SCHOLARSHIP MANUAL

DIVISION OF UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT

Savannah State University

Institutional guidance for scholarship support and student responsibilities.

2026 - 2027

This manual organizes the supplied Savannah State University scholarship policy content into an accessible reference for students, families, scholarship supporters, and University offices. It explains the available scholarship pathways, the information used to match and award scholarships, conditions that may affect an award, and responsibilities that follow an award.

Scholarship Support

Scholarship support helps Savannah State University students pursue their educational goals by connecting eligible students with institutional and external scholarship opportunities. It is essential to the mission of Savannah State University and the success of our students. Our goal is to strategically utilize available resources so that scholarship support can reach as many eligible students as possible while honoring the requirements of each scholarship and the intentions of the donor.

Institutional Scholarships

Institutional scholarships are strategic funds provided by a diverse network of donors, including organizations, businesses, corporations, churches, foundations, students, faculty and staff, alumni, and friends of Savannah State University. These funds are administered by the University to support eligible students who demonstrate unmet financial need and meet the donor-established criteria.

Scholarship awards are subject to the availability of funding and may be awarded up to $2,000, unless otherwise specified in the donor agreement and in accordance with applicable University guidelines.

Institutional scholarships are part of the student's overall financial aid picture and must be coordinated with the University's financial aid and bursar's offices. As a result, scholarship funds must be used in accordance with applicable financial aid regulations, University policies, donor restrictions, and the terms of the scholarship agreement. Institutional scholarship funds are not intended to pay for non-degree-applicable courses or courses for which the student has already

satisfied the applicable degree requirement.

Many institutional scholarships require students to complete the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** as part of the eligibility process. Students should complete the FAFSA as early as possible to ensure that their financial aid eligibility can be properly evaluated.

Types of Institutional Scholarships

Savannah State University offers several types of scholarships to support student success. These scholarships may vary based on their funding source, eligibility requirements, donor restrictions, academic criteria, financial need, and renewal provisions.

Scholarship type	General description
Endowed	Supported by an established endowment for scholarship purposes.
Restricted	Supported by funds designated for a specific scholarship purpose or student population.
Need-based	Uses financial-need information as part of eligibility or matching.
Merit-based	Uses academic, achievement, talent, leadership, or other stated merit criteria.

Endowed Scholarships

Endowed scholarships are awards established through gifts made by donors to the Savannah State University Foundation, Inc. The donated funds are invested with the intent of preserving the principal while generating investment earnings

that may be used to support scholarship awards in accordance with the applicable Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

The MOU is an agreement between the donor and the Savannah State University Foundation, Inc. that documents the donor's objectives and establishes the terms governing the endowment. It outlines how the endowment is established and funded, the eligibility criteria for scholarship recipients, and how scholarship awards are to be administered.

Because the principal of an endowment is invested, an endowed scholarship is intended to provide a sustainable source of scholarship support for future generations. The minimum amount required to establish an endowed scholarship at Savannah State University is $25,000.

Restricted Scholarships

Restricted scholarships are awards established by donors who provide specific eligibility criteria and/or awarding restrictions for the use of the scholarship funds. These restrictions may include, but are not limited to, academic achievement, major, classification, residency, financial need, extracurricular involvement, or other qualifications established by the donor.

The University is responsible for administering the scholarship process, including identifying students who may meet the established criteria, evaluating eligibility, and facilitating the awarding of funds in accordance with the donor's agreement.

Unlike endowed scholarships, restricted scholarship funds may be available for immediate awarding and do not require the generation of investment earnings before they can be utilized. Restricted scholarships remain available for awarding while funding is available and the donor-established criteria can be satisfied.

The minimum amount required to establish a restricted scholarship at Savannah State University is $5,000.

Need-Based and Merit-Based Scholarships

Endowed and restricted scholarships may be established with the intent of providing awards based on financial need, academic merit, or a combination of criteria, as outlined in the applicable donor agreement.

Need-Based Scholarships

Need-based scholarships are financial aid awards provided to students based on demonstrated unmet financial need. At Savannah State University, institutional scholarship support is intended to supplement other available sources of financial aid after applicable federal, state, institutional, and other financial aid resources have been considered.

Merit-Based Scholarships

Merit-based scholarships are financial aid awards provided to students based on demonstrated academic achievement. Academic achievement may be measured by criteria such as cumulative GPA, academic performance, or other academic requirements established by the donor.

A scholarship may be identified as merit-based while also requiring the student to demonstrate unmet financial need. For example, a donor may establish a minimum GPA requirement as a merit criterion while requiring the recipient to have demonstrated unmet financial need. In such cases, the student must satisfy all requirements established in the scholarship agreement.

