

POLICY ON STUDENT AWARDS, GRANTS, FINANCIAL AID & SCHOLARSHIPS

POLICY NUMBER:	AC-AD-003
REVISION NUMBER:	
TITLE:	Policy on Student Awards, Grants, Financial Aid & Scholarships
DATE OF ADOPTION:	3 rd August, 2021
SUPERSEDES:	
DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION:	Fall 2021
STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S):	
FREQUENCY OF REVISION:	Every 3 years
PROJECTED DATE OF REVISION:	Spring 2024.
PURPOSE OF THE POLICY:	To establish the principles for financial support for students offered by the University of the Bahamas and to ensure fair and transparent management of these resources in the service of student needs and University goals.
ACCOUNTABILITY:	This Policy is under the primary responsibility of The Vice President, Administrative Services, who will report annually on the execution of the Policy and the disbursement of aid.
RELATED POLICIES:	<p>Policy On Admissions to University of The Bahamas Tuition Policy Policy on Continuance, Academic Probation and Suspension Guidelines on Donor Supported Student Awards Private Giving Naming Policy</p> <p>Guidelines for student emergency assistance. International Student Athlete Tuition Waiver</p>

APPENDICES:	
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1. Overview

- 1.1 University of The Bahamas Act assigns the power to the Board of Trustees to “provide for the welfare of the students of the University; to control and superintend the property and policies of the University and to fix fees and charges for courses of study, facilities and other services provided by the University and to reduce, waive or refund fees and charges so fixed, generally or in any particular case or class of case”.
- 1.2 University of The Bahamas is committed to trying to meet the financial needs of students and to make sure that no student is deprived of the opportunity to earn a degree solely for financial reasons. The University is also committed to attracting and retaining talented students. In fulfilment of these commitments, University of The Bahamas has established this policy governing the administration of student awards and financial assistance.
- 1.3 This Policy applies to financial support managed by University of The Bahamas, whether funded by restricted donor funds or government programmes or through the University’s operating budget and includes awards governed by the Guidelines on Donor Supported Student Awards. Financial support includes bursaries, scholarships and fellowships whether funded from restricted funds, government support or through the University’s operating budget. It also includes donor-funded student awards as defined in the Guidelines on Donor Supported Student Awards.
- 1.4 The Policy does not apply to financial support managed directly by the government or government agencies or to financial aid awarded and disbursed directly by non-University agencies.
- 1.5 The purpose of this Policy is to ensure equitable, transparent and consistent practices in the awarding of financial aid and scholarships to students while allowing The University sufficient flexibility to administer its award programmes in a manner appropriate to their particular needs and objectives.
- 1.6 The University may from time to time establish awards specifically intended to improve the participation of particular groups of students. The terms of such awards will conform to the goals and objectives of the University and of the unit concerned. The terms will include a provision for ongoing review and provide for alternative uses of the funds once the specific purpose has been met.
- 1.7 This Policy applies to students enrolled in University academic enhancement, pre-technology, pre-nursing, post-baccalaureate (i.e. diploma of education) and

undergraduate degree programmes, including LL.B. The Policy does not apply to research awards, research grants and graduate programmes.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 **AWARD:** (i) any scholarship, fellowship, prize, grant or bursary; or, (ii) a generic term including any monetary award based on a combination of academic and non-academic criteria for which none of the following terms are appropriate.
- 2.2 **BAHAMAS GOVERNMENT TERTIARY GRANT:** a sum of money given by the Government, of no fixed value, to full-time Bahamian students attending the University.
- 2.3 **COMMON ASSESSMENT MECHANISM:** A standardized tool used by the University to determine the financial need of eligible students.
- 2.4 **COST OF ATTENDANCE:** Estimated cost of attending The University including tuition, fees, books and accommodation.
- 2.5 **COST OF SUBSISTENCE:** Estimated cost of housing & food where a student's home is not on the island where the student is attending.
- 2.6 **ACCOMMODATION GRANT:** Allocation of a maximum of \$500 per month (Fall & Spring semesters only) to students who have moved from another island to attend the University and have met the criteria.
- 2.7 **FAMILY ISLAND STUDENT:** For the purpose of the Bahamas Government Tertiary Grant, a Family Island Student is defined as one who has relocated from a Bahamian Island of domicile to pursue studies at the University of the Bahamas. Also, for the purpose of other scholarships, a Family Island student is defined as a student who graduated high school on a Bahamian island and relocated to New Providence or Grand Bahama to attend University of The Bahamas.

Family Island students who have been residing in New Providence or Grand Bahama for 7 years or more are not eligible for the accommodation grant. Exceptions, however, will be made for persons in the following categories:
 - Students who had to relocate due to hurricane or other natural disasters on their Island.
 - Students who have been awarded a scholarship by the MOE and/or an offer from a private school and had to relocate to New Providence or Grand Bahama to complete high school.
- 2.8 **INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ATHLETES:** students who have been approved by University Athletics and have relocated to New Providence or Grand Bahama from a foreign country.

