SCHOLARSHIP ADMINISTRATOR'S
RESOURCE GUIDE

A policy and procedures guide for scholarship account administrators.

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TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
Scholarships &
Financial Aid

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Overview

Texas A&M University (TAMU) disburses on average $986 million in financial aid each Award Year, with approximately $192 million of this in the form of scholarships. While many scholarships are awarded at the university level, students also receive numerous scholarships from other scholarship-granting entities across campus including academic colleges, departments, and other administrative units and organizations.

Texas A&M (TAMU) System policies and regulations, TAMU Rules and SAPs, and university guidelines recognize the University Scholarship Committee (USC) as the executive agency charged with encouraging, developing, and evaluating TAMU scholarship/fellowship programs. Scholarship/fellowship-granting units at TAMU must be able to describe, document, and, if necessary, refine their current departmental scholarship/fellowship award procedures to meet minimum requirements set forth by System policies, University rules, and USC guidelines.

This resource guide outlines the fundamental policies and processes affecting TAMU student scholarship and fellowship award administration to support an overall fair and equitable process in compliance with pertinent rules and regulations. This document is intended to serve as a basic resource for scholarship/fellowship-granting units in all steps of the scholarship process - from identification of scholarship/fellowship funds, through the scholarship/fellowship award process, to post award activities and evaluation. The individual department/unit is expected to further document their internal policies and/or procedures and outcomes as needed to clearly reflect the unit's scholarship/fellowship decision-making process, and to satisfy all pertinent System, University, and USC requirements.

For the purpose of this document, the term "scholarships" will be used to reflect both scholarships and fellowships, except where usage of the two terms is clearly delineated. Where practical, sample documents and self-audit questions are included as well as links to electronic reference materials and/or forms. This resource guide was created by an adhoc group of the Committee of Senior Business Administrators (CSBA) at Texas A&M University – College Station to focus on requirements and best practices.

Mandatory Scholarship Program Checklist

Donor Stewardship

The donor's wishes and criteria must be carried out to the fullest extent possible. In cases where these criteria are difficult or impossible to fulfill, the unit/department must take the necessary steps to recommend revisions so that the funds can be used.

- ☐ The selection must comply with donor specific award criteria per gift agreement and/or establishment of documented scholarship award criteria for each unique scholarship.
- ☐ The scholarship administrator must use projections to determine the availability of funds to award.
- ☐ The donors must routinely be informed about how their funds are utilized.
- ☐ The donors must be included in award ceremonies/receptions and invited to attend whenever possible.
- ☐ The scholarship recipients must send thank you letters to the donors for awards in a timely manner.
- ☐ The scholarship recipients' grades are shared with donors.

Written Award Procedures

Written procedures of current scholarship award processes must be documented, reviewed, and approved annually by each college's TAMU University Scholarship Committee Member per TAMU Rule 13.03.99.MO.04 Scholarships and Awards Program Coordination.
https://rulesadmin.tamu.edu/rules/download/13.03.99.M0.04.

- ☐ There must be a documented written award process with the following items included but not limited to:

1. General Information (types of scholarships, amount of award, length of award, and requirements to maintain the scholarship
2. Scholarship Administration
3. Awarding Procedures (Incoming Freshman, Incoming Transfer, Incoming Graduate, Continuing Student)

□ The scholarship administrator must understand the requirements necessary for a scholarship recipient to be eligible for an out-of-state tuition waiver, and have appropriately designated the scholarships in this regard. The student must have competed with Texas residents and non-residents, for the scholarship, and the scholarship must be awarded by a TAMU college or department, scholarship committee, or University representative.

□ The scholarship administrator must provide standardized award notifications that clearly outline how recipients maintain eligibility and must include an appropriate deadline to accept the award (Freshmen- May 1) (Minimum GPR, renewal criteria, non-resident tuition waiver renewal requirements, etc.)

□ The scholarship administrator must use a timely award notification process to meet University timelines.

□ The scholarship administrator must post scholarship awards in a timely manner in the university information system (July 1 for fall, November 1 for spring and May 1 for summer).

□ The scholarship administrator must monitor scholarship recipient's academic progress, and maintain compliance with other scholarship retention requirements.

□ There must be a policy and/or process regarding loss of scholarship appeals.

Scholarship Committee

Each committee must have designated responsible parties and duties.

□ The scholarship committee must have a designated chair and designated secretary/recorder.

□ The scholarship committee must have an appropriate committee composition (# of members, representative of unit).

□ The scholarship committee must have rotational committee membership that ensures orderly succession.

□ The scholarship committee must have clearly defined and documented committee scope/charge, and committee member responsibilities.

□ The scholarship committee must have a designated business liaison or coordination with pertinent administrative and/or business staff.

□ Each member of the scholarship committee must sign conflict of interest and confidentiality acknowledgements.

□ The scholarship committee must use a timely award notification process to meet University timelines.

Application Process

□ The selection process must use a standardized application to ensure that applicants are assessed on a fair and equitable basis with all others.

□ The scholarship application must have a question to inquire if the scholarship applicant is related to a member of the Texas A&M Board of Regents.

Accounting/Reconciliation

Those involved with scholarship administration must follow good accounting/business practices in regards to account reconciliation of scholarships accounts and balances to promote optimal use of funds, and identification and resolution of discrepancies.

□ The scholarship account must be balanced monthly by two individuals. This should include:
1. Verification that transfer of funds from the Foundation to FAMIS is correct
2. Verification Compass postings to FAMIS are correct

□ The scholarship account must have all errors resolved within 90 days.

Record Retention

All scholarship programs must comply with pertinent records retention requirements for each award cycle based on the University Records Retention schedule (Date of Award + 1), including the following scholarship data:

- ☐ Donor's intent and criteria (permanent file)
- ☐ Number of applications
- ☐ Weight or value given each criteria
- ☐ Ranked list of applicants
- ☐ Awards offered
- ☐ Amount (dollars) for the award period (academic year, semester, etc.)
- ☐ Awards accepted
- ☐ List of selection committee members

If a scholarship awarding unit fails to take corrective action, escalation could include removal of access to all scholarship awarding tools (SPARTA, SOLAR, etc.) and recommendation to the Office of the Provost for removal of scholarship awarding privileges.

TAMU System Regulations and University Rules

Student scholarships and their associated award programs are currently regulated by the following Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) policy and Texas A&M University (TAMU) rules and standard administrative procedures (SAPs):

TAMUS Policies and Regulations
www.tamus.edu/offices/policy/policies/

TAMU Rules and SAPS
https://rules-saps.tamu.edu/rules-saps-library/?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1

TAMUS Regulation 21.01.02 Receipt, Custody and Deposit of Revenues

This regulation establishes The Texas A&M University System standards for deposits and cash handling, including scholarship checks. See policies. http://policies.tamus.edu/21-01-02.pdf

TAMU SAP 13.03.99.M0.02 Scholarships and Financial Aid

This University SAP outlines general student financial aid criteria and types of financial aid, including scholarships, and provides basic (broad) definitions and usages of the various types of financial aid. The guidelines reflect the need for applicants to be assessed on a fair and equitable basis with all others, and establishes pertinent record retention requirements. https://rulesadmin.tamu.edu/rules/download/13.03.99.M0.02

TAMU SAP 13.03.99.M0.03 Non-Resident Exemption for Competitive Scholarship Recipients

This SAP establishes criteria by which non-resident students may be exempt from non-resident tuition based on receipt of a competitive scholarship of a specified dollar amount for an academic year. Specific requirements include: (a) the need for the student to compete for the scholarship against other students including Texas residents; (b) the need for the award to be offered by a scholarship committee officially recognized by the administration; (c) certification of the award and non-resident exemption by the University Scholarship Committee. The SAP reflects an institutional cap on the number of students that are granted the competitive scholarship exemption in a given semester and provides guidelines for the administration of non-resident exemptions through Scholarships & Financial Aid and Student Business Services. Finally, the SAP establishes how long the exemption remains permissible, and provides a cancellation process in the event of reduction or cancellation of the competitive scholarship during the pertinent academic period.

See Appendix A for current SAP or https://rulesadmin.tamu.edu/rules/download/13.03.99.M0.03

TAMU -SAP 13.03.99.M0.04 Scholarships and Awards Program Coordination

This University SAP designates Scholarships & Financial Aid (SFA) and the University Scholarship Committee as the executive agency of the University in matters related to scholarships and awards. Its function is to encourage, develop, and evaluate TAMU scholarship programs. The SAP outlines a general award process in the identification of university scholarship-granting units, grants the Scholarships & Financial Aid Office the ability to adjust a student's award in order to remain in compliance with institutional, state, and federal guidelines, and sets timely notification requirements for the student and for Scholarships and Financial Aid. The University Scholarship Committee is also charged with hearing appeals for athletic grants in aid not renewed.

See Appendix A for current SAP or https://rulesadmin.tamu.edu/rules/download/13.03.99.M0.04

TAMU SAP 21.01.01.M1.01 Accounting Procedures for Departmental Fiscal Record Keeping

This SAP notes the decentralized nature of most fiscal record keeping at TAMU and establishes general procedures for timely reconciliation or verification of departmental fiscal records of all accounts within the unit. The SAP requires each unit to reconcile or verify its respective accounts with FAMIS on a monthly basis including resolution of identified discrepancies. Departments must reconcile or verify each account within 30 calendar days of FAMIS month end closing and resolve discrepancies within 90 days of the end of the month in which the transaction occurred. Approved in May 2009, this SAP is next scheduled for review in February 2022.

See Appendix A for current SAP or https://rules-saps.tamu.edu/PDFs/21.01.01.M0.01.pdf

Compliance Issues

Recent TAMU System Internal Audit Department (SIAD) audits resulted in a number of inconsistent scholarship management findings at several other system institutions. SIAD found that the institution often lacked comprehensive and/or university-wide administrative procedures to provide guidance and standards for scholarship/fellowship award processes and documentation requirements. There was also a lack of written procedures for the selection of awards at the departmental level and poor documentation to support the scholarship decision-making process. Other findings included the lack of appropriate monitoring for compliance and/or optimal use of funds, the unsecure distribution of confidential student data, the lack of timely reconciliation of scholarship accounts and balances, poor or no segregation of duties between record-keeping and custody, and inappropriate access to information. See Appendix B for a brief summary of system audit findings/ recommendations reported in FY2009.

Records Retention

Record retention must follow the State of Texas Record Retention Schedule.

- Applications of students that were not selected for an award have to be maintained for the scholarship cycle plus one year.
- Applications and support for awarded students must be maintained for Award Year + 1 (one year after the date of close of the award year).

Financial Aid documents must be retained for a minimum of three years after annual audit acceptance. It is also interpreted to include the retention of the following scholarship data:

1. Donor's intent and criteria (permanent file)
2. Number of applications received
3. Weight or value given each criteria
4. Ranked list of applicants
5. Awards offered
6. Amount (dollars) for the award period (academic year, semester, etc.)
7. Awards accepted
8. List of selection committee members

TAMU Record Retention Schedule (See Appendix A)
tamus.edu/assets/files/legal/pdf/RecordsRetentionSchedulRecertified12Jan2012.pdf

Departmental Self-audit Questions Regarding Policies/Rules/SAPs

- Does our current scholarship award process ensure that applicants are assessed on a fair and equitable basis with all others per TAMU Rule https://rulesadmin.tamu.edu/rules/download/13.03.99.M0.02 ?
- Do we have a written procedure for our current scholarship award process?
- Is our unit represented on the University Scholarship Committee? Is our representative aware of our current scholarship award procedures? Is there two-way communication with our representative?
- Do we periodically review our scholarship award process? How are changes implemented?
- Do we utilize a unit scholarship committee for any competitive awards made by our unit?
- How are we ensuring that non-resident exemptions are made in compliance with TAMU SAP 13.03.99. M0.03 https://rules-saps.tamu.edu/PDFs/13.03.99.M0.03.pdf
- Do we maintain scholarship files in compliance with records retention? Who is the record custodian?

State and Federal Rules

Texas Administrative Code

TITLE 19	EDUCATION
PART 1	TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD
CHAPTER 21	GRANT AND SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS
SUBCHAPTER O	PROVISIONS REGARDING SCHOLARSHIPS TO RELATIVES OF BOARD MEMBERS OF INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND UNIVERSITY SYSTEMS

RULE §21.471 – Prohibited Scholarships

A person is not eligible to receive a scholarship originating from and administered by an institution of higher education or university system if the person is related to a current member of the governing board of the institution or system if the scholarship application is filed on or after January 1, 2008, unless:

1. The scholarship is granted by a private organization or third party not affiliated with the institution of higher education or university system;
2. The scholarship is awarded exclusively on the basis of prior academic merit;
3. The scholarship is an athletic scholarship; or
4. The relationship is not within the third degree by consanguinity or the second degree by affinity.

These questions are posed to students in the ApplyTexas Scholarship Application and the University Scholarship Application. If a student answers that they are related to a Board of Regents member, they will be ineligible for scholarships unless one of the above exemptions applies.

RULE §22.402 – Definitions

The following words and terms shall be defined as follows for the purpose of this subchapter, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

1. *Affinity* – Relationship between individuals based on being married or the fact that the spouse of one of the individuals is related by consanguinity to the other individual. The ending of a marriage ends relationships by affinity unless a child of that marriage is living, in which case the affinity continues as long as a child of that marriage lives. These relationships are named as follows:
   (A) 1st Degree – Spouse, spouse's child, spouse's mother or father, child's spouse, parent's spouse.

(B) 2nd Degree – Spouse's brother or sister, spouse's grandparent, spouse's grandchild, brother or sister's spouse, grandparent's spouse, grandchild's spouse.

2. *Board or Coordinating Board* – the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

3. *Consanguinity* – Relationship between individuals based on being descendants of one another or sharing a common ancestor. An adopted child is considered to be a child of the adoptive parent. These relationships are named as follows:

   (A) *1st Degree* – Mother, father, daughter, son.

   (B) *2nd Degree* –Brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild.

   (C) *3rd Degree* – Great-grandparent, great-grandchild, uncle (brother of parent), aunt (sister of parent), nephew (son of brother or sister), niece (daughter of brother or sister).

4. *Institution of Higher Education* – A public institution of higher education as defined in Texas Education Code Chapter 61, §61.003.

5. *Scholarship* – An award of gift aid that does not have to be repaid by the student or earned through service or performance.

6. *University System* –The association of one or more public senior colleges or universities, medical or dental units or other agencies of higher education under the policy direction of a single governing board.

