



Requirements and Instructions for Semifinalists in the 2019 National Merit® Scholarship Program

REQUIREMENTS FOR BECOMING A FINALIST

As a Semifinalist named in the fall of 2018, you must advance to Finalist standing before you can be considered for a Merit Scholarship® award to be offered in 2019. You must meet all specified requirements and deadlines, or you will be withdrawn from the competition. To qualify as a Finalist, you must:

1. Continue to meet all program entry requirements (published in the 2017 *PSAT/NMSQT® Student Guide*).
2. Be enrolled in the last year of high school and be planning to enroll full time in college in the fall of 2019 **or** be enrolled in the first year of college, if you completed grades 9 through 12 in three years or less.
3. Be a citizen of the United States; or be a U.S. lawful permanent resident (or have applied for permanent residence, the application for which has not been denied) and intend to become a U.S. citizen at the earliest opportunity allowed by law. If you have not yet become a U.S. citizen, see box below.
4. Be fully endorsed for Finalist standing and recommended for a National Merit Scholarship by your high school principal (or school official designated by the principal).
5. Have a record of consistently very high academic performance in **all** of grades 9 through 12 and in any college course work taken. Your school must provide a complete record of high school courses you have taken, grades earned, and course work you will take in grade 12. The school should also notify National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) of any noticeable decline in your academic performance during the current year. If you are now in college, high academic performance must continue and must be documented by an official transcript of your record (see instructions on page 2 of this document).
6. Submit the completed application to your high school official as soon as possible using NMSC's Online Scholarship Application (OSA). The school official will complete the school's sections of the application for final transmittal to NMSC by October 10, 2018.
7. Take the SAT® and earn scores that confirm your 2017 PSAT/NMSQT performance. You must take (or have taken) an administration of the SAT between October 2016 and December 2018. **It is your responsibility** to file a request with the College Board SAT Program to have an official report of your SAT scores sent to NMSC (**code 0085**). See page 2 of this document for detailed information about authorized SAT administrations and score reporting.
8. Provide any additional documentation and information that NMSC requests.

If you have not yet become a U.S. citizen, you must submit with your completed *National Merit Scholarship Application* (NMSC will not share citizenship information with any other organization or agency):

- A letter signed by you explaining your plans for becoming a citizen, including the date on which you expect to be eligible and will apply for U.S. citizenship.

AND

- **If you are a U.S. lawful permanent resident**, a copy of your Permanent Resident Card (Green Card); **or** a copy of your passport including the identity/biographical page and the "I-551" stamp showing that you have been granted lawful permanent resident status.

OR

- **If you have applied for U.S. lawful permanent residence**, a copy of Form I-797 Receipt Notice from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS) that verifies you filed the "Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status" (Form I-485). *Note: Form I-797 Receipt Notice must be received by NMSC on or before January 31, 2019.*

TAKING THE SAT AND REPORTING YOUR SCORES

To become a Finalist, you must confirm your PSAT/NMSQT performance with scores from the SAT.

Deadline

You will be withdrawn from further consideration in the competition if NMSC does not receive a report of your SAT scores by January 31, 2019. **NMSC must receive your scores no later than December 31, 2018 for full award consideration.**

The SAT Program will **not** report your scores to NMSC unless you request it, and you cannot substitute a photocopy of the score report sent to you or your school for the official report. Send all testing and score reporting fees directly to the SAT Program.

Authorized SAT administrations

Scores earned on administrations of the SAT from October 2016 through December 2018 will be considered by NMSC. NMSC will not accept scores from an SAT administration taken earlier than October 2016 or later than December 2018.

NMSC will calculate an NMSC Selection Index score using the Reading, Writing and Language, and Math Test SAT scores. Please note that NMSC will only consider the highest set of scores from a single administration of the SAT.

If you have not yet taken the SAT

It is **solely your responsibility** to register **now** to take the SAT on one of the following dates in 2018 and request scores be sent to NMSC when you register (**code 0085**):

- October 6
- November 3
- December 1

We urge you to take the SAT no later than November 3 and not wait until the December administration. Visit www.collegeboard.org for information about registering for the SAT and ordering SAT score reports. You may also contact the SAT Program at (866) 756-7346 domestic or (212) 713-7789 international.

If you have already taken an authorized administration of the SAT

Look at the score report sent to you by the SAT Program to verify it shows National Merit Scholarship Corporation (**code 0085**) as a recipient. If NMSC is not listed, it is **solely your responsibility** to IMMEDIATELY contact the College Board and request that an official score report be sent to NMSC.

SEMIFINALISTS NOW ENROLLED FULL TIME IN COLLEGE

As instructed in the OSA, submit the completed application to the school official (high school you last attended), who will complete the school's sections of the application for final transmittal to NMSC by October 10, 2018. If you report a college choice using the OSA, it should be the college you plan to attend during the 2019–20 academic year.

To be considered for Finalist standing, you must meet all requirements specified on page 1 and, immediately after the end of the current term, arrange to have your college send an **official transcript** of all college course work you have taken to Scholarship Administration at NMSC.

