

Scholarship Handbook

For

Academic Departments

At

Texas A&M International
University

Created: September 2007
Updated: August 2008

Introduction

This handbook has been prepared to assist all employees with the scholarship process and includes helpful information that will assist you in answering frequently asked questions. It is the hope of the Office of Financial Aid that all University Departments and Divisions will use this information to ensure consistency in procedures.

The Office of Financial Aid is the central location for the processing of scholarships and any questions should be directed to the Scholarship Coordinator and/or the Coordinator of Scholarship and Stewardships. Locations of these individuals and phone numbers are listed below.

**Office of Financial Aid
Scholarship Coordinator
Mr. Samuel Flores
University Success Center, Suite 214
Telephone #: 956-326-2229
E-mail: sflores@tamiu.edu
Fax #: 956-326-2224**

**Office of Institutional Advancement
Coordinator of Scholarship & Stewardship
Ms. Ivonne Wise
Killam Library, Suite 261B
Telephone #: 956-326-2167
E-mail: ivonne.wise@tamiu.edu**

**Office of Career Services
Director of Student Relations
Ms. San Juanita Perez
Student Center, Suite 114
Telephone #: 956-326-2262
E-mail: sanjuanita.perez@tamiu.edu**

Table of Contents

A. General Information

- I. Application Guidelines for scholarships
- II. Guidelines for choosing recipients
- III. Guidelines for notifying recipients
- IV. Guidelines for notifying Scholarship office

B. Samples

- I. Freshman Scholarship Application
- II. Current and Transfer Scholarship Application
- III. Scholarship Selection Criteria
- IV. Scholarship Resume Evaluation
- V. Scholarship Essay Evaluation
- VI. Letter of Recommendation Evaluation
- VII. Committee Member Ranking Sheet
- VIII. Disbursement Form
- IX. Notification Letter
- X. Scholarship Acceptance Form
- XI. Thank You Note to Donor
- XII. Appeal Letter
- XIII. Appeal Form
- XIV. Appeal Approval Letter
- XV. Appeal Denial Letter
- XVI. Potential Conflict of Interest Statement

C. Frequently Asked Questions

D. Helpful Information

General Information

TEXAS A&M INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Departmental Guidelines

I. Application Guideline

- Each University department should have an application for each university scholarship offered within their department.
- This application should be made available to students, along with any requirements needed for consideration for the scholarship (such as transcripts, letters of recommendation, GPA requirements, hour completion requirements etc.)
- Application deadlines should be posted clearly for any scholarship awarded through the department.

II. Guidelines for Scholarship Recipient Selection

- It is recommended that Departmental Scholarship Committees be used by departments to determine recipients of scholarships awarded through the departments.
- Departments should use a quantitative scale to rank applicants and determine recipients. (*Samples are available with the Scholarship Coordinator if needed*)
- Departmental Scholarship Committee members should complete an evaluation form using the quantitative scale and submit to the committee chair to keep in file. (*NOTE: This information will need to be kept on-file for a minimum of two years.*)
- Departmental Scholarship Committee members should sign a form stating that all who participated in the selection have considered any potential conflict of interest with applicants and, if necessary, will remove themselves from the decision-making process and agree with the awards made. (*NOTE: This information will need to be kept on-file for a minimum of two years.*)

III. Guidelines for Notification of Scholarship Recipients

- It is the responsibility of the academic department to notify the recipient of the scholarship.
- This notification should be in writing, with a copy of the letter to be kept with the applications. (*NOTE: This information will need to be kept on-file for a minimum of two years.*)
- The letter should be by semester or year-specific, and include the amount of the scholarship, whether the scholarship is a one-time award or renewable, and the requirements for renewal, if applicable.
- It is required that the student write a Thank you letter to the donor if they are under the TAMIU General Scholarship. It is suggested that all other awardees also write a thank you note to the donor. The Office of Career Services can assist recipients with this letter.