7. *Within the Second Degree by Affinity* – A circumstance in which a person is a spouse, spouse's child, spouse's mother or father, child's spouse, parent's spouse, spouse's brother or sister, spouse's grandparent, spouse's grandchild, brother or sister's spouse, grandparent's spouse, grandchild's spouse.

8. *Within the Third Degree by Consanguinity* – A circumstance in which a person is a parent, child, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild, great-grandparent, great-grandchild, aunt who is a sister of a parent of the individual, uncle who is a brother of a parent of the individual, nephew who is a child of a brother or sister of the individual, or niece who is a child of a brother or sister of the individual of an individual. An adopted child is considered to be a child of the adoptive parent for this purpose.

Source Note: The provisions of this §22.404 adopted to be effective November 27, 2007, 32 TexReg 8498

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (Federal)

Source: http://registrar.tamu.edu/Catalogs,-Policies-Procedures/FERPA/FERPA-for-Faculty-Staff

FERPA for Faculty, Staff and Administrators

WHAT IS FERPA?

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, FERPA, is a federal law designed to protect the privacy of educational records, to establish the right of students to inspect and review their educational records, and to provide guidelines for the correction of inaccurate and misleading data through informal and formal hearings.

FERPA allows the release of specified items but does not require it. Items that may be released are called directory information. Texas A&M University has classified these items as directory information: student's name, Universal Identification Number (UIN), local address, permanent address, e-mail address, local telephone number, permanent telephone number, program of study, classification, dates of attendance, previous educational agencies/institutions attended, degree(s), academic honors and awards received, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, Medical Residence Location (Health Science Students), and Medical Residence Specialization (Health Science Students).

Students may request a hold on any or all of the aforementioned directory information via the My Record tab in Howdy, or by completing the Hold Directory Information form and submitting it to the Office of the Registrar. A warning message in Compass indicates the student has blocked his/her information. A "Confidential" notation will also appear in the upper left-hand corner of any Compass form containing student information when a student has restricted the

release of any directory item. The Compass SWAINFO form lists the specific directory items that have been restricted and may not be released without prior written consent from the student.

Items which cannot be identified as directory information are a student's social security number, race, religion, national origin, gender, grades, or GPA.

WHAT IS A STUDENT EDUCATIONAL RECORD?

Any record, with certain exceptions, maintained by an institution that is directly related to a student or students is an educational record. This record can contain a student's name, or several students' names, or information from which an individual student or students can be personally (individually) identified. Educational records include files, documents, and materials in whatever medium (handwriting, print, monitor screen, tapes, disks, film, microfilm, microfiche, or notes) that contain information directly related to students and from which students can be personally identified. If ever in doubt whether information may be released, please call the Office of the Registrar at 458-4175 or 845-1145. You may also send your questions to ferpa@tamu.edu.

WHAT IS LEGITIMATE EDUCATIONAL INTEREST?

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the information requested is necessary for that official to (a) perform appropriate tasks that are specified in his/her position description or in the performance of regularly assigned duties by a lawful supervisor; (b) fulfill the terms of a contractual agreement; (c) perform a task related to a student's education; (d) perform a task related to the discipline of a student; or (e) provide a service or benefit relating to the student or student's family, such as health care, counseling, financial aid, job placement, or former student-related activities.

For example, if a student is assigned to you for advising, you have a legitimate educational interest and may access his/her records. If a good friend asks you to tell him about his daughter's grades, DON'T. This situation poses two problems. First, unless this student is your advisee, you do not have a legitimate educational interest. Second, if the parent has not filed the Certification of Dependency form with the Office of the Registrar, the parent may not be eligible to receive this information. In post-secondary institutions, the student "owns" his/her educational record from the first enrollment, regardless of the age of the student.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Statements made by a person making a recommendation that are made from that person's personal observation or knowledge do not require a written release from the student who is the subject of the recommendation. However, if personally identifiable information obtained from a student's educational record is included (GPA, grades, etc.), the writer is required to obtain a signed release from the student. This letter would become a part of the student's educational record and the student has the right to read it unless he/she has waived that right.

PENALTIES FOR VIOLATING FERPA

The Family Policy Compliance Office reviews and investigates complaints of violations of FERPA. The penalty for violating FERPA is loss of all federal funding, including grants and financial aid.

If you witness or commit what you believe to be a possible FERPA violation, please notify the Office of the Registrar immediately at 979-845-1145, ferpa@tamu.edu. The Office of the Registrar will investigate the matter and determine what action, if any, should be taken. If you have any questions about FERPA compliance or the release of student information, please contact Venesa Heidick, Registrar at vheidick@tamu.edu or 979-845-1145.

If you have questions or concerns or believe you have committed a possible FERPA violation, please contact the Office of the Registrar at 979-845-1711 or submit a request to ferpa@tamu.edu.

DO NOT

- Use social security number, institutional identification number, or any portion of these numbers in a public posting of grades
- Link the name of a student with that student's social security number in any public manner
- Leave graded tests or papers in a stack for students to pick up by sorting through the tests or papers of all students
- Circulate a printed class list with student name and social security number/institutional identification number or grades as an attendance roster
- Discuss the progress of any student with anyone other than the student (including parents/guardians) without the consent of the student
- Provide anyone with lists of students enrolled in your classes for any commercial purpose
- Provide anyone with student schedules or assist anyone in finding a student on campus

TAMU Scholarships & Financial Aid Office

TAMU's Scholarships & Financial Aid Office is responsible for the administration of scholarships/fellowships and financial aid for Texas A&M University students. The office provides financial aid advising, short-term loans, long-term loans, scholarships, student employment, debt management and financial literacy. The office oversees scholarship/fellowship awards and provides information (https://financialaid.tamu.edu/policies/scholarship-university-administrators), training, and coordination with academic and other units in the administration of scholarships and other financial aid across the campus. The office is located on the second floor of the General Services Complex.

Physical Location
2nd Floor of the General Service Complex
Phone: (979) 845-3982
Fax: (979) 847-9061
scholarships@tamu.edu   General Scholarship E-Mail
fellowschol@tamu.edu   TAMU Department Scholarship E-Mail

Mailing Address
Texas A&M University
Scholarships & Financial Aid
P.O. Box 30016
College Station, TX 77842-3016

Overnight Mailing Address
Texas A&M University
Scholarships & Financial Aid
General Service Complex Suite 2601
College Station, TX 77843-1252

Texas A&M University at Galveston and Health Science Center Mailing Addresses
(Do not send external checks to Galveston or the Health Science Center. The College Station office processes all external scholarship checks for students.)

Galveston	Health Science Center
Texas A&M University	Texas A&M University
Financial Aid Office	Attn. Scholarship Office
Galveston Processing	P.O. Box 30016
P.O. Box 40005	College Station, TX 77842
College Station, TX 77842	

The Scholarships & Financial Aid Office works in conjunction with Student Business Services in the disbursement of scholarship/fellowship awards at TAMU. Since a scholarship award will have direct impact on a student's overall financial aid package, units must award and post scholarships in a timely manner according to the Scholarships & Financial Aid deadlines outlined in University SAP 13.03.99.M0.04 https://rules-saps.tamu.edu/PDFs/13.03.99.M0.04.pdf . Student Business Services should be contacted for questions relating to a student's bill and/or refund status.

Scholarships Awards and Student Enrollment

Scholarships & Financial Aid anticipates that students will enroll full-time for the fall and spring semesters.

Full-time enrollment is defined as follows:

Undergraduate / DVM / JD / MD / DDS / PharmD Students

12 or more semester credit hours for fall/spring
8 or more semester credit hours for summer

Graduate Students

9 or more semester credit hours for fall/spring
6 or more semester credit hours for summer

Student enrollment for scholarship funds posted by the July 1 deadline for fall payment is considered at the time of disbursement. Funds will credit to student billing accounts upon the scheduled disbursement dates if the student is enrolled full-time as defined above.

Generally, scholarship funds will not credit to student billing accounts for students who are enrolled less than full-time. Instances where an exception to the full-time requirement is considered include but are not limited to the following: student is in final semester and requires less than full-time hours to graduate, student enrolled in less than full-time hours based on evaluation and documented recommendation of Disability Services, or student enrolled in a required internship or cooperative education experience. The aforementioned exceptions are made only with an approved and documentation from the scholarship provider or awarding unit. Approval may be provided based on a particular fund or specific student.

Scholarships & Financial Aid reviews student enrollment again after census (12th class day in fall/spring or 4th class day in summer). Scholarship funds for students who are enrolled in zero hours are cancelled and/or are returned to the scholarship provider. If a scholarship that carriers a non-resident tuition waiver is cancelled before the census date, the waiver is also cancelled for that term and future terms – unless the student has another scholarship that meets the eligibility requirements for a non-resident tuition waiver.

Scholarships for students who are enrolled less than full-time (but not zero hours) remain as offered / accepted but not paid and will be identified via disbursement validation reports. Scholarships & Financial Aid works with scholarship providers and awarding units to determine student eligibility for students enrolled less than full-time.

Scholarships (and accompanying non-resident tuition waivers) are considered earned as long as the student was enrolled through the census date for a term and are not generally adjusted or cancelled, unless a request is made.

Colleges, Departments, and Other Scholarship-Granting Units

While TAMU's Scholarships & Financial Aid Office administers and awards many university scholarships, students can receive TAMU scholarships, fellowships, grants, or awards from a number of scholarship-granting units. The University Scholarship Committee annually reviews the award process for each scholarship/fellowship-awarding unit. Currently recognized scholarship-granting units other than TAMU's Scholarships & Financial Aid Office include the following:

1. Scholarships & Financial Aid Office
2. Office of Graduate and Professional Studies
3. Office of the Commandant- Corps of Cadets
4. Athletics (grant-in-aid)
5. Colleges and Schools
6. Academic Departments
7. Other award units may be approved by the USC

Scholarship-granting units are responsible for ensuring that their respective scholarship award processes are fair and equitable and in compliance with pertinent rules and regulations. At a minimum, each scholarship-granting unit must establish and maintain:

1. A scholarship award committee to assist with the evaluation and selection of their scholarship winners
2. Documentation of their scholarship award process
3. Respective scholarship account(s), including regular reconciliation
4. Scholarship award records in compliance with record retention requirements
5. Competitive tuition waiver certification if pertinent
6. Timely award notification to Scholarships & Financial Aid Office

Departmental Self-audit Questions Regarding Scholarship-Granting Units
- Are any scholarships awarded by or through the unit?
- Do we have a written award process?
- Are we regularly reconciling our scholarship account(s)?
- Do we maintain award records in compliance with record retention?

Fellowships

Many different fellowships are available through departments, colleges, and the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies. Ordinarily, graduate students holding fellowships are not required to perform any services. Many competitive fellowships of $1,000 or greater per academic year also allow students to pay tuition at the in-state rate. Fellowships packages vary from $1,000 to over $30,000 and some include funds for insurance and tuition and fees.

Scholarships & Financial Aid is required to account for fellowships paid as a resource towards a student's financial aid packet. Fellowships can be paid in a lump sum or monthly (5 stipends in fall, 4 stipends in spring, and 3 stipends in summer) in a semester. Awarding units determine which way a fellowship is to be paid. Scholarships & Financial Aid sets fellowship payment dates annually and according to the semester. These dates are not flexible, due to how funds are to be disbursed in Scholarships & Financial Aid.

Disbursement dates of Fellowships can be found at:
https://aggie.tamu.edu/financial-aid/types-of-aid/scholarships/important-dates

Fellowships are to be awarded to a student's account before July 1 for the following academic year. This permits Scholarships & Financial Aid time to review each student account to determine if the fellowship will have an impact on other aid. Awards added after July 1 may affect financial aid, and result in reducing other funds.

Fellowships are usually a stipend given to a student to assist with living and educationally related expenses. Scholarships are lump sum payments, and are an award that is given to a student based on his/her performance on a scholarship application or financial need.

More information on a fellowship can be found at:
https://grad.tamu.edu/funding-your-education

Scholarship/Fellowship Funds and Accounting

Scholarships are established and awarded to assist students with the cost of their education at Texas A&M University. While scholarships do not need to be repaid, the recipient may have to maintain specific criteria (i.e. grade point average, major, etc.) to remain eligible to receive the funds. Awarding units seek to maximize scholarship funds, and must actively manage and monitor accounts to ensure utilization and efficient administration of awards. Former students, prospective employers, and others provide both endowed and one-time scholarship funds to the University as well as to individual colleges, departments, and other units. Proper stewardship of these scholarships should be maintained. Depending on the nature and size of the gift appropriate fiscal accounts are to be set up to segregate scholarship funds for disbursement in accordance with donor preferences and unit scholarship award strategies. While funds may initially reside in accounts with various fund- raising or administrative entities, TAMU department/unit scholarship funds are disbursed through designated TAMU scholarship accounts set up in FAMIS, TAMU's official financial accounting management information system. Departments/units that administer, award, and/or disburse scholarship funds must manage their respective scholarship accounts in accordance with all pertinent state statutes, system policies and regulations, and university rules and SAPs. This includes regular and timely reconciliation of scholarship accounts and funds.

Donors/Fund-Raising Entities

Texas A&M University has a large network of former students and friends of the University who generously donate gifts of all types and sizes to the University or one of its colleges, departments, administrative units or programs. Funds may be donated through the Texas A&M Foundation, the Association of Former Students, The 12th Man Foundation, or may be given directly to a unit within Texas A&M University.

Texas A&M Foundation

As reflected on their website, the Texas A&M Foundation (TAMF) (https://www.txamfoundation.com/) spearheads the University's fundraising efforts and matches donors, and their interests with the University's priorities. The TAMF is a private nonprofit corporation with its own board of trustees and president. The Foundation directs major gift funds in support of educational excellence at TAMU. All gifts given to the Foundation or directly to Texas A&M University or one of its colleges or departments are receipted through the Foundation. The Foundation manages gifts of all types and sizes with a financial focus on managing major gift endowments, in this case, individually named endowed scholarships. Scholarships may be funded, however, as either one-time (non-endowed pass-through) or perpetual (endowed).

Giving through the Foundation allows donors to designate their gift for a specific purpose. Donors can give gifts outright or pledge gifts to be funded over a period of up to five years. The Foundation also works with donors interested in gift planning through a charitable trust or bequest. Formal gift agreements that outline the purpose, form, schedule, and administration of the gift are written for all gifts and pledges of $25,000 or more. Donors document their preferences with pledge cards, letters, or notations on checks for smaller gifts. Foundation operational accounts are established for each gift whether endowed or non-endowed.

A number of Foundation employees serve as designated development officers in TAMU's academic colleges for college or departmental fundraising. The Foundation also has designated development officers for scholarship programs. Current College Development Officers and the Scholarship Programs Development Officers are listed at: https://www.txamfoundation.com/contact-us/development-team.aspx. Prospective donors interested in giving a specific purpose scholarship should be directed to the appropriate Development Officer.

