



Scholars Program



2026 Innovation and Technology Scholarship Application Frequently Asked Questions

 [Access Scholarship Application:](https://asu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cAVRH1ZXSkx6j3w)

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Deadline: Sunday, 14 September, 23:59 GMT

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What Makes a Good Scholarship Essay?

Question: What makes a good scholarship essay?

Answer:

A strong scholarship essay clearly demonstrates how your personal and professional experiences make you a strong candidate for graduate studies at ASU, and for the specific academic program you are applying to. Focus on clarity, relevance, and authenticity in your writing.

Question: How can I make sure my essay is well written?

Answer:

Ask a trusted friend, mentor, or professor to review your essay. They can help you catch grammar or spelling mistakes and check that your ideas flow well. A second set of eyes can strengthen your application.

Question: Can I use AI tools like ChatGPT to help write my essay?

Answer:

If you choose to use AI tools, you must ensure your final essay is personalized and authentic. Essays that feel generic or clearly generated by AI without human input are easy to spot and will weaken your application. Be sure your essay reflects your voice and story.

Question: What content should my essay include?

Answer:

Your essay should show what makes you unique and how your experiences have shaped your commitment to transforming Africa. It should also reflect a strong understanding of the graduate program you're applying to and how it connects to your goals.

Tip: Take time to explore the program webpage to understand the curriculum and its impact.

Application Process

Question: What should I do if I need help while filling out the application?

Answer:

If you have any questions or face challenges while completing your application, please email us at mastercardfdnscholars@asu.edu. We are happy to help clarify requirements or troubleshoot issues.

Question: What academic programs are available through this scholarship?

Answer:

This scholarship offers the following academic programs:

- [MS Global Technology and Development](#)
- [MS Information Technology](#)
- [MS Human Systems Engineering - Intelligent Systems](#)
- [MS User Experience](#)
- [MSC Computer Science](#)
- [MS Data Science Analytics & Engineering](#)
- [MS Robotics and Autonomous Systems](#)
- [MS Civil, Environmental & Sustainable Engineering](#)
- [MS Clean Energy Systems](#)
- [MS Modern Energy Production and Sustainable Use](#)

Question: Am I able to apply to other academic programs?

Answer:

The scholarship will only provide opportunities for the above listed academic programs. These are the programs that have been approved through this scholarship grant. **No other programs will be available during this scholarship cycle.**

Question: How will my application be evaluated?

Answer:

Applications will be reviewed based on academic background, leadership and service, quality of essays, and alignment with the program's goals. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to an interview.

Question: What if I change my mind about the academic program I selected?

Answer:

Please choose carefully. You will only be considered for the program you select. Changes may not be allowed after submission.

Question: Do I need to apply for academic admission before applying for the scholarship?

Answer:

No. You will need to apply for the scholarship first, then you will be guided to apply for admission to Arizona State University **only if you are selected to interview for the scholarship.**

Question: Deadlines are approaching...do I need to apply to ASU before applying for the scholarship? Can I have financial assistance for the graduate application fee now?

Answer:

Admission to the academic program is not required for scholarship eligibility. We advise you to submit the scholarship application first. If you are selected as a scholarship finalist, you will be prompted to apply to the academic program. **Do not pay for the application fee.**

Please note, getting the scholarship does not guarantee admission to the graduate program.

Question: Does getting the scholarship admission guarantee getting admission into the desired graduate program?

Answer:

No. But graduate program admission is required in order to be selected for the scholarship.

Question: I will graduate with my bachelors (undergraduate) degree in 2026. Am I eligible to apply for the scholarship?

Answer:

Your bachelors (undergraduate) degree will need to be conferred before July 2026 to be considered eligible. No exceptions will be allowed.

Question: Can I select or apply for more than one academic program?

Answer:

No, we encourage applicants to select only one program they feel a strong interest in.

Question: Can you provide funding for an academic program of my choosing?

Answer:

No, the current scholarship opportunity is only available for the specific programs listed in the application page. These opportunities have been pre-arranged with the Mastercard Foundation and the academic departments long ago.

Question: What if I don't have a Bachelor's degree but I have something that is post high school education.

Answer:

To be considered for this scholarship it is a requirement that you have a bachelor's degree or that you have completed your bachelor's degree by July 2026.

Recommendation Letters

Question: Could you elaborate on the recommendation letter requirements?

Answer:

This scholarship application requires one letter, which should speak to your leadership, academic success, etc. Most academic admission applications require more than one letter, and you might be able to re-use the letter of recommendation submitted for this scholarship. Please ensure that you are uploading PDF recommendations that are **signed** by the recommender. Word documents may not be reviewed.

Question: Can I use an older letter of recommendation?

Answer:

You can, but we strongly encourage using letters written within the past year. Recent letters give reviewers the most up-to-date view of your experience and strengths.

