

ACADEMIC COMMON MARKET POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Maryland residents may submit applications only for programs listed in the **current inventory** (see Undergraduate/Graduate ACM Programs for Maryland Residents). The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) is **not** accepting requests from Maryland residents for additions to the inventory of out-of-state programs available through the Academic Common Market (ACM). This restriction will remain in effect until further notice.

ACM POLICIES & ELIBILITY CRITERIA:

Maryland policy (and some institutions) require ACM students to be enrolled full-time and remain in good academic standing (both defined by the institution) while pursuing the degree. Students who fall below full-time status or do not maintain adequate GPA's will immediately lose the ACM tuition waiver. Additionally students must:

- o prove that s/he is a resident of Maryland (see Section D of application)
- o select a program listed in the *current ACM inventory* and available to Maryland residents
- o include a letter of acceptance into *the specific program of study offered at the out-of-state institution* on institution letterhead with the ACM Application (**transcripts, grade reports and proof of registration are NOT acceptable**)
- o Students who have been "provisionally" admitted into an ACM major or need to complete pre-requisite coursework before fully admitted to the program are NOT eligible for ACM tuition benefits until formally accepted into the major.

Questions about ACM policies and application procedures should be directed by email (preferred) to Dr. Genevieve Segura at gsegura@mhec.state.md.us

THE ACM APPLICATION:

ACM applications are accepted year-round provided they meet the deadlines. At the very least, the application form and accompanying documents must be submitted by the following deadline date:

Fall semester deadline – June 30th
Summer semester deadline – March 31st
Spring semester deadline – November 30th

*** ACM application deadline dates and policies are firm and may not be appealed. ***

*** **To be considered timely**, the ACM application **must** be submitted by the deadline with copies of the Maryland income tax return, drivers license(s), vehicle registration and military earnings statements/orders (if applicable) at the very least (see Section D of ACM Application).

*** The program acceptance letter from the institution may be sent to the ACM Coordinator separately and after the deadline *as long as the student filed an ACM application with **all** the other required documents by the cut-off date* or the ACM application will be considered "late". ***

*** "Late" ACM applications will be reviewed for the following semester ***

*** Maryland residents may submit no more than one (1) ACM application; multiple applications will be returned. ***

*** The institution has the right to set ACM deadlines and restrictions; students are **strongly** advised to contact the institution for this information ***

***** It is the student's responsibility to remain informed about and abide by the ACM Policies of Maryland AND of the Institution they plan to attend *****

*** "Incomplete" ACM applications will not be reviewed or approved until all of the required documentation is received ***

REQUIRED APPLICATION DOCUMENTS:

- **Citizenship** – Proof of U.S. citizenship or legally admitted permanent immigrant alien classification (must have a registration number of I-151 or I-551; F1 or F2 student visas, J1 or J2 exchange visitor visas, or G series visas are ineligible)
- **ACM residency policies do not apply to out-of-state students attempting to establish residency to study at a Maryland institution.**
- **Dependent Maryland Resident** – A student under age 24 years whose parents, legal guardian, or spouse provide(s) 50 percent or more financial support and/or claim the student as a tax dependent, will be classified as a "dependent resident" for ACM purposes. All supporting documentation proving Maryland residency that accompanies the ACM application must prove that the student and parent/guardian or spouse has resided in Maryland for a period of 12 consecutive months prior to filing an ACM application. These additional criteria must also be met by the student and parent/guardian for 12 consecutive months:
 - owns or rents and occupies living quarters in Maryland
 - pays Maryland income tax on all earned taxable income
 - registers all owned motor vehicles in Maryland
 - possesses a valid Maryland driver's license, if licensed
 - registered to vote in Maryland, if eligible to vote
 - filed Maryland State income tax returns
- **Independent Maryland Resident** – A student over age 24 who does not receive more than 50 percent or more financial support or claimed as a tax dependent, will be classified as an "independent resident" for ACM purposes.
- **Maryland Military Resident** – If the applicant is a member of the U.S. Armed Forces (or spouse or dependent) and if the student (spouse or dependent) has paid income taxes to Maryland on all military income for the last 12 consecutive months, or if current military leave/earnings statements reflect Maryland withholdings, the applicant will be classified as a Maryland resident. Military orders from the commander will serve to verify.
- **Other Information** - The Federal Privacy Act requires that any federal, state, or local agency that requests an individual to disclose a Social Security number inform the individual by which statutory or other authority the number is solicited, whether that disclosure is mandatory or voluntary, and what uses could be made of it. The Maryland Higher Education Commission's (MHEC) ACM application requests that ACM applicants list a portion of their social security numbers on a voluntary basis. The purpose of the number is for unique identification purposes in the certification process. **MHEC destroys all ACM forms and accompanying documentation that contains identity information immediately following the application deadline date.**