Non-endowed gifts are disbursed to a TAMU fiscal account as designated by the donor upon request by the TAMU department/unit. Endowed funds are held by the Foundation, invested and accrue interest earnings that are disbursed to a TAMU fiscal account when requested by the department/unit. The corpus endowment remains in the Foundation.

Association of Former Students (AFS)

Gifts can also be made through TAMU's alumni organization, the Association of Former Students (http://www.aggienetwork.com/). Former Students support "benevolent, charitable, and educational undertakings by extending financial and other aid to students of Texas A&M University." Volunteers serving on the Association Leadership Council govern the Association of Former Students and represent the Aggie network world-wide. Through the support of former students and friends of Texas A&M, the Association of Former Students conducts annual drives for unrestricted funds to support former student programs and services, student activities, scholarships and financial aid, faculty enrichment programs, and many other critical projects for Texas A&M.

Association scholarships include both endowed memorial scholarships, Board designated scholarships, and scholarships awarded through Association's Annual Fund. TAMU's University Scholarship Committee selects Association memorial scholarship recipients. The Scholarships & Financial Aid Office administers these scholarships. Prospective donors may make a donation on-line or find out more about giving through the Association of Former Students at aggienetwork.com.

12th Man Foundation

The 12th Man Foundation (https://www.12thmanfoundation.com/) raises support for student athletes, and funds scholarships, programs, and facilities in support of championship athletics. The 12th Man Foundation provides funding for athletic scholarships that TAMU offers in its men's and women's sports. The TAMU Athletics department and Scholarships & Financial Aid Office jointly administer these scholarships.

Texas A&M University System (TAMUS)

The TAMUS Office of the Treasurer (System Treasury Services) oversees the System Endowment Fund and Cash Concentration Pool for endowments held by Texas A&M University.

Texas A&M University

TAMU's Gifts and Endowments office in FMO (https://uas.tamu.edu/financial-reporting/gifts-endowments/index.html) provides internal financial reporting at the request of departments and external financial reporting at the request of donors. The office processes funds transferred from TAMF accounts into TAMU fiscal accounts. The office also works closely with System Treasury Services in matters regarding the System Endowment Fund and the Cash Concentration Pool.

Other Outside Entities

For outside gifts specifically directed for use as a scholarship to a named recipient it is recommended that donors attach a Scholarship Donor Form to payments. This form informs the University of the specifics regarding the distribution and/or use of the gift funds (recipient, amount, requirements, disbursement schedule, etc.)

All outside gifts received by Texas A&M University are receipted through the Texas A&M Foundation (TAMF). Gifts are usually received for specific program support or a designated purpose, including student scholarships. After receipting through the TAMF, funds are deposited into an appropriate FAMIS account.

Scholarship donor form can be found at https://financialaid.tamu.edu/policies/scholarship-donors

How to Give Scholarships

Donors may endow a scholarship with the Texas A&M Foundation. For more information visit https://www.txamfoundation.com/ways-to-give.aspx or call (800) 392-3310.

Gifts can also be made through the Association of Former Students. For more information on giving through the Association of Former Students, please call (979) 392-3310.

Scholarship/Fellowship Award Criteria

Through Texas A&M Foundation gift agreements or other means (pledge cards, letters, etc.), donors may establish criteria to be used in the selection of their respective scholarship recipients. Criteria can run the spectrum from very general (e.g. a student in good standing at the university pursuing a degree in a specific college) to very specific (e.g. student must be from a specific school or county or junior college; pursuing a specific major; pursuing a career in a specific industry). The department/ unit must make every effort to honor donor preferences in the selection of scholarship recipients. In the case of highly restrictive criteria preventing full utilization of the scholarship funds, the unit or development officer may wish to consult the donor to change criteria and/or allow the unit some flexibility if no applicant meets original donor criteria.

Scholarship awarding departments/units may define specific criteria for otherwise unspecified scholarship funds. Please see Appendix C for acceptable criteria. Each department/unit must develop a general philosophy regarding their individual scholarship programs and develop criteria to advance that. They may choose to impose higher standards for student recipients. They may choose to direct scholarship support to students with financial need or those that demonstrate leadership in addition to academic achievement. Once the philosophy is well defined and criteria are set, the scholarship award process within each department/unit can be designed to find students who meet these requirements. Criteria must be applied consistently and equitably.

General university criteria includes:

- Degree-seeking at Texas A&M University
- Good standing with the University
- Academic eligibility to receive scholarship

As noted above, more specific requirements and/or preference criteria may be established. Other common criteria include: financial need, academic achievement, leadership, and/or extra- curricular activities. In all cases, the criteria for each specific scholarship should be clearly defined and documented. Any exceptions to these criteria should likewise be fully defined and documented.

Departmental Self-audit Questions Regarding Scholarship Award Criteria

- What is our unit's underlying philosophy regarding scholarship awards? For example, a few larger awards to maximize benefit to best applicants or a greater number of smaller awards to maximize number of students that benefit.
- Is our departmental scholarship awarding philosophy documented?
- Does our unit scholarship award process support this philosophy? Is this reviewed regularly?
- How are changes made to process? Is this documented?
- How are the departmental criteria for scholarship awards determined? Is the process defined and formalized? Is this documented?
- For academic units, are faculty involved in the process?
- Does the unit allow exceptions to the departmental philosophy? Are these fully defined and documented?

Scholarship/Fellowship Accounts

In order to appropriately track and report fund activity, funds are segregated in separate designated accounts depending on type of funds and unit's scholarship/fellowship administrative procedures. While department/unit funds may initially reside in accounts in various fund-raising or administrative entities, scholarship/fellowship funds are disbursed through designated TAMU scholarship accounts set up in FAMIS.

While most scholarship/fellowship funds are received as gift funds with a specific purpose, scholarship/fellowship funds may also be identified and allocated from a number of other fund types including Educational and General (E&G) state funds, designated or other local funds, restricted contract and grant funds, and other restricted or unrestricted gift funds. Since funds may only be disbursed through a designated TAMU account, the department/unit may have to establish a separate designated scholarship/fellowship account in the appropriate account fund range, transfer funds between an existing TAMU account to the designated scholarship/fellowship account, and/or transfer funds from a University-affiliated organization account to a TAMU designated scholarship account. See chart on following page for summary of scholarship fund account parameters.

Departments/units may choose to establish unique designated scholarship accounts for each individual scholarship fund (one to one relationship) or might set up a general scholarship account utilizing support accounts to segregate discrete scholarships or some combination of these. Units must establish a general scholarship disbursement account or designated scholarship accounts depending on the nature of funds. E&G scholarship funds will be disbursed through a 163xxx account, scholarship funds from TAMU designated accounts will be disbursed through a 24xxxx account, other gift funds used for scholarships will be disbursed through a 65xxxx account, etc. In addition, certain scholarship or fellowships may be awarded through restricted contract and grant accounts (4xxxxx).

Once scholarship/fellowship funds are identified, the department/unit must request that Scholarships & Financial Aid establish the scholarship in the SOLAR database and set up FAMIS, Compass fund and detail codes. The fund code ties the scholarship to the given disbursement account and the detail code sets the scholarship parameters (scholarship or fellowship, graduate or undergraduate, one-time or monthly disbursements, etc.). The department completes and submits a Request for New Scholarship FAMIS Account and/or Compass Fund Code for each new endowed scholarship and other unique scholarships that the department wishes to track separately. Scholarships & Financial Aid works in conjunction with Financial Management Operations and Student Business Services to establish scholarship account funds. Departments/ units are responsible for ensuring SOLAR information accurately reflects the scholarship award criteria, etc. If inaccuracies are noted, corrections maybe submitted by CORRECTION FORM to Scholarships & Financial Aid. This form can be found at https://financialaid.tamu.edu/getmedia/38f31150-4891-49ab-ad8b-535966f7c068/ScholarshipFellowshipCorrection.pdf. All endowed accounts must have a sufficient balance on the income side of the endowment to award a scholarship before the FAMIS and fund code can be set up. Please provide a copy of the scholarship account summary with the Request for New Scholarship Account.

Account Information

FAMIS Object Code	Description	Student Level	Note
5910	Scholarship – Undergraduate	UG	Use this code for undergraduate students selected by TAMU
5915	Scholarship – Graduate	GR	Use this code for graduate students selected by TAMU
5920	Scholarship – Professional	PR	Use this code for professional students selected by TAMU
5928	Pass-thru awards	All Levels	Scholarship recipient selected by donor

Scholarship Fund Accounts

Below is a summary of the FAMIS accounts that can pay for scholarships/fellowships:

Function codes of 60 and 15 allow for scholarships/fellowships to be paid from the FAMIS account.

1xxxxx scholarships/fellowships should be paid from accounts in the 163700 to 163869 range with a function code 60.

20xxxx/21xxxx function 60 is allowed to pay for scholarships/fellowships.

230xxx function 15 is allowed to pay for scholarships/fellowships

246xxx function 15 is allowed to pay for scholarships/fellowships.

25xxxx function 15 is allowed to pay for scholarships/fellowships.

290xxx function 15 is allowed to pay for scholarships/fellowships.

4xxxxx can pay for scholarships/fellowships if it is listed on screen 8 in FAMIS no matter what the function code is on screen 6.

5xxxxx/51xxxx function 15 is allowed to pay for scholarships/fellowships.

Account Fund Sources

Accounts starting in…

1   come from E&G state funds
2   come from designated funds, local (tuition)
24   come from designated tuition
4   come from research gifts, grants, contracts
5   come from gift funds
6   come from scholarships/fellowships

Account Related Online Resources

Texas A&M Foundation
https://www.txamfoundation.com/

Departmental Budget Request Information
https://fmo.tamu.edu/operational-accounting/index.html

Foundation Expense Voucher-FMO form
https://campusclients.txamfoundation.com/intranet/view-intranet-form.aspx?id=69

Request for New Scholarship FAMIS Account or Compass Fund Code (College Station)
https://financialaid.tamu.edu/getmedia/b633cc53-4eaa-4d35-954e-3c29f18fe614/FAMISAcctRequest.pdf

Instructions can be found at: https://financialaid.tamu.edu/getmedia/8c6ceb31-d2aa-4a53-a24b-efd857a1f3ad/SchFellowAcctRequestFormInstructions.pdf

Correction Form for Scholarship/Fellowship Account Set-Up
https://financialaid.tamu.edu/getmedia/38f31150-4891-49ab-ad8b-535966f7c068/ScholarshipFellowshipCorrection.pdf

Departmental Self-audit Questions Regarding Scholarship Accounts

- Are scholarship/fellowship funds endowed or non-endowed? If endowed, where are the endowments held for this unit?
- Does unit utilize separate scholarship accounts? Support accounts? Both?
- Who has responsibility for account establishment? Support accounts?
- Who has responsibility for necessary funds transfers (from Foundation and/or Departmental Budget Request (DBRs))?
- Who has responsibility for SOLAR information update?

Identifying Available Scholarship/Fellowship Funds

Units utilize fiscal reports to ascertain current balances and predict cash flow for the coming award period. Other factors in determining anticipated available funds include the prior commitment of funds for multi-year awards, endowment pooled fund unit payout rate, development fee(s) payable, and timing and type of award. Based on available funds, the unit determines which scholarships/fellowships can be awarded at what level for the coming academic year or term.

The department/unit can identify available scholarship funds through the following steps:

1. Determine when funds will be disbursed (anticipated date of scholarship payments)
2. Verify earmarked one-time or external scholarship funds and current location (type of funds, type of account where funds are currently located)
3. If necessary, follow-up on scholarship funding commitments that have not been received by unit (determine if funds are committed, if they will flow through unit or be awarded by another entity, when funds should be available, etc.)
4. Transfer one-time or pass-through funds to designated scholarship account(s) as committed or required. This step can also be accomplished after scholarship recipients have been determined; however, sufficient time must be allowed for the transfer depending on current location.
5. Verify scholarship endowments and current location
6. Obtain current fiscal reports and/or review other pertinent information as needed (endowment pooled fund unit payout rate, development fee payable, etc.)
7. Ascertain current balance of scholarship accounts and/or support accounts
8. Adjust for (subtract) multi-year or other previously committed scholarship award(s) if unit financial obligations are not used and award has not yet posted

9. Estimate monthly pooled fund payout for each scholarship endowment (#PF units) x (payout rate) / 12 = monthly pooled fund payout
10. Adjust (add) monthly pooled fund payout (multiply by # of months until disbursement) for each scholarship endowment
11. Determine if there is a development fee payable and adjust (subtract) accordingly for each scholarship endowment
12. Compare calculated available funds with anticipated award amount (if stipulated by donor or set by department/unit)
13. Provide summary of available scholarship funds to unit's scholarship committee

CSBA Identified Best Practices include:

- Utilize projection sheets and maintain records (see Appendix C)

Departmental Self-audit Questions Regarding Available Scholarship Funds

- Who determines the amount of money available for award in a given year? Are all available funds used each year? When is this determination made?
- Is the departmental committee aware of funds available when it meets?
- How is unit scholarship philosophy communicated to committee? (Number of awards, amount of individual award(s), etc.)
- Is department's business office/staff involved in this process?
- Are individual faculty allowed to provide funds for scholarships or fellowships? How is this handled with regard to the selection process?

Process for Creating New FAMIS Account and Fund Code

1. When setting up a new scholarship/fellowship account, first determine if this account is going to be awarded more than one-time. If this is a one-time award, you may need to deposit into a general account to award these funds.
2. Complete the Request for New FAMIS Account and Fund Code form which can be found at scholarships.tamu.edu/Staff-Resources.
3. You can request a FAMIS account and a Fund Code at the same time or if you have a FAMIS account you may request just a new Fund Code.
4. Make sure your FAMIS account number and/or support account is set up to pay for scholarships/fellowships. The function code to pay scholarships is a 60 and for fellowships, it is a 15.
5. The form needs to be completely filled out and if this is a Foundation account, a gift agreement must accompany the request form. If you have any questions about the form, contact Scholarships & Financial Aid at fellowschol@tamu.edu. This could cause a delay in setting up the account.
6. Scholarships & Financial Aid works with FMO and SBS to get your account setup typically within 7-10 business days. During peak, add an additional 3-4 business days.
7. You can email the form and supporting documents to fellowschol@tamu.edu.
8. Once the account has been established (set-up completely), the college/department contact person will be notified of the account number/fund code.
9. If the fund code will carry the non-resident tuition waiver, the Dean or Department head must sign "Section IV – Certification of Fund Administration" on the new account request form before the student may receive the tuition waiver.

