

Texas FFA Association

Policy Handbook

Section 22: State Scholarship Selection and Administration

September 11, 2017

22.1 Operating Philosophy, General Criteria and Eligibility

- (a) The purpose of the Texas FFA College Scholarship Program is to provide financial assistance to the most capable and deserving FFA members from each area of our state wishing to pursue a bachelor's degree from a Texas college or university in preparation for a successful career. The scholarship recipients should pursue a degree plan which meets the criteria of their scholarship award. Exceptions will be considered on an individual basis contingent upon the approval from the donor of a specific scholarship and/or the availability of a recognized agricultural or life science transfer program from the applicant's chosen institution.
- (b) Texas FFA award scholarships are awarded to winners in designated program areas. Award scholarships are intended to stimulate and reward the attainment of excellence in a specific program area.

22.2 Establishment of Scholarships and Scholarship Endowments

- (a) The Texas FFA Association and the Texas FFA Foundation welcome those organizations and individuals of common goals and values who wish to partner in the investment of youth and educational excellence through the support of the scholarship program.
- (b) Funding for the entire scholarship value must be received before a scholarship can be awarded. Scholarship funds are restricted monies and are placed in the Texas FFA Foundation's scholarship account until they are disbursed in accordance to policy-mandated timelines. Entities that opt to pay scholarships through the Texas FFA Foundation incrementally will pay a 3% administrative fee. Organizations that opt to self-administer scholarships must provide documentation of a process that separates and restricts scholarship funds from operating capital and ensures the future honoring of scholarship commitments.
- (c) Scholarship fund balances due to scholarship termination, failure to claim or early graduation shall be returned to the donor.

22.3 Selection Criteria and Process—Texas FFA Academic Scholarship Program

- (a) An at-large chairman and vice-chairman, appointed by the Board of Directors, shall serve a term generally consistent with the current Career Development Event cycle and concludes at the opening of the state professional improvement conference at the beginning of the new cycle. Each area may submit to the FFA Executive Director, the names of two qualified teachers as nominations for the chairmanship of the committee. The Texas FFA Association Board of Directors nominating committee as described in Article III, Section A, Texas FFA Bylaws, shall recommend a candidate or a slate of candidates for consideration by the board. The board's election timeline shall be derived to facilitate training of the new chairman to ensure the most effective transition within the context of the selection timeline. Each area shall elect one agricultural science teacher to serve as a voting member and one alternate to serve on the state scholarship committee which shall serve as an advisory committee to the Board of Directors.
- (b) Selection of scholarship recipients is conducted on a competitive basis. Criteria used in selecting scholarship recipients includes: (1) academic achievement as reflected by class rank, (2) SAT or ACT scores, (3) completion of agricultural science instruction (4) achievement in agricultural science/FFA program: leadership development events, career development events, supervised agricultural experience program, individual leadership and other FFA activities (5) financial need, and (6) interview performance.
- (c) A bank of questions shall be formulated and review annually by the scholarship committee. In the interview room, scholarship candidates shall randomly draw three questions and deliver an oral response to the scoring committee. Applicants shall be evaluated on poise, eye contact, ability to answer questions, self confidence. Prior to the draw, each candidate shall be allowed to deliver an introduction to not exceed 90 seconds in time.
- (d) Evaluation committees used to score applications and interviews shall be comprised of an equal number of agricultural science teachers from each administrative area and up to five business and industry

representatives. However, the committee shall not be prohibited from conducting the process should an area fail to send representatives. A majority of areas must be represented to conduct any evaluation process. Individuals who have a vested interest as a teacher or parent in the outcome of an area or state selection process may not serve on area or state evaluation committees. A teacher may be recused from the evaluation committee due to a vested interest in the outcome of a selection procedure on a given year but may continue to serve on the advisory committee.

