



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT  
OF HIGHER EDUCATION

# **The Complete YOUniversal Scholarship System Guide**

Updated September 2014

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**Disclaimer**

The information in this guide is subject to change at any time. The laws, rules, regulations, award amounts, amount of awardees, eligibility criteria, funding per program, etc. are subject to change at any point prior to, during or after application through the YOUniversal application. These changes will be based on changes in law or funding provided by the Arkansas General Assembly. It is understood that ADHE is not at fault for any changes that occur to any financial aid program. In addition, awards for all ADHE programs are limited by the availability of funds.

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## What is YOUiversal?

The YOUiversal (pronounced like Universal) is the scholarship management system used by the State of Arkansas. YOUiversal was created by the Information Network of Arkansas in 2010 with the addition of the Arkansas Lottery funding to the Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship. The system is a universal scholarship search, meaning one application can determine eligibility for all of the state’s scholarship programs.

## Applying for Scholarships

If you have never used the YOUiversal search to look for scholarships, then you will go to [scholarships.adhe.edu](http://scholarships.adhe.edu) and click “START” under “Get Started” to apply.

If you already have a YOUiversal account, want to complete a new scholarship search, you will need to log into your account at [scholarships.adhe.edu](http://scholarships.adhe.edu) and click “search for additional financial aid.”

The screenshot shows the homepage of the YOUiversal website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for "Agencies | Online Services | State Directory" and the "Arkansas.gov" logo. Below this is a dark blue header with the "adhe" logo, "Contact Us" link, and social media icons for Facebook and Twitter. A search bar is also present. The main navigation area features the "COLLEGE for YOU" logo with "ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION" underneath, and four user categories: "FOR STUDENTS", "FOR COUNSELORS", "FOR TEACHERS", and "FOR PARENTS". A large image of three students looking at a laptop is displayed. Below the image is a "GET STARTED" section with the text "Create an Account to Begin your Financial Aid Search!" and a "START >" button. To the right is a "Returning User" section with links for "Make a Correction", "View my Report", "Add a school", and "and more...". It includes input fields for "username" and "Password", a "forgot password" link, and a "LOGIN" button.

## **Application Verification**

After you apply for a scholarship, you will receive an email verifying that you have created an account and successfully applied for scholarships. If you do not receive an email, you may not have successfully applied. You can determine if you have open applications by logging into your account at [scholarships.adhe.edu](http://scholarships.adhe.edu).

Once you have applied, there are several steps that your account will go through in the application process. Right after you apply, the YOUiversal system will indicate that your status is currently “submitted application.” This status means that you have successfully submitted your application, but no action has been taken.

## **Submitting Required Documents**

Now that you have successfully submitted your application, it’s time to make sure that you provide all of the required documentation to ADHE. At this point in the process, you may notice that your status has changed from “Submitted Application” to “Eligibility Pending.”

Many of the scholarships that you will apply for will have additional requirements, from filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to submitting test scores and/or transcripts from your college or high school.

When it comes to graduating seniors at public high schools, we should receive your transcripts and ACT score automatically from your high school. However, it is still very important for you to check your account to be sure that we have received the required information. This information is generally retrieved from high schools in late January. Private high school and home schooled students need to mail in required documents.

If you are a non-traditional student who needs to send in transcripts, you can request them from the registrar’s office of your college(s).

A status of “Eligibility Pending” can mean one of two things. Most likely, it means that you have not submitted all required documents to us. You can see which documents might be missing by logging into your account and clicking on the program that you are inquiring about.

If you do not have any documents missing, it is likely that the information that you submitted does not qualify you for the scholarship or grant that you have applied for. If you think there might be a mistake, or if you have a question, you can contact our office by emailing [finaid@adhe.edu](mailto:finaid@adhe.edu).

## Submitting Your FAFSA

Some scholarship programs require that you complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (the FAFSA) in order to qualify. The FAFSA is available at <https://fafsa.gov/>. You may complete the FAFSA any time before or after you have submitted your YOUuniversal application, but you must complete it before the June 1 deadline in order to be considered eligible.



The screenshot shows the FAFSA website homepage. At the top, it features the 'Federal Student Aid' logo with the text 'An OFFICE of the U.S. DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION' and 'PROUD SPONSOR of the AMERICAN MIND™'. To the right is the 'FAFSA™ Free Application for Federal Student Aid' logo. Below the logo is a navigation bar with icons for Home, About Us, PIN Site, StudentAid.gov, and Help. A search bar is located on the right side of the navigation bar. The main content area has a blue banner with the text 'Get help paying for college' and 'Submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)'. Below the banner is a collage of four photos of diverse college students. At the bottom, there are two columns: 'New to the FAFSA?' with a 'Start A New FAFSA' button, and 'Returning User?' with a list of options (Make a correction, Add a school, View your Student Aid Report (SAR), and more...) and a 'Login' button.

The FAFSA asks for information about your family's income, so you may need to fill it out with your parent or guardian. It uses information from the previous year's income, so if you are filling out the FAFSA in 2015, it will use income information from 2014.

It will be easier to complete your FAFSA after you have filed your taxes. The IRS Data Retrieval Tool is available to pull your tax information once your taxes have been filed.

Once you have completed your FAFSA, the Arkansas Department of Higher Education will receive it automatically within two to three weeks. After that time, it should show as received on your account. If it does not appear, you may want to contact ADHE to verify your date of birth and Social Security number.

## **Scholarship Awards**

Once you have completed all of the requirements, the YOUniversal system will determine if you are eligible for the scholarship. At this point, you would see your status in the system change to “eligible.” It is important to note that a status of eligible is not a guarantee of an award. Awards are determined based on the availability of funding for a particular program. Awards may also be limited to a set number in some cases (such as with the Governor’s Scholars Program).

