



UNIVERSITY
of ALASKA

Many Traditions One Alaska

UA SCHOLARS

Student Handbook



UA SCHOLARS PROGRAM

This student handbook contains important information about eligibility requirements, deadlines, and other provisions for receiving and retaining the UA Scholars Award.

Important Deadline

Scholars: August 15

Deadline to submit an application to any eligible program within the University of Alaska system.



alaska.edu/alaska/apply.php

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You Are Alaska's Future

The UA Scholars Award can be used at any location within the University of Alaska system.

The UA system's three universities (UAA, UAF and UAS) are separately accredited institutions with 13 community campuses and extended learning centers across the state of Alaska. All three universities deliver extensive e-Learning instruction anywhere students are located.



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This May 2023 version of the UA Scholars Student Handbook replaces all previous versions.

1. ABOUT THE PROGRAM

A. Purpose

The University of Alaska established the UA Scholars Program (Award or Program) in 1999 to encourage Alaska students to attend and graduate from college in their home state. It is designed to provide an incentive for secondary school students to achieve academic excellence, to nourish efforts of schools to provide high quality education, and to encourage high school graduates from every Alaska community to seriously consider the opportunities that the University of Alaska has to offer.

B. How it Works

Annually, each qualified high school in Alaska identifies the top 10 percent of the junior class based on academic factors to be recognized as UA Scholars. The UA Scholars Program verifies eligibility and notifies each designated Scholar about the Award offer.

To use the Award, a Scholar must meet all of the requirements listed in this handbook (see Section (2)(A)).

C. Award Amount, Distribution and Deadline for Use

1.) Current Award amount: \$12,000. The University of Alaska Board of Regents, at its discretion, may adjust the amount of the Award.

2.) How the Award is paid: Eligible Scholars receive \$1,500 per semester for eight semesters. The Award will show as a payment on the Scholar's student account at the University of Alaska.

3.) Deadline for Use: The Award will expire after a total of eight semesters or within five years of the Scholar's designation as a UA Scholar.

A Scholar will forfeit any portion of the Award not used within this five-year period and any portion remaining if a Scholar fails to use the Award for more than two semesters.

2. INFORMATION FOR UA SCHOLARS

A. Scholar Requirements

1. Apply for admission by August 15

Scholars must submit an application for admission to a certificate or degree program at any campus in the University of Alaska System by August 15 of their senior year. Any Scholar who misses the August 15 deadline will not be eligible to use the Award (except as discussed in Section (2)(H), Eligibility Reconsideration, Senior Year).

2. Meet the requirements of the Award

To redeem the Award, the Scholar must:

- a.) Be a U.S. citizen or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the United States;
- b.) Have successfully earned a high school diploma from a qualified Alaska high school;
- c.) Be admitted into a certificate or undergraduate degree program at a University of Alaska campus;
- d.) Enroll full time in 12 or more credits beginning the first fall semester following their designated class unless utilizing the Leave of Absence provision discussed in Section (2)(B); and
- e.) Remain eligible for the Award as outlined in Section (2)(A)(3).

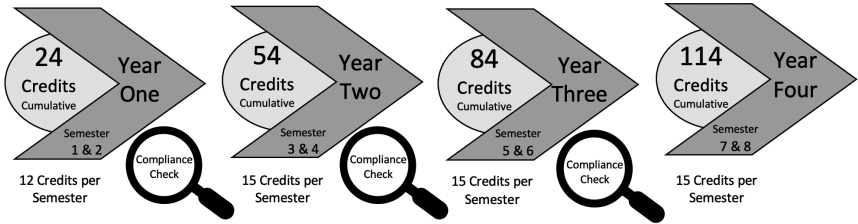
3. Remain Eligible for the Award

- a.) To remain eligible for the Scholars Award, a Scholar must:
 - (1) Maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress. Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements are subject to changes in federal or state law and institutional policy. UA Scholars should contact their financial aid office with any questions regarding the Satisfactory Academic Progress policy;
 - (2) Enroll in at least 12 credits each fall and spring semester except when taking a qualified Leave of Absence as described in Section (2)(B);
 - (3) Earn the minimum number of cumulative credits: 24 credits after two paid semesters, 54 credits after four paid semesters, and 84 credits after six paid semesters;
 - (4) Be in good standing in accordance with the UA Student Code of Conduct (Board of Regents Policy 09.02.020 and University Regulation 09.02.020); and
 - (5) Maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.5.