- (e) Each administrative area conducts an elimination process in compliance with all applicable Texas FFA Association policies. Applications shall be submitted to the area selection process by whatever timelines and methods are adopted by the respective administrative areas.
- (f) All submitted applications become the property of the state association and shall be retained by the Texas FFA until they are released to scholarship donors or back to the respective area coordinator.
- (g) The total number of state scholarship qualifiers shall be a percentage above the total number of scholarships. The said percentage and the minimum number of applications allowed to each area shall be fixed by the Board of Directors. The remaining qualifier positions shall be prorated based on area membership using a formula approved by the Board of Directors. Area membership shall be determined using the average of the last three completed membership years. In addition to the state qualifiers, each area shall designate two applications to be alternate qualifiers.
- (h) Applications must be received at the Texas FFA Headquarters on or before the date set by the state chairperson. Applications shall be scored and ranked by an evaluation committee. The top applicants shall be invited to interview for a scholarship. Alternate applications shall be scored and ranked in a separate pool.
- (i) In all scoring processes, the high and low scores representing 20% of the total score or fraction thereof that can be evenly split between high and low, shall be dropped from the process. In scoring processes with ten evaluators, the high and low scores shall be dropped. In scoring processes with twenty evaluators, the top two and bottom two scores shall be dropped.
- (j) The number of finalists shall be equal to the number of scholarships available. No area shall be awarded less than eight finalists. Based on application scores, the scholarship finalists shall be broken into interview pools which best fit the dollar amount breaks in the continuum of scholarships. Each pool shall be evaluated by a separate interview committee. Interview positions shall be determined by draw and the interview schedule shall be posted online and area coordinators shall be notified via e-mail following the conclusion of the application evaluation process. Candidates who withdraw from the interview process shall be replaced by the next highest ranking alternate, unless such withdrawal causes an area to have less than ten finalists. In such case, the highest ranking, fully qualified candidate from the respective area shall be designated as a finalist. If no fully qualified replacement from the respective area is available, the alternate shall be selected from the at-large pool.
- (k) The final interview score shall be added to application score to derive a total score for each finalist. Rankings will be determined by the highest total scores within each pool. The value of the scholarship received will be determined by the final ranking, with the highest-ranking applicant(s) receiving the highest dollar value scholarship(s), and remaining applicants receiving scholarships of descending value based on descending rank and donor criteria. All interview committees shall convene as a single deliberative body following the conclusion of their respective interview processes to compile rankings into a single list of recipients and to resolve potential conflicts with donor requirements. To protect the confidentiality of the process, staff may hide student identities during the sorting and assigning of scholarships. In such cases, the Scholarship chair, vice chair and one representative from each area will oversee the initial set of scoring results prior to the hiding of student identities.
- (l) In the event of a tie during the final ranking after interviews at degree check, the following will be used as a tie breaker in order as listed: 1) FFA Activity Score, 2) Student's GPA generated on the application, 3) Need Narrative Score, 4) Interview Score.
- (m) The committee shall not discriminate against applicants declaring non-agricultural majors but such candidates may be eliminated by donor criteria should they not qualify for a non-major specific scholarship. Scholarship candidates who do not qualify for a scholarship by virtue of declared major shall be replaced by the highest ranking alternate selected at large from the alternate pool, unless such

disqualification places the area's scholarship total below eight, in which case the highest ranking, qualifying alternate from his or her respective area shall be moved to a finalist position. In such case when an eligible candidate from a corresponding area is unavailable, the highest ranking alternate, selected at large shall be moved into the recipient roster as positions are available.

