



OSSE Scholars Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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Application Information

To apply for the OSSE Scholars program, you must:

- Attend a District of Columbia public high school;
- Be a resident of the District of Columbia;
- Be a high school sophomore or junior at the time of submitting an application;
- Demonstrate financial need;
- Have a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.2 or higher; and
- Have leadership potential and desire to attend college after high school.

How do I apply?

During the open application window each fall, the link to the application portal can be found on the OSSE Scholars website. **There are two parts to the application.** Students must first complete basic registration, school and eligibility information in Part 1. Once submitted, applicants receive a follow-up email within 24 hours and, if they are eligible, an invitation to complete Part 2 OSSE Scholars application.

Will my first semester grades from this school year count?

Yes. OSSE requests a current transcript in Part 2 of the application and a list of current coursework if not included on the transcript. If accepted as an OSSE Scholar, students will have to provide their first semester grades as part of their university summer program application. Failure to maintain good grades could result in rejection from the university, which would also result in the loss of your OSSE Scholars funding.

Why is the minimum GPA a 3.2?

Our college partners have very selective admissions criteria, even for their summer college programs for high school students. We have found that a 3.2 GPA is the minimum of students who have been accepted as OSSE Scholars to these programs. In addition to the cumulative GPA, grades on your high school transcript lower than a C in all courses or a B in core courses are typically not accepted by the OSSE Scholars summer college partner programs. OSSE reviews all completed applications based on GPA, extracurricular activities, level of difficulty of classes and strength of your application essay.

I submitted my application. What's next?

OSSE will review applications and be in touch with you and your school counselor to schedule an interview if you meet the minimum requirements. After all interviews are complete, OSSE will notify students of their decision. If selected as an OSSE Scholar, students will still need to apply to the university program with which they have been matched. OSSE will provide detailed instructions on how to complete the university application as well as support and assistance, as needed. Students must be accepted by the university in order to attend the summer program and receive the OSSE Scholars scholarship.

Selection Information

What is the acceptance rate?

Each year, the acceptance rate changes based on the number and make-up of the applicant pool, but historically, the acceptance rate for students who apply to OSSE Scholars is less than 40%. However, once accepted as an OSSE Scholar, the acceptance rate into the college summer program with which they have been matched is more than 97%.

How does OSSE select my university program?

All applicants have the opportunity to share their top choices for schools/programs in the application, writing sample and during the interview. When making acceptance decisions, OSSE staff matches each accepted Scholar with a single university program based on academic interests and the admissions requirements for that program. Your OSSE Scholars' acceptance email will indicate to which university you have been matched and selected to apply. Please note that your university match may not be one of your original three preferences. University matches are final.

If I was selected and attended a program on behalf of OSSE during a previous summer, am I eligible to participate this year?

Yes. However, OSSE will give preferential treatment to new students who have not previously attended summer academic programs through a scholarship from OSSE.

If I am selected for OSSE Scholars, does that mean I am automatically accepted into a university program?

No. If you are selected as an OSSE Scholar, you still need to apply to and be accepted by the university program with which you were matched. OSSE has partnered with the university directly and will be providing a recommendation for you for their program. However, your participation in OSSE Scholars is contingent upon your acceptance into a university program. Each university program has its own admissions requirements. **Students are strongly encouraged to research the requirements for each school before writing their application essay and before indicating their top three preferences in their application and interview.**

If I am selected as a Scholar, what's expected of me?

The OSSE Scholars process is very similar to the college application process. You'll need to complete all application elements (including essays, recommendations, transcripts and the actual application to the university summer program) by OSSE's partner deadlines, which often differ from the universities. You will be required to attend all orientation sessions, complete all enrollment forms by the applicable deadlines and attend all Scholars meetings. You'll also be expected to respond to emails from OSSE Scholars program and university staff in a timely fashion. Finally, you'll be expected to successfully complete all summer college classes, attend for the duration of the program and follow your college's code of conduct. OSSE Scholars are also expected to attend a few additional events in the school year following their summer experience.

If I am accepted into another summer program, can I also participate in OSSE Scholars?

It depends. The shortest OSSE Scholar program is two weeks long—if the dates do not conflict, you may be able to participate in both. However, you will need to verify this with your other program as well and get permission. Please be aware that some programs will not allow you to miss time in order to attend your OSSE program. In that case, you will have to pick one.

Additionally, you will need to commit to your OSSE Scholars college program in early spring. If you are still waiting at that point to hear about an acceptance decision from another program, you may have to decide whether or not to commit to OSSE Scholars without having received that decision.

Program Information

Can I start the program late or end early?

No. You should select a program based on your summer schedule and be able to commit to the duration of the program. At the time of your interview, you should inform OSSE staff of any potential summer conflicts since OSSE ultimately chooses which summer program is the best match for you.

What does the OSSE Scholars funding pay for?

If accepted, OSSE Scholars will pay your tuition, room and board, books and transportation costs to and from campus for the summer program. Students are responsible for getting to and from their point of departure from the District of Columbia (your home to Reagan National Airport) as well as their own spending money for laundry, snacks, optional trips and other expenses that are not required for program participation.

Each school offers a unique experience with various amenities, excursions, and opportunities that may or may not be included. For instance, a school in New York City will have more expensive meals, outings and weekend activities than a school in Syracuse. You are never required to participate in activities that are not included in the summer program cost, however, you should consider this as it is often a great way to meet new people and experience a new environment. **Students are strongly encouraged to research and consider these extra expenses for each school before indicating their top three preferences in the application essay and during their interview.**

What additional support does OSSE provide to Scholars?

OSSE provides assistance with the summer college program application process and coordinates travel for Scholars to their university program. Once a student is accepted to their university summer program, OSSE provides help with pre-enrollment, a parent and Scholars travel information session, a peer orientation session, and one-on-one meetings as needed. Optional workshops and other events are also offered to OSSE Scholars throughout the program year. Once students return from the summer, OSSE provides a variety of alumni services, including college application help and invitations to special events.

Will I earn college credit?

It depends on the university program you attend. Details about which programs provide college credit to summer students can be found on the individual university program pages. Please note that credit-earning programs are typically more challenging to get into—therefore, the students selected for them must meet higher academic standards to prove that they are capable of completing college-level work.

Does OSSE Scholars provide any scholarships for undergraduate admission?

No. The OSSE Scholar funding is only for summer program costs while you are still a high school student.

Does OSSE Scholars provide assistance with job placement or internships?

No. While OSSE Scholars serves as a host site for the Marion Berry Summer Youth Employment Program ([SYEP](#)) for eligible students during the summer in which they are an OSSE Scholar, the program does not assist with job placement or internships.

I have additional questions that were not answered here. Can I contact someone for more details?

Please contact the OSSE Scholars staff as listed on [the program website](#).