External Scholarships

External scholarships are scholarship funds provided by organizations or individuals outside of Savannah State University. External scholarship sponsors may include individuals, businesses, corporations, civic organizations, churches, foundations, government agencies, and other organizations.

These entities provide the scholarship funds and generally maintain responsibility for establishing the eligibility criteria, application process, evaluation process, recipient selection, and scholarship award amount.

The University does not determine the criteria, evaluate applicants, or select recipients for external scholarships. The University's role is generally to receive the scholarship funds and process the award for the designated student in accordance with applicable University and financial aid procedures.

Students who receive an external scholarship are responsible for communicating

the award information to the appropriate University offices, including the **Office of Financial Aid** and the **Office of the Bursar**, as applicable.

External Scholarship Documentation

External scholarship sponsors should provide official documentation that identifies the student, the scholarship sponsor, the scholarship amount, the applicable term or duration, any stated conditions, and instructions for sending or processing the funds. Documentation should include sponsor contact information so the University can verify or coordinate the award when needed.

Students should submit sponsor documentation through the designated University process and should not delay reporting an external scholarship because the check or payment has not yet arrived. External scholarship resources may affect the student's financial aid package.

Scholarship Matching

The scholarship matching process begins with the student completing and maintaining an accurate profile in **Scholarship Universe.** Visit **savannahstate.edu/scholarship-universe.**

Scholarship Universe is used to help match students with institutional and external scholarship opportunities. Students may answer up to **300 matching questions**. The answers help identify opportunities for which a student may be eligible and may also identify information or documents needed for an application.

Students should complete the matching questions carefully and keep their information current. The matching process does not guarantee an award; it helps students find opportunities that may fit their reported qualifications.

Eligibility and documentation information

- **Student information** — Provide and confirm the information in Scholarship Universe. (GPA, Major, Address, Classification, Other)
- **Academic information** — Provide the academic, achievement, talent, leadership, or other merit information requested.

- **Financial information** — Provide financial-need information and FAFSA-related information when requested or applicable.
- **Enrollment information** — Provide degree-seeking status, standing, and other enrollment information requested for eligibility.
- **Supporting documents** — Submit the documentation required by the individual scholarship, such as materials identified in its application or award instructions (Recommendations, Community Service, Biographical Sheet, Thank You, Essay)

Matching is not awarding — A match identifies a possible opportunity. Students must still complete the required application or award steps and satisfy the scholarship's stated qualifications.

Scholarship Selection

Applying for a scholarship for which you meet the eligibility requirements does not guarantee that you will receive the scholarship. Scholarship selection is subject to a competitive review process. Eligible applications are evaluated based on the established scholarship criteria, and selection is made to the applicant(s) who most closely meet the requirements and demonstrate the strongest qualifications among the applicant pool, subject to the availability of funding.

Scholarship Awarding & Distribution

Scholarship awarding follows the requirements of the applicable opportunity and the University's scholarship administration process. An award communication should be reviewed for the scholarship amount, applicable term or terms, eligibility conditions, required documentation, acceptance steps, and renewal information stated for that award.

Awards are subject to verification of eligibility and available scholarship resources. Students should not assume that a match, application, or preliminary notice is a final award until the University provides the applicable award communication.

As a standard practice, institutional scholarship awards are generally distributed between the fall and spring semesters when the scholarship is intended to support the full academic year. Scholarship awards may also be designated for a specific semester. a

The actual distribution of an award may vary based on the donor agreement, scholarship terms, available funding, student eligibility, and University procedures.

Incoming Freshmen

Some institutional scholarships permit incoming freshmen to qualify for an award based on criteria such as high school GPA, standardized test scores, or other donor-established requirements.

Incoming freshmen who have not yet earned institutional college credit hours may not qualify for institutional scholarships that require a **college cumulative GPA**, because the student has not yet established a college GPA at Savannah State University.

Eligibility will be determined based on the specific requirements established for each scholarship.

Award Types

Application-Based Scholarship Awards

Application-based scholarships require students to complete the designated application through the stated process. Students should answer all required questions, provide accurate information, attach requested documentation, and submit the application by the deadline identified for that opportunity.

Direct Award Scholarships

Direct award scholarships are awarded to students through the applicable University process without requiring the same student-initiated application process as an application-based scholarship. A direct award remains subject to the stated eligibility, documentation, enrollment, distribution, and renewal conditions. Students receiving a direct award should review the award communication, complete any requested acceptance or documentation steps, and respond to University requests by the stated deadline.