- (n) Due to donor requirements, it is possible that finalists selected for an interview will not receive a scholarship.
- (o) Grievances and appeals related to area or state selection processes must be submitted to the state executive director no later than the end of the next working day following the completion of the selection process in question. Qualitative evaluation decisions which are inherent to judging applications and candidates may not be appealed. All appeals and grievances will be answered in writing within ten working days.
- (p) Teachers and students should expect the Texas FFA Scholarship process to be conducted with the same quality of standards that are consistent with the core values of the Texas FFA Association. As a result, committee members and volunteers may be excused from serving on any state level committee indefinitely due to ethical and confidentiality violations, such as but not limited to releasing selection results via social media, phone or email before the official results have been posted by the Texas FFA Association.
- (q) Unofficial results from the State Selection in Austin and interview process at Degree Check will have a review period of up to 5 business days after the committee concludes. This review period will ensure that there are no technical/human errors and results will be posted as soon as the FFA Executive Director approves the review. Once the results are posted on the Texas FFA website, they will be deemed 'Official Results.'
- (r) It shall be the responsibility of the applicant to provide a valid e-mail address. Official results shall be posted on-line and announced via email to applicants and the teacher designated as the applicant advisor.

22.4 Candidate Eligibility and Application Requirements

- (a) To be eligible to apply for a Texas FFA College Scholarship, an applicant must:
 - 1. be an active member of the Texas FFA Association for the current year and at least two of the three previous years, be listed on the State FFA Roster, and be in good standing with the Texas FFA Association and all Texas FFA College Scholarship sponsors.
 - 2. be a U.S. citizen. If the applicant's transcript reflects a place of birth other than the United States, proof of naturalization must be shown to a high school records official (principal, counselor, registrar, etc.) or the agricultural science teacher, who will then verify it as part of the application.
 - 3. declare intent to attend a Texas college or university in the fall semester of the application year.
 - 4. be a current year graduating senior.
 - 5. upon graduation, have completed at least three (3) academic calendar years and at least five (5) different semesters of instruction in agriscience and/or agribusiness during grades 9 through 12. Course credits received through Credit By Examination shall not count towards satisfying the five (5) different semesters of instruction. All agriscience and agribusiness courses taken in one semester shall be counted as one semester of instruction.
 - 6. score at least **1000** on the SAT or at least **19** on the ACT.
 - 7. be in the upper one-half of his/her class, based on scholastic rank, for the first three and one-half (3.5) years of high school for all scholarships, except the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, Wallrath Educational Foundation, Star of Texas Scholarships, which require that the student be in the upper one-fourth.
 - 8. be present in **Official FFA Dress** (according to Texas Standards) at all scholarship interviews (district, area, and state).
 - 9. submit the most current Texas FFA Scholarship Application.
 - 10. Candidates who receive a Terry Foundation Scholarship are NOT eligible to receive a Texas FFA Academic Scholarship.
- (b) The Texas FFA College Scholarship Application must:
 - 1. be generated as a PDF by the official online Texas FFA Scholarship Application

2. have all applicable pages completed
 3. contain all requested signatures
 4. contain no supplemental pages that are not requested
 5. be accompanied by the student's official transcript for the first three and one-half (3.5) years, which is signed by a school records official (principal, counselor, registrar, etc.) and certified with a school seal. The academic achievement record must include a photocopy of the college entrance exam's Official Report of Scores Label indicating the student's SAT and/or ACT scores. If more than one page is submitted, each page of the academic achievement record must display a school seal.
 6. be submitted in an official FFA award folder.
- (c) All scholarship recipients **MUST BE PRESENT** in Official FFA Dress (according to Texas Standards) at the State FFA Convention scholarship sponsors' dinner and the awards ceremony in order to receive an FFA scholarship. Any exceptions must be approved by the Texas FFA Association. Petitions for exceptions resulting from extenuating circumstances must be filed with the Texas FFA Executive Director no later than July 1. Texas FFA reserves the right to verify identity of interviewees and recipients.

22.5 Approved Majors for Degree Plan Specific Scholarships

(a) The following major degree plans have been approved for scholarships which require degree plans in agricultural science and life sciences. For degree plans which do not fit these titles, consult the Texas FFA Association office for additional guidance.

