ACM Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is the Academic Common Market?

A. The Academic Common Market (ACM) is an agreement between 16 states (AL, AR, DE, FL, GA, KY, LA, MD, MS, OK, SC, TN, TX, VA, WV) of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) that allows students to pursue degrees not offered by four-year public institutions in their own respective states. Students, who qualify, can enroll in degree programs at participating SREB institutions at in-state tuition rates.

Several states and institutions restrict its ACM participation and access to programs because of but not limited to governance, economic challenges, and competitive programs. For example, the states of FL and TX participate in the ACM at the graduate level only. A complete list of state and institutional general restrictions is available at http://www.schev.edu/Students/ACMpolicyProcedures.asp.

Q. How does a student in Virginia qualify for the Academic Common market?

A. The student must be able to prove that he/she is a resident of Virginia. He/she must be a full-time student enrolled in the pursuit of a degree; must have a letter of acceptance into the specific program of study offered at the out-of-state institution and this program must be listed in the ACM and available to Virginia residents. Only students who have been unconditionally accepted into ACM approved programs are eligible to participate.

Q. Can I qualify for ACM certification as a part-time student?

A. No. ACM certification is only available to full-time students seeking a degree.

Q. Can I apply for ACM status before I am accepted at the participating institution?

A. No. Students must be accepted for admission to the approved ACM major at the participating institution before they apply for certification.

Q. What is the certification process?

A. The certification process varies from state to state. In Virginia, students must complete the ACM Application Form available at http://www.schev.edu/Students/AcademicCommonMkt.asp. Virginia residents can submit only one application. All applications require an original signature(s) and must be mailed via U.S. Mail to the State Council of Higher Education (SCHEV) with all required documents. Electronic or faxed applications will not be accepted. The review process takes approximately 3 or 4 weeks before a determination is made. However, the determination may be delayed up to six weeks for various reasons: the volume of applications received, holidays, the application is incomplete and not signed and dated by the appropriate person(s), missing required documents and the documents are not acceptable. SCHEV will notify
applicants in writing if they meet eligibility to participate or not participate in the ACM as a Virginia resident. If the applicant is approved to participate as a Virginia resident, the student will receive a certification letter and a copy will be sent to the participating institution’s ACM contact. The final decision will be made by the institution and the student will be granted a waiver or the in-state rate. It is highly recommended that you contact the institution prior to completing the application and submitting it to our office to check on any institutional requirements and your effective term of eligibility. Click the following link to access ACM Coordinator information at participating institutions http://home.sreb.org/acm/participating/institutionstates.aspx.

Q. What documents must be enclosed with the completed application?

A. The student must enclose with the completed application a copy of his/her official acceptance letter into the participating institution stating the major/degree program and effective term. In addition to the acceptance letter, students must also enclose photocopies of three documents supporting claim of Virginia domicile. The three documents are: a valid Virginia’s driver’s license or valid Virginia identification card, a signed copy of most recent federal income tax form; and a signed copy of most recent Virginia income tax form.

If your parents, a legal guardian, or spouse provide(s) 50% or more of your financial support and/or claim you as a tax dependent, you should classify yourself as a “dependent” student and all supporting documents for Virginia residency should bear this individual’s name.

Q. Can I fax or e-mail my application?

A. No, the application must be mailed. It cannot be faxed or sent electronically. We strongly encourage applicants to retain a copy of the application and documents for their records.

Q. Do I need to mail a copy of my application to the participating institution?

A. No, the application must be mailed to the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia not the participating institution. It cannot be faxed or sent electronically. We strongly encourage applicants to retain a copy of the application and supporting documents for their records. The mailing address is:

Academic Common Market
State Council of Higher Education for Virginia
James Monroe Building,
101 North Fourteenth Street, 9th Floor
Richmond, VA 23219

Q. How long does it take to process the application?

A. The review process takes approximately 3 or 4 weeks. Processing of your application will be delayed unless all questions are completed, all documentation is attached, and the application is
signed and dated by the appropriate person(s). Although SCHEV accepts applications year-round, institutions set their individual deadlines for designation as an ACM student.

To avoid delays, it is wise to start the application process early and to allow some extra time, especially during the busy seasons. Busy times usually occur during the weeks prior to the beginning of each semester. The student is strongly advised to submit their ACM application when the official letter of acceptance or enrollment is received but no later than six (6) weeks prior to their institution’s deadline or the start of classes, whichever is earlier. For specific institutional deadlines, students must contact the institution directly. Click the following link to access ACM Coordinator information at participating institutions http://home.sreb.org/acm/participating/institutionstates.aspx.