Account Reconciliation

In accordance with TAMU SAP 21.01.01.M1.01 https://rules-saps.tamu.edu/PDFs/21.01.01.M0.01.pdf Accounting Procedures for Departmental Fiscal Record Keeping, the department/unit is responsible for maintaining proper

departmental fiscal records for all unit accounts. The department must reconcile/verify each account monthly, and resolve any discrepancies in a timely manner. Scholarship account reconciliation ensures that scholarship funds are readily identified for maximum utilization, and disbursed in accordance with all pertinent rules and regulations. Monthly reconciliation also provides timely identification and resolution of problems. Because scholarship accounts may be located with various entities, a unit may have to perform separate reconciliations/verifications by entity, or maintain a secondary bookkeeping system, transaction log, or file system for a given scholarship fund that reflects full accounting of the fund(s). Due to the timing of transfers between entities and/or the posting of scholarships in Compass and FAMIS, maintenance and regular reconciliation of scholarship accounts becomes critical in ensuring accurate fiscal information for department/unit decision-making. TAMU SAP 21.01.01.M1.01 https://rules-saps.tamu.edu/PDFs/21.01.01.M0.01.pdf Accounting Procedures for Departmental Fiscal Record Keeping requires the unit, at a minimum, to fulfill the following responsibilities:

- Monthly reconciliation/verification depending on type of system used by department – reconciliation/verification within 30 calendar days of FAMIS month-end closing.
- Verification of appropriateness and accuracy of all transactions recorded in FAMIS for the given month
- Documentation of outstanding items and actions to correct as needed
- Review of outstanding items/problems from previous month to see if they have been resolved; additional documentation of actions to correct if necessary; resolution of outstanding items within 90 days of the end of the month in which the transaction occurred
- Review of Unit Financial Obligations for validity and adjustment if appropriate
- Review of encumbrance/commitments for validity and adjustment if appropriate
- Documentation (signature and date) of preparer and reviewer

Departmental Self-audit Questions Regarding Account Reconciliation
- Where are unit's scholarship accounts held?
- Who is responsible for scholarship account reconciliation?
- Do at least two individuals participate in reconciliation (preparer/reviewer roles)?
- Are accounts reconciled on a monthly basis?
- Are outstanding items resolved within 90 days of activity month end?
- Is the reconciliation process documented?
- Does my unit use encumbrances Unit Financial Obligations (UFO) appropriately? Are UFO's adjusted in a timely manner?
- Are encumbrances accurate? Is monthly disbursement correct?

CANOPY, FAMIS, Campus Clients, and SOLAR

Depending on the type of scholarship funds, a department will utilize one or more financial information systems in the administration of its scholarship fund accounts. All such systems at TAMU have controlled security access, and unit personnel must request access and complete training for the respective system.

CANOPY

The CANOPY System provides web-based functions for the FAMIS system. The system provides on-line access to real-time FAMIS accounting information including account summaries (fund balances, encumbrances, expenditures, posted unit financial obligations) and current and previous transaction detail.

FAMIS

The Texas A&M University System and TAMU utilize the Financial Accounting Management Information System (FAMIS) to view and update financial information in a common database. Scholarships are disbursed through designated fiscal accounts established in FAMIS. Departments/ units may also transfer funds to or within appropriate scholarship accounts in FAMIS. FAMIS/ CANOPY access and training is obtained through TAMU's Financial Management Operations' Training and FAMIS Security group.

Campus Clients access

Access request form link at https://campusclients.txamfoundation.com

Departments/units with scholarship funds held in the Texas A&M Foundation utilize the Foundation's financial information system, Campus Clients, to access Foundation fiscal reports and forms.

SOLAR

SOLAR Access

Access request link at https://sfaid.tamu.edu/SOLAR

Scholarships & Financial Aid maintains a scholarship database (Scholarship On-Line Account Review or SOLAR) that reflects a current summary of a given scholarship's information - fund code, account(s) information, donor/gift agreement, criteria/restrictions, recipients, etc. New scholarships are added to the SOLAR database through the departmental submission of a Request for New Scholarship FAMIS Account or Compass Fund (College Station).

FAMIS/CANOPY Access

FD-805 Financial Systems Access Request link at https://budget.tamu.edu/_media/documents/.pdf/fd-805.pdf

Departmental Self-audit Questions Regarding CANOPY, FAMIS, iFound, and SOLAR

- Where are unit scholarship fund accounts held? Are funds located in multiple entities and/or accounts?
- Who is responsible for scholarship account administration (account establishment, monitoring of account activity, transfers within and between accounts, account reconciliation, account closeout)?
- Who is responsible for providing Scholarships & Financial Aid with revisions to SOLAR information?
- Does unit have a Texas A&M Foundation Development Officer? How is information regarding new or revised scholarship gifts and donors transmitted to unit?
- Who has or needs access to financial or scholarship information systems?
- How is information shared with the unit scholarship committee?
- Are scholarship accounts reconciled monthly?

Scholarship and Financial Aid Application Process

TAMU scholarships are available from numerous sources and students compete for these scholarships through an application process at either the University or department/unit level, or both. Some scholarships are based on financial need, as determined by an application for financial aid. Students seeking financial aid from the university will complete one of the following:

- FAFSA = U.S. citizens or eligible non-citizens
- TASFA = Texas residents ineligible to complete the FAFSA (SB 1528)
- ISFAA = International students

In addition, incoming freshman complete the Incoming Freshman Admissions Scholarship Application through the Apply Texas or Coalition website. This combined application allows incoming freshman applicants to be considered for hundreds of scholarships from TAMU. Currently enrolled students can complete the University Scholarship Application to be considered for University scholarships. Transfer students are considered for scholarships from their ApplyTexas or Coalition admissions application. Most graduate scholarships are awarded from the prospective student's department.

Scholarship-granting units have several options to obtain scholarship applicants for their scholarships. The department/unit may create its own application, utilize the University Scholarship Application, or add customized questions to the University application. If the department chooses to use the University applications, the unit can also utilize the Scholarship Processing: Apply, Review, Track & Award (SPARTA) database to compile applicant data, score applications, make scholarship awards, and provide information for the University's award notification process.

At a minimum, units should complete the following:

1. Document the application process
2. Post or otherwise communicate scholarship availability and criteria to eligible students
3. Ensure students are aware of application process, deadlines, etc.
4. Use an application that solicits the same information from each student, and addresses pertinent criteria for scholarship awarding
5. Monitor application submission as needed
6. Compile applications and/or student data from applications
7. Submit applications to unit scholarship committee for review/award selection
8. Determine recipient selection to meet unit needs, student's needs, and university (Scholarship & Financial Aid, Student Business Services) timelines, such as tuition and fee payment dates

CSBA Identified Best Practices include:

- Using the University scholarship or ApplyTexas/Coalition application for Freshman and Transfer Students (with or without customized questions)
- Fully utilize SPARTA award process.

Departmental Self-audit Questions Regarding Scholarship Application Process

- How are students notified of available scholarships/award criteria, scholarship application process, and application submission deadline?
- Who sets/determines the timeline for submission of applications? Are University timelines considered?
- Is there a minimum requirement for students to be considered?
- Is there an application screening process? If so, by whom?
- Are ALL applications entered into competitive process?
- Who certifies qualifications (e.g. full time status, GPA, classification, etc.) of students?
- How is student information stored? How is it protected? Is paper routed and/or stored?
- Who has access to this information?
- Who has responsibility for the storage of this information?

Scholarship/Fellowship Award Process

In compliance with the University Scholarship Committee (USC) operational guidelines, TAMU scholarships (competitive and non-competitive) must be awarded by a university, college, or departmental scholarship committee. The unit's scholarship/fellowship award process must adhere to donor specifications, and ensure overall fairness and equity in compliance with pertinent rules and regulations. Department/unit must document award criteria for each scholarship and the respective weight of criteria in the case of multiple criterion. The overall award process must be documented to comply with audit and record retention requirements. In short, the unit should be able to answer the auditor's question, "How was this student selected from a pool of applicants?"

The National Association for College Admission Counseling's Statement of Good Principles of Good Practice states that members should "permit first-year candidates for fall admission to choose among offers of admission, financial aid and scholarships until May 1 and will state this deadline explicitly…"

Departmental/Unit Scholarship Committee

The scholarship-granting unit should have a designated scholarship committee to assist with the evaluation and selection of their respective scholarship recipients. The committee membership should consist of a representative group of people (i.e., faculty, staff, donors where applicable) with interest in the unit's scholarship program. Larger units may serve in this capacity for smaller units (e.g. College may have committee that assists with departmental scholarships). The committee chair, or designee, should coordinate regular and timely communication between the scholarship committee and the pertinent administrative and/or business staff to ensure efficient application of

scholarship awards. Committees should convene and deliberate in a timely fashion that allows the unit to meet university scholarship deadlines as reflected in University SAP 13.03.99.M0.04 Scholarships and Awards Program Coordination. Scholarship award information must be provided to Scholarships & Financial Aid by July 1 for the Fall semester, November 1 for the Spring semester, and May 1 for the Summer sessions in order to ensure student eligibility.

Departmental committees must operate within guidelines that adhere to donor specifications and ensure an overall fair and equitable process in compliance with pertinent rules and regulations. Committee members should understand pertinent rules, the departmental process, scholarship committee scope and structure, and their individual role and responsibilities. Potential conflict of interest and confidentiality issues should be discussed and/or formally acknowledged. Deliberations, recommendations, and applicant information should be considered confidential and should not be disclosed outside of the committee.

The department/unit must document award criteria for each scholarship, and the respective weight of criteria in the case of multiple criterion. The overall award process must be documented to comply with audit and record retention requirements. The University Scholarship Committee set general operational guidelines that include retention of the following scholarship data for a period of three years from the time of award:

1. Donor's intent and criteria (permanent file)
2. Number of applications
3. Weight or value given each criteria
4. Ranked list of applicants
5. Awards offered
6. Amount (dollars) for the award period (academic year, semester, etc.)
7. Awards accepted
8. List of committee members

CSBA Identified Best Practices include:

- Clearly defined/documented committee scope/charge and committee member responsibilities
- Rotational membership that ensures orderly succession
- Appropriate committee composition (# of members, representative of unit)
- Written operating procedures that reflect unit's process and designated responsible parties
- Annual orientation/training of all committee members and other responsible parties within unit (university rules, departmental process, individual responsibilities)
- Conflict of interest and confidentiality acknowledgements
- Established committee calendars, checklists, and departmental scholarship spreadsheets that provide pertinent and timely information to aid the departmental committee in their deliberations
- Designated chair; designated secretary/recorder
- Designated business liaison OR coordination of committee with pertinent administrative and/or business staff
- Full utilization of SPARTA award process

Departmental Self-audit Questions Regarding Department/Unit Scholarship Committee

- Do we have a designated scholarship committee? How is the membership of our scholarship committee determined (number of members, representation, etc.)?
- How are members selected and how long do they serve? What are the requirements for their service and how are these responsibilities communicated to the committee member?
- For academic departments, is committee service credited in the faculty evaluation process?
- Do committee members receive training in the pertinent policies and existing process (es)? Do committee members know what their role is? Do we discuss and/or acknowledge conflict of interest and confidentiality issues?
- How is consistency and orderly succession for committee membership ensured?

- Who determines the timeline for committee meetings in order to conform to/meet University scholarship deadlines?
- What is the actual process for determining recipients? Is this documented?
- Does the committee make final decisions on awards, or do they make recommendation to department head or other individual? Is there an appeal process in place?
- How are scholarship recipients notified? Who tracks the response?
- Do we maintain scholarship files in compliance with records retention policies? Who is the custodian?

Award Notification

Once the committee has completed its deliberations, scholarship recipients must be notified of their award(s), along with any requirements for acceptance or decline of the award. Common notification methods include an award letter sent through the U.S. postal service (mailed) to the recipient and/or an award letter sent electronically through the student's official TAMU e-mail address. Recipients should be given a response deadline that ensures adequate time to either post the scholarship in Compass or award a declined scholarship to another applicant. The award notification letter should include, at a minimum, the following elements:

1. Full name of scholarship
2. Amount of award
3. Disbursement schedule (one-time, once at beginning of each semester, monthly, etc)
4. Award criteria (requirements to receive full award)
5. Renewal criteria, if applicable to maintain multi-year awards
6. Deadline for acceptance or decline of award
7. Donor contact information, if requiring student to send written thank you note
8. Departmental contact information in event the student has questions
9. Duration of scholarship (one-year; four year)
10. If award carries non-resident tuition waiver eligibility & duration

The department should have procedures in place to notify recipients in a timely manner, monitor and document student response (acceptance/decline), award funds to an alternate applicant in the event of initial decline, notify Scholarships & Financial Aid of awards in a timely manner, and ensure timely posting of final awards in Compass.

CSBA Identified Best Practices include:

- Using the University scholarship or ApplyTexas/Coalition applications for Freshman and Transfer Students (with or without customized questions)
- Fully utilizing SPARTA award process, including award notification
- Completion of notification process by University award notification deadlines (Scholarship award information must be provided to Scholarships & Financial Aid by July 1 for the Fall semester, November 1 for the Spring semester, and May 1 for the Summer sessions in order to ensure student eligibility.)

Departmental Self-audit Questions Regarding Award Notification

- Who is responsible for notifying recipients? How is information communicated to the person with notification responsibility?
- What type of notification is sent?
- What is the timeframe for this notification?
- What minimum responsibilities are expected of each recipient? How are the student's responsibilities communicated to them? Do these differ between awards?
- Who is responsible for tracking the student's responses, etc.? Are there consequences if the student does not respond by a stipulated deadline?
- Is the student required to send a thank you to the donor?
- Is the notification process documented?
- Is there an appeal process for continued eligibility? If so, under what circumstances is the student allowed to appeal?

Posting Scholarship/Fellowship Awards

Once students have accepted their respective scholarship award(s), the unit must post the awards in SPARTA through entry on the RPAAWRD tab. Scholarships awarded utilizing the SPARTA database will be automatically entered in

Compass for the unit. In all cases, the unit must verify the award has been entered correctly (student, scholarship, amount, disbursement schedule, etc.) and the accompanying tuition waiver, if any, has been properly applied.

To post a scholarship award in SPARTA, the scholarship must have appropriate fund and detail codes to tie the scholarship award to the pertinent FAMIS disbursement account, and to codify the details of the disbursement (graduate or undergraduate, one-time or monthly, etc.). These codes are established when scholarship funds are set up. Unit personnel responsible for posting awards must obtain Compass, HOWDY, and SPARTA access, and complete required training to enter (post) scholarship awards in Compass.

