

**Handbook for Scholarship Recipients**

**2025-2026**

*Revised July 2025*

***The Shirley P. Ritchie Academy for Teaching***

***“Influencing Education, One Teacher at a Time”***

“The Mission of the School of Education is to prepare reflective teachers who possess the professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for effectively teaching students in a diverse and global society.”

The Mission of the Academy for Teaching is to enhance the quality of teacher preparation by providing opportunities for leadership, service, professional development, and the understanding of culture in order to promote the development of extraordinary teaching leadership for the 21st century.

**Your Charge and Challenge**

You have been selected as the recipient of a Teacher Education scholarship through the Academy for Teaching. Upon acceptance of this scholarship, you have made a commitment to pursue the profession of teaching. This program of study is designed to develop the skills needed to become an accomplished professional educator. Academy Scholars are expected to:

* maintain a high academic standard.
* participate in Academy events.
* cooperate and communicate with your peers and faculty.
* employ strong time management techniques.
* exhibit professional behavior.

**Program Description**

In 2007, the Board of Trustees of Catawba College approved the creation of the Academy for Teaching, named in honor of a teacher educator and a Catawba College trustee, Dr. Shirley Peeler Ritchie of Salisbury, N.C. The program is funded by an anonymous benefactor.

**Program Goals**

* To provide a supportive and stimulating learning community enhanced by peers, the business community, and faculty mentors.
* To provide an academic program that includes early field experiences, travel, professional development opportunities and cultural events extending beyond the scope of the regular college program.
* To instill a sense of vision, service, and professionalism in prospective teachers.
* To provide opportunities to encourage leadership development.

**Program Scholarships**

**West Teaching Scholarship**

The West Teaching Scholarship awards students in the education field up to $12,000 in addition to academic scholarships awarded by Catawba, except for Socratic Scholarships. Recipients are named in honor of Dr. Martha Kirkland West, a teacher education faculty member, and a Catawba College trustee.

**Eligibility for West Scholarships**  
To be eligible for these scholarships, students must have a cumulative GPA of at least 4.0. West Scholars must submit SAT or ACT scores to qualify for the scholarship and exemption from the required Praxis CORE exam for entry to Teacher Education. An SAT score of 1170 or ACT score of 24 is required.  **Recipients must maintain a 3.0 GPA each semester at Catawba College. To continue to receive the scholarship, recipients must declare a major or minor in Education that leads to licensure by the end of their freshman year, qualify for admittance to Teacher Education for the junior year, and complete the coursework required for the major or minor selected in Education.**

**Opportunities in Education**

The Opportunities in Education Scholarship awards students interested in the field of education up to $10,000 in addition to academic scholarships awarded by Catawba, except for Socratic Scholarships.

**Eligibility for Opportunities in Education Scholarships**  
The Opportunities in Education Scholarship is designed to provide more affordable post-secondary access to college and to encourage the pursuit of opportunities in the field of education. Eligibility for these scholarships requires a cumulative high school GPA of at least 3.5. **Recipients must maintain a 2.75 GPA each semester at Catawba College. To continue to receive the scholarship, recipients must declare a major or minor in Education that leads to licensure by the end of their freshman year, qualify for admittance to Teacher Education for the junior year, and complete the coursework required for the major or minor selected in Education.**

**Commit to Teacher Education Scholarship**

For students who do not qualify for either the West Teaching Scholarship or Opportunities in Education Scholarship, the Teacher Education Department also offers the "Commit to Teacher Education Scholarship." Recipients of this scholarship receive $2000 per year, with an increase to $4000 per year once successfully accepted in the Teacher Education program. **Recipients must maintain a 2.75 GPA each year at Catawba College. To continue to receive the scholarship, recipients must declare a major or minor in Education by the end of their freshman year, qualify for admittance to Teacher Education for the junior year, and complete the coursework required for the major or minor selected in Education.**

**NOTE:** Applicants are only eligible to receive one of the above scholarships (i.e. Students can receive either a West Scholarship, an Opportunities in Education Scholarship, or a Commit to Teacher Education Scholarship).

**Program Requirements and Commitments**

**Academics**

* Adhere to Catawba College standards as outlined in the Catawba College Catalog and the Student Handbook.
* Adhere to all School of Education policies and procedures as outlined in the Goodman School of Education handbook.
* Maintain acceptable progress toward graduation at the end of each academic year.
* Achieve requirements for maintenance of scholarship funds, as noted above in the scholarship descriptions.

**Attendance**

As a student at Catawba College, you are expected to be present and punctual in all college courses. **Scholarship recipients must attend monthly SNCAE meetings and must volunteer for at least two SNCAE service events each year. Attendance is recorded and will be instrumental in determining your continuation in the Academy for Teaching Scholarship Program.**

Scholarship recipients should take advantage of learning opportunities outside the classroom at Catawba. Be sure to capitalize on any Catawba event or activity that might help you learn, volunteer, socialize, or grow in your leadership abilities.

**Communication**

Teacher Education Social Media: All scholars should follow the School of Education Instagram and/or Facebook accounts. Students wishing to share posts for Teacher Education, should contact Mr. Fleming (rfleming@catawba.edu), who serves as coordinator for our social media outlets.