IV. Guidelines for notifying the Scholarship Office

- Once the recipient is determined, it is the responsibility of the department to notify the Scholarship Coordinator in the Office of Student Financial Aid. A scholarship disbursement request form must be submitted for processing.
- The department will complete the disbursement request form that is available on our web site at <http://www.tamtu.edu/affairs/financial/documents/ScholarDisbRequest.pdf>, and submit to the Dean of the College or respective Vice-President for approval and signature.
- It is the responsibility of the department to verify that all signatures are recorded before submission to the Scholarship Coordinator. **Note: The Budget Responsible Person signature is required and the form will be declined without this signature.**

Samples

SAMPLE

**Scholarship Applications can be found at the following
websites:**

First-time Freshmen Application

<http://www.tamtu.edu/affairs/enroll/documents/2006-07ScholarApp2.pdf>

Current and Transfer Application

http://www.tamtu.edu/affairs/financial/documents/TAMTU_scholarshipappl.pdf

SAMPLE

Scholarship Criteria

Entrance Exams:

SAT/ACT

1070+/ 23+ = 50 pts

1030<1070/ 22<23 = 40 pts

990<1030/ 21<22 = 30 pts

910<990/ 19<21 = 20 pts

830<910/ 17<19 = 10 pts

<830/16 = 2 pts

Class Rank:

Top 5% = 40 pts

Top 10% = 35 pts

Top 20% = 30 pts

Top 25% = 25 pts

Top 30% = 20 pts

Top 50% = 10 pts

Lower 50% = 5 pts

Letter of Recommendation:

30 pts

Resume:

25 pts

Essay:

100 pts x 2 = 200 pts/2 = Average

Bonus:

On Campus = 2 pts

GRAND TOTAL POINTS = 247

SAMPLE

Scholarship Resume Evaluation

Student's Name: _____

Criteria:	Score:	Maximum:
Academic Honors: Does the student demonstrate being a recipient of awards?		5 pts
Extracurricular: Does the student demonstrate involvement in activities outside class work?		5 pts
Volunteer/Work Experience: does the student have experience outside the classroom setting?		5 pts
Overall Impression:		10 pts
Grand Total:		25 pts

Evaluated By: _____

SAMPLE

Scholarship Essay Evaluation

Criteria:	Score:	Maximum:
Presents an original idea.		30 pts
Essay takes audience and task into consideration		20 pts
Focuses on a significant, carefully worded idea/ assertion/statement that addresses the topic.		20 pts
Essay flows smoothly; leads to an interesting statement about the topic.		5 pts
Interesting choice of words and phrases that add to the overall clarity.		5 pts
The essay shows that it was carefully revised, avoiding incoherent sentences, incorrect word choice, grammatical errors and spelling mistakes.		5 pts
Overall impression		15 pts
Grand Total:		100 pts

SAMPLE

Letter of Recommendation Evaluation

Student's Name: _____

Criteria:	Score:	Maximum:
Recommender's enthusiasm for student		10 pts
Recommender's knowledge of student's potential to succeed		5 pts
Recommender's expression of student's success rate		5 pts
Letter's uniqueness and overall impression		10 pts
Grand Total:		30 pts

Evaluated By: _____

SAMPLE

SAMPLE

Scholarship Notification Letter

Date

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Dear Name:

Congratulations! On behalf of the _____ department here at TAMIU, I am honored to notify you that you have been selected to receive the _____ (name of Scholarship) Scholarship for the 06-07 academic year. Receiving this scholarship is a tribute to your outstanding accomplishments. The scholarship will be applied to your student account as follows:

Fall 2006 Semester: \$ _____

Spring 2007 Semester \$ _____

This scholarship is renewable for # _____ of semesters if you continue to meet the criteria. To remain eligible you must maintain a _____ cumulative grade point average and remain a full-time student each semester. Failure to maintain these requirements means you forfeit any unallocated portion of your scholarship.

This scholarship was made possible by gifts to Texas A&M International University by generous donors. I strongly encourage you send a letter of appreciation to the following:

Donor Name

Donor Address

City, State, Zip

Please send me a copy of your thank you letter to complete your scholarship file.

If you accept the terms of this scholarship award, please sign the enclosed Scholarship Acceptance form and return it to the office of _____ as soon as possible. Again, congratulations on this well-deserved recognition.