CSBA Identified Best Practices include:

- Using University application (with or without customized questions)
- Fully utilizing SPARTA award process including award notification

Departmental Self-audit Questions Regarding Posting of Scholarship Awards

- Who is responsible for posting scholarship awards? Does the individual have appropriate system access and have they completed necessary training?
- Have scholarship funds been transferred to designated FAMIS scholarship accounts for disbursement?
- Have fund and detail codes been established for each scholarship as needed?
- How are scholarship awards communicated to the individual responsible for entering the awards?
- Who is responsible for verification that scholarship awards have been entered correctly? Who is responsible for entry error correction? What happens if a scholarship award is withdrawn?
- Whom do students contact with questions regarding the award?

Compass, Howdy and SPARTA

Compass
http://eis.tamu.edu/Compass

TAMU's Enterprise Information Systems (EIS) department and project team are responsible for the mission-critical, enterprise-wide information systems at Texas A&M University. Compass is TAMU's student information system, and the EIS project team manages the Compass system for the university's three campuses in College Station, Galveston, and Qatar. Additionally, the project team maintains a web portal (HOWDY) that serves as the "front door" for Compass end-users. HOWDY currently allows Texas A&M University students, applicants, faculty, staff, parents, and former students to use a single sign-on to access web-based campus services.

Access to Compass is restricted, and users must request a Compass account through the unit's Compass primary authorizing agent (PAA). The PAA should be able to assist the user in determining what level of access is needed to fulfill the user's responsibilities. Users must successfully complete Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) training (found on-line at sso.tamus.edu) prior to requesting Compass access. Additional training on Compass navigation and specific functional training must also be completed. Full information on designated Compass PAAs, training requirements and current instructions for acquiring an individual Compass account are found on- line at: http://eis.tamu.edu/Compass/Compass-Training

Howdy
https://eis.tamu.edu/Howdy

Howdy is the comprehensive web portal connecting students, applicants, faculty, staff, parents, and former students to their web based services at Texas A&M University. One login to Howdy at howdy.tamu.edu lets users access their individual university records and other system applications. An employee's NetID (https://gateway.tamu.edu/activation/)and password are used to login to HOWDY. Compass is accessed through the HOWDY web portal.

SPARTA
https://moses.tamu.edu/SPARTA/

The Scholarships & Financial Aid Office has developed a scholarship award database as a tool for units to utilize in compiling applicant data, application scoring, scholarship award, and award notification. Utilizing student information from Compass and the University's financial aid application, SPARTA (Scholarship Processing – Apply, Review, Track, & Award) allows the user to create a scholarship applicant pool based on selected search criteria, apply either a standard or custom scoring model to the pool, and rank applicants based on the selected scoring model. Access to SPARTA is restricted, and access must be requested through Scholarships & Financial Aid.

Departmental Self-audit Questions Regarding Compass, Howdy and SPARTA

- Who is responsible for posting scholarship awards? Do they have appropriate access to systems needed and have they completed required training?
- Is unit responsible for posting awards in SPARTA?
- Who needs access to financial or scholarship information systems?
- Who is your Compass primary authorizing agent?

Competitive Scholarship Tuition Waivers

There are several rules and guidelines that exist for competitive scholarship non-resident waivers.

Texas Education Code 54.213
http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/ED/htm/ED.54.htm

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board rule, Chapter 21

https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=5&ti=19&pt=1&ch=21&sch=O&rl=Y

Texas A&M University SAP
https://rulesadmin.tamu.edu/rules/download/13.03.99.M0.03

Scholarships that qualify for non-resident Tuition Waivers follow this process:

1. Department certifies that the scholarship qualifies for a non-resident waiver.
2. Department awards competitive scholarship.
3. Scholarships & Financial Aid verifies receiving proof of meeting Selective Service registration requirements or being exempt.
4. Scholarships & Financial Aid posts non-resident waiver as a resource to financial aid package no later than the twelfth class day in the fall and spring semesters and the fourth class day in a summer session.
5. Scholarships & Financial Aid forwards student and scholarship information to Student Business Services.
6. Student Business Services credits the non-resident waiver to the students billing account.

Summary of eligibility criteria:

1. Student must provide the institution proof of meeting Selective Service registration as a one-time requirement. Students can provide proof of meeting Selective Service registration either by the FAFSA completion or by completing requirements posted to the Financial Aid Portal if a FAFSA was not completed. International students are exempt from Selective Service registration, but will need to complete the requirement in the Financial Aid Portal stating they are exempt. Eligible students for Selective Service will need to complete the Selective Service Statement in the Financial Aid Portal, along with uploading their Selective Service card.
2. A minimum award for the period of time covered by the scholarship, not to exceed 12 months
3. Permit awards to both resident and non-resident persons
4. Be awarded according to published criteria
5. Be awarded under circumstances that cause both the funds and the selection process to be under the control of the institution
6. Award selection by a university, college, or departmental committee officially recognized by the administration and approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. An outside donor may be consulted for input

by the college or departmental unit, however outside donor(s) may not make the final selection of the student recipient for a scholarship.

7. Race cannot be used as a factor in the selection process of the award

Departments/units determine whether a given scholarship meets the eligibility for a non-resident tuition waiver based on the above criteria. The scholarship award shall specify the semester or semesters for which the scholarship is awarded and a waiver of non-resident tuition under this provision shall not exceed the semester or semesters for which the scholarship is awarded. The unit must complete and submit the appropriate certification through the Request for New Scholarship FAMIS Account or Compass Fund Code (College Station) OR Scholarship/Fellowship – CORRECTION FORM to Scholarships & Financial Aid for their respective scholarship accounts that will carry a non-resident tuition waiver. Units can check the scholarship waiver eligibility status of their respective scholarships in SOLAR. Once the department has awarded the competitive scholarship, the applicable non-resident waiver will be automatically posted (credited) to the student's account through Compass. Scholarships & Financial Aid will post the non-resident waiver as a resource to the student's financial aid package and the non-resident waiver will appear at bottom of RPAAWRD as "resource".

The waiver of non-resident tuition shall be for the same academic year as that of the competitive scholarship. If a competitive scholarship is canceled or reduced for the academic year or summer session, the student may lose eligibility for reduced tuition. In such case, the waiver will cease at the end of the enrollment period in which the scholarship is terminated or reduced, unless it is before the 12th class day in which it is cancelled immediately. The student will be required to pay non-resident tuition beginning with the next enrollment period. Scholarships & Financial Aid receives a report weekly of scholarship cancellations or reductions that affect non-resident waiver eligibility. It is the responsibility of the awarding unit to inform the student of his/her loss of eligibility for the tuition exemption. Timing of the non-resident waiver credit depends upon when the scholarship is awarded (i.e. becomes a part of the financial aid package). All non-resident waivers are to be certified and approved no later than the 12th class day of the fall/spring terms or fourth class day of summer terms. Departments should not cancel a scholarship after the 12th class day unless student is not enrolled. Scholarships & Financial Aid will no longer accept late waivers after the 20th class day.

Renewal:

Eligibility, including GPR, total amount awarded, and certification of scholarship by college/department will be reviewed after each semester by the unit that awarded the scholarship.

1. Incoming freshman and graduate/ professional students: admittance to Texas A&M University. Incoming transfer: admittance to Texas A&M.
2. To maintain the waiver, students must maintain the competitive scholarship that qualified the student for the Non-Resident Tuition Waiver. Students who lose eligibility for the scholarship in subsequent years, will no longer be entitled to receive this resource and will be assessed non-resident tuition rates.

Reclassification Based on Additional or Changed Information: (from Texas Administrative Code)

If a person is initially classified as a nonresident based on information provided through the set of Core Residency Questions, the person may request reclassification by providing the institution with supporting documentation. (Contact: Office of Registrar) A person shall provide the institution with any additional or changed information which may affect his or her resident or nonresident tuition classification under this subchapter. An institution may reclassify a person who had previously been classified as a resident or nonresident under this subchapter based on additional or changed information provided by the person.

Any change made under this section shall apply to the first succeeding semester in which the person is enrolled if the change is made on or after the census date (12th class day) of that semester. If the change is made prior to the census date, it will apply to the current semester.

Per University Rule 13.03.99.M0.03 Non-Resident Tuition Exemption for Competitive Scholarship Recipients, if a competitive scholarship is cancelled or reduced threshold for the academic year or summer session, the student may lose eligibility for reduced tuition. In such case, the waiver ceases at the end of the enrollment period in which the scholarship is terminated or reduced and the student will be required to pay non-resident tuition beginning with the next enrollment period. If the reduction or cancellation occurs prior to the 12th class day, the non-resident waiver is cancelled immediately in that semester.

Errors in Classification: (from Texas Administrative Code)

Units should note that the competitive scholarship tuition waiver is a separate and distinct waiver from the non-resident graduate assistantship waiver. As the name implies, the graduate assistantship waiver provides a waiver of out-of-state tuition for full-time graduate students employed as graduate assistants in units. The total number of students at an institution paying resident tuition under this waiver/exemption for a particular semester may not exceed five percent of the total number of students registered at the institution for the same semester of the preceding academic year. No such cap exists for graduate assistantship waivers, therefore a non-resident graduate student eligible for both waivers should receive the graduate assistantship waiver rather than the competitive scholarship waiver. All non-resident waivers must be certified and approved no later than the 12th class day of the fall /spring terms or by the 4th class day of the summer term.

Under certain circumstances, a student may be deemed to be ineligible for a non-resident tuition waiver. This includes circumstances under which the student is determined to hold residency status (such as non-US citizens who have resided in Texas long enough while attending a Texas high school to be allowed to pay resident tuition under SB1528) or the student has exceeded their degree plan by more than 30 SCHs causing the university to lose subvention dollars. In the case of a student exceeding their degree plan by more than 30 SCHs, both resident and non-resident students are charged non-resident tuition and are not allowed the waiver.

Departmental Self-audit Questions Regarding Competitive Scholarship Tuition Waivers

- Is the scholarship open to both non-residents and residents?
- Is the scholarship award at least $4,000 for the academic year?
- Is race used as a factor in the scholarship selection process?
- Do the scholarship applicants meet the grade point average standards set by the University Scholarship committee?
- Does a scholarship committee make the award selection?
- Has the department/unit made the student aware of renewal/eligibility criteria for the waiver?
- Can you document notification if questioned at a later date?
- Has the department/unit certified the competitive scholarship award as waiver eligible?
- Does the unit maintain a tuition waiver list to ensure that in the case of dual waiver eligibility, the graduate assistantship waiver takes precedent?
- Does the unit monitor continuing eligibility and notify Scholarships & Financial Aid in the case of a cancelled or reduced award?

Scholarship/Fellowship Post-Award Administration

Effective scholarship administration does not end with the awarding of scholarships, it also includes several post-award considerations, such as active donor stewardship and monitoring of scholarship accounts, scholarship awards, and recipients.

Donor Relations/Stewardship

Each department is encouraged to have mechanisms in place to ensure the following:

1. Donor wishes and instructions are carried out to the fullest extent possible. Care must be given to maintain criteria in considering applicants. In cases where criteria are difficult or impossible to fulfill, the unit/department will take the necessary steps to make changes so that the funds can be used.
2. Donors are routinely informed about how their funds are being utilized. The unit/department should maintain an ongoing communication with donors to assure that they are informed of updates, current awards, etc. The chair of the departmental committee or department head might send an annual letter of thanks to donors whose funds are being used for departmental scholarships.
3. Donors are included in award ceremonies/receptions and invited to attend whenever possible. Recipients should be required to attend the events to meet the individuals who make scholarship funds available.
4. Donors are recognized as is appropriate at unit/departmental events, in publications, and through regular communications such as webmail or departmental newsletters.
5. Scholarship recipients appropriately thank donors for awards in a timely manner. Students should be required to send written acknowledgement to donors – not a form letter, but a personal note that conveys sincere thanks.
6. Unit/department establishes minimum requirements for award recipients so that each must comply before funds are made available. Non-compliance should result in the loss of the scholarship award.
7. Unit/department monitors academic progress of student to affirm that no changes have occurred and that student remains in good standing. A proactive approach is likely more productive to assure that students are successful and continuing progress toward a degree.
8. Unit/department establishes a monitoring schedule to confirm that all requirements have been met prior to the release of funds to assure donors are appropriately recognized by the recipients. It is important that minimum requirements are monitored and students are held accountable for their part in this process.

Continued Eligibility

Scholarships are designed to reward, encourage, and assist students in pursuing academic excellence and leadership roles. While scholarships do not need to be repaid, there may be specific criteria set for the recipient in order to remain eligible for the scholarship funds (i.e. grade point average, major, etc.). For most University scholarships awarded by Scholarships & Financial Aid, the recipient must maintain the following minimum requirements:

- Be a degree-seeking student
- Be in "good standing" with the University at the time of disbursement of funds (i.e., not on conduct probation)
- Meet Scholarship Academic Progress Policy requirements:
    - Complete at least 30 hours per academic year (fall-spring/summer in some instances)
    - Maintain a 2.5 cumulative GPR

Scholarships & Financial Aid monitors a scholarship recipient's academic progress at the fall mid- term, end of the fall semester and at the end of the spring semester. Colleges, departments and other scholarship-granting units may have other specific requirements to remain eligible for their respective scholarship awards (e.g. Higher GPA or specific major). The awarding unit is responsible for monitoring their students' scholarship eligibility.

Scholarship Academic Progress Policy and Academic Scholarship Policies and Resource Guide for each academic year can be found here: https://aggie.tamu.edu/resources/forms-and-media

Scholarship/Fellowship Appeal Process

Students who do not meet the Scholarship Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy requirements for University scholarships/fellowships have the right to appeal and provide information about extenuating circumstances that may have hindered their progress. Appeals are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Other scholarship-granting units should have a documented appeals policy and/or process in place. These should be communicated to the scholarship recipient at time of award notification.

Acronyms and Definitions

AFS – see Association of Former Students.

The Association of Former Students (AFS) (https://www.aggienetwork.com)– TAMU's alumni organization that supports "benevolent, charitable, and educational undertakings by extending financial and other aid to students of Texas A&M University." AFS conducts annual drives for unrestricted funds to support former student programs and services, student activities, scholarships and financial aid, faculty enrichment programs and many other critical projects for Texas A&M.

CANOPY – CANOPY provides web-based functions for the Financial Accounting Management Information System (FAMIS) system. CANOPY provides on-line access to real-time FAMIS accounting information including account summaries (fund balances, encumbrances, expenditures, posted unit financial obligations) and current and previous transaction detail.