Plant and Soil Sciences

Agronomy
Botany
Clothing and Textiles
Floriculture
Horticulture
Plant Science
Soil Science

Core/Basic Sciences

Biochemistry
Biology
Biomedical Science
Biotechnology
Genetics
Microbiology
Pharmacology
Chemistry

Natural and Environmental Sciences

Aquaculture
Atmospheric Science
Bioenvironmental Science
Entomology
Forestry
Fisheries
Integrated Pest Management
Mariculture
Marine Biology
Meteorology
Range Science
Wildlife Science
Soil and Water Conservation

Human and Animal Sciences

Animal Science
Dairy Science
Equine Science
Food and Nutrition
Food Science
Food Technology
Nutrition/Scientific Nutrition
Poultry Science
Preveterinary Medicine
Veterinary Science
Zoology

Support Curriculums to Agricultural/Life Sciences

Agricultural Development/Interdisciplinary Agriculture
Agricultural Economics/Agricultural Business
Agricultural Education
Agricultural Engineering/Mechanized Agriculture
Agricultural Journalism
Agricultural Research
Agricultural Science
Agricultural Services and Development
Agricultural Systems
Bioengineering
Biomedical Engineering
Food Engineering
Landscape Architecture
Recreation and Parks
Land Use and Planning
Chemical Engineering

22.6 Scholarships Administered by Texas FFA Foundation: Disbursement of Funds

(Policies adopted by the Texas FFA Foundation Board of Directors and endorsed by the Texas FFA Association Board of Directors)

- (a) Funds will be sent to the financial aid officer of the recipient's chosen college or university at the rate specified. The funds are to reimburse the college or university for the student's tuition and/or fees in the amount not to exceed the total specified sum. The unexpended balance of the scholarship may be used to defray other legitimate expenses incidental to college attendance. The scholarship recipient shall receive notification of funds sent to the respective institution. Recipients are to contact the state scholarship administrator if any information including dollar amounts are incorrect.
- (b) Upon request, award scholarships which are paid in full may be directly paid to the student provided that proof of enrollment and other required documentation is submitted pursuant to the provisions of this policy, and procedures enacted by the Texas FFA Foundation.
- (c) Requests for scholarship funding will not be processed before August 1 for the fall semester and not before January 2 for the spring semester. Scholarship funding requests shall be fulfilled in no later than ten working days from receipt of completed information.
- (d) Scholarship recipients must thank their scholarship sponsor. Funds will not be disbursed until the scholarship recipient thanks his or her sponsor in writing and provides a photocopy of the letter and the stamped addressed envelope to the state scholarship administrator. Scholarship recipients must attend the scholarship sponsors' dinner and the awards ceremony at the state convention at which the scholarship is to be presented.
- (e) Proof of enrollment and grade reports of the previous semester must be submitted to the respective scholarship administrator for their scholarship program. To be valid, these documents must be generated by the institution in which the student is enrolled.
- (f) To receive funding for the fall semester, required documentation must be received by August 1 for first time recipients, July 1 for returning recipients, and for the spring semester, January 2. The state scholarship administrator has the discretion to grant extensions due to extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the student.
- (g) Recipients should be advised to observe their respective institution's tuition and fee payment deadlines. Sponsor scholarship disbursement timelines may cause funds to be sent after payment deadlines, requiring students to be responsible for initial payment of tuition and fees.
- (h) It is mandatory that the scholarship recipient attend college the fall semester immediately following selection. Only with permission from the donor and state scholarship administrator, may the use of the scholarship be deferred one year.
- (i) Recipients who transfer to a different institution must provide to the scholarship administrator under their name, the institution from which they are transferring and the institution in which they are enrolling. Transfer information must be received by July 1 for the fall semester and January 2 for the spring semester.
- (j) Award scholarships must be used within 12 months of high school graduation or receipt of scholarship, whichever occurs first, unless the recipient submits a hold request. Funds not claimed or requested to be held will be returned to the respective scholarship fund. No award scholarship will be held for more than 24 months following high school graduation, or receipt of the scholarship unless the recipient is engaged in military service or has received approval from the Texas FFA Foundation Executive Committee because of an extenuating circumstance beyond the control of the recipient.
- (k) Recipients who earn a baccalaureate degree in less than four years resulting in a remaining fund balance are not eligible to receive the balance of funds, but will be allowed to carry over such balance to graduate school provided the recipient adheres to all relevant policies.

