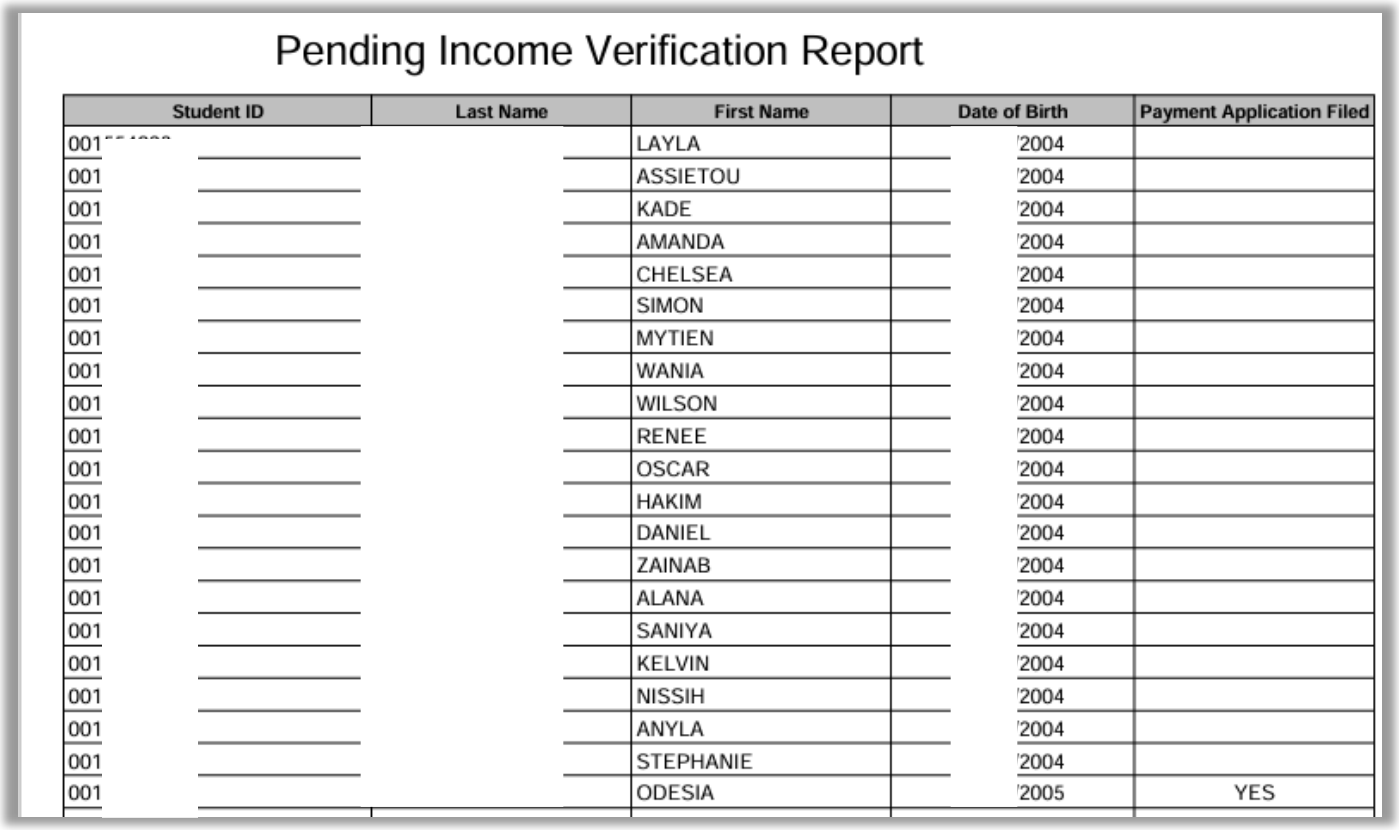
a. Review any Excelsior applicants who are pending income verification

To review:

- Go to the Financial Aid Professionals page
- Go to "Secure Transaction Processing" link
- Click on the "G & S" tab
- Go to the "Reports" tab
- Select Customized Reports – QGE012 "Pending Income Verification Report"
- Enter query parameters including "EC- Excelsior Scholarship" to select Excelsior applicants.