- b.) A Scholar's Award will be suspended if a Scholar fails to meet any of the eligibility factors listed in Section (2)(A)(3).
- c.) A Scholar may appeal the suspension of the Award through their campus financial aid office.

Table A.

Credits earned through regular semesters, summer coursework, transferred from other universities or high school, including dual enrollment, AP, and IB, count toward cumulative credit earned and compliance requirements.



Notes:

1. One academic year will be defined as two paid semesters.
2. Credits earned through dual enrollment or transfer credits (AP, CLEP, IB, etc.) may count cumulatively toward annual credit requirements.
3. Credits earned outside of the regular semesters (e.g., summer, winter, May terms) will count toward annual credit requirements.
4. Compliance with the cumulative credit completion requirement will be checked before the 3rd, 5th, and 7th semester as described in Table A.

IMPORTANT: To graduate in four years with a bachelor's degree, or in two years with an associate's degree, most programs require students to complete at least 30 credits per academic year.

B. Leave of Absence

1. Leave of Absence

A Leave of Absence (Leave) is defined as any fall or spring semester for which a Scholar does not receive an Award distribution.

Leave of Absence Terms:

- a.) The Leave maximum is two consecutive or nonconsecutive fall and/or spring semesters after high school graduation.
- b.) The Leave does not extend the Scholar Deadline for Use as specified in Section (1)(C)(3).
- c.) A Scholar who intends to take a Leave of Absence in the fall semester immediately following high school graduation must notify their campus admissions office that they intend to defer enrollment.
- d.) A Scholar is not required to inform the UA Scholars Program when using their Leave.

A Scholar whose high school graduation is delayed for any reason is subject to the same Scholar Requirements listed in this handbook as their designated peers. Any fall or spring semester following normal high school graduation that a Scholar does not use their Award will count toward their Leave of Absence. The Award will permanently conclude if they do not begin using their Award by the third semester.

2. Extended Leave of Absence

A Scholar may request an extension to the Leave of Absence for qualified circumstances.

- a.) To request a Leave extension, the Scholar must submit a request before the period that the extension is to begin and provide supporting documentation detailing:
 - (1) Exactly how the request fits within one of the qualified extension circumstances listed in Section (2)(B)(2)(b);
 - (2) The expected length of absence; and
 - (3) The anticipated date the Scholar will return to school.

In case of a medical or mental health emergency that makes it impractical to make the request before the extended leave starts, the Scholar must submit a request as soon as the Scholar is medically or mentally able to do so, but in no event more than six months after the beginning of treatment under Section (2)(B)(2)(b)(3).

b.) A Leave extension may be granted:

(1) To participate in limited periods of service designed to benefit the public good or wellbeing of the community such as the Military, National Guard, AmeriCorps, Peace Corps, community work programs sponsored by a governmental, charitable, or religious entity or other similar activities.

(2) When waitlisted after admission into a UA degree program (e.g., Nursing). A Scholars Deferment form must be completed and returned to the Program prior to the Award expiration to qualify. The form can be obtained from the Program or an academic advisor.

(3) When a determination has been made that a Scholar's physical, psychological, and/or other extenuating circumstances substantially impair the Scholar's ability to function safely or successfully as a member of the university community. If the Scholar is currently enrolled, this determination will be made in conjunction with the Scholar's Senior Student Services Professional or other designated authority.

c.) Extended Leave Terms:

(1) A Scholar may not exceed more than a six-semester (three year) Leave extension. This includes the original two-semester Leave benefit and any approved Leave extension.

(2) The Scholar must maintain the Scholar Requirements under Section (2)(A).

(3) A Leave extension may extend the Deadline for Use from five years to a maximum of seven years.

(4) If the Scholar does not use the Award within the extended term, they will forfeit the remaining balance.

d.) Notification of Extension:

The Program will inform the student of the Leave extension request outcome in writing.

C. Using the Award to participate in Exchange Programs

A Scholar may use the Award to participate in Study Away programs such as National Student Exchange (NSE), Study Abroad and International Exchange. Contact your admissions office with questions about using the Award to participate in the Study Away programs.

D. Award Disbursement

1. Eligible Expenses

The Award will be applied as a payment on the Scholar's student account and may be used for expenses such as undergraduate or graduate tuition, fees, room, board, books, supplies and other education costs incurred for attendance at the University of Alaska.

2. Refunds

A refund may be issued if the Scholar's student account has a positive balance. The Scholar should contact their bursar's office with questions about the refund process.

