

Gamecock Guarantee Program

Facts and Figures

Report Description: This report summarizes important participant information, academic performance information, and aid information for students in the Gamecock Guarantee Program. Gamecock Guarantee participants are regularly admitted South Carolina residents who are considered first-generation college students and whose families’ adjusted gross incomes at the time they join the program is less than 150% of the poverty level.

Participant Information

Number of Participants by Cohort	
	Total Participants
2014 Cohort	118
2015 Cohort	118
2016 Cohort	105
2017 Cohort	189
2018 Cohort	162
2019 Cohort	162
2020 Cohort	155
2021 Cohort	165
2022 Cohort	169
2023 Cohort	169
2024 Cohort	149
2025 Cohort	129

Since the program’s inception in 2008, the Gamecock Guarantee has served a total of **2,548** students.

Participant Academic Performance

Retention Rate - Gamecock Guarantee				Graduation Rates			
	Two-Year Retention Rate	Three-Year Retention Rate	Four-Year Retention Rate		Four-Year Graduation Rate	Five-Year Graduation Rate	Six-Year Graduation Rate
2014 Cohort	89%	85%	80%	2014 Cohort	64%	75%	80%
2015 Cohort	89%	81%	73%	2015 Cohort	49%	65%	68%
2016 Cohort	94%	89%	79%	2016 Cohort	56%	73%	76%
2017 Cohort	88%	76%	70%	2017 Cohort	63%	71%	73%
2018 Cohort	92%	81%	76%	2018 Cohort	64%	73%	74%
2019 Cohort	91%	82%	73%	2019 Cohort	64%	70%	73%
2020 Cohort	88%	79%	73%	2020 Cohort	57%	67%	
2021 Cohort	91%	84%	82%	2021 Cohort	72%		
2022 Cohort	88%	86%	72%	2022 Cohort			
2023 Cohort	99%	83%		2023 Cohort			
2024 Cohort	99%			2024 Cohort			
2025 Cohort				2025 Cohort			

Participant Aid Information

Freshman Year Gift Aid & Self-Help Aid as a Percent of Total Award			Freshman to Sophomore LIFE Scholarship Retention Rates		Average Student Loan Debt at Graduation		
	Freshman Year Gift Aid as a Percent of Total Award	Freshman Year Self-Help Aid as a Percent of Total Award		Freshman to Sophomore LIFE Scholarship Retention Rates		Average Student Loan Debt at Graduation (Students Graduating in Four Years)	Average Student Loan Debt at Graduation (Students Graduating in Five to Six Years)
2014 Cohort	98%	2%	2014 Cohort	77%	2014 Cohort	\$35,026	\$36,138
2015 Cohort	97%	3%	2015 Cohort	72%	2015 Cohort	\$32,579	\$30,042
2016 Cohort	95%	5%	2016 Cohort	77%	2016 Cohort	\$23,764	\$24,371
2017 Cohort	93%	7%	2017 Cohort	71%	2017 Cohort	\$25,085	\$25,333
2018 Cohort	94%	6%	2018 Cohort	76%	2018 Cohort	\$29,607	\$28,081
2019 Cohort	93%	7%	2019 Cohort	76%	2019 Cohort	\$27,486	\$26,392
2020 Cohort	95%	5%	2020 Cohort	72%	2020 Cohort	\$27,923	
2021 Cohort	96%	4%	2021 Cohort	87%	2021 Cohort	\$16,895	
2022 Cohort	94%	6%	2022 Cohort	69%	2022 Cohort		
2023 Cohort	96%	4%	2023 Cohort	83%	2023 Cohort		
2024 Cohort	96%	4%	2024 Cohort	94%	2024 Cohort		
2025 Cohort	95%	5%	2025 Cohort		2025 Cohort		

Additional Information

The Gamecock Guarantee is a need-based financial- and academic-support initiative to help make attendance at the university more affordable—and a South Carolina degree attainable—for academically qualified first-time freshmen who will be the first in their families to earn a college degree and are residents of South Carolina.

At minimum, the Gamecock Guarantee provides each participant an award of \$5,000 per year for four continuous years of enrollment. If this award combined with the total of other grants and scholarships in the student’s financial aid package does not meet the cost of undergraduate tuition, technology fee, and average program fees, the Gamecock Guarantee will increase its support to cover the difference. In other words, Gamecock Guarantee participants who retain eligibility and graduate in four years will not pay any of the tuition, technology fees, or average program fees from their own pockets. The purpose of the annual \$5,000 program award is to help offset the participants’ educational costs while attending the University of South Carolina. Many Gamecock Guarantee participants will find that their other awards cover or nearly cover their tuition, technology fee and average program fees. If so, they can use the remaining \$5,000 program award to pay for other college-related expenses such as course fees, equipment or lab fees, books and supplies, room, food or other miscellaneous expenses. Participants should diligently pursue and maintain their eligibility for other scholarships and grants. By doing so, the Gamecock Guarantee award can help to reduce or eliminate participants’ needs for incurring educational debt.

To be eligible a student must:

- Be a resident of South Carolina
- Apply for University admission on or before the December 1st priority application deadline
- Be admitted to the University of South Carolina's Columbia campus
- Have a family taxable income for the tax year required for that year’s FAFSA that is not greater than 150% of the Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines
- Be a first-generation college student (neither parent has completed a four-year college degree)
- Be eligible to receive a federal Pell Grant
- Enroll as a first-time, full-time freshman for fall semester after being admitted to a program
- Be pursuing a bachelor's degree
- Completed that year’s FAFSA as early as possible, but definitely by April 1

No special application is required to be considered for the Gamecock Guarantee Program. The University will identify and notify eligible students. **Please note that due to funding limitations, not ALL eligible students will be invited into the program so it is important to complete the FAFSA as soon as it opens for that year.**