



Guide to Requirements

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

As you would presume, 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 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 College 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 3.2.** Your cumulative GPA must meet the minimum at the end of the first year and each semester thereafter. GPAs will not be rounded up. If your GPA goes under the minimum and you lose your NMF award, you can fall back to an academic scholarship if your GPA permits.
- 2. Make due progress toward graduation in nine semesters.** National Merit Finalist Scholarships are limited to **nine consecutive long semesters OR your graduation**, whichever comes first. They pay full tuition for ACU courses, normally for a maximum of 144 semester hours. Courses that are not completed because of withdrawal will count against the 144-hour total. The scholarship may be used for summer terms between the first and ninth semester. Note that 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: Professional Career Track (fast-track psychology) majors and students earning the Master of Accountancy 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 Professional Career Track 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/studentlife. NMF Scholars must model personal and academic integrity and the wholesome lifestyle that ACU policies are intended to promote.

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

- Please complete an Honors College application as soon as you are awarded a scholarship. Honors College applications are available online at www.acu.edu/honors. 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 by April 1. Waiting until later will mean a delay in crediting your scholarship to your account, and you will pay the late fees. The FAFSA is available at www.fafsa.ed.gov.

Administrators and contacts

For applicants:

Tamara Long

Director of Admissions

Email: info@admissions.acu.edu

Phone: 325-674-2949 or 800-460-6228

Office: Hunter Welcome Center 142

For recipients:

Stephanie Smith

Administrative Coordinator, ACU Honors College

Email: stephanie.smith@acu.edu

Address: ACU Box 29142, Abilene, Texas 79699-9142

Phone: 325-674-2728

Fax: 325-674-6581

Office: Zellner Hall, ground floor

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

Presidential/NMF Board:

The board includes the dean of the Honors College, the director of residence life, the director of service-learning and volunteer resources, the director of admissions and 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.



www.acu.edu