SUBMIT APPLICATION:

Mail – Applications should be mailed first class "certified with receipt" or FedEx/UPS is recommended. In the event the application is lost in the mail, a duplicate package may be submitted with proof of original postal date only. Send to:

ATTN: ACM Coordinator

Maryland Higher Education Commission
6 N. Liberty Street, Tenth Floor
Baltimore, MD 21201

EMAIL - The ACM Application package may be scanned and sent electronically to Dr. Genevieve Segura at gsegura@mhec.state.md.us

FAX - to Dr. Genevieve Segura at (410) 332-0270; students should follow-up and confirm delivery via email to gsegura@mhec.state.md.us

Students are responsible for ensuring complete and timely delivery of their application package

ACM CERTIFICATION PROCESS:

Once the application has been completed, full admission and Maryland residency verified, the State Coordinator will issue an ACM Certification letter. The certification letter confirms that the student has complied with all the ACM criteria and qualifies for the tuition benefit. **MHEC will electronically deliver the ACM certification letter to the participating institution and send a copy of the letter to the student within 4-6 weeks of receiving a COMPLETE application.** The institution will either grant a tuition waiver equal to the difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition or simply classify the student as an in-state resident. **Students will not receive in-state tuition rates until the institution has completed this final step.** The effective date of the waiver of out-of-state tuition will be the next full semester/session after certification. For example, if a student applies during the fall semester, the waiver would not be effective until the spring semester. **The ACM tuition waiver is applicable only for the institution and program/degree specified in the ACM certification letter.**

SREB/ACM policies and MHEC State policy prohibit tuition waivers from being applied retroactively

NOTE: The ACM program and Delegate/Legislative Scholarships are NOT AFFILIATED in any way. Each involves a separate application process, policies and deadlines. The programs are administered by different divisions of this agency. Receiving the ACM tuition waiver does NOT guarantee that the ACM student will be granted the Unique Major Scholarship; nor does the Scholarship have any affect on a student's out-of-state residency status.

ACM RENEWAL:

Once the student has been granted an ACM tuition waiver the student does **not** need to reapply as long as the student:

- o remains enrolled full-time (defined by institution)
- o does not change majors *or* institutions (even to another ACM major or institution)
- o remains in good academic standing (defined by institution)
- o maintains home state residency

***** Not meeting any of these requirements would cause the immediate termination of ACM benefits and the student would be billed for the out-of-state tuition differential for the semester the change was made. *****

******* If a student's eligibility changes, even if switching to another ACM program/institution, the student **must** apply for ACM benefits as a **new** applicant by the deadline and be recertified by the Maryland State ACM Coordinator.

***** Students who change majors or drop out of college DO NOT NEED TO REIMBUSE THE TUITION DIFFERENTIAL to the State of Maryland or the ACM institution. The ACM program does not involve an exchange of money; it is strictly a reciprocal agreement among Southern states.**

Please note: Participating institutions also have the right to set their own restrictions. Not all ACM institutions allow students to participate in the ACM program as recertified or reinstated. **In this case, a student may permanently lose ACM benefits if eligibility requirements are not met.**

Students are ***strongly advised to contact the institution directly for this information. It is the student's responsibility to remain informed about and abide by the ACM Policies of Maryland AND of the Institution they plan to attend. ***

The ACM tuition waiver is applicable only for the institution and program/degree specified in the ACM certification letter

*** Participating institutions also have the right to set their own restrictions. Students are *strongly* advised to contact the institution directly for this information. It is the student's responsibility to remain informed about and abide by the ACM Policies of Maryland AND of the Institution they plan to attend. ***

GENERAL RESTRICTIONS:

The restrictions listed below are ***NOT*** all inclusive. **Participating institutions have the right to set ACM restrictions and deadlines. Students are *strongly* advised to contact the institution directly for this information.** It is the student's responsibility to remain informed about and abide by the ACM Policies of Maryland **AND** the institution they plan to attend.