Scholarship Award Adjustments

An institutional scholarship award may be adjusted when information changes, eligibility is not verified, a student's enrollment changes, a scholarship condition is not met, or the student receives other aid that affects the overall financial aid package.

Adjustments may include reducing, canceling, moving, or otherwise revising an award in accordance with applicable federal, state, and institutional financial aid requirements.

Institutional scholarships are intended to assist with eligible educational expenses and are not designed to generate a student refund. Scholarship awards may therefore be adjusted when additional financial aid or other funding changes the student's demonstrated unmet financial need.

Students should review updated communications and contact the appropriate University office when an adjustment is not understood.

Scholarship Award Renewal

Institutional scholarships may be renewable when permitted by the donor agreement. A renewable scholarship allows a student to receive the scholarship again in subsequent academic terms or years, provided the student continues to meet the minimum renewal requirements established by the donor.

Renewal is also subject to the number of awards authorized under the donor agreement and the availability of scholarship funding. Students must satisfy all applicable renewal requirements during each renewal period to remain eligible.

Initial eligibility does not automatically guarantee renewal. Students may be required to undergo a subsequent selection process, and renewal may be subject to competition among other eligible applicants. Meeting the initial eligibility requirements alone does not ensure that a scholarship will be renewed.

Student Responsibilities

Students who receive an institutional scholarship are required to complete a thank-you letter to the donor. The Division of University Advancement will provide instructions and templates to assist students in completing the letter.

Thank-you letters may be submitted to the Division of University Advancement for review and delivery to the donor.

Scholarship recipients may also be selected to participate in the University's Annual Scholarship Luncheon and may be asked to participate in University scholarship-related communications, publications or annual giving campaign initiatives. Participation in these activities helps demonstrate the impact of donor support and allows donors to see how their generosity contributes to student success.

After receiving a scholarship award, students are responsible for understanding and completing the actions connected to the award.

- [ ] Complete acceptance, verification, or follow-up steps requested by the University.
- [ ] Submit required documentation accurately and by the requested deadline.
- [ ] Report changes that may affect eligibility, enrollment, financial aid, or the scholarship award.
- [ ] Monitor University communications and respond to questions about the award.

Additional Scholarship Guidelines

- **Accuracy** — Do not omit, misstate, or misrepresent information used for matching, application, awarding, or renewal.
- **Deadlines** — Follow the deadline for each scholarship or requested action.
- **Documentation** — Provide clear, complete, and readable documentation when requested.
- **Communication** — Monitor University messages and respond to questions or

notices about an award.
- **Changes** — Report changes in enrollment, classification, degree-seeking status, financial aid, or other information relevant to an award.
- **Thank-you letters** — Complete and submit a thank-you letter when required following a scholarship award.

Degree-Seeking Students

Institutional scholarship eligibility and support is primarily designed to support degree-seeking students enrolled at Savannah State University. Funding is primarily reserved for undergraduate students.

Classification

When an institutional scholarship references an upperclassman, the term generally refers to a student classified as a sophomore, junior, or senior in an undergraduate degree program.

Graduate students are not considered upperclassmen because graduate students are classified as graduate students rather than by undergraduate classifications such as sophomore, junior, or senior. Graduate student funding may be available when a scholarship's donor-established criteria specifically permit graduate student eligibility.

Scholarship Usage & Non-Allowable Expenses

Institutional scholarships are intended to support eligible educational expenses in accordance with the established scholarship criteria and donor restrictions.
Scholarship funds are not intended to:

- Generate a student refund;
- Pay a Nelnet payment or balance;
- Reimburse students for expenses they have already paid;
- Cover personal hardship expenses
- Cover travel, lodging, meals, or expenses related to internships, conferences, or similar activities.

Book Scholarships

Institutional scholarships that specifically provide funding for books must be used

within the applicable bookstore period and before the posted deadline established for the use of financial aid for books.

Questions

For questions about scholarship support, institutional scholarships, scholarship documentation, or related processes, contact:

Division of University Advancement

Savannah State University
Phone: 912-358-3059
Email: ua@savannahstate.edu
savannahstate.edu/bursar/scholarships/

When contacting University Advancement, students should include their name, student identification information when appropriate, supporting documentation, and a concise description of the question so the request can be directed efficiently.

Additional Support

Office of Financial Aid
Phone: 912-358-4162 (Option 6)
Email: finaid@savannahstate.edu

Office of the Bursar
Phone: 912-358-4042
Email: bursar@savannahstate.edu