Question: Can my recommender submit a letter of recommendation directly? To whom should my letter of recommendation be addressed to?

Answer:

Our preference would be to have your recommender send the letter directly to you, and you can upload it when you submit the rest of your application materials.

However, if your recommender would like to send your letter directly to us, advise them to include your name, and send it to our email address: mastercardfdnscholars@asu.edu

Question: Does submitting a non-academic recommendation letter reduce your chances of being accepted?

Answer:

A non-academic recommendation letter is fine for the scholarship application, but the academic program will require recommendation letters that speak to your academic abilities/experience.

Question: Who should I have my recommender address the letter of recommendation

Answer:

Recommendation letters can be addressed to the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program at Arizona State University.

Transcripts and Language Requirements

Question: Do I need to submit an official translation if my transcript is in French?

Answer:

Please submit the responses to the online scholarship application form in English. For the additional materials, including letters of recommendation, resumes, and transcripts, those can be submitted in French. Our Francophone staff will be able to review your application materials in full.

An official transcript translation will only be needed if you are selected as a scholarship finalist. At that point, you may be asked to produce an official translation to apply to the academic program. However, for the purposes of this scholarship application, a transcript translation is not required.

Question: Do I need to submit proof of English proficiency for the scholarship?

Answer:

No, it is not required for the scholarship application. However, if selected as a finalist, you will need to provide it for ASU graduate admission.

Question: I have a transcript for a Higher National Diploma (HND). Does this mean I am eligible to apply.

Answer:

Applicants must have earned an undergraduate degree conferred by July 2025. A Higher National Diploma does not qualify as an undergraduate degree.

Application Submission Details

Question: What documents must I submit with my application?

Answer:

A complete application includes:

- Personal Statement
- Essay on Resilience, Leadership, and Impact
- Resume/CV
- One Letter of Recommendation
- Unofficial Transcript (with English translation if needed)
- Optional: Proof of English Language Proficiency (required later for ASU admission)

Question: Should I label my documents in a specific way?

Answer:

Yes. Please include your name in all file names (e.g., Jane Doe_RESUME, Jane Doe_TRANSCRIPT). This helps us match your files to your application.

Question: Do you have specific numbers for how many students will be accepted per country or the minimum?

Answer:

There are no minimums or maximums for country representation in the scholarship program.

Question: Do I need to submit both an online application & downloadable application?

Answer:

No, please only submit one application. The PDF version of the application is available for applicants with limited internet access. Click [HERE](#) to download the application form and email it along with required attachments to mastercardfdnscholars@asu.edu.

Please note, submitting your application directly via the online application form is preferable. To access the direct link to submit your scholarship application, click [HERE](#).

Question: Can I get “edit access” to the downloadable version of the application?

Answer:

No, please do not request edit access. To access the downloadable form, click [HERE](#). This will take you to a link containing a PDF document. To submit the completed PDF form, email it to mastercardfdnscholars@asu.edu along with all required attachments.

Question: I received an error message, “You have either already completed the survey or your session has expired”? Was my application submitted?

Answer:

Your application likely timed out. You can resubmit your application along with the required documentation for review, or kindly email us to ask if your application has been submitted at mastercardfdnscholars@asu.edu.

Question: After submitting an application, I didn’t get an email confirming the application had been received.

Answer:

You should receive an auto-reply message once your application has been submitted. In addition, confirmation can be seen once you submit your submission, and you will see a message saying, “your response has been recorded”.

If you would like to confirm your application was received, please email us at mastercardfdnscholars@asu.edu.

Eligibility Criteria

Question: I completed a 3 year undergraduate degree, am I eligible for the scholarship?:

Answer:

The eligibility criteria depends on the program of study for this particular scholarship. All applications will be reviewed to determine eligibility.

Question: I am over 33 years of age or under 18, am I eligible for the scholarship?

Answer:

No, current age eligibility criteria limit applications to individuals who are between the ages of 18 and 33 at the time of application.

Question: Who is encouraged to apply for this scholarship?

Answer:

We strongly encourage applications from women, refugees or displaced persons, and individuals with disabilities. Applicants must also demonstrate a strong commitment to leadership, community engagement, and giving back to Africa.

Question: Will I need to complete an internship during the program?

Answer:

Yes. All Scholars are expected to participate in a two-month internship between Year 1 and Year 2, aligned with their program of study.

Question: Will I be able to work while studying?

Answer:

Yes. Scholars may hold part-time, on-campus jobs for up to 20 hrs per week with ASU or the Baobab Platform team while classes are in session.

Question: Can I stay in the U.S. after graduation?

Answer:

This scholarship strongly encourages Scholars to return to their home countries to contribute to social and economic development. This expectation is a core part of the Mastercard Foundation's mission.