22.7 Maintenance of Academic Eligibility, Warned Status, Termination

- (a) To maintain eligibility to receive scholarship monies, a student must complete a minimum of 12 hours per semester and maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale.
- (b) Students who intend to apply scholarship funds toward summer session classes must request such funding from the Texas FFA Foundation in writing and register for a minimum cumulative total of 12

credit hours for the balance of the summer sessions. Students who fail to complete the minimum 12 credit hours shall be placed on warned status.

- (c) Scholarship recipients must maintain an approved degree plan leading to the attainment of a baccalaureate degree at a selected accredited Texas college or university throughout the duration of the scholarship. Students who change declared majors must contact the state scholarship administrator within five working days of the change of major. If a student fails to report a change of major after declaring a major not approved as eligible to receive scholarship funds, but continues to receive monies, the Texas FFA Foundation shall pursue all necessary legal remedies to recover such monies to which the student was no longer entitled. The student may appeal to the Texas FFA Foundation Executive Committee to approve the newly declared major.
- (d) Failure to comply with all scholarship policies shall be considered grounds for termination. Students may be placed on warned status, pending correction of compliance issues. Students placed on warned status shall be notified via mail. Students whose scholarships have been terminated shall be notified by certified mail.
- (e) A student will not forfeit a scholarship due to the death of an immediate family member—a parent or sibling. A student shall not be required to forfeit a scholarship due to circumstances arising from one of the following documented medical circumstances: severe physical injury, extensive surgery or extended hospitalization. In the aforementioned circumstances, the student shall be placed on approved inactive status, but must return to school no later than the second full semester following the extenuating circumstance. An extension of approved inactive status must be requested in writing and shall be approved or disapproved by the Texas FFA Foundation Executive Committee. Other circumstances which may merit an approved suspension must be approved by the Texas FFA Foundation Executive Committee. It is the responsibility of the recipient to initiate contacts with the state scholarship administrator concerning special circumstances.

22.8 Ryan Mott Memorial Scholarship

- (a) Ryan Mott was the 1997-98 Area IV State FFA Vice President from Quanah, Texas. He passed away in 1998 after a short but courageous battle with cancer. This memorial scholarship was established by his family and friends to honor his dedication to the FFA organization and its members. It will provide one student with a \$1,000 scholarship, which will be distributed through the Texas FFA Foundation. This scholarship is intended to recognize students within the FFA that possess the same outstanding qualities as Ryan. The scholarship recipient will be a person who is kind, courteous, hardworking, and dedicated to the FFA. The person should also possess strong leadership and communication skills (which they use on an individual basis as well as in a team situation). Furthermore, ACT or SAT scores will not be considered as a primary factor when selecting the scholarship winner. Instead, the student's personal characteristics and FFA involvement will be the two major deciding factors.
- (b) Scholarship candidates who have advanced to the state scholarship selection process in the Texas FFA Scholarship program are not eligible to compete for the Ryan Mott Scholarship. The John Justin Standard of the West Award is not part of the Texas FFA Scholarship Program and does not affect eligibility for the Ryan Mott Memorial Scholarship.
- (c) To apply for this scholarship, a student must complete the latest revised application and submit it for review at each applicant's appropriate district or area convention. If any part of the application is incomplete, it will be rejected.
- (d) The application must:
 - 1. Be typed.
 - 2. Be accompanied by an official transcript
 - 3. Be accompanied by three letters of recommendation. (one from the local FFA advisor, one from a community member, and one from a past/present employer (if possible) or a school administrator)
 - 4. Include a senior year photograph
- (e) Applicants may undergo interviews at each level of competition. This decision should be made by the local officials. The applicants advancing to the state level will go through an interview process at the state degree check.