Competitive scholarship – A scholarship open to both non-resident and resident applicants with award selection by a TAMU university, college, or departmental committee officially recognized by the administration and approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Race may not be used as a factor in the selection process of the award.

Compass – The name TAMU selected to use for its student information system. The corporate name of the system is Banner.

DBR – see Departmental Budget Request.

Departmental Budget Request (DBR) – Transaction process used by unit to transfer funds between expense codes or from one FAMIS account to another.

Deserving / Worthy – These terms can be found in gift agreements and refer to merit.

Detail Code – An alpha-numeric description assigned to a scholarship that describes the scholarship attributes for entry into Compass. Detail code is related to accounting functions.

Endowment – An endowment is a permanent fund that is invested and generates interest income for the department/unit to use for its designated purpose.

FAFSA – See Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

FAMIS (Financial Accounting Management Information System) – TAMU's official accounting information system used by departments to view and update financial information in a common database.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) – The FAFSA is the basic student financial aid application form used by virtually all two and four-year colleges, universities and career schools for the awarding of federal student aid and most state and college aid.

Fund Code – A numeric description assigned to a scholarship that ties the scholarship award in Compass to a specific FAMIS disbursement account.

Good Standing – Not on conduct or honor code probation with a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPR at Texas A&M.

GPA or GPR – Grade point average or grade point ratio - a measure of scholastic attainment computed by dividing the total number of grade points received by the total number of credits or hours of course work taken.

Howdy (https://howdy.tamu.edu/)– Howdy is the comprehensive web portal connecting students, applicants, faculty, staff, parents and former students to their web based services at Texas A&M University. Compass is accessed through the Howdy web portal.

International Student Financial Aid Application (ISFAA) – ISFAA is the form completed by non- resident international students seeking financial aid at TAMU.

ISFAA – See International Student Financial Aid Application.

Merit Funds – provided to a student on the basis of some achievement, usually academic.

PAA (primary authorizing agent) – unit individual authorized to request Compass access for unit personnel.

Preference – A criteria that is preferred, but not required. Every effort should be made to meet preferences; however, if they cannot be satisfied the next most competitive candidate may be selected.

Reconciliation – Monitoring process whereby departments can ensure that financial data can be relied upon for decision-making purposes. A reconciliation process compares both transaction and account balances between FAMIS and departmental fiscal records.

Record Retention – The requirement to keep on file certain information or documentation for a specified period of time beyond its creation or immediate usage.

Resident – An individual who meets the requirements to be classified as a Texas resident and is thus eligible for the Texas resident tuition rate.

Requirement – A criteria that cannot be overlooked and must be met when selecting scholarship recipients to meet donor intent.

RPAAWRD – Compass form where scholarship awards are entered. A RPAAWRD tab is available in SPARTA for your convenience.

SBS – Student Business Services.

Scholarships & Financial Aid – An office under the Division of Academic Affairs responsible for administration of scholarships and financial aid for Texas A&M University students, oversees scholarship awards and provides information (scholarships.tamu.edu/Staff-Resources), training, and coordination with academic and other units in the administration of scholarships and other financial aid across the campus.

SFA – Scholarships & Financial Aid.

SOLAR (Scholarship On-Line Account Review) – On-line database maintained by SFA that reflects a current summary of a given scholarship's information - fund code, account(s) information, donor/ gift agreement, criteria/restrictions, recipients, etc.

SPARTA (Scholarship Processing – Apply, Review, Track, & Award) – Online web service developed by Scholarships & Financial Aid that provides departments the ability to review applications, apply scoring models, select award recipients, award actual dollar amounts to specific students, and process awards into Compass behind the scenes.

Student Business Services (SBS) – A department in the Division of Finance responsible for managing all student accounts and billing tuition and fees and optional services (on-campus housing, parking permits, meal plans, sports passes, etc.), monitoring student waivers and exemptions, and processing refunds.

TAMU – Texas A&M University

TASFA (Texas Application for Student Financial Aid) – student financial aid application form used by certain categories of foreign students who qualify for Texas residency and are thus eligible for Texas state financial aid.

Texas A&M Foundation – Private, nonprofit corporation with its own board of trustees and president that serves as the university's major fund-raising entity in support of educational excellence at TAMU.

TAMUS – Texas A&M University System

12th Man Foundation – The 12th Man Foundation (https://www.12thmanfoundation.com/)raises support for student athletes and funds scholarships, programs, and facilities in support of championship athletics. The 12th Man Foundation provides funding for athletic scholarships that TAMU offers in its men's and women's sports.

UFO – unit financial obligation.

Unit financial obligation (UFO) – A means by which units can post/record scholarship award commitments or otherwise earmark funds for scholarship awards.

Verification – A monitoring process whereby departments can ensure that financial data can be relied upon for decision-making purposes. A verification process compares transactions but not account balances between FAMIS and departmental fiscal records.

APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY STANDARD ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE
13.03.99. M0.02 – Standard Administrative Procedures
https://rulesadmin.tamu.edu/rules/download/13.03.99.M0.02
13.03.9. M0.03 – Non-resident Tuition Exemption for Competitive Scholarship Recipients
https://rulesadmin.tamu.edu/rules/download/13.03.99.M0.03
13.03.99. M0.04 – Scholarships and Awards Program Coordination
https://rulesadmin.tamu.edu/rules/download/13.03.99.M0.04
21.01.01. M1.01 – Accounting Procedures for Departmental Fiscal Record Keeping
https://rules-saps.tamu.edu/PDFs/21.01.01.M0.01.pdf

Record Retention
https://assets.system.tamus.edu/files/legal/pdf/System-Records-Retention-Schedule.PDF
06.103.10   Scholarship Applications AC+1   AC=Closed

STATE OF TEXAS
Records Retention Schedule

TEXAS STATE LIBRARY ARCHIVES COMMISSION

SLR 105
Rev. 2017-07

Retention Codes (field 7)
AC – See field 9 for specific records series definition
AV – Administratively valuable
CE – Calendar year end

FE – Fiscal year end
LA – Life of Asset
PM – Permanent
US – Until Superseded

Archival Codes (Field 10)
A/I – Transfer to State/University Archivist
R/O – Review by State/University Archivist

1. Agency Code: 710			2. Agency Name: Texas A&M System Office (TAMUS)								
3. Agency Item No.	4. Record Series Item No.	5. Record Series Title	6. Description	7. Ret. Code	8. Retention Period Years	Months	Days	9. AC Definition	10. Archival	11. Remarks	12. Legal Citations
06.100.20		Documents for Applicants Who Enter		AC	5			AC=Graduation or date of last attendance		Includes transcripts, acceptance letters, advanced placement records, applications for admission & readmission, correspondence, entrance examination reports, medical records, placement scores, residency classification forms, test scores.	
06.101.10		Letters of Recommendation		AC				AC=After student (applicants who enter) is admitted		Waivers of rights of access filed with letters of recommendation should be retained as long as the file is retained.	
06.102.10		Recruitment Materials	Applicants who enter.	AC				AC=After enrollment of student			
06.102.20		Recruitment Materials for Veterans			3					VA Regulations	
06.103.10		Scholarship Applications		AC	1			AC=Date of award			

Scholarship Management Items Identified in System Internal Audits

Below is a summary of observations and recommendations identified in several reviews by System Internal Audit of various Texas A&M System members.

Procedures

- The University lacks comprehensive/ University Wide administrative procedures to provide guidance and standards for scholarship award processes and documentation requirements.
- Lack of written procedures for the selection of awards in some departments.

Recommendation

Establish formal administrative and university wide scholarship procedures for an objective process to award scholarships. These should address:

- Development and dissemination of procedures for the scholarship award process
- Use of formal criteria
- Use of formal applications
- Documentation of the evaluation and ranking of scholarship applicants
- Documentation of the acknowledgement of those participating in the applicant review process and concurrence with the list of scholarship awards
- Documentation of consideration of any conflicts of interest with applicants
- Retention of documentation for the length of time required according to TAMUS record retention schedule

Documentation

Documentation and maintenance of scholarship files require improvement. As awarding of scholarships can be subjective, the University should clearly document the scholarship decision- making process to better defend its position in the event it is challenged. Examples identified during reviews include:

- Lack of formal criteria
- Lack of formal application forms
- Lack of documentation of the selection and approval of the scholarship awards and formal criteria
- No documentation of who participated in the application evaluation and their concurrence with the list of scholarship awards
- Lack of documentation of award offer and acceptance
- Not aware of and/or maintaining documentation per record retention requirements
- Lack of documentation that potential conflicts of interests were acknowledged in award decisions

Recommendation

Establish appropriate procedures. See Procedures recommendation.

Monitoring- Compliance

Without monitoring processes, scholarship may not be made on an objective basis or meet donor intent.

Examples identified during reviews include:

- Award did not meet scholarship criteria/donor intent or requirements

- Appropriate documentation not maintained (see documentation)

Recommendation

Establish monitoring processes to ensure departmental compliance with university-wide scholarship procedures.

Monitoring – Optimal Use

Scholarship Management

A formal monitoring is not in place to provide assurance that scholarships are awarded and managed for optimum use of funds.

- Some scholarships have not had activity for a long period of time
- Some scholarships had significant portions unspent over time

Recommendation

Develop and implement a process to track and monitor unused funds by scholarship account. Complete the current scholarship consolidation process (a project to combine inactive scholarships with similar. Working with OGC)

Confidential Data

Confidential student information was distributed to departmental scholarship coordinators in an unsecure manner. Student information such as ID, grade point, test scores, etc. was emailed.

Recommendation

Provide scholarship coordinators with access to confidential student information through a secure means such as encrypted files or shared directory access.

Reconciliations

Scholarship balances could not be verified because funds had not been reconciled to FAMIS or performed in a timely manner. Reconciling items were not researched and resolved within a reasonable time frame.

Recommendation

Develop a formal reconciliation process to:

- Ensure scholarship data is accurate for each account/fund balance
- Document discrepancies between all systems used (banner, database, FAMIS)
- Reflect adjustments made, track pending items, and include appropriate documentation
- Document preparer, reviewer and dates
- Address reconciling items in a timely manner

Segregation of Duties

Processes lack segregation between record-keeping and custody.

Financial Aid Information Access

Access to information systems should be reviewed for appropriateness.

For more detail information see the following reports by System Internal Audit at:
https://www.tamus.edu/iaudit/electronic-reports/

Prairie View A&M University, Review of Student Financial Aid, 3rd. Qtr. 2012

Tarleton State University, Review of Financial Aid, FY 2018

Texas A&M International University, Review of Financial Aid, FY 2018

Texas A&M University System Health Science Center, Review of Student Financial Aid, 3rd. Qtr. 2010

Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi, Review of Financial Aid, FY 2019

Prairie View A&M University, Review of Student Financial Aid, 1st Qtr. 2009

Texas A&M University – Commerce, Review of Financial Aid, FY 2019

Texas A&M University – Kingsville, Review of Student Financial Aid, 2nd. Qtr. 2019

West Texas A&M University, Review of Financial Aid, FY 2020

Texas A&M University -- Texarkana, Review of Financial Aid, FY 2020

Texas A&M University – Central Texas, Review of Financial Aid, FY 2021

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE Online Applications

Freshman & Transfer:
https://www.applytexas.org

https://www.commonapp.org/

Continuing Students
http://uwide.tamu.edu/

SAMPLE LETTERS

Award notification
Donor select correspondence

OTHER REFERENCE MATERIAL

University Scholarship Committee Guidelines
Conflict of Interest/Confidentiality form
New Scholarship FAMIS Account and Fund Code
Guidelines for Accepting Scholarship, Grant, and Loan Donations
Sharing Information with Non-TAMU entities-Scholarships & Financial Aid Policy NCAA Division I Manual 2022-2023
Projection Sheet Training for New Scholarship Administrators

SAMPLE LETTERS

Award Notification, Page 1

9/24/2023

John Doe
123 Your Street
Hometown, TX 12345

Dear John:

We are pleased to learn of your interest in Texas A&M. In recognition of your outstanding academic achievement, we are pleased to offer you scholarship funds to attend Texas A&M University.

Texas A&M offers scholarships based on the premise that young people, having come from various backgrounds and experiences, are the cornerstone of this university. As a land grant institution, Texas A&M University has always fundamentally been a university for all people and remains committed to opening doors of opportunity for all.

Offering more than 150 courses of study Texas A&M has been ranked nationally for its academics. We are known for our traditions and are grounded in our core values: Excellence, Integrity, Leadership, Loyalty, Respect and Selfless Service. We hope that you will consider playing a part in what the University is and what it will become.

We understand that the decision concerning where to pursue your higher education is important to your future. Your educational and extracurricular background has opened several doors of opportunity to you. We hope to help you make this difficult decision easier by offering you a scholarship.

We look forward to welcoming you into Texas A&M University's community of Scholars and to the Aggie Family as a member of the Fightin' Texas Aggie Class of 20XX!

Sincerely,

Your Name
Your Title

Attachment

Sample Scholarship Offer Letter

Date

Student Name
Address
My Town, TX 86753-0999

Dear Student:

Congratulations on your admission to Texas A&M University! We are pleased to offer you the [name of scholarship] worth $x,xxx ($x,000 per year for 4 years). To qualify for this fund from year to year, you must attend Texas A&M University, enroll full-time, maintain at least a cumulative 3.0 GPR and maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress.

The choice of where to continue your education and how to finance it is important to your future. We hope this decision is made somewhat easier with this [name of scholarship]. In addition, we hope you applied for other University scholarships through your admissions application, and we encourage you to apply for financial aid through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (or other appropriate application). Visit the website https://aggie.tamu.edu for more information.

Texas A&M is consistently ranked among the best universities in the nation for academics, for being a 'Best Value School' among public institutions, and for an unmatched alumni network. As a member of the Texas A&M community, we each take part in the shared responsibility of creating a culture where people are treated equitably and contribute to a campus climate that fosters success and achievement. We are known for our traditions and are grounded in our core values: Excellence, Integrity, Leadership, Loyalty, Respect, and Selfless Service. We hope you will consider playing a part in what Texas A&M is and what it will become.

We look forward to welcoming you into Texas A&M University's community of scholars and into the Aggie Family as a loud and proud member of the Fightin' Texas Aggie Class of 202x!

Gig 'em!

Name
Title
College/Department/Office

Donor Select Sample Letter

SCHOLARSHIPS & FINANCIAL AID

[Date]

[Name]
[Address][Address 2]
[City], [State][Zip]

Howdy!

First, we'd like to thank you for supporting Texas Aggies. In the current economic climate, your scholarship dollars have increased necessity and are highly valued. It is imperative that we use our scholarship dollars strategically in order to recruit the best and brightest students to Texas A&M University.