3. Impact on Financial Aid and Scholarships

The Award may reduce certain financial assistance including loans and the Alaska Performance Scholarship. In addition, the Award may make the Scholar ineligible for the UA President's Scholarship. The Scholar should contact their financial aid office with questions about any impacts the Award may have on other aid.

E. Award Expiration

The Award expires or is forfeited when the Scholar:

- (1) Has received the full \$12,000 scholarship or eight distributions;
- (2) Has missed more than two semesters unless they have received an approved Leave extension as described in Section (2)(B)(2);
- (3) Surpasses five years from their high school graduation date, unless the Program Administrator has granted the Scholar a Leave extension under Section (2)(B)(2)
- (4) Has not met the Scholar Requirements under Section (2)(A); or
- (5) Is found in violation of the UA Student Code of Conduct (Board of Regents Policy 09.02.020 and University Regulation 09.02.020) which results in disciplinary action such as expulsion or suspension.

F. Award Appeals

1. Dispute Procedure

All disputes and requests for determination shall be submitted to the Program in writing. The Program Administrator shall issue a written response to such disputes or requests within 10 business days unless notice of extension of the response date is issued by the Program Administrator.

Parties adversely affected by the response may appeal the decision to the University of Alaska Chief Financial Officer, or their designee, in writing, within 10 business days of receipt of decision. The appeal must state all of the pertinent facts and circumstances related to the claim and the desired outcome or action. The Chief Financial Officer's decision will be issued within 10 business days of receipt unless notice of an extension is given to the claimant. The Chief Financial Officer's decision is the University's final decision on the matter. To seek judicial review, the claimant must initiate an administrative appeal in the Superior Court for the State of Alaska within 30 days from the date the final decision was mailed or otherwise distributed, as provided by Rule 602(a)(2) of the Alaska Rules of Appellate Procedure. For information regarding eligibility reconsideration for the UA Scholars Award, please see Section (2)(H) Eligibility Reconsideration, Senior Year.

2. Notices to the Program

Address all communications to the Program Administrator concerning the UA Scholars Program.

G. Notification of Award

Official notification of the Award must come from the UA Scholars Program. Students, families and high school officials cannot rely on any other source of information about the notification of an Award.

H. Eligibility Reconsideration, Senior Year

If a student is not in the top 10 percent of their high school class at the end of their junior year, but is in the top 10 percent at the end of their senior year, based on the schools original designation criteria, or if the student graduated early, a request for reconsideration of Award eligibility may be made.

To request Eligibility Reconsideration:

- 1.) The Scholar must submit a request to the Program and it must be dated no later than six months after the student's high school graduation date as posted on the official high school transcript. The request should explain in detail the basis for reconsideration;
- 2.) Submit a final official transcript including their high school graduation date and class rank compared to the graduating class.

The Program Administrator will inform the student of the outcome of the reconsideration in writing. Scholars granted Awards under this provision must apply for admission no later than 30 days from the date of the written Award notice. With the exception of the August 15 admissions deadline, students granted an Award after reconsideration must comply with all of the Scholar Requirements in Section (2)(A) as stated in this handbook.

3. OTHER PROVISIONS

A. Governing Law and Venue

The laws of the state of Alaska govern the UA Scholars Program.

B. Transferability

The Scholars Award and eligibility for the Award is not transferable to other individuals or recipients.

C. Income Tax Treatment

Award distributions made under the Program may be subject to income tax reporting or withholding requirements. The Program, its Administrator and the employees of the University of Alaska make no representations, expressed or implied, about the taxability of benefits received under this Program. The Scholar is responsible for paying any applicable tax and should seek advice from their tax advisor.

D. Correction of Errors

In the event a Scholar receives an erroneous distribution, the Program may recover the amount or may adjust any remaining amount due under the Award to correct the error.

E. Availability of Funds

Distribution of all Awards is subject to the availability of funds as may be determined by the Board of Regents.

F. No Additional Rights

Neither the establishment of this Program, the granting of an Award, nor any action of the University related to the Program shall be held or construed to confer upon any person any right to be or continue to be a student at the University of Alaska. Nothing in the Program shall be construed to expand a student's rights beyond those provided in University policies and regulations.

G. Amendment or Termination

The University's Board of Regents reserves the right to terminate, discontinue, suspend, merge or consolidate this Program with other initiatives. This Program may be amended by authority of the University's President at any time, except that any reduction in benefits already awarded to recipients shall be approved by the Board of Regents.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the UA Scholars Award?