Email and Blackboard: Communication is vital on behalf of both teacher and student. The faculty and staff will communicate with you in a timely manner, and it is your responsibility to check emails and Blackboard (for your courses) daily.

Social Networking: You may have a personal social networking account which is legal, permissible, and, hopefully, private. However, many students do not realize that prospective employers, the media, and others can access your account. Any posted information is essentially broadcast for all to view. What may seem like an innocent remark or picture can be misconstrued by others, possibly preventing you from being granted a teaching license or being hired for a teaching position. Scholarship recipients should exercise caution and discretion in their use of social media.

Cell phones: Please have respect for others regarding cell phone use during meetings or during Academy experiences. If you are tied to your cell phone, you may be missing opportunities to connect with your peers.

Public comments: You may be asked to speak to groups, including your former High School, about Catawba College, the Academy for Teaching, and the scholarship program. If you have concerns about the program or one of your peers, please relay your concerns to Dr. Creamer, Dean of the School of Education and Director of the Academy for Teaching, rather than publicly expressing any negativity or criticism.

**Professional Appearance**

Catawba College scholarship recipients are expected to adhere to professional appearance policies as stated in the School of Education Handbook. All scholars are expected to review the School of Education Handbook each year.

In addition, when attending Academy for Teaching events, students should dress appropriately for the given event. The Director for the Academy for Teaching will provide guidelines for dress code for specific events, as needed.

**Professional Behavior**

As a future teacher, you are in the public eye, representing not only yourself, but also your college and the teaching profession in general. As prospective teachers, you are held to a higher standard. Perception is reality for most; therefore, please take seriously the way the college community and the community at large may view your appearance.

Underage drinking is a common issue among college students. Keep in mind that it is illegal under the age of 21 to be in possession of alcoholic beverages, and you cannot have open containers in vehicles regardless of age. You also cannot be in possession of illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia. The state may ask any person who has had a DUI to appear before a review board to determine if he or she is eligible for a teaching license in North Carolina.

Your college discipline record is reviewed at the end of each year prior to determination of scholarship renewal. Subsequent action, such as probation or expulsion from the program may be applicable. Remember that illegal activity may result in a criminal background record that will prevent you from being eligible for teaching licensure.

**What if…?**

**I encounter academic problems?**

Speak with your course professor first to determine your status and to discuss possible recovery efforts. Inform your program director and academic advisor as soon as possible. Take advantage of tutoring through the Resource Center, the Writing Center, the Math Center, and, if applicable, seek accommodations for a learning disability. Do not hesitate to take full advantage of Catawba resources.

**My GPA at the end of my freshman year is not acceptable?**

Your GPA will be reviewed at the end of the first semester. If your GPA does not meet the required GPA for your scholarship (West – 3.0; all others, 2.75) at the end of the first academic year and/or if you have not completed the required number of hours of coursework to make progress towards graduation, you will either be placed on probation for the following year or be denied the opportunity to continue in the program. In either case, you may forfeit a portion or the entirety of your academic scholarship.

In addition to your GPA, your discipline and attendance reports may be reviewed and may have a bearing on the outcome of your status.

**I am involved in an illegal activity?**

The penalty can be dismissal from the Scholars program, suspension from the College, and/or police intervention. If charged and convicted by law enforcement, a substantial fine and community service is required. The same is true for possession of drugs or drug paraphernalia.

**My social media account has been reported for inappropriate content?**

Questionable or illegal postings (e.g. a picture of you wearing a Catawba shirt and holding a beer can) or other inappropriate content can be cause for probation and/or dismissal from the program. Remember that pictures posted by friends are subject to review, even if they do not appear on your personal site.

**I exhibit unprofessional behavior?**

A conference with the program director will occur to review the Professional Dispositions rubric and to determine if disciplinary action is necessary. Removal from the scholarship program may result.

**I have trouble getting along with others in my cohort?**

You may need someone to mediate. Consider talking to a counselor, professor, or program administrator, or, if you feel comfortable, the specific person with whom you have a conflict.

**I am stressed, distressed, or depressed?**

Don’t hesitate to ask for help; you are not the only student for whom this is an issue. Catawba has counseling services available to provide you with professional, unbiased advice. You may also want to confide in a friend, professor, or advisor.

**I miss a scheduled event?**

It is important that you attend and participate in program events. You must notify the program director if you have extenuating circumstances that may prevent your attendance. The program administrators will consider each individual’s circumstances. You may be required to participate in an alternative event.

**I decide to withdraw from Catawba or just leave the Teacher Education program?**

Pursuit of a major or minor in the Teacher Education program that leads to licensure is required to maintain a Teacher Education Scholarship. If your plans change, as a matter of professional courtesy and to assist the Academy in future planning, we request that you notify the program director in writing (via email). Please do so in a timely manner, as soon as your decision is made.



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**Handbook Agreement Contract**

**I hereby agree to and will abide by the content and details found in The Shirley P. Ritchie Academy for Teaching Handbook.**

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**Student Signature**

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**Printed Full Name Cohort Group**

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**Date**

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**Director, Academy for Teaching**