



STUDENT STAR FAQs

Topic Summary

APPLICATION ONLINE PROCESS

- I understand the application is made online. What does this entail?
- What are the components of the P.E.O. STAR Scholarship application?
- Who may I contact if I have questions using the online application process?

GENERAL INFORMATION

- What is the application deadline?
- What is an unofficial transcript?
- What is Cottey College?
- My high school does not rank students. Will this disqualify me?
- Does preference go to students with 4.0 GPAs?
- My grades are in percentage or letter mark. How do I convert this to a GPA?
- May the P.E.O. STAR Scholarship be renewed?
- Who determines how the \$2,500 scholarship funds are used?
- If I am selected as a recipient, when may I expect to receive the scholarship funds?
- When and how will I be notified whether I have been selected as a STAR Scholarship recipient?

RECOMMENDATIONS/SPONSORSHIPS

- May I apply without a chapter's recommendation?
- How do I find a chapter to recommend me?
- May the chapter member who writes the chapter recommendation also write one of the references required for the scholarship application?
- What advice can be given to reference writers?

QUALIFICATIONS

- On what criteria are STAR recipients selected?

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APPLICATION ONLINE PROCESS

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 online, the system creates an account for you. You will be sent an email with your username and password, instructions and a link to the STAR Scholarship application. You will be able to complete the required application forms, compose an essay, send emails requesting references 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 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 by the end of the calendar year in which they are applying, the student application will require the student to obtain parent/guardian consent to apply. The applicant will also complete two Activity Charts – one for Extracurricular Activities and one for Community/Volunteer Service. Additionally, the opportunity to note Awards and Honors as well as Honor Societies are included. The applicant lists and describes activities, number of years involved, leadership or other roles, and skills learned and developed. The applicant will write a 700-word essay articulating and discussing her possible career aspirations including higher education plans. Two references from persons who know the applicant well are required. The recommending chapter also writes a recommendation. The applicant must upload 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.) The link to the STAR Scholarship application will be emailed to the student applicant after a P.E.O. chapter has submitted a recommendation for the student applicant to apply. Please be sure to READ all instructions for completing the application.

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. All other questions regarding the STAR Scholarship should be addressed to your recommending chapter or to the STAR Scholarship project supervisor at 515-255-3153 or star@peodsm.org.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Q. What is the application deadline?

A. Each applicant has 30 calendar days to complete and electronically submit her application from the date the link is sent to her from the STAR Supervisor. This will be done after a chapter has electronically submitted an online recommendation form. At that point, the student applicant is emailed a link to the STAR Scholarship application. The applicant has ONLY 30 days from the date the link is email to her to complete and submit her online application, including the two references 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 been sent the application link. Applications must be submitted no later than 11:59 pm Eastern Time (ET) on the 30th day. This deadline is firm. NO EXCEPTIONS.

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 upload to your online application. Do not mail your transcript to the P.E.O. Executive Office. STAR Scholarship application online instructions explain how to upload your transcript.

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. International website for additional information or go to: www.cottey.edu.

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

A. No. Class rank is not a requirement for eligibility, but it is helpful to know the general size of your high school class.

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 equal.

Q. My grades are in percentage or letter mark. How do I convert this to a GPA?

A. Canadian students can convert their grades to GPA by searching the many GPA conversion websites available. An example of such a website you may wish to use is as follows: <https://gpacalculator.net/grade-conversion/canada/>

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. If you plan to take a gap year, you will not be eligible for funding and should not apply.

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. 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 required to complete the Acceptance of STAR Scholarship and the Fall Confirmation of Enrollment sections on her application portal. Additionally, if a student elects to receive her scholarship funds directly in the Acceptance of STAR Scholarship section, she will also be required to complete the Direct Deposit section in her portal by August 1st.

1. If the recipient has elected to receive the money directly, one half of the scholarship will be direct deposited into her account for the fall semester following the completion of the Fall Confirmation of Enrollment section on her application portal. The second half of the scholarship will be direct deposited into her account early in the spring semester following the completion of the Spring Confirmation of Enrollment section on her application portal.
2. Scholarships sent to the student's institution of higher learning will typically be divided by the institution into two installments and applied to the fall and spring semesters.

It is the recipient's responsibility to upload Confirmation of Enrollment to her application portal by the stated deadline(s):

- Fall Confirmation of Enrollment deadline – September 30th
- Spring Confirmation of Enrollment deadline – January 31st

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

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

RECOMMENDATIONS/SPONSORSHIPS

Q. May I apply without a chapter's recommendation?

A. No. The link to the STAR Scholarship application will only be emailed to the students recommended by a P.E.O. chapter

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 recommendation also write one of the references required for the scholarship application?

A. No. Two references are required in addition to the chapter recommendation. There should be three separate writers. An applicant who submits a reference written by the same person who wrote the chapter recommendation is one short. That application will be considered incomplete and will not be evaluated. RELATIVES MAY NOT WRITE REFERENCES OR THE CHAPTER RECOMMENDATION.

Q. What advice can be given to reference writers?

A. The references selected should know you very well and project who you are in real life – your character, your talents, your promise for the future. Encourage references to personalize their references rather than simply cut and paste a college recommendation.

QUALIFICATIONS

Q. On what criteria 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 (unweighted 3.0/4.0 GPA minimum), 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 recommendations, specific to her, clearly delineating her achievements and contributions according to the published criteria. The two references will be asked to answer five questions about the applicant – reference letters are not accepted. Here are the five questions the student references will be asked to answer:

1. In what capacity and for how long have you known this student? (200 words max)
2. Describe her strengths and challenges based on your personal observations. How has she made a positive impact on her school and/or community? (200 words max)
3. Specify qualities of character and skill sets that you believe will carry her successfully into the future. (200 words max)
4. If you were to choose one aspect of this young woman that you and/or others around her admire most, what would that be? Why does this aspect of the applicant make her exceptional? (200 words max)
5. Is there anything else you would like to say about this young woman? (200 words max)