Sincerely,

Name

Title

SAMPLE

Scholarship Acceptance Form

Office of Recruitment & School Relations

I, _____ (Print Name)

Accept

Decline

The Texas A&M International University General Scholarship renewable in the amount of \$_____ (**Total Amount**) in which I receive \$_____ (**Year Amount**) for each academic year for four years.

- ▶ I understand that I must register for the fall 2007 semester at TAMIU before Friday, June 15, 2007.
- ▶ I understand that I must complete a 2007-08 FAFSA and submit the information directly to TAMIU.
- ▶ I understand that I must complete a Financial Aid folder at the Office of Financial Aid, Killam Library, room 158.
- ▶ I understand that I must complete 30 hours each academic year at TAMIU.
- ▶ I understand in order to continue receiving the scholarship I must maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.0.
- ▶ I understand that this scholarship is non-transferable, and valid for the 2007-2008 academic year.
- ▶ I understand that I must be in compliance with the Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy at all times.
- ▶ I understand that failure to comply with the above mentioned regulations will automatically result in forfeiture of my scholarship.

Signature

Date

**This form must be returned to the Office of Recruitment and School Relations,
Student Center 126, no later than Friday, April 20, 2007 4:00 p.m.**

**Failure to submit form prior to deadline will result in forfeit of scholarship.
For more information or questions please call 956.326.2270**

SAMPLE

Scholarship Thank You Letter

Scholarship donors are very interested in knowing exactly how their gifts are benefiting students. Who better to tell them than you – the scholarship recipient? Please take a few minutes to let your benefactor know who you are and why this scholarship is important, and of course, how thankful you are for receiving it. Below is information you might want to include in your letter to the donor.

Date

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Dear Mr. and/or Ms. _____:
Donor's Name

Include the following in the body of your letter:

1. Express appreciation for the award
2. Tell about your background, hometown, and biographical information
3. Tell about your future goals and how a college education will help you achieve them.
4. Tell how receiving the scholarship is an honor and will encourage you to do well in school.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Formatting instructions:

1. Leave a 1 1/4 inch margin on the left side of the letter
2. Leave a 1 inch margin on the top, bottom and right side.
3. **PLEASE, check your spelling, grammar, and typing!!**

SAMPLE

Appeal Letter

Date

Name

Address

City, State, Zip Code

RE: NOTICE OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Dear _____,

I have reviewed your academic records for the _____ semester to determine your eligibility for scholarships. Our records indicate that you are no longer making satisfactory academic progress as stated in the scholarship notification letter given to you at the beginning of the semester. A copy of this letter is enclosed for your convenience. I am sorry to inform you that your scholarship(s) has/have been canceled and will not be available to you beginning with the _____ semester.

You have the right to appeal the cancellation of your scholarship. Appeals must be submitted in writing and should briefly address those circumstances that may have led to your present academic standing. This appeal should also concentrate on the steps you have taken to ensure future progress. Appeals should be received in the *XYZ Department* no later than _____.

I wish you well during the remainder of your college career.

Sincerely,

SAMPLE

Scholarship Appeal Form

Satisfactory Academic Progress

NAME: _____ SIGNATURE: _____
(PLEASE PRINT)

SS#/STUDENT ID: _____ EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

LOCAL ADDRESS: _____

PERMANENT ADDRESS: _____

TO: Department Head
XYZ Department

In accordance with Texas A&M International University procedure, I appeal my Satisfactory Academic Progress standing for the _____ semester based on:

- _____ The death of a relative: (Please give details below such as number of classes missed, relationship to you, etc.)
- _____ Injury or illness: (Please give details below such as number of classes missed, duration of illness, etc.)
- _____ Other special circumstances: (Explain fully below those circumstances beyond your control that caused you to not successfully complete your work.)

In as much detail as necessary, please describe below your situation, but mostly, concentrate on your plans to be a successful student. (For example, have you sought tutoring, cleared more time for studying, etc.?)