The report will reflect students by the sort order selected and will indicate whether a student has filed a payment application with HESC.



Pending Income Verification Report

Student ID	Last Name	First Name	Date of Birth	Payment Application Filed
001		LAYLA	'2004	
001		ASSIETOU	'2004	
001		KADE	'2004	
001		AMANDA	'2004	
001		CHELSEA	'2004	
001		SIMON	'2004	
001		MYTIEN	'2004	
001		WANIA	'2004	
001		WILSON	'2004	
001		RENEE	'2004	
001		OSCAR	'2004	
001		HAKIM	'2004	
001		DANIEL	'2004	
001		ZAINAB	'2004	
001		ALANA	'2004	
001		SANIYA	'2004	
001		KELVIN	'2004	
001		NISSIH	'2004	
001		ANYLA	'2004	
001		STEPHANIE	'2004	
001		ODESIA	'2005	YES

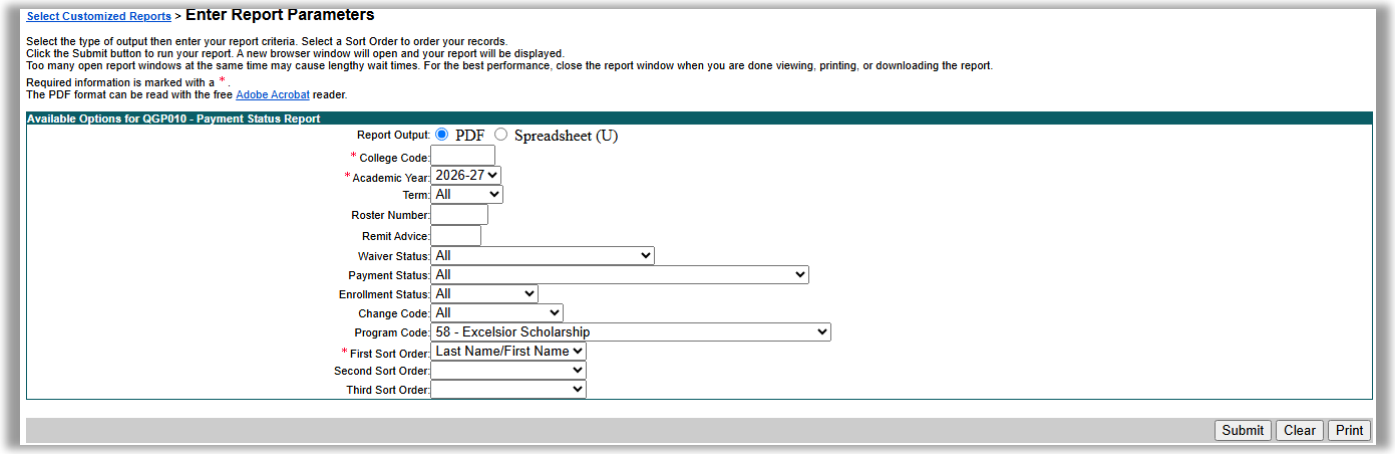
5.03. QGP010 Payment Status Report

a. Review the payment status for Excelsior recipients

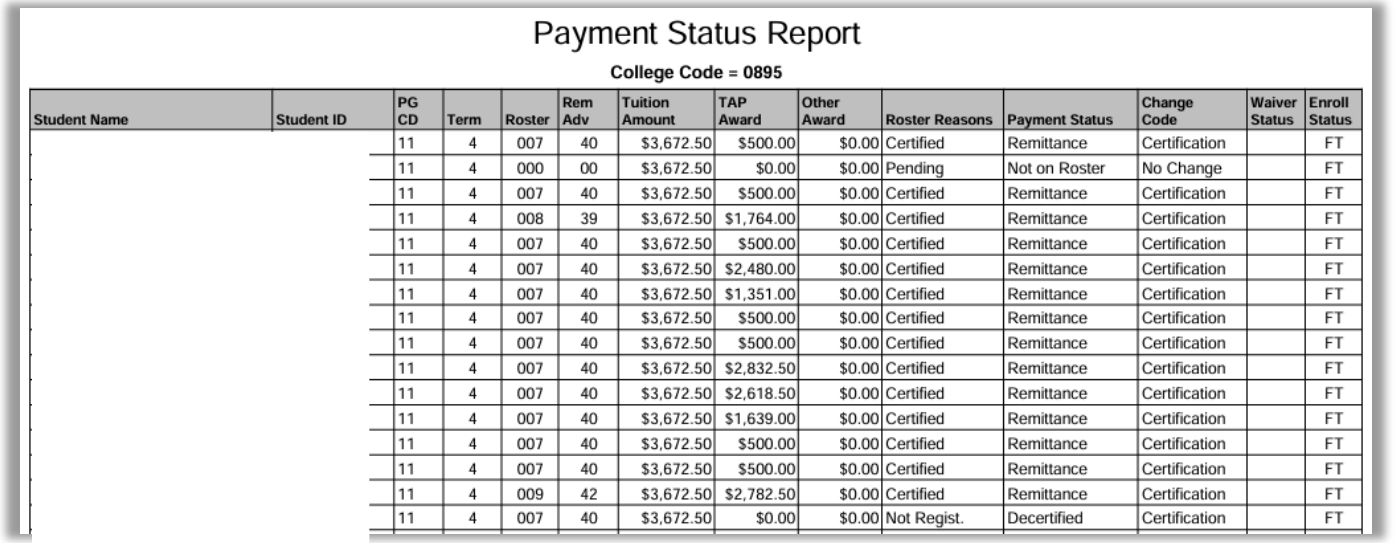
To review:

- Go to the Financial Aid Professionals page
- Go to "Secure Transaction Processing" link
- Click on the "G & S" tab
- Go to the "Reports" tab
- Select Customized Reports – QGP010 "Payment Status Report
- Enter query parameters including program code "58- Excelsior Scholarship" to select Excelsior recipients."

Excelsior Scholarship Program Excelsior Report



The report will reflect students on the sort order selected and will indicate the payment status for each student displayed plus additional information as reflected on the sample below:



Payment Status Report

