

## MSS SCHOLARSHIPS POLICY

### 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. To acknowledge the diverse experiences of science students and to provide financial support through a variety of scholarships;
- 1.2. To outline how \$1,500 in funding will be awarded through five (5) \$300 MSS Scholarships, which will provide financial relief for qualifying students who portray admirable characteristics and considerable experiences, outside the scope of academics;
- 1.3. To define the application and selection process in which MSS Scholarships will be awarded to students.

### 2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1. General Member: As defined in Article 4 of the MSS Constitution, any student in the Faculty of Science;
- 2.2. Scholarships Committee: Group of individuals who are responsible for overseeing MSS Scholarships, as per Article 5.1 in the MSS Scholarships Policy;
- 2.3. Scholarships Category: A defined set of characteristics in which the awarding of MSS Scholarships will be based upon, as per Article 6 in the MSS Scholarships Policy;
- 2.4. Academic Year: Timeframe of one consecutive Fall and Winter semester cycle;
- 2.5. MSS Executive: A member of the MSS General membership who has been granted and actively holds, either through election or appointment, one of the positions outlined in the MSS Executive Duties and Operations policy.

### 3. ELIGIBILITY

3.1. A student is eligible to apply for MSS Scholarship(s) if:

3.1.1. The student is an MSS General Member,

3.1.2. The student is in good academic standing:

3.1.2.1. Good academic standing is defined by the McMaster Academic Calendar as "a student who satisfies the minimum requirements to continue in their program without restriction," and differs by program,

3.1.2.2. Proof of good academic standing is required through the submission of an unofficial transcript:

3.1.2.2.1. The transcript must be dated no earlier than the first day the application opens,

3.1.2.2.2. However, a competitive GPA is not required and will not provide an advantage in the awarding of MSS scholarships;

3.1.3. The student provides information that is true and accurate to the best of their knowledge,

3.1.4. The student is not a member of the MSS Executive within the Academic Year;

3.2. A student is eligible to receive one MSS Scholarship per Academic Year:

3.2.1. A student may apply to as many MSS Scholarships Categories as desired, however, only one scholarship may be awarded to each individual;

3.3. A student is eligible to receive only one MSS Scholarship per Scholarships Category during their academic career.

### 4. SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION PROCEDURE

- 4.1. MSS Scholarships will commence with an online written application. This first stage of the application shall:
  - 4.1.1. Be accessible as a Google Forms posted on the MSS website,
  - 4.1.2. Be available, at the latest, for application by 11:59pm EST the day prior to the Midterm Recess of the fall semester:
    - 4.1.2.1. The date of opening shall only be changed if extenuating circumstances occur that year and is approved by the MSS President;
  - 4.1.3. Close, and thus, stop receiving applications by 11:59pm EST the final day of the Midterm Recess of winter semester;
  - 4.1.4. Serve as the preliminary phase in the application process of being considered for MSS Scholarships;
- 4.2. After the applications have been marked, top-scoring individual(s) of each category shall move on to an interview stage. This second stage of the application shall:
  - 4.2.1. Be communicated to successful applicants via a follow-up email no later than one (1) month after the written applications close,
  - 4.2.2. Be hosted by at least two of the VP External, VP Finance, President, Equity and Inclusion Officer, and Year Representatives:
    - 4.2.2.1. At least one of the interviewers shall be the VP External, VP Finance, or President;
  - 4.2.3. Serve as an opportunity for applicants to provide further insight to support their candidacy for their respective scholarship,
  - 4.2.4. Act as a method to verify applicant experiences:
    - 4.2.4.1. Applicants will not be scored to prevent any biases that may arise from meeting applicants or knowing their identities,
    - 4.2.4.2. Applicant rankings will not change unless an applicant is unable to verify their written application and experiences;

- 4.3. After the awardees are decided, they will be notified via email by the VP External within one (1) week of the conclusion of interviews;
  - 4.4. The scholarship will be awarded in the form of a cheque;
  - 4.5. In the case that less than two applications have been submitted for one or more Scholarship Categories, the MSS will not extend scholarship applications and reserves the right to withhold the respective scholarship(s) for that Academic Year.
5. APPLICATION PROCESSING
- 5.1. The Scholarships Committee shall mark all applications, and is comprised of:
    - 5.1.1. The VP External,
    - 5.1.2. The VP Finance,
    - 5.1.3. The President,
    - 5.1.4. The Equity and Inclusion Officer,
    - 5.1.5. Five (5) current Year Representatives;
  - 5.2. Application processing shall proceed as follows:
    - 5.2.1. Applications received will be put through a blinding process by the VP Internal in order to anonymize the identity of applicants to the Scholarships Committee:
      - 5.2.1.1. Students are not to write about personally identifiable experiences related to the MSS in order to ensure anonymity to the Scholarships Committee;
    - 5.2.2. Transcripts will be reviewed by the VP External and a list of qualifying candidates, as per Article 3.1.2, shall be generated for the Scholarships Committee:
      - 5.2.2.1. Any applicants who do not meet this criteria will not have their application scored,

5.2.2.2. In the event that the VP External is unable to review applicant transcripts, one of the VP Internal, VP Finance, or President shall be responsible;

5.2.3. Applications will be scored by all members of the Scholarships Committee on a scale of one to five based on how well the response reflects the Scholarship Category,

5.2.4. The top scoring individual shall proceed to an interview stage:

5.2.4.1. In the event that two or more applicants tie for the highest application scores, those applicants with the same rankings shall be re-scored in which there cannot be a tie result,

5.2.4.2. In the event that the top scoring individual is unable to verify their experiences, as per Article 4.2, the next-highest ranked individual shall be considered for the scholarship and shall proceed to an interview stage instead,

5.2.4.3. Only successful applicants will be contacted for an interview stage;

5.2.5. The timeline for marking shall take no longer than two (2) weeks, and interviews should take place no longer one (1) month after applications close.

## 6. SCHOLARSHIP CATEGORIES

6.1. There are five (5) Scholarship Categories of MSS Scholarships, each of which will have one (1) award per academic year, valued at \$300 each;

6.2. Applications for each Scholarship Category are to be written responses that reflect the applicant's experiences during their university studies;

6.3. The current Scholarship Categories are:

6.3.1. Resilience & Courage,

6.3.2. Advocacy,

6.3.3. Introspection,

6.3.4. Engagement and Community,

6.3.5. Leadership & Innovation.

## 7. PRIVACY AND INTEGRITY

7.1. Awardees of MSS Scholarships will be publicly announced via MSS media and social platforms:

7.1.1. Scholarship recipients will need to consent to the release of their name, program, year of study, and awarded Scholarship Category;

7.2. Student transcripts will be held in confidentiality as they will only be reviewed by the VP External and shall be deleted from MSS records by the end of the Academic Year;

7.3. The MSS reserves the right to rescind or withhold an MSS Scholarship under certain outstanding circumstances, including but not limited to the discovery of fraudulent information provided in an individual's application form:

7.3.1. Any additional circumstances shall be reviewed by the Scholarships Committee on a case by case basis;

7.4. The MSS strives to select awardees fairly through processes such as application blinding, exclusion of personal MSS experiences, and a diverse Scholarships Committee. The Scholarships Committee will do the best of their ability to uphold integrity in the selection of award recipients.

Date last reviewed: November 18th, 2021