



P.E.O. STAR Scholarship Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Student Applicants

Q. On what basis are STAR recipients selected?

A. Selections are based on the evaluation of the published criteria. The merit of the application drives the selection. The successful applicant will have clearly presented her academic achievement, demonstrated leadership, extracurricular involvement, community/volunteer service, and potential for future success in an organized and thorough manner within her application. She will also have written a well-organized essay regarding possible career aspirations, including higher education goals. She will further have chosen two references who have written outstanding recommendation letters, specific to her, clearly delineating her achievements and contributions according to the published criteria. The successful applicant has taken the time to extend her best effort in applying for the P.E.O. STAR Scholarship.

Q. I understand the application is made online. What does this entail?

A. The P.E.O. STAR Scholarship application is an online submission. After your recommending chapter has completed and submitted a recommendation form and letter online, you will be sent an email with instructions and a link to create your STAR online account. You will log into this account with the username and password you entered when creating the account. You will be able to complete the required forms, compose an essay, send emails requesting letters of reference and electronically submit everything to the P.E.O. Executive Office. Helpful instructions may be viewed and printed once you have logged into your account.

Q. What is the application deadline?

A. Each applicant has 30 calendar days to complete and electronically submit her application from the date she receives the link to establish her online account. After a chapter has electronically submitted an online recommendation form and letter, their applicant is emailed a link to set up an online account. The applicant has **ONLY** 30 days from the date she receives the link to complete and submit her online application, including the two letters of reference and high school transcript – **official or unofficial** – (through the 11th grade/junior year). Canadian applicants must also include their province conversion grading scale. Instructions are accessible once the applicant has set up her online account.

Q. What are the components of the P.E.O. STAR Scholarship application?

A. The applicant will complete the online Student Profile Form. For applicants under the age of 18 on the date the application is submitted, the application form must contain a parent's or guardian's signature. Online instructions are included regarding signatures and uploading a document. The applicant will also complete two Activity Charts – one for Extracurricular Activities and one for Community/Volunteer Service. The applicant lists and describes activities, number of years involved, leadership or other roles, and skills learned and developed. The applicant will write a one-page essay thoroughly articulating and discussing her possible career aspirations including higher education plans. Two letters of reference from persons who know the applicant well are required. The recommending chapter also writes a letter of recommendation. The applicant must electronically submit her high school transcript – **official or unofficial** (through the 11th grade/junior

year) as part of the online application. (Canadian applicants must include their provincial conversion grading scale.)

Forms and instructions are available once the applicant has established an online account.

Q. What is an unofficial transcript?

A. An unofficial transcript is a transcript that has not been made official by a signature, stamp or seal. You may submit **either** an official **or unofficial** transcript with your online application. Submit whichever form of transcript your high school will release to you that you can electronically submit with your online application. Do not mail your transcript to the P.E.O. Executive Office. STAR Scholarship application online instructions explain how to scan/upload your transcript.

Q. May I submit an application without a chapter's recommendation?

A. No. An application received without the recommendation of a chapter is incomplete and will not be evaluated.

Q. How do I find a chapter to recommend me?

A. Visit www.peointernational.org, the official P.E.O. website and click on Contact Us link located at the top of the page and fill in the requested information. Ask women with whom you are acquainted if they are P.E.O.s or if they know women who belong to P.E.O. Ask at your church, school and extracurricular activities. Ask your high school counselor whether anyone from a P.E.O. chapter has visited the school regarding the P.E.O. STAR Scholarship or Cottey College. Once you find a member, tell her you are interested in applying for the STAR Scholarship and would like to speak with the chapter members. If that chapter is already recommending a student for the scholarship, ask the members for help in connecting you to another chapter.

Q. May the chapter member who writes the chapter letter of recommendation also write one of the reference letters required for the scholarship application?

A. No. Two letters of reference are required in addition to the chapter letter of recommendation. There should be three separate writers. An applicant who submits a letter of reference written by the same person who wrote the chapter letter of recommendation is one letter short. That application is incomplete and will not be evaluated.

Q. What is Cottey College?

A. Cottey College is an independent liberal arts and sciences college for women in Nevada, Missouri, owned and operated by the P.E.O. Sisterhood since 1927. Cottey College offers two-year and four-year degree programs. Click on the Cottey College link on the P.E.O. website for additional information.

Q. My high school does not rank students. Will this disqualify me?

A. No. Class rank is not a requirement for eligibility.

Q. Does preference go to students with 4.0 GPAs?

A. No. Applicants for the P.E.O. STAR Scholarship are evaluated on demonstrated excellence in the areas of leadership, academics, extracurricular activities, community/volunteer service and potential for future success. An applicant selected as a STAR Scholarship recipient will have shown excellence in all five areas. The minimum GPA eligibility requirement is an unweighted 3.0. An applicant with a 3.0 GPA has the same chance for selection as an applicant with a 4.0 GPA, so long as all other evaluated areas are also equal.

Q. May the P.E.O. STAR Scholarship be renewed?

A. No. This is a one-time scholarship that must be used during the academic year the scholarship is received.

Q. Who determines how the \$2,500 scholarship funds are used?

A. The recipient and her family will decide whether the student will directly receive the scholarship or whether the scholarship will be sent to her institute of higher learning, as well as how the funds will be used. The student and her family should be aware that if the scholarship is used other than for tuition, fees, books, required course supplies, or other college expenses, the funds may become reportable income for tax purposes. The student and her family should consult a tax professional if there are questions regarding uses of the funds.

Q. Who may I contact if I have questions using the online application process?

A. For computer/technical questions, send an email request by clicking on the Contact Us link located in the upper right-hand corner of the online screens of the application program. You will receive an email response from the user support desk in 24 to 48 business hours. Questions regarding the STAR Scholarship should be addressed to your recommending chapter or to the STAR Scholarship project supervisor at 515-255-3153.

Q. When and how will I be notified whether I have been selected as a STAR Scholarship recipient?

A. By April 30 every applicant will have been notified by letter whether she has been selected as a P.E.O. STAR Scholarship recipient.

Q. If I am selected as a recipient, when may I expect to receive the scholarship funds?

A. No scholarship money is released before August. To trigger the release of funds, each recipient will be sent the Acceptance of Educational Aid form and the Confirmation of Enrollment form. Each form must be completed and submitted to the stated address, following form instructions, prior to scholarship money being released. If the recipient has elected to receive the money directly, one-half of the scholarship will be mailed in the fall semester following the receipt of the Confirmation of Enrollment form. The second half of the scholarship will be sent early in the spring semester following the receipt of the second Confirmation of Enrollment form which has a January 31 deadline. Scholarships sent to the student's institution of higher learning will typically be divided by the institution into two parts and applied to the fall and spring semesters. It is the recipient's responsibility to make sure the Confirmation of Enrollment is sent by her college to the P.E.O. Executive Office by the stated deadline(s).