SAMPLE

Appeal Approval Letter

Date

Name

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear XXXX,

After careful review of your appeal with the Scholarship Committee, I am pleased to inform you that your _____ scholarship has been reinstated for the _____ semester.

Knowing that extenuating circumstances sometimes affect academic performance, the committee members have agreed that your _____ scholarship should be reinstated. **The committee has indicated that you must complete the _____ semester with 15 hours and a 3.0 semester and cumulative GPA in order for the scholarship to be renewed in the _____ semester.**

Please contact me if you have any questions concerning the renewal of this scholarship or the stipulations set forth by the committee.

I wish you well during the remainder of your academic career.

Sincerely,

Name

Department

SAMPLE

Appeal Denial Letter

Date

Name

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear XXXX,

The Scholarship Committee has reviewed appeal of the satisfactory academic progress for the _____ and has denied your appeal. In order to maintain the integrity of our scholarship program, scholarships can be awarded only to students who are making satisfactory academic progress as stipulated by the scholarship agreement. In rare cases and for just cause, such as death in the family, accidents, or other extenuating circumstances, appeals are approved.

I wish you well during the remainder of your academic career.

Sincerely,

Name

Department

MEMORANDUM

TO: TAMIU Scholarship Committee Members

FROM: Laura Elizondo, Director
Office of Financial Aid

DATE: August 1, 2007

REF: Potential Conflict of Interest Statement

All scholarship committee members must sign a Conflict of Interest Statement before they review any scholarship applications in order to ensure that all applicants receive a fair evaluation. A sample statement is below for your convenience.

I, (name of committee member) as a reviewer of scholarship applications have considered that there may be a potential conflict of interest with any applicant and I will disclose that conflict of interest in writing and will recuse myself from submitting an evaluation on that application.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at 326-2213 or laura@tamiu.edu.

Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is responsible to verify that the student meets eligibility for the scholarship?

It is the responsibility of each academic department to verify eligibility of the recipient. If the scholarship is renewable, the department must verify the scholarship recipient meets the eligibility requirements EACH semester.

When will the departmental scholarship pay to student's account?

For departmental scholarships, the scholarships will pay on the 1st class day if the scholarship form is received on time and unless specified by the department. If submitted after the 1st class day, all forms will be processed as received and payment will be received within two weeks of submission.

When will the departmental scholarship pay to the student's account?

For departmental scholarships, the scholarship will be posted to the student's account 5 to 10 business days after the disbursement form is received with all signatures by the Office of Financial Aid. The student will then need to accept awards on UOnline. Business Office processes refunds to students twice a week Wednesdays and Fridays.

Will scholarships affect a student's financial aid award?

Under some circumstances, scholarships will affect a student's financial aid package. We will attempt to reduce any loans a student has before reducing need-based grants. If there is a concern, please contact the Office of Financial Aid.

Where can I pick up additional disbursement forms?

Additional forms may be printed off the Office of Financial Aid web site:

<http://www.tamtu.edu/affairs/financial/scholarships.shtml>

If my department receives a check from an outside donor for a scholarship for a student, where should that check be sent?

The check should be sent to the Office of Institutional Advancement. The scholarship will be processed and the Office of Financial Aid will receive a scholarship request form to post to the student's account.

If my department needs a new account for a grant or scholarship, where can I apply for one?

The Office of Institutional Advancement is responsible for overseeing the set-up of all NEW Scholarship accounts and Private Grants. This needs to be done before any forms are submitted to the Office of Financial Aid.

Reminders and Helpful Information

Reminders and Helpful Information

- Please remember that under no circumstances should a dean, department head, faculty member, administrator, or other employee of Texas A&M International present a check directly to a recipient. All scholarship awards must be coordinated through the Office of Financial Aid.
- Please remember to notify students in writing about their award. *Under no circumstances* should anyone make a verbal commitment to a student regarding an award. **Don't** promise anything you can't deliver!
- All scholarships, including monies from outside sources, will be credited to the student's account to offset the cost of tuition, fees, room and board, and any other outstanding balances. If a credit balance exists after all monies owed to the University have been paid, the Business Office will then process a refund to the student's account.