College Code = 0895

Student Name	Student ID	PG CD	Term	Roster	Rem Adv	Tuition Amount	TAP Award	Other Award	Roster Reasons	Payment Status	Change Code	Waiver Status	Enroll Status
		11	4	007	40	$3,672.50	$500.00	$0.00	Certified	Remittance	Certification		FT
		11	4	000	00	$3,672.50	$0.00	$0.00	Pending	Not on Roster	No Change		FT
		11	4	007	40	$3,672.50	$500.00	$0.00	Certified	Remittance	Certification		FT
		11	4	008	39	$3,672.50	$1,764.00	$0.00	Certified	Remittance	Certification		FT
		11	4	007	40	$3,672.50	$500.00	$0.00	Certified	Remittance	Certification		FT
		11	4	007	40	$3,672.50	$2,480.00	$0.00	Certified	Remittance	Certification		FT
		11	4	007	40	$3,672.50	$1,351.00	$0.00	Certified	Remittance	Certification		FT
		11	4	007	40	$3,672.50	$500.00	$0.00	Certified	Remittance	Certification		FT
		11	4	007	40	$3,672.50	$500.00	$0.00	Certified	Remittance	Certification		FT
		11	4	007	40	$3,672.50	$2,832.50	$0.00	Certified	Remittance	Certification		FT
		11	4	007	40	$3,672.50	$2,618.50	$0.00	Certified	Remittance	Certification		FT
		11	4	007	40	$3,672.50	$1,639.00	$0.00	Certified	Remittance	Certification		FT
		11	4	007	40	$3,672.50	$500.00	$0.00	Certified	Remittance	Certification		FT
		11	4	007	40	$3,672.50	$500.00	$0.00	Certified	Remittance	Certification		FT
		11	4	009	42	$3,672.50	$2,782.50	$0.00	Certified	Remittance	Certification		FT
		11	4	007	40	$3,672.50	$0.00	$0.00	Not Regist.	Decertified	Certification		FT