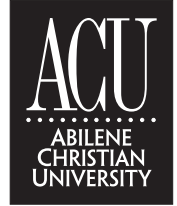


Guide to Requirements



The National Merit Finalist Award is one of the most prestigious scholarships granted by Abilene Christian University.

As you would expect, there are some strong expectations tied to it. This guide is written for prospects, applicants, recipients, their parents, and all university staff and administrators who have contact with them. Its purpose is to explain expectations and clarify rules.

Award recipients are bound by the terms of their acceptance letters and by the procedures and standards set forth in the latest version of this guide. **Failure to meet requirements will result in forfeiture of some or all of a scholarship and possibly in other penalties. Forfeitures begin at \$500 and increase with the seriousness of the offense. Some offenses result in complete and permanent loss of scholarship.** Questions about penalties for noncompliance should be directed to the Presidential/National Merit Finalist Scholarship Board.

Rationale for requirements

The **National Merit Finalist Awards** help ACU compete for the highest tier of academically gifted students. These students are vital to the continued upgrading of academic standards and strengthening of the academic climate on campus. The university wants to promote their fullest growth – ethically as well as professionally – after they arrive. Thus, NMF awardees must not only prove their academic drive by earning high grades and by completing several Honors Program courses, they must adhere to campus standards of conduct.

Requirements for Holders of National Merit Finalist Awards

1. Maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of at least 3.5. Your cumulative GPA must meet the minimum at the end of each semester. GPAs will not be rounded up. If your GPA goes under the minimum and you lose your NMF award, you can fall back to a Trustee Scholarship if your GPA permits.

2. Make due progress toward graduation in nine semesters. National Merit Finalist Scholarships pay full tuition for a **maximum of 144 semester hours** of ACU courses. The scholarship is limited to **nine consecutive long semesters OR your graduation**, whichever comes first. The scholarship may be used for summer terms (including Maymester) between the first and ninth semester.

Special note: This is a change in the terms of the scholarship and is **effective January 2006** for all current and future NMF awardees. This change gives them the freedom to use their award for summer courses and a ninth semester. However, the \$500 stipend from the National Merit Corporation is paid during long semesters only and ceases after the eighth semester.

The award can be used only for ACU courses, including ACU distance learning and Study Abroad. **It cannot be used for graduate degrees**, graduate courses (except those taken for undergraduate credit), courses taken after graduation, or semesters at Focus on the Family. It cannot be used for non-ACU courses either in the U.S. or abroad (such as semesters sponsored by the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities).

Exception: APCT (fast-track psychology) majors may use their awards to complete both the bachelor's and master's degrees at ACU if they do so in four years. They do forfeit the ninth semester of scholarship. If a student switches out of the APCT program or decides to take longer than four years, then the award covers graduate courses **only** if taken for undergraduate credit.

3. Remain in good standing according to all ACU policies and regulations, including chapel attendance. Every ACU student is responsible for adhering to the Student Guide, available at www.acu.edu/campusoffices/campuslife. NMF Scholars must model personal and academic integrity and the wholesome lifestyle that ACU policies are intended to promote.

4. Participate in the Honors Program (HP) by completing four honors courses within your first year. Take two honors courses each semester. If you have scheduling problems, see the Honors Program office to make arrangements. After, you complete the four courses, HP participation is encouraged but not required.

- You must meet the usual curricular requirements for honors students: In the fall of your first year, one of your HP courses must be an honors section of University Seminar (unless you take a departmental section or a Learning Community that includes University Seminar). Also, your first year HP courses must include at least one Honors Core course (HCOR 221, 222, 223, 120 or 240). These cover humanities, social sciences and the arts and count toward General Education requirements in degree plans.
- Please complete an HP application as soon as you are awarded a scholarship. Honors Program applications are available online at www.acu.edu/academics/honors/application or from Admissions and the HP Office. NMF Scholars are not required to write the Honors Application Essay.

5. Submit a new FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) every year. This is required for any full-tuition scholarship at ACU. Please do this early in the summer. Waiting until after August 1 will mean a delay in crediting your scholarship to your account, and you will pay the late fees. The FAFSA is available at the ACU Welcome Center and at www.fafsa.ed.gov.

Administrators and contacts

For applicants:

Robert Heil
ACU Admissions and Recruiting
Email: rheil@admissions.acu.edu
Phone: 325-674-2650
Office: Zellner Hall 214B

For recipients:

Stephanie Smith
Administrative Coordinator, ACU Honors Program
Email: stephanie.smith@acu.edu
Address: ACU Box 29142, Abilene, Texas 79699-9142
Phone: 325-674-2728
Fax: 325-674-6581
Office: Hardin Administration Building 216

Stephanie Smith handles all questions about Presidential and NMF awards and about the Honors Program. She tracks all Presidential or NMF awardees to ensure that they meet requirements.

Presidential/NMF Board:

Dr. Mimi Barnard, Director, Residence Life Education and Housing
Nancy Coburn, Director, Volunteer and Service-Learning Center
Dr. Chris Willerton, Director, ACU Honors Program

The board also includes the director of Student Financial Services. The board oversees the tracking of awardees and makes decisions on whether awardees lose their scholarships because of grades or other problems. Appeals based on extenuating circumstances should be routed to the board through Stephanie Smith.