COLLEGE CHOICE

College choice is not considered in determining whether a Semifinalist qualifies as a Finalist or in the selection of National Merit \$2500 Scholarships. However, NMSC requests your college choice because every National Merit Scholarship can be used only for attendance at a college or university in the United States that holds accredited status with a regional accrediting commission on higher education. Merit Scholarship stipends are not payable, however, for attendance at service academies or certain institutions that are limited in their purposes or training. All National Merit \$2500 Scholarships and corporate-sponsored awards (explained in the *Information about the National Merit Scholarship Competition* document) **are transferable** from one regionally accredited U.S. institution to another, but college-sponsored awards are not (as explained in the next section).

You are asked to report your first-choice college (to which you are applying for admission) on your *National Merit Scholarship Application* using the OSA. However, if you are unsure, indicate “undecided” on your application and report your first-choice college to NMSC as soon as possible. To report your college choice or a change in your choice, log back in at osa.nationalmerit.org using the username and password you created when you set up your account. It is your responsibility to ensure your request to change your college choice has been successfully submitted. Please note that you may not make a change to your college choice until your high school transmits the completed application to NMSC. It is your responsibility to apply and be admitted to the college you plan to attend.

REPORT OF A SPONSOR COLLEGE AS FIRST CHOICE

Consideration for a college-sponsored Merit Scholarship award is limited to Semifinalists who qualify as Finalists and who also

1. report to NMSC that a sponsor college is their first choice (see the list of college sponsors included in the “Competition Instructions” section of the OSA and at nationalmerit.org/resources);
2. have applied for admission to the sponsor college; and
3. have **not** been offered any other National Merit Scholarship (corporate-sponsored, National, or another college-sponsored award). No student will receive more than one scholarship offer from NMSC.

A college-sponsored Merit Scholarship award can be used **only** at the institution financing it and therefore is canceled if the winner changes college choice.

Schedule specific to **college-sponsored** awards:

March 1 through May 31, 2019: A Finalist who has reported a sponsor college as first choice before March 1 will be included in the first group referred to that institution for scholarship consideration. Only the sponsoring college you have listed as your first choice will be notified. Periodically NMSC will notify sponsors of additional Finalists who have reported (by May 31) the college or university as their first choice.

May 1, 2019: NMSC will begin mailing college-sponsored Merit Scholarship offers.

NOTE: If NMSC receives notification of a change in college choice from a Finalist **after** mailing a college-sponsored Merit Scholarship offer to that student, the change in college choice will not be processed and the Finalist **cannot** be offered another college-sponsored Merit Scholarship award. This applies even if the new choice of college is one that also sponsors Merit Scholarship awards. Therefore, a Finalist who has previously reported a sponsor college as first choice but is uncertain about it may choose to notify NMSC that he or she is now “undecided” to prevent being made an offer from a school he or she is uncertain about attending; such notification must be submitted online at osa.nationalmerit.org **before May 1**. The Finalist can subsequently report a firm college choice that NMSC receives by May 31.

May 31, 2019: Deadline date for NMSC to receive reports of a sponsor college as first choice. Because it is necessary to treat all Finalists consistently and conclude the annual competition in a timely manner, only college choice reports that NMSC receives by May 31, 2019, will be used to identify the final group of candidates to a college or university that sponsors awards.

See the **Schedule and Deadlines** on the next page.

Schedule and Deadlines for the 2019 Merit Scholarship® Competition

2018

- September 12** NMSC releases names of about 16,000 Semifinalists to news media
- October 6** SAT administration date
- October 10** Schools transmit completed *National Merit Scholarship Applications* to NMSC using the OSA
- November 3** SAT administration date
- Semifinalists who took an earlier authorized administration of the SAT should have requested the SAT Program to report scores to NMSC (**code 0085**)
- December 1** Last date for Semifinalists to take the SAT
(We urge you to take the SAT no later than November 3 and not wait until December)
- December 31** Semifinalists who have not submitted SAT scores by this date will not be considered for the National Merit \$2500 Scholarship

2019

- January 20** Selection committees begin choosing Merit Scholarship award winners
- January 31** Last day to submit SAT scores and other documentation required for Finalist consideration
- February 4** NMSC mails notification to high school principals about the status of their Semifinalists; a *Certificate of Merit* is provided for each Semifinalist who qualifies as a Finalist
- February 11** NMSC notifies Finalists of their status at their home addresses
- March 1** Finalists who have reported a sponsor college as first choice *before* this date will be included in the first group referred to the institution for scholarship consideration
- March 6** NMSC begins mailing corporate-sponsored Merit Scholarship offers to winners at their home addresses
- March 21** NMSC mails offers of National Merit \$2500 Scholarships
- May 1** NMSC begins mailing offers of college-sponsored Merit Scholarship awards
(see **NOTE** on page 3)
- May 31** Deadline for NMSC to receive reports of college choice for identifying the final group of candidates for college-sponsored Merit Scholarship awards

NMSC releases announcements of Merit Scholar® designees to news media nationwide:

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|---------------------------|---|
| April 17 | Corporate-sponsored Merit Scholarship winners |
| May 8 | National Merit \$2500 Scholarship winners |
| June 5 and July 15 | College-sponsored Merit Scholarship winners |

If you have questions, contact: National Merit Scholarship Corporation, Attn: Scholarship Administration
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