

Procedure for Academic Department Awarding of Scholarships, Prizes & Fellowships
Funded by ESF College Foundation
Effective January 2019
Replaces April 2014 Document

To comply with enhanced financial aid regulations; to serve the needs of recipients and donors; and to help lessen the financial impact on ESF, the following procedures will be used for the selection and payment of recipients receiving awards from Foundation accounts.

Definition of Scholarships, Prizes, Fellowships, and Employees

Scholarships – Awarded through the Financial Aid office and paid directly to ESF Bursar. No payments are made directly to students because of tax reporting requirements. Scholarships are paid for students when they are enrolled in classes and have billable charges from the College for tuition, fees, etc. There are no administrative fees associated with scholarships.

Unless otherwise specified by the donor, ESF College Foundation funds designated for scholarships for either undergraduate or graduate students are intended to defray the costs of attending college and are administered as a component of a comprehensive financial aid package. All Foundation scholarship awards:

- Are assigned in advance of the period when they are to be applied (because they are often part of a more comprehensive aid package).
- Are drawn from the budget of the fiscal year in which they are applied (to comply with accounting standards and donor agreements, as well as aid in reporting the names of recipients to donors).
- Are approved by the Office of Financial Aid and applied to the student bill during a period of enrollment.

The College Bursar will provide an electronic refund to students who receive scholarships and have no outstanding bill due to ESF

Prizes - Some Foundation Funds may be used for “prizes” awarded at the end of an academic semester. Prizes are distinguished from scholarships in that:

- Prizes are not required to be assigned before the period in which they are to be applied.
- Prizes may not exceed \$300 unless a donor has specified that funds are to be used for a prize exceeding this value.

Prizes are legally treated as financial aid and must be approved by the Office of Financial Aid and applied to the student bill. The College Bursar will provide an electronic refund to students

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who receive prizes and have no outstanding bill due to ESF. The ESF College Foundation will not cut individual checks to students for either scholarships or prizes.

Fellowships - Lump sum or installment payments made directly to students (not the College) through the Research Foundation of SUNY. Fellowships are deemed a “gift”, and no service or work is required of the awardee. Fellowships are intended to assist with academic endeavors such as research projects or career development experiences.

Fellowships differ from scholarships because they do not need to be applied toward the payment of tuition and fees. The College Bursar’s office does not net these awards against educational expenses on a 1098-T tax form but the Research Foundation issues a letter to recipients notifying them to consult with a tax advisor to determine if the award is taxable.

Other considerations to note for the awarding of fellowships:

- Fellowships can ONLY be paid to continuing students during a period of non-enrollment, i.e. summer, and cannot be paid post-graduation
- If a fellowship is inadvertently awarded during a period of enrollment, the award may impact other financial aid eligibility. In this case, students may need to consult with Financial Aid to disclose expenses related to the fellowship experience (such as travel or equipment purchase) in order to increase their overall education expense budget to avoid a reduction of aid
- The Research Foundation charges an administrative fee (currently 7.1%) which reduces the amount awarded to the student.
 - Many, but not all, Foundation funds for graduate students can be paid as fellowships. The spreadsheet of funds provided to the department by the Foundation will indicate whether or not the terms of the donor agreement allow payment as a fellowship

Employees – Students that receive funds as in exchange for a work requirement will be paid as employees via Research Foundation payroll. An evaluation of a scope of work, supervision and accountability requirements will be made to determine whether or not employee status is appropriate. Costs for fringe benefits and an administrative fee must be factored into the budget for employee salaries.

Responsibilities of Academic Department Chairs in Awarding Scholarships & Fellowships

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Some donors to ESF College Foundation have requested that academic department chairs be involved in the selection of scholarship or fellowship recipients. For these awards, ESF College Foundation has designated the department chair as the “fund administrator”. The designated fund administrator has the following responsibilities related to the awarding of scholarships and fellowships:

- To confirm their acceptance of the fund administrator role with ESF College Foundation; or provide the Foundation with the name of one (1) faculty member who will serve as their designee; or abdicate their responsibility to the Awards Committee (defined below).
- To determine and administer an internal departmental process that results in the selection of recipients in a timeframe that adheres to this procedure.
- To select recipients on the basis of the criteria required by the donor.
- To select recipients who will be continuing students in the next academic year*.
- To ensure that any other selection criteria utilized by the department is considered secondary to the donor criteria; is based on available data; is reasonable and fair; and is documented for the Foundation’s records.
- To consider prioritizing the selection of students with higher financial need when all other selection criteria among potential recipients is reasonably equal.
- To suggest scholarship awards of not less than \$500 per student, or prize awards of not more than \$300 per student when budgets support awards of this amount
- To fully expend, but not exceed, the budget provided for each award
- To provide a written explanation for any unspent funds as unspent funds do not roll to the next fiscal year

Information Provided to Departments

During the first week of April each year academic department chairs will receive the following materials:

- A chart listing each award for which the department is responsible for selecting a recipient. The chart will contain information regarding the donor designated selection criteria, the dollar amount available to award for the coming academic year, and a fund purpose such as “scholarship” or “fellowship”.
- A Financial Aid Office generated list of eligible continuing students that provides information regarding program major, GPA and a categorization of financial need (high, medium, low or none).

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- A form to be completed by the department documenting the selection process for each award.

Timing:

By June 10* each year the department chair, or designee, will provide the Awards Committee (defined below) with recommended recipients for all ***undergraduate scholarships and academic year graduate scholarships*** for which the department is responsible. At this time, the chairs should also indicate which funds will be held for spring graduate scholarships, year-end prizes, and summer fellowships. This timing has been determined based on the following:

- Departments will have the ability to access end-of-semester grade information if needed to make selections
- Suggested scholarship award amounts will be applied in equal installments for the fall and spring semester bills of the next academic year. Fall bills are available July 1st .
- Approved graduate spring scholarships will be applied to the spring semester bill available in early December
- Graduate fellowships will be paid through the SUNY Research Foundation after the end of the spring semester
- Funds can be held for prizes in the following academic year. The names of prize recipients should be provided to the Financial Aid Office by April 15th in the year the funds are to be paid
- In instances where scholarships accounts have remaining funds available in the fall semester, due to student withdrawal or other unforeseen factors, the awards committee will require recommendations for spring semester awards by November 1st .

Award Type	Payment Period	Selection Deadline
Undergraduate Scholarship	Academic Year	June 10
Undergraduate Prize	End of Spring Semester	April 15 th of Payment Semester

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Graduate Academic Year Scholarship	Academic Year	June 10
Graduate Spring Scholarship	Spring Semester	November 1
Graduate Fellowship* (*requires 7.1% indirect cost)	Summer	April 15

Awards Committee

An awards committee comprised of the Executive Director of ESF College Foundation & Subsidiaries, the Director of Finance for ESF College Foundation & Subsidiaries, and the Director of Financial Aid has been established to oversee the academic department scholarship and fellowship award process. The ESF Chief Diversity Officer will be an ex-officio member of this committee and will be consulted on the awarding of all awards for which the donor has cited student diversity as award criteria.

The awards committee will be available to provide information, advice and guidance to the academic departments throughout the award process. The committee will schedule appointments with the department chair or designee during the end of May – beginning of June to receive and review the department's recipient recommendations.

The awards committee will have final approval for all scholarship and fellowship selections and award amounts. In the absence of recommendations from the departments during the cited timeframe, or under other special circumstances, the awards committee shall be empowered to select recipients based on the award criteria set by the donor.

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