Q. How do I determine which certification start term to list on the application?

A. Students should contact the ACM Coordinator at the university to verify his/her term and year of eligibility any other institutional requirements. It is highly recommended that you contact the institution prior to completing the application and submitting it to our office. Click the following link to access ACM Coordinator information at participating institutions http://home.sreb.org/acm/participating/institutionstates.aspx.

Q. Where can I find the application for the Academic Common Market?

A. The application for Virginia residents is available at http://www.schev.edu/Students/AcademicCommonMkt.asp.

Q. Can I submit multiple applications for certification to participate in different programs at participating institutions?

A. No, Virginia residents may submit only one application.

Q. Does Virginia notify the participating institution when the certification process is complete?

A. Yes. Students, who meet Virginia residency requirements, to participate in the ACM are provided a certification letter and a copy of the letter is also sent to the participating institution. The letter will include, but not limited to, the student’s information, major and effective date.

Q. Once I receive ACM certification, do I need to re-apply every year?

A. No. There is no need to re-apply each year as long as the student remains in the same major, stays in the same school, retains Virginia residency, and maintains the school’s institutional requirement including required GPA.

Q. If I change my major, residency, or do not maintain the school’s requirements, do I automatically retain ACM status?
A. No. You must reapply for certification.

Q. Are distance learning programs available via the Academic Common Market?

A. Yes, distance learning or on-line degree programs are available via the Academic Common Market/ Electronic Campus (ACM/EC). The eligibility requirements for the ACM Electronic Campus are the same as those of the ACM. Students must also complete the application to participate in these programs.

Q. Can I participate in the ACM if I am pursuing a Graduate Certificate or continuing education credits?

A. No. The ACM Program is only available for degree programs at the bachelor and graduate level. Certificate and non-degree programs are not included in the ACM.

Q. Are tuition waivers retroactive?

A. No. Waivers and in-state rates are not retroactive prior to the effective date of ACM, except at the discretion of the participating institution. Students should apply for the current term and year or the following. It is highly recommended that you contact the institution prior to completing the application and submitting it to our office. Click the following link to access ACM Coordinator information at participating institutions http://home.sreb.org/acm/participating/institutionstates.aspx.

Q. How can I find out what specific programs are available to Virginia residents via the ACM?

A. To find out if Virginia offers a specific degree program, view the Degree Inventory. If you discover that Virginia does not offer the program in which you are interested and you do not see it listed in the ACM offerings for Virginians (see http://www.schev.edu/Students/AcademicCommonMkt.asp, then it may be possible to add that program to the ACM offerings. At this time, SCHEV is accepting new program requests for consideration. New program requests will be accepted once a year in February. Only students who are enrolled or officially accepted into the major may submit a request. Click here to access the New Program Request Form.

Q. The program I want is not offered in Virginia and it is not on the list of approved programs for Virginia residents. What can I do?

A. In order to discover if it is possible to add your program of interest to those available to Virginia residents via the ACM, you must contact the ACM Coordinator for Virginia. The Coordinator and the participating institutions in Virginia will review the program’s curricula, course descriptions, and credit hour requirements. ACM guidelines stipulate that only those programs that differ by at least 50% in curricular content from those offered in the state may be included. At this time, SCHEV is accepting new program requests for consideration. Only
students who are enrolled or officially accepted into the major may submit a request. Click here to access the New Program Request Form.

Q. How do I submit a new program request to be considered for inclusion?

A. Complete the NEW PROGRAM REQUEST FORM and email it to darlenederricott@schev.edu. The request must be submitted in February to be considered. Click here to access the New Program Request Form.

Q. Will I be notified if my request to add a new program is approved or not approved for inclusion?

A. Yes. The review process will take several months before a determination is made and the student will be notified if the program meets or does not meet eligibility for inclusion.

Q. I don’t live in Virginia, but I really want to go to school there. Am I eligible for the Academic Common Market?

A. Please check with the Academic Common Market Coordinator in your state. For a listing of ACM participating states and their coordinators, please go to www.sreb.org.

Q. I live in Virginia but within driving distance of Eastern Tennessee State University. My major is offered at George Mason University which is several hours away. Can I get in-state tuition at ETSU since I am so close?

A. As long as the program you wish to pursue is offered in Virginia, you may not qualify for participation in the ACM.

Q. I don’t officially get admitted to my major until I am a junior and have completed other requirements. Can I participate in the ACM now or must I wait until I get to that point?

A. Since the ACM is based on specific programs of study, you will have to wait until you are officially accepted into the program major, even though that may not be until you are a junior. You must apply for certification at that time.