National Merit Scholars Program Policies

Deferral Before Freshman Year?

Incoming freshmen that accept a National Merit Finalist Scholarship may seek to defer their scholarship for a maximum of two semesters if they do not attend an institution of higher education prior to enrolling at UT Dallas. Incoming freshman attending another institution of higher learning prior to enrolling in UT Dallas will have their scholarship offer revoked. Recipients must receive approval from the National Merit Scholars Program prior to the first day of classes and must also receive approval for a deferral from the UT Dallas Office of Admissions and Enrollment Services.

Deferral for Current Scholars?

National Merit Finalist Scholarship recipients may defer their scholarship for a maximum of two semesters for extenuating circumstances or for study abroad or internship opportunities. Current NMFS recipients may seek to defer their scholarship for a maximum of two semesters. Students must receive approval from the National Merit Scholars Program prior to the first day of classes.

Study Abroad

Each National Merit Finalist Scholarship recipient in good academic and scholarship standing is eligible for up to $6,000 for study abroad. The student must receive approval from the UT Dallas Education Abroad Office in order to receive any funding. The final award amount will be based upon the merits of the applicant’s proposal, as well as the included budget.

Enrollment Requirement

National Merit Finalist Scholarship recipients are expected to complete a timely graduation from UT Dallas. The following semester credit hours requirements establish a default enrollment expectation.

Required Semester Credit Hours (SCH)  Required Semester Credit Hours (SCH)
13  Fall Semester, Freshman Year
14  Spring Semester, Freshman Year
15  All other semesters

National Merit Scholars regularly enroll at UT Dallas with college credit from other institutions. Exceptions to the above requirements are consistently granted if a student demonstrates they can maintain progress to a timely graduation and are in good academic and scholarship standing.

Hours Exemption Request
Full Time Status

National Merit Finalist Scholarship recipients are required to maintain full-time student status while receiving their scholarship. Full-time status requires 12 semester credit hours for undergraduate students at UT Dallas. The Office of Student AccessAbility can adjust the full-time requirements on a case-by-case basis for university and scholarship standing.

Under special circumstances, a student may choose to enroll part-time at UT Dallas while receiving the National Merit Finalist Scholarship. Permission is granted in extraordinary circumstances for students who maintain progress to a timely graduation and are in good academic and scholarship standing.

Full-Time Status Exemption Request

Summer Usage

National Merit Finalist Scholarship recipients at UT Dallas may be allowed to apply their scholarship toward summer courses. Students must be in good academic standing with their National Merit Finalist Scholarship program requirements. Please note: the summer semester will count as one of the eight semesters of scholarship eligibility. Students will receive their semester stipend in addition to tuition and mandatory fees for the summer term.

Summer Usage Form

Graduate Usage

National Merit Finalist Scholarship recipients who are admitted into a degree seeking graduate program at UT Dallas may be allowed to apply their scholarship toward graduate-level courses. Students must be in good academic standing; enrollment must be continuous after undergraduate graduation and students must receive approval from the UT Dallas National Merit Scholarship Program prior to enrolling in graduate courses.

Graduate Usage Form