If it is determined that you are eligible and there is money available to award you, you will be sent an email to notify you that you have been awarded. The scholarship status in your account will change to “pending acceptance,” and at this time you will have to log in to accept your scholarship.

Once you have accepted, it is important to double check to make sure that you have selected the appropriate college or university.

## **Making Changes to Your YOUniversal Account**

It is important that you update your YOUniversal account whenever something changes. This is especially true with email, because this will be the primary way that you will be contacted about your scholarships.

### Changing Your Email Address

In order to change the email address associated with your YOUniversal account, you will first need to log in to your account using your current email address. Once you have logged in, click “Change Profile Information” under “View or Update My Information.” Once in your profile, you will see the option to “change email” next to your current email address. Click the link and follow the instructions to complete the process.

If you are unable to access the email address that you signed up with, and have forgotten the password to your account, you will need to contact INA support at 1-877-727-3468.

### Changing Your College

In order to change the college listed in your YOUniversal account, all you need to do is log in at [scholarships.adhe.edu](http://scholarships.adhe.edu) and select “Change College” under “View or Update My Information.” Then follow the prompts to change your college, making sure that you are selecting the correct start semester for your new school. The deadlines to change your college are October 1 for the fall semester and February 1 for the spring semester.

Once you have requested the change, you may not see it immediately updated on your account. An ADHE financial aid representative will have to approve your request before your new school will appear. This process generally takes two to three business days. Transfers requested for future semesters will be processed after the prior semester is complete.

Please be aware that there are certain situations where you may not transfer your Academic Challenge scholarship, such as if you are going from a four-year college to a two-year college and have earned too many hours to qualify at a two-year school. If you transfer between fall and spring semesters, you must send your official transcript from the school you are leaving to ADHE for renewal purposes.

### Requesting a Hold

If you are a recipient of the Academic Challenge, GO! Grant, or Governor's Scholarships, you may find it necessary at some point to place your scholarship on hold. A student can place his or her scholarship on hold for up to two semesters. In order to request a hold, you must fill out the hold request form at [scholarships.adhe.edu](http://scholarships.adhe.edu). The link to the form can be found below:

### [HOLD REQUEST FORM](#)

Once you have completed the form, you will be notified by email when your scholarship is placed on hold. If you indicate when you will be returning to school, your scholarship will automatically resume at that time. However, if you do not indicate when you will return, you will have to notify ADHE when you go back to school in order to continue to receive your scholarship.

Please note that Governor's Distinguished Scholars may not place their scholarship on hold in the first semester after they were awarded.

### **Renewal of Your Scholarship**

Scholarship renewal requirements vary from program to program. When it comes to the biggest three scholarship programs: Academic Challenge, Governor's Scholars and GO, there are certain GPA and other criteria that must be met in order for your scholarship to be renewed. With these scholarships, if you have done everything that is required within the school year, your scholarship should be automatically renewed until you graduate or have reached your funding limit. However, if you do not meet the requirements, your scholarship may be put on probation. You will be notified by email when your scholarship is renewed.

It is up to you to make sure that you are meeting the requirements of your scholarship. Notices of probation may not be sent out in time for you to sign up for summer classes due to the turnaround involved in us receiving continuing eligibility rosters. If you are not sure if you are meeting your requirements at the end of the



year, you may contact the financial aid office at your school or the financial aid office at ADHE for more information.

Only a few programs require you to reapply each year once you have been initially awarded. These programs are mainly our teacher scholarship programs such as TOP and STEP. If you have received one of these scholarships in the past, then you will have to reapply each year in order to continue to be considered.

### **Scholarship Probation**

If you should happen to find yourself on scholarship probation, you're not completely done yet – there is still a chance that you could get your scholarship back by attending summer school.

If you do choose to attend summer school to regain your scholarship, you will have to do so at your own expense. It is important to remember that you will only have until the end of the summer semester to raise your GPA or complete the required number of hours. It may be necessary to do some calculations to determine if summer school will be enough to get you renewed. If you need assistance determining if summer school will be enough to get your scholarship renewed, you should contact your academic advisor.

Once you complete summer school, it will be up to you to request that your transcript is sent in to ADHE. You can do this by contacting the registrar's office at your college. Generally, these transcripts are sent electronically by the college. Your registrar's office should be aware of how to get the transcript to us once it is requested. Be sure to get a confirmation or receipt showing that the transcript was sent. The deadline to submit your transcript for consideration for scholarship renewal is September 15.

### **Understanding Your Status**

You may find that the status of your scholarship can be confusing at times. If you have a question about what your status means, you should first refer to our "Understanding Your Status" guide at [scholarships.adhe.edu](http://scholarships.adhe.edu). The direct link to this page is below:

[UNDERSTANDING YOUR STATUS](#)

If you still have questions, please feel free to contact ADHE.

## **Financial Aid Timeline**

Below you will find the typical timeline of ADHE financial aid operations in a given year. Keep in mind that this timeline, especially when it comes to the times that awards are made, is subject to change and is only presented to serve as a guide.

January 1 – Application opens

February 1 – Deadline for Governor’s Distinguished applications

Late April –Governor’s Distinguished awardees are notified

May – Academic Challenge awarding for high school students begins

June 1 – Deadline for all other scholarship applications

Late Summer – Go! Opportunities Grant awardees are notified

Mid-late Summer – Non-traditional Academic Challenge awardees are notified

## **Contact Us**

The Financial Aid Staff at ADHE is always happy to answer any questions that you might have. The fastest and most efficient way to communicate with us is by filling out the contact us form at the link below:

[CONTACT US](#)

You should also be sure to check the Frequently Asked Questions on our website to see if your question has already been answered.