- 2.9 **INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ATHLETE TUITION WAIVER:** a sum of money given by the University, of no fixed value, to approved full-time international student athletes attending the University
- 2.10 **DEPENDENT APPLICANT:** A dependent applicant is one considered dependent on his/her parent(s) for financial purposes. A student is considered a “dependent” if they can answer “no” to each of the following questions:
- Were you age 25 before January 1 of the year financial assistance is being sought?
 - Are you married?
 - Do you have children, biological or adoptive, who receive more than half of their support from you?
 - Do you have dependents, who currently live with you, other than your biological/adoptive children or Spouse, who receive more than half of their support from you?
 - Are you or were you an emancipated minor as determined by a court of law?
- 2.11. **INDEPENDENT APPLICANT:** An independent applicant is one for whom there is neither parental support nor expectation of such support. If a student is considered independent, he/she is under no obligation to provide his/her parent(s) financial information for Common Assessment Mechanism use. For financial aid purposes a student is considered an “independent applicant” if they can answer “yes” to one or more of the following questions:
- Were you age 25 before January 1 of the year financial aid is being sought?
 - Are you married?
 - Do you have children, biological or adoptive, who receive more than half of their support from you?
 - Do you have dependents, who currently live with you, other than your biological/adoptive children or spouse, and who receive more than half of their support from you?
 - Are you or were you an emancipated minor as determined by a court of law?
 - Do you live independently and are you supported only by your earnings?
- 2.12 **ELIGIBILITY:** The conditions required for the applicant to be considered for financial assistance/scholarship.
- 2.13 **EMERGENCY SUPPORT:** Either a partial or full payment of tuition the University may make in response to a crucial emergency in the life of a student. The student must make a request in writing with submitted proof.
- 2.14 **EXTERNAL AWARD:** An award that is disbursed directly and administered by a non-University agency. These awards are administered, allocated and disbursed by individuals or organizations external to the University, in accordance with their specific parameters, policies and procedures. The accountability and responsibility to report to and communicate with an external sponsor is entirely that of the student. Students must declare all sources of external award funding

as part of their available resources when applying for financial aid for use in the determination of need in the Common Assessment Mechanism.

- 2.15. **FINANCIAL AID:** Financial assistance that is granted a student to supplement the student's effort to pay for University expenses. Financial aid is distributed on the basis of need, as determined by the Common Assessment Mechanism, and is to be distinguished from awards given on the basis of merit.
- 2.16. **FULL-TIME:** to be considered a full-time student or in a full-time programme of study, one must be enrolled in at least twelve (12) credit hours per semester at the undergraduate level.
- 2.17. **SCHOLARSHIP:** a monetary award, normally given to an undergraduate student, based on general academic excellence or on excellence in a specific subject or group of subjects, alone or in combination with financial need, having a fixed minimum value.

3. General Information

- 3.1 The University will seek to ensure that no eligible student (as defined by this Policy) will be prevented from commencing or continuing his or her studies at The University for financial reasons alone.
- 3.2 The University will seek to provide aid for the Summer Sessions, if funds are available.
- 3.3 The University will seek to provide financial aid when all combined sources (family, Government and other sources) do not meet the reasonable costs of a University education.
- 3.4 The formula for calculating aid is progressive; the University will provide the maximum aid grant to the students measured as having the greatest financial need.
- 3.5 The awarding of financial aid at the University will be simple, efficient and applicant friendly.
- 3.6 Financial need may be assessed by the Common Assessment Mechanism where applicable.
- 3.7 The University shall maintain confidentiality with respect to each applicant's personal and academic information.
- 3.8 Prior to the distribution of student awards in any given academic year, the University will establish the total budget based on funded awards, government contribution and any other contribution to the awards budget.

- 3.9 The terms and conditions of awards established by the University will be free of criteria based on personal characteristics such as religion, colour, sex, gender, creed, age, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, or disability.
- 3.10 The Office of Financial Aid & Scholarships will routinely capture data and information on every student and on total aid dollars received and awarded so that data can be analyzed and trends determined over time.
- 3.11 The University recognizes that it must attract and retain academically gifted students that represent the best and the brightest in order to drive programme excellence and quality. The University will strive to offer competitive forms of financial assistance in the form of meritorious scholarships.

Types and Establishments of Awards

- 3.12 **GOVERNMENT TERTIARY GRANT:** These awards are for eligible Bahamian students. It covers tuition and mandatory course fees.
- 3.13 **TEACHER STIPEND:** These are for eligible Teacher Education students who are approved by Ministry of Education and maintain the requisite cumulative GPA.
- 3.14 **NURSING STIPEND:** These are for eligible Nursing students who are approved by the Ministry of Health and maintain the requisite cumulative GPA.
- 3.15 **MERIT AWARDS:** These awards are allocated and distributed according to demonstration of a specific talent or other meritorious criteria in areas such as music, visual or performing arts and athletics.
- 3.16 **NEED-BASED AWARD:** These awards assist student on the basis of demonstrated financial need.
- 3.17 **EMERGENCY SUPPORT:** to help students on an urgent or emergency basis. (Emergency support will be 10% or less of the total approved funding available for the given year). Prospective students must complete a "Student Emergency Support Application.
- 3.18 **ACCOMMODATION GRANT:** to subsidize living expenses for Family Island students who are attending The University at a campus on an island which is not their island of residence. Grants are capped at a maximum value of \$500.00 per semester.
- 3.19 **BOOK AWARD:** To cover the cost of books up to a maximum of \$150 per semester.
- 3.20 **GENERAL CONDITIONS OF ELIGIBILITY FOR FINANCIAL AID**