The UA Scholars Award is a \$12,000 scholarship awarded to Alaska high school students who are academically ranked in the top 10 percent of their class at the end of their junior year as determined by their school. The Award may be used at any campus within the University of Alaska system and is distributed in the amount of \$1,500 per semester for eight semesters provided the Scholar remains eligible.

How is the Program funded?

The scholarships are funded by the University of Alaska Land Grant Trust Fund. The endowment receives revenue from property sales and resource development conducted on Trust lands.

Is a UA Scholars Award a full-ride scholarship?

The Award is not a full-ride scholarship. While eligible, you will receive \$1,500 each semester to help cover your expenses.

Is there a deadline to accept the Award?

You must apply for admission to any campus within the UA system by August 15 of your senior year. Missing this deadline will cause your Award to expire.

When does the Award conclude?

The Award expires under any of the following conditions:

- * You did not apply for admission by August 15;
- * You did not receive a distribution more than two semesters;
- * You have received the entire amount of the Award; or
- * You do not remain eligible for the award.

Can I take time off from using my Award?

Yes. You may take a Leave of Absence of up to two semesters at any time during the five year period following your high school designation. During the Leave of Absence you will not receive an Award distribution. If you do not receive a distribution for more than two semesters, your Award will expire unless, in certain narrow circumstances, you apply for and the Program Administrator determines you are eligible for an Extended Leave of Absence.

How do I take advantage of my Leave of Absence?

Your Award and your Leave of Absence are secured once you have applied for admission by August 15 of your senior year. If you plan to use your Leave of Absence during the first fall semester after graduation, please indicate the semester in which you plan to enroll on your application for admission. Otherwise, any semester you do not attend or you enroll in less than 12 credits during the fall and/or spring semesters will count as a Leave of Absence.

Do I need to inform the UA Scholars Program if I am going to use my Leave of Absence?

You do not need to inform the UA Scholars Program, but you must contact your campus admissions office to postpone your enrollment if you plan to utilize your Leave of Absence in the first two semesters.

Do I have to start classes right after graduation?

Unless you are using a Leave of Absence, you must begin using your Award the fall semester immediately following high school graduation.

How is my Award paid to me?

Your Award is posted to your student account at the University once you have been accepted into a degree or certificate program and are enrolled as a full time student. Distribution of Awards occurs during the normal fee payment period each semester you are eligible.

Can I apply for admission online?

Yes and the application is free when you use the code UASCHOLARS2024 . Find out more at alaska.edu/alaska/apply.php.

What must I do to maintain good academic standing?

You must uphold the University's Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy toward completion of your degree or certificate program, and maintain the milestone requirements of the Program by earning the minimum cumulative number of annual credits (24 credits after two paid semesters, 54 credits after four paid semesters and 84 credits after six paid semesters) and maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.5.

What if I have other financial aid?

Your Award may be used in conjunction with other funding sources. If you have a credit balance on your account due to funding from the Alaska 529 account, additional scholarship(s) or financial aid, your campus may issue you a refund.

Can I receive the UA Scholars Award if I have also received the Alaska Performance Scholarship?

Yes. Visit [APS.alaska.gov](https://aps.alaska.gov) for more information.

Can I use my Award toward expenses related to Study Away programs?

Yes, you can use your Award for Study Away programs. In fact, we encourage you to take advantage of exciting opportunities like these.

Can I use the Award during a summer term?

Yes, you may use your Award to take classes during the summer term but only if you are enrolled in at least 12 credits and otherwise eligible. Contact your campus financial aid department to ensure distribution of your Award during the summer term as you may be required to complete a form.

Do I need to be a United States citizen to use my award?

You must be either a U.S. citizen or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence.

If I graduate from high school early, can I begin using my Award?

Yes, you may begin using your Award as soon as you graduate and meet all other eligibility requirements.

Can I start using the Award before I receive my high school diploma?

No, you must have earned a high school diploma before you can start using your Award. If you receive a certificate of achievement or GED instead of a diploma you will not be eligible to redeem your Award.

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UA Scholars Program

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Get in touch with the UA Scholars Program and the Office of Admissions:

alaska.edu/scholars/contact-us



UA Scholars Stories

Read success stories from scholars, including those of Mariah Vantrease (left), Matteo Yoon (center) and Katie Scoggin (right) at alaska.edu/scholars/stories.

