



Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education

Montana Resident Undergraduate Student Financial Aid – Montana University System Honor Scholarship

Montana University System Honor Scholarship – Eligibility Criteria and Procedures

The Board of Regents of Higher Education authorizes the Commissioner of Higher Education to offer MUS Honor Scholarships annually to Montana high school graduates in accordance with terms of this policy. The Commissioner will offer a sufficient number of scholarships with the intent to award a target number of 200 scholarships each year to qualifying students attending Montana University System campuses. The MUS Honor Scholarships will be awarded in accordance with Board of Regents Policy 940.8 – *Montana Resident Undergraduate Student Financial Aid*, and the following eligibility criteria and procedures.

A. Recipients will be selected based upon class ranking as determined by the student's grade point average (GPA) at the student's respective high school and their ACT or SAT test score (the higher of the two if both tests are taken). If the SAT test is taken, it will be converted to a corresponding ACT score. A composite scholarship score will be determined by assigning a value to class rank and adding that value to the student's ACT/SAT score, with the highest score being offered the first MUS honor scholarship and continuing until the target number of students has accepted the scholarship. Class rank value will be determined as follows:

- A student ranked first in grade point average at his or her high school (and all ties for first) will receive the maximum of 30 points for class ranking.
- A student ranked second in grade point average at his or her high school (and all ties for second) will receive 29 points for class ranking.
- Points earned for class rank will continue to be assigned in descending order until either (1) all students with a minimum GPA of 3.4 are ranked or (2) the students ranked 30th are ranked, whichever occurs first.
- A student must have at least a 3.4 GPA to be ranked. High Schools which use weighted grade point averages to determine class ranking must use weighted averages for every student for which that weighting applies.

B. Prospective recipients must graduate from a Montana high school accredited by the Montana State Board of Public Education and have been enrolled full time and in attendance in a Montana accredited high school for at least three years prior to graduation. In addition, prospective recipients must be U.S. citizens, have a minimum grade point average of 3.4, and meet the board of regents' rigorous core policy requirements described in Board of Regents Policy 301.1 Appendix I. The high school principal, or designee, must certify to the Commissioner of Higher Education that the prospective recipients have met or will meet these requirements. Students have until the date of high school graduation to meet the MUS rigorous core requirement.

C. The only exception to Section B above is that students who have not attended an accredited Montana high school solely because they reside with a parent who resides outside of Montana due to service in active duty in a branch of the armed forces. Eligibility shall be based on the following:

1. Such students must attend accredited high schools which award grades competitively for at least 3 of their 4 high school years.

2. Such students must attend accredited Montana high schools during their senior years and their grades must be computed on those high schools' grading systems.
3. To be eligible, parents in active military service must have been residents of Montana for at least 3 of the 4 years of their sons' or daughters' high school years, including the senior year, and must financially support their students.
4. The determination of residency will be based on the terms of BOR residency policy 940.1, and the burden of proving resident status is on the parent.
5. For purposes of this policy, membership in ROTC, in the reserves or in the National Guard, does not in itself qualify as active duty. Active duty military status cannot be achieved by attending school.

D. The scholarships may be utilized at any campus of the MUS or Dawson, Flathead Valley, or Miles Community Colleges (hereinafter referred to as eligible campuses) as a waiver of tuition at the home campus, provided the provisions of this policy are met.

E. The honor scholarship is renewable annually provided the student maintains a 3.4 GPA at the home campus at the end of each academic year and demonstrates progress toward a degree by completing at least 30 credit hours after two semesters, 60 credit hours after four semesters, and 90 credit hours after six semesters. If the student is not able to obtain the credits or GPA required for progress toward a degree due to circumstances beyond his or her control, the student may appeal to the financial aid office at the home campus.

F. The scholarship may be received a maximum of 8 continuous academic (fall/spring) undergraduate semesters and is transferable between eligible campuses. Summer semester does not count as one of the 8 continuous semesters. Summer tuition may be waived for an eligible recipient at the discretion of the campus.

G. To waive tuition and/or receive credit for classes taken on-line at MUS qualifying campuses other than the home campus, recipients must first contact and make the appropriate arrangements with the home campus.

H. Students lose eligibility by non-enrollment, earning lower than 3.4 GPA at the end of the academic year, or violating the student conduct code.

I. For purposes of this policy, the home campus is the campus at which a student originally matriculates until such time as the student formally transfers to another eligible campus.

APPLICATION PROCESS:

- A. Eligible high school students must apply for the scholarship. Before the student can submit an application, the student must apply to and be accepted by one of the eligible campuses. A completed scholarship application must be submitted to the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) by March 15th of the award year. Any eligible student who does not submit the required scholarship application and acceptance letter by the application deadline will be deemed to have relinquished the scholarship.
- B. Each eligible Montana high school shall provide a class ranking list of eligible students that includes the students' grade point averages to OCHE no later than March 15th of the award year.
- C. GPA will be calculated through the 7th high school semester (5th semester, for students graduating early).

- D. If there is a tie for the final scholarship, the tie will be broken by awarding the student with the highest ACT score.
- E. If the recipient of a MUS honor scholarship decides not to attend an eligible campus, the student should relinquish the scholarship at once.
- F. A recipient must utilize the scholarship within 9 months after high school graduation.

ADMINISTRATION:

- A. OCHE will develop and maintain appropriate procedures that enable the MUS Honor Scholarships to be administered in accordance with Board policy.
- B. OCHE is charged with the central administration of the MUS Honor Scholarships.
- C. The MUS campuses are charged with the execution of the individual student awards according to the established eligibility criteria set forth in the operating procedures.