- A student must be a Bahamian citizen. International student athletes may be eligible for funding.
- Applicant is allowed to obtain more than one award, however, he or she must inform the Office of Financial Aid & Scholarships.
- Have and maintain a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA (exceptions may be considered in extenuating circumstances).
- Student must complete and submit an online application.
- The award will not cover “repeated” courses (exceptions may be considered in extenuating circumstances).
- Applicant must be enrolled in a minimum of 12 credits or equivalent.

3.21 **SPECIFIC CONDITIONS OF ELIGIBILITY: Academic Enhancement Programme, New Students and Continuing Students**

UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME

Given the limited resources for financial aid, priority is given to fund students who gain direct entry into degree programmes. A student who enters the University Academic Enhancement programme will be considered for funding for a maximum of one calendar year, in other words, the completion of two consecutive semesters taking 4 classes each semester.

Eligibility

- a) To be eligible for a Student Aid/Financial Aid, a student must be a Bahamian citizen, unless otherwise specified by the donor. (A passport is used as a form of citizenship).
- b) Applicant must be enrolled in a minimum of four (4) courses or the equivalent of 12 credits. Fewer credits may be accepted if they are at the completion of their programme.
- c) A student must complete and submit an online need-based Financial Aid form.
- d) A percentage is to be determined by a Common Assessment Mechanism.

Conditions Applied

Student must maintain a minimum of “C” average per semester.

Student will not be required to engage in any form of work-study programme.

The award will not cover “repeated” courses (exceptions may be considered in extenuating circumstances).

4.0 NEW STUDENTS: ASSOCIATE DEGREE STUDENTS

Applicant has been admitted for direct entry to a full-time associate degree programme for the first time AND Applicant is seeking financial assistance for a course load of at least twelve (12) credits per semester.

5.0 NEW STUDENTS: BACCALAUREATE DEGREE STUDENTS

Applicant is entering a full-time baccalaureate degree programme for the first time AND Applicant is seeking financial assistance for a course load of at least twelve (12) credits per semester.

6.0 CONTINUING AND RETURNING STUDENTS

- Applicant is seeking financial assistance for a course load of at least twelve (12) credits per semester.
- Applicant is in good academic standing (i.e. has a cumulative grade point average of no less than 2.0)
- If enrolled in an associate degree programme, applicant has not exceeded six (6) years of full-time study OR
- If enrolled in a baccalaureate degree, applicant has not exceeded ten (10) years of full-time study.
- Applicants are allowed to pursue less than the required credits if they are graduating and it is their final semester or year. The request must be made in writing with substantiated proof having checked with their advisors.

7.0 VALUE OF AWARD

7.1 The value of the award will vary in accordance with the following conditions:

- Whether the award is a named award, the value of which has been set in the donor's agreement, regarding funding for student award.
- Whether the award is a merit-based award, the value of which has been set in the terms of the award or
- Whether the award is a need-based award disbursed by the University.

7.2 Need-based awards will carry the value calculated by the Common Assessment Mechanism, taking into account all other awards the student may have received unless there are insufficient funds to meet the demand, in which case the award may be prorated based on the level of need of each applicant.

7.3 In no case will an award be granted that exceeds the cost of attendance at the University.

8.0 CALCULATION OF NEED (where applicable)

8.1 Calculation of need will take into account the following:

Dependent Applicant: for a dependent applicant, the responsibility for payment for attendance at University of The Bahamas is primarily the student's and/or the student's family. Therefore, the University's formula for assessing the financial need of any applicant is dependent on Estimated Family Contribution, that is, a standardized tool used by the University to determine the financial need of eligible students.

Independent Applicant: for an independent applicant, The University shall consider only the student's resources which will be assessed using the same formula.

9.0 CANCELLATION OF AWARDS

- 9.1 Students who reduce their course-load will forfeit part or all of their award in accordance with the calculation of the cost of attending the University. A cancelled award will take the form of a charge against the student's University account. The charge will appear after the last day to withdraw from classes as indicated on the University's Calendar for the semester and year in which the applicant has received financial aid. **The student will be required to immediately settle any outstanding balances with the Business Office.**
- 9.2 Students who wish to change their programme of study must consult the Office of Financial Aid to verify the impact such a change may have on their award. Students who alter their programme of study may forfeit all or part of their award. The decision will be made by the Director, Financial Aid and Scholarships, based on the terms of the award, the circumstances leading to the student's decision and the educational costs already incurred. A cancelled award will take the form of a charge against the student's University account.
- 9.3 During the disbursement period, some students who may have already received financial aid and then are chosen for a private award may