Based on our projection data, the [Insert Name of Scholarship Here] can support *[# awards] award(s) at [amount] for [# years] year(s)* for or beginning in the academic year of 20XX-20XX.

Please rank and submit the attached list of eligible scholarship applicants for Fall 20XX-Spring 20XX awards no later than June 15, 20XX.

If you need any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me. Once we receive your ranked list, I will post the scholarship to the students' account. Funds will credit as soon as 10 days prior to the start of classes for each semester.

Thanks & Gig 'em,

THE UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

<u>CHARGE OF THE COMMITTEE:</u> (Approved by the Faculty Senate on December 12, 1995)

The University Scholarship Committee shall function as the Faculty Senate charge dictates as listed in the Faculty Senate Structure of Reporting Committees, Faculty Senate Bylaws - Chapter II.K.

It is the function of this committee to encourage, develop, and evaluate TAMU scholarship programs. The University Scholarship Committee assisted by the Athletic Council, also hears appeals of students whose Athletic grants-in-aid are not renewed or have been reduced.

In the conduct of these functions, the committee shall be assisted by the Athletic Council and any Faculty Senate committee on minority conditions, each of which may be called on to suggest criteria for granting appropriate scholarships and awards.

<u>MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE:</u> The Faculty senate appoints the members of the committee.

TAMU students can receive scholarships, fellowships, grants, or awards from:

1. Scholarships & Financial Aid
2. Office of Graduate Studies
3. Office of the Commandant - Corps of Cadets Office
4. International Student Services
5. Athletic Office (grant-in-aid)
6. Colleges
7. Departments
8. TAMU Offices and Organizations
9. Health Science Center
10. Qatar and Galveston Campuses

GUIDELINES FOR THE AWARDING OF COMPETITIVE

SCHOLARSHIPS/FELLOWSHIPS FOR

NON-RESIDENT TUITION EXEMPTION

1. The scholarship/fellowship must be competitive. A sufficient number of applicants, including Texas residents, have to be given equal consideration to ensure competition for the award. The same criteria must be used in evaluating both resident and non-resident applicants for the award. Effective Fall 2017, students must be awarded and maintain competitive scholarships of at least $4,000 per academic year in order to qualify for this waiver. Current students with existing and continuing scholarship awards may continue to receive this waiver at the previous $1,000 threshold during the academic year or summer. All Graduate students may be awarded a $1,000 competitive scholarship. All new students and new scholarship recipients are subject to the $4,000 minimum. . The maximum number of out-of-state waivers must not exceed five percent (5%) of the total number of students registered for the same semester of the preceding year. The five percent refers only to the waivers awarded/approved by those that this committee represents.
2. Students qualifying for in-state tuition must be selected by a university, college or departmental committee. Scholarships & Financial Aid verifies receiving proof of meeting Selective Service registration requirements or being exempt each academic year per the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Rule 21.2263. The waiver will automatically be posted to the students account if scholarship is posted before the 12th class day. Scholarships & Financial Aid will no longer accept late waivers after the 20th class day of each semester. An outside donor may be consulted for input by the college or departmental scholarship committee but the outside donor may not make the final selection. There shall be no grace period if students fall below the minimums for

continuing the waiver. Exceptions to the requirements stated above must have the written approval of the University Scholarship Committee prior to the awarding of the scholarship and waiver.

3. Scholarship offer notification should include the duration of the non-resident waiver. For example, "You have been awarded a competitive scholarship which makes you eligible for a non-resident waiver for the academic year." A competitive scholarship awarded for a fall and spring (AY) semester, example for fall term 2022 and Spring term 2023, will allow the student to receive a non-resident tuition waiver for those two semesters, as well as the following summer term (within the same academic year) since we define academic year as fall, spring, and summer. Scholarship awards for summer only also qualifies for summer only non-resident tuition waiver if all other criteria are met.

4. Non-resident Tuition Waivers for Competitive Scholarship Recipients will not be considered after the twelfth class day of the fall/spring terms or fourth class day of the summer terms. For a pre-registered student's tuition bill to reflect the proper charges, all scholarships are to be posted to the students account by July 1 for the Fall, and November 1 for the Spring Semester.

Texas A&M University
University Scholarship Committee
Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Statement

To be completed by each staff member that reviews scholarship applications and submitted annually to the Assistant Director prior to receiving or reviewing scholarship applications.

A conflict of interest can occur when an action of a staff member reviewing and/or recommending a scholarship award results in a direct financial benefit to a person closely affiliated to the committee member. A conflict of interest may also occur if a committee member exerts influence to select a recipient without considering objective/ criteria for the scholarship.

Selection committee members are often asked to serve because of their knowledge of local communities or their connection with a school, college, or program. In some cases, scholarship donors may act in an advisory capacity to a scholarship committee. Committee members may be familiar with individual scholarship applicants or their families or in some cases, related to an applicant. Committee members must be able to make independent decisions on behalf of the Texas A&M University without potential or perceived influence caused by conflict of interest. They must evaluate the eligibility of all applicants without bias and make recommendations based on the established objective criteria for the scholarship.

Staff/selection committee members should avoid any situation where personal and business relationships could have, or give the appearance of having, influence on the member's judgment in matters under consideration.

In case of a potential conflict of interest, the member shall declare the conflict to the committee leadership and not review the application and/or leave the meeting until deliberations on the applicant are complete. The member shall not influence the discussion or decision making process where there is a potential conflict of interest.

As a member of the selection committee, I confirm that:

1. The opportunity for students to apply has been made available to a broad class of eligible individuals and no

individual is earmarked to receive a scholarship award.

2. The review of applications will be based on pre-determined, objective criteria reasonably related to the

purposes of the scholarship.

3. This selection committee is not directly or indirectly controlled by the donor(s), donor advisor(s) or their

family members.

4. I will not recommend that any scholarship be awarded to a student who is my employee, family friend, or

family member.

5. All selection committee materials and discussions will remain confidential.

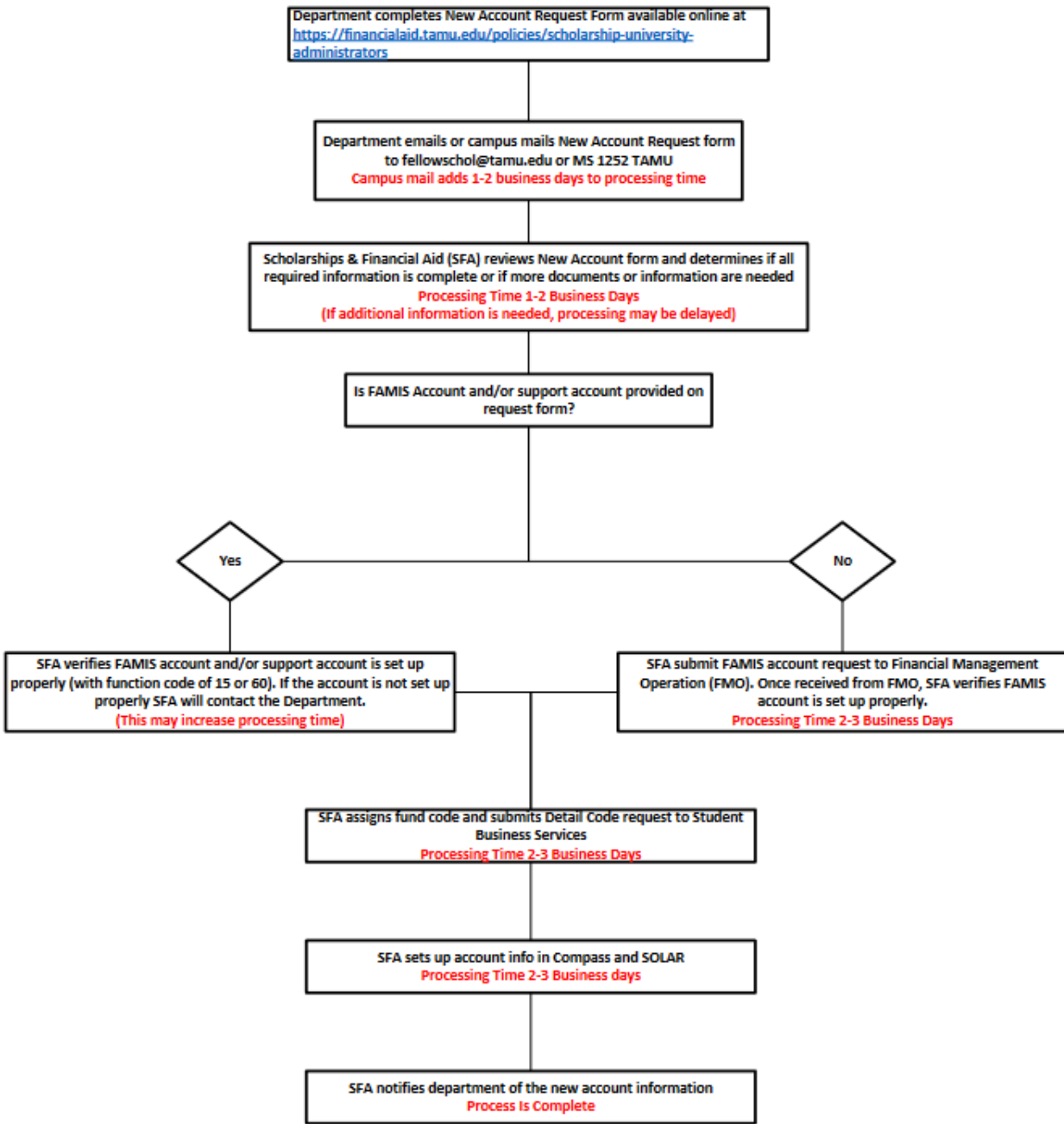I understand the policy set forth above and agree to adhere to this standard.

Date _____   Signature _____
Printed Name: _____

New Scholarship FAMIS Account and/or Compass Fund Code

https://financialaid.tamu.edu/policies/scholarship-university-administrators

New Account Request Process

Department completes New Account Request Form available online at
https://financialaid.tamu.edu/policies/scholarship-university-administrators

Department emails or campus mails New Account Request form
to fellowschol@tamu.edu or MS 1252 TAMU
Campus mail adds 1-2 business days to processing time

Scholarships & Financial Aid (SFA) reviews New Account form and determines if all
required information is complete or if more documents or information are needed
Processing Time 1-2 Business Days
(If additional information is needed, processing may be delayed)

Is FAMIS Account and/or support account provided on
request form?

Yes

No

SFA verifies FAMIS account and/or support account is set up
properly (with function code of 15 or 60). If the account is not set up
properly SFA will contact the Department.
(This may increase processing time)

SFA submit FAMIS account request to Financial Management
Operation (FMO). Once received from FMO, SFA verifies FAMIS
account is set up properly.
Processing Time 2-3 Business Days

SFA assigns fund code and submits Detail Code request to Student
Business Services
Processing Time 2-3 Business Days

SFA sets up account info in Compass and SOLAR
Processing Time 2-3 Business days

SFA notifies department of the new account information
Process Is Complete

New Account Request process should take approximately 7-10 business days (please permit an additional 2-3
business days during the months of July, August, January, and February)

Scholarships & Financial Aid Policies and Procedures

SUBJECT: Guidelines for Accepting Scholarship, Grant and Loan Donations When Texas A&M accepts donations for scholarships or other forms of student financial aid, it is obliged to administer them in accordance with the donor's directions. Nevertheless, the University is also obligated to function with federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations. The following guidelines are adopted to facilitate the negotiation of such gifts and to ensure that they can be administered by the University.

Acceptable Selection Criteria

While maximum benefit to students is derived from scholarships, grants, and loans given without restriction, the following selection criteria are acceptable:

1. Academic Record: grade point ratio, but not excluding any courses taken at Texas A&M: class rank, high school record; standard test scores
2. Financial need as determined by the Scholarships & Financial Aid office
3. Course of study or college major
4. Classification: freshman, upperclassmen, etc.

Other Selection Criteria

The best interests of the student body will be served if the following are specified by the donors as only preferences:

1. U.S. resident
2. Texas resident
3. Geographic area (if a substantial number of students come from that area)
4. Demonstration of leadership skills/extracurricular activities
5. Participation in recognized University activities or organizations
6. Letters of recommendation (if person to write the letter is not specified)

Unacceptable Selection Criteria

The University will not accept gifts that use the following criteria to exclude recipients:

1. Race
2. Color
3. Religion
4. Sex
5. Age
6. National Origin
7. Educationally unrelated handicap
8. Personal characteristics or appearance
9. Marital status
10. Citizenship

Other Unacceptable Selection Criteria

The University will not accept gifts that:

1. Require participation in varsity athletics (except funds administered through the Athletic Department)
2. Designate a relative as a recipient

Scholarships & Financial Aid Policy
Sharing of Student Information with Non-TAMU Entities

An open records request is required for our office to send directory information which includes most student contact information, such as email address, to non-TAMU entities. The Open records request requirement is not new, though it was not enforced well previously. Due to a recent incident with email addresses university staff have been reminded that this requirement must be enforced before sharing emails to non-TAMU employees or outside entities.

We hope that everyone appreciates the university's concern for protecting the privacy of students. Open records request can be submitted the following ways:

- Open Records Office **Electronic Open Records Portal**
- Email to **open-records@tamu.edu**
- US Mail (see mailing address below)
- Hand delivery (see physical address below)

You can also mail the request to Texas A&M University, 1280 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-1280. We recommend emailing requests if the information is needed quickly. Two weeks should be expected for processing such request. Also, the request should be clear if electronic data or hard copy labels are needed. Outside entities are charged approximately $25. Aggie Mom's Clubs are not charged. Due to the volume of Aggie Mom's clubs requests, EIS also requires a form for requests for data.

Once the Open Records Office processes the request they send it to the EIS department to pull the data.

Foundations such as the Terry and Craig and Galen Brown Foundation that we collect data for via the Apply Texas application or Continuing Student Application are not required to submit open records requests since we essentially are requesting data on their behalf and tell students such in the application by stating that the information can be shared with outside entities. These Foundations are considered to have "educational interest". Also scholarship donors are not required to do an open records request for contact information for students already on their account.

To work around this process, some entities may request names of students only. An open records request is not required for names only. However, care should be taken to verify on SWAINFO in Compass to ensure students have not opted to hold their name as part of directory information.

Another solution is for outside entities to send us the information to be emailed and FAID staff email it for them. This solution is not feasible given the volume of requests and staff available. FAID staff should not offer to do this.