Alabama

- **Auburn University** limits ACM access to undergraduate programs. Only 25 new ACM participants are accepted each year; and students must be at the junior or senior level to participate in the ACM. Auburn selects applicants on a competitive basis. The deadline is March 15. Applicants should first contact the institutional coordinator's office prior to contacting state coordinator.
- The **University of Alabama** applies the following two new conditions for participating in approved ACM programs (UA limits ACM access to the programs that are currently listed in the ACM inventory.):
 - (1) For first-time ACM certification, an undergraduate student must have at least a 25 ACT composite score or 1130 SAT composite score (math and verbal only) and at least a 3.00 overall high school GPA.
 - (2) For continuing certification after the first semester of ACM support, each UA ACM student must maintain at least a 3.00 overall GPA on all UA course work attempted. This GPA standard is in addition to the long-standing requirements for maintaining residency and major.
- The **University of Alabama** limits ACM access to the programs that are currently listed in the ACM inventory.

Delaware

- The **University of Delaware** limits ACM access to the programs that are currently listed in the ACM inventory

Florida

- The **State of Florida** limits ACM access to graduate programs only.

Georgia

- The **Georgia Institute of Technology** limits ACM access to programs that are currently listed in the ACM inventory.

- The **Georgia Institute of Technology** is planning to limit its participation in the ACM to the graduate level beginning summer semester 2011. The last semester they will take students through the ACM into their undergraduate programs is spring semester 2011.
- **Georgia State University** limits ACM access to graduate programs only.
- **The University of Georgia** grants ACM access after students have completed at least 60 college credit hours and been formally admitted into the ACM degree program. ACM eligibility at UGA is limited to four academic semesters for undergraduate students.

Maryland

- The **State of Maryland** is not processing requests from its residents for the addition of new programs to the ACM inventory. Maryland residents may only select programs from the state's currently approved inventory.
- States may continue to request access to programs currently listed as part of the ACM and **NEW** programs at Maryland institutions.
- Maryland is still considering invitations from ACM institutions to add programs for Maryland residents if the program is already part of the ACM program inventory.
- The **University of Maryland, Eastern Shore** does not participate in the ACM.

Mississippi

- The **State of Mississippi** limits the eligibility of Mississippi residents participating in the ACM program to those enrolled in degree programs on a full-time basis. Full-time enrollment status will be based on the host institution's definition of full-time enrollment.
- The **University of Mississippi** limits ACM access to the programs that are currently listed in the ACM inventory.
- The **University of Southern Mississippi** limits ACM access to the programs that are currently listed in the ACM inventory.
- The **University of Mississippi** and **The University of Southern Mississippi** are not adding any new programs to the ACM at this time.
- The **State of Mississippi** does not include "mode of delivery" as a determinant of program eligibility for state residents.

North Carolina

- **North Carolina's** (NC) position is tenuous as a partner in the ACM as a result of its Legislature's action this past summer; therefore, the State of Maryland no longer accept requests to add new NC degrees to the Maryland ACM inventory.
- NC will accept certifications for spring 2012 and Summer session I 2012 only for degree programs already in the inventory.

Oklahoma

- The **University of Oklahoma** limits ACM access to the programs that are currently listed in the ACM inventory.

South Carolina

- The **State of South Carolina** limits the eligibility of South Carolina residents participating in the ACM program to those enrolled in degree programs on a full-time

basis. Full-time enrollment status will be based on the host institution's definition of full-time enrollment.

- **The Citadel, College of Charleston, Francis Marion University** and the **University of South Carolina-Beaufort** do not participate in the ACM.
- **Clemson University** limits ACM access to graduate programs only.
- **Coastal Carolina University** will not add the BSBA in Marketing (Professional Golf Management) to the ACM during 2010-2011 Academic Year.
- The **State of South Carolina** does not include "mode of delivery" as a determinant of program eligibility for state residents.
- **University of South Carolina – Columbia** holds to strict deadlines for ACM states to submit student certification letters: USC's spring semester deadline = first day of the semester; USC's fall semester deadline = August 15.

Texas

- The **State of Texas** limits ACM access to residential graduate programs only.
- The **University of Texas at Austin** does not participate in the ACM.

Virginia

- The **College of William and Mary** limits ACM access to the program that is currently listed in the ACM inventory, i.e., the American Studies graduate program.
- **George Mason University** has restrictive policies for ACM students including full-time status; continuous enrollment; eligibility limited to official time limit for degree; and prohibition against pursuing additional degree components beyond the approved ACM program. Check the Mason Registrar's web site for detailed information.
- **James Madison University, University of Mary Washington, University of Virginia, Virginia Commonwealth University** and **Virginia Military Institute** do not participate in the ACM.

West Virginia

- Students studying at the **West Virginia University Institute of Technology** must have completed the associate's degree in Printing Technology before enrolling in the bachelor's degree in Printing Management through the ACM.
- **West Virginia University** will not add the BS in Forensic and Investigative Science; furthermore, the program has been found to be similar to degrees at public institutions in Maryland.