Resources
Open Records Office: https://orec.tamu.edu/open-records/
Withhold Directory Information from Registrar: http://registrar.tamu.edu/Catalogs,-Policies-Procedures/FERPA/FERPA-for-Faculty-Staff
(List of Directory info that is protected for privacy and requires open records request to share outside the university)

15.02.7 Honorary Academic Award/Research Grant

An honorary academic award for outstanding academic achievement or a research grant is an award that meets the following criteria: (Revised: 1/10/91, 1/10/92, 10/28/04, 1/14/08 effective 8/1/08)

(a) The award or grant is a standing scholarship award or an established research grant;

(b) The basis for the award or grant shall be the candidate's academic record at the awarding institution;

(c) The award or grant shall be determined by competition among the students of a particular class or college of the institution.

Competition for the award or grant may include additional objective criteria unrelated to athletics abilities (e.g., gender, race and ethnicity, financial need); and

(d) The award or grant is included in determining if the student-athlete's cost-of-attendance limitation has been met.

15.5.3.2.4.1 Academic Honor Awards—Based on High School Record

Academic honor awards that are part of an institution's normal arrangements for academic scholarships, based solely on the recipient's high school record and awarded independently of athletics interests and in amounts consistent with the pattern of all such awards made by the institution, are exempt from an institution's equivalency computations, provided the recipient was ranked in the upper 10 percent of the high school graduating class or achieved a cumulative grade-point average of at least 3.500 (based on a maximum of 4.000) or a minimum ACT sum score of 105 or a minimum SAT score of 1200 (critical reading and math) for SAT tests taken before March 1, 2016; or a minimum SAT score of 1270 (critical reading and math) for tests taken on or after March 1, 2016, based on the concordance determined by the College Board. (Adopted: 1/12/99 effective 8/1/99, Revised: 1/14/08 effective 8/1/08, 1/16/10 effective 8/1/10, 2/2/16)

15.5.3.2.4.1.1 Additional Requirements. The following additional requirements shall be met: (Adopted:

1/12/99 effective 8/1/99, Revised: 1/18/14 effective 8/1/14)

(a) The awards may include additional, nonacademic criteria (e.g., interviews, essays, need analysis), provided

the additional criteria are not based on athletics ability, participation or interests, and the awards are

consistent with the pattern of all such awards provided to all students;

(b) No quota of awards shall be designated for student-athletes;

(c) Athletics participation shall not be required before or after collegiate enrollment;

(d) No athletics department staff member shall be involved in designating the recipients of such awards; and

(e) Any additional criteria shall not include athletics ability, participation or interests.

15.5.3.2.4.1.2 Renewals. The renewal of an academic honor award (per Bylaw 15.5.3.2.4.1) may be exempted from an institution's equivalency computation regardless of whether the recipient qualified for exemption in his or her initial academic year enrollment, provided: (Adopted: 1/12/99 effective 8/1/99, Revised: 3/18/10)

(a) The recipient achieves a cumulative grade-point average of at least 3.000 (based on a maximum of 4.000)

at the certifying institution; and

(b) The recipient meets all NCAA, conference and institutional progress-toward-degree requirements.

15.5.3.2.4.2 Academic Honor Awards—Transfer Students

SCHOLARSHIPS & FINANCIAL AID

Scholarship Vacancy Projections 2023-2024

Award Type

Fund Source

Fiscal Account

Fund Code

Name

Annual Earnings

Cash Reserve

Scholarship Amount

Max Award Length

(FAMIS Balance)

Projected Funds

2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027

Payment Commitments

2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027

Projected Available Funds

2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027

Projected Available Scholarships

2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027

Award Criteria

Training for new Scholarship Administrators

Required Trainings:

New Scholarship Administrator Training (includes SOLAR & SPARTA Training)
New Scholarship Administrators to schedule through TrainTraq (Course 2113445)
Annual Training-TrainTraq Notification

Recommended Trainings:

Texas A&M Foundation Policies & Procedures Workshop
Usually held in November.
To schedule: Becky Shaw 845-3954

FAMIS/Canopy Training
https://it.tamus.edu/famis/links/canopy/

APPENDIX D

DEPARTMENTAL SCHOLARSHIP ADMINISTRATION
TOP 10 SCHOLARSHIP AUDIT FINDINGS
BEST PRACTICES FOR TAMU SCHOLARSHIP ADMINISTRATORS
AWARD PROCEDURES DOCUMENTATION EXAMPLE
SFA REVIEW OF SCHOLARSHIP AWARDING UNITS

Departmental Scholarship Administration

Departmental Scholarship Program Checklist

Department/unit scholarship award process ensures that applicants are assessed on a fair and equitable basis with all others per TAMU Rule 13.03.99.M0.02 Scholarships and Financial Aid.

Documented (written down) department/unit scholarship award process includes:

- Awareness of pertinent System policies, University Rules and SAP's, and University Scholarship Committee guidelines and compliance with same.
- Establishment and maintenance of department/unit scholarship committee for competitive scholarship awards.
- Awareness of and compliance with pertinent records retention requirements for each award cycle including:
  - donor's intent and criteria (permanent file)
  - number of applications
  - weight or value given each criteria
  - ranked list of applicants
  - awards offered
  - awards accepted
  - list of selection committee
- Awareness of and compliance with donor specific award criteria and/or establishment of set documented scholarship award criteria for each unique scholarship
- Setting of an assigned weight or value for each given criteria
- Use of a standardized application form (University application, customized department application, or combination form)
- Timely award selection process to meet university timelines
- Timely award notification process to meet university timelines
- Timely posting of scholarship awards in pertinent university information system
- Segregation of scholarship award funds in designated scholarship accounts
- Secured access and utilization of pertinent available tools and information system(s) as required
- Application of non-resident exemptions made in compliance with TAMU SAP 13.03.99.M0.M4 Non-Resident Exemption for Competitive Scholarship Recipients
- Timely reconciliation of scholarship accounts and balances to promote optimal use of funds and identification and resolution of discrepancies
- Post-award considerations, if any, are consistently addressed
- Monitoring of scholarship recipients' academic progress and compliance with other scholarship retention requirements
- Set unit policy and/or process regarding scholarship appeals
- Periodic review of process to ensure continued relevancy and compliance with pertinent System, University, and USC regulations

TAMU System Policies, Rules, and SAP's

- We understand and comply with pertinent scholarship policies, rules, and SAP's.
- We understand and comply with pertinent scholarship record retention requirements.

University Scholarship Committee

- We understand role of University Scholarship Committee.
- We know how our unit is represented on the University Scholarship Committee (USC).
- Our USC representative is aware of our current scholarship award procedures.
- There is frequent two-way communication with our USC representative.
- Our departmental award procedure is documented and reviewed/approved annually by TAMU's University Scholarship Committee per TAMU Rule 13.03.99.M0.04 Scholarships and Awards Program Coordination.
- We periodically review our scholarship award process, and changes are documented and implemented in a timely manner.

Scholarships & Financial Aid Office

We understand role of Scholarships & Financial Aid Office (SFA).

We understand different roles of SFA and Student Business Services (SBS).

Scholarship/Fellowship Funds and Accounting

- We know what scholarship funds the department administers and where these funds (including endowment, pass through, and disbursement) are held.
- We know who our scholarship donors are as well as their specified or preferred scholarship criteria.
- Our unit's underlying philosophy regarding scholarship awards is clearly identified and documented.
- We have established scholarship award criteria in the absence of donor specifications as appropriate and in accordance with our unit's scholarship award philosophy.
- If allowed, potential exceptions to these set criteria are fully defined and documented.
- We know when and how to establish a designated scholarship account and appropriate fund and detail codes required for the posting of scholarship award.
- We know how to identify available scholarship funds and utilize a process that maximizes usage of these funds.
- We know when and how to ensure funds are in the appropriate scholarship account for disbursement.
- We reconcile our respective scholarship accounts in a timely manner according to TAMU standard administrative procedure.
- We request appropriate access to and utilize university information systems.

Scholarship and Financial Aid Application Process

- We utilize a standardized application to ensure that applicants are assessed on a fair and equitable basis with all others.
- We effectively communicate scholarship information (available scholarships/award criteria, scholarship application process and application submission deadline).
- All applications are entered into competitive process.

Scholarship/Fellowship Award Process

- We utilize a unit scholarship committee with a clearly defined/documented scope/charge for all competitive awards made by our unit.
- Our scholarship award decision-making process is clearly documented.
- Scholarship recipients are identified and notified in a timely manner to ensure compliance with all relevant university timelines.
- All scholarships awarded by or through the unit are documented, including declines.
- Our scholarship awards are posted (entered) into pertinent information systems in a timely manner to ensure accuracy of posting and compliance with all relevant university timelines.

- Scholarship recipients are notified of renewal criteria and any requirements before accepting them.
- Scholarship recipients acknowledge that their grades and contact information may be shared with donors.

Competitive Scholarship Waivers

- We understand the requirements necessary for a scholarship recipient to be eligible for an out- of-state tuition waiver and have appropriately designated our scholarships in this regard.
- We maintain a tuition waiver list to ensure that in the case of dual waiver eligibility, the graduate assistantship waiver takes precedent (is entered by the department).

Scholarship/Fellowship Post-Award

- The unit monitors continuing eligibility and notifies Scholarships & Financial Aid in the case of a cancelled or reduced award.
- Donor wishes and instructions are carried out to the fullest extent possible. In cases where these criteria are difficult or impossible to fulfill, the unit/department takes the necessary steps to make changes so that the funds can be used.
- Donors are routinely informed about how their funds are being utilized.
- Donors are included in award ceremonies and invited to attend whenever possible.
- Student end-of-semester grades are shared with donors.
- Donors are recognized as is appropriate at unit/departmental events, in publications, and through regular communications such as webmail or departmental newsletters.
- Scholarship recipients appropriately thank donors for awards in a timely manner.
- Unit/department appeals process, if any, is documented.

Top 10 Scholarship Audit Findings

1. Lack of written procedures of current scholarship award process
2. Scholarship Applications and files not retained according to the University Records Retention schedule (AC+1).
3. Lack of documented award criteria, or not clearly defined award criteria.
4. Lack of adequate support for award decisions. For example, not documented how one student was selected over another.
5. Gift agreements or award criteria discrepancies, such as gift agreements not on file with the department or awarding students that do not meet donor intent.
6. Lack of good accounting/business practices in regard to account reconciliation. Scholarship accounts not being reconciled and documented monthly with errors resolved within 90 days to catch errors, such as students being paid on wrong account or wrong amount.
7. Lack of processes to verify eligibility for renewable scholarships. For example, a student on a renewable scholarship that no longer holds an eligible GPR or major.
8. Lack of documentation of a conflict of interest form used with scholarship selection committees.
9. Lack of documentation of scholarship committee membership and length of service on the committee.
10. Lack of standardized award notifications that clearly outline how to maintain eligibility. Award information does not include an appropriate deadline to respond (Freshmen no earlier than May 1), minimum GPR to maintain eligibility, and all other requirements the student must meet to retain the award.

Best Practices for TAMU Scholarship Administrators

- Written operating procedures that reflect unit's process and designated responsible parties
- Established committee calendars, checklists, and departmental scholarship spreadsheets that provide pertinent and timely information to aid the departmental committee in their deliberations
- Designated chair; designated secretary/recorder
- Appropriate committee composition (# of members, representative of unit)

- Rotational committee membership that ensures orderly succession
- Clearly defined/documented committee scope/charge and committee member responsibilities
- Designated business liaison OR coordination of committee with pertinent administrative and/or business staff
- Annual orientation/training of all committee members and other responsible parties within unit (University rules, departmental process, individual responsibilities)
- Conflict of interest and confidentiality acknowledgements
- Using university application (with or without customized questions)
- Fully utilizing resources available such as SPARTA, SOLAR, Canopy/FAMIS, and fnet
- Completion of notification process by university award notification deadlines
- Maximizing use of available scholarship funds annually
- Monthly reconciliation by two individuals
- Make students aware of scholarship opportunities annually
- Awareness of competitive scholarship tuition waiver eligibility and renewal requirements.

Best practices online resources

National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
http://www.nasfaa.org/

National Association for College Admission Counseling Code of Ethics and Professional Practices
https://www.nacacnet.org/who-we-are/what-we-do/guiding-ethics/nacacs-guide-to-ethical-practice-in-college-admission/

National Scholarship Providers Association
https://www.scholarshipproviders.org/

Scholarships & Financial Aid Review of Scholarship Awarding Units

Based on a non-federal audit conducted in FY 11 System audit has deemed Scholarships & Financial Aid (SFA) the responsible unit to review annual scholarship awarding units on the Texas A&M University College Station campus. The review of scholarship awarding unit's will determine if requirements are being met in relation to documentation of processing scholarships, selection of scholarship recipients and record retention and other general scholarship processes.

SFA will request information from three to four scholarship awarding units each May with a June deadline for submission of requested information.

SFA will review responses in detail, follow up with any missing information or not self-explanatory information provided.

After sufficient review and clarification has been sought, SFA will send a response to the scholarship awarding unit administrator or scholarship coordinator and to the department head for any one of the following:

1. No findings no action to be taken. SFA letter will state: Congratulations no findings have been identified for your scholarship awarding unit. Reminder of requirements and best practices.
2. Overall meets expectations, we identified a few areas that could be strengthened, we will request follow up with correction action and review that processes are strengthen. Our letter to scholarship awarding unit and department head will state: Please review and strengthen x no later than (up to 3 months deadline depending on what is needed). Our recommendations are A, B, C would bring x into compliance. Reminder of requirements and best practices.
3. Overall does not meet expectations, thus we have identified several areas that need significant improvements to be in compliance with University rules and guidelines.

SFA letter will state: Please review and strengthen x, y, z no later than (up to 3 months deadline depending on what is needed). Our recommendations are A, B, C would bring x into compliance. D, E would strengthen Y. Reminder of requirements and best practices in regards to F in regards to Z.

If a scholarship awarding unit receives response 2 or 3 above, after the assigned deadline, the revised items or processes must be reviewed again. A response will be sent to the scholarship awarding unit with a copy to the department head.

1. Your scholarship awarding and processing documentation appears to be in good order and in compliance with current university rules.
2. Your scholarship awarding and processing documentation is not in compliance with current university rules. (Copy next level: Dean or Asst. Provost and department head this time) In the event of an audit, we believe the following would be findings and should be addressed immediately.
    a. –X
    b. –Y
    c. -Z

If a scholarship awarding unit fails to make take corrective action escalation could include removal of access to all scholarship awarding tools (Compass, SPARTA, SOLAR etc.) and recommendation to Provost Office for removal of scholarship awarding functions from that unit.

PO Box 30016
College Station, TX 77842-3016
scholarships@tamu.edu
fellowschol@tamu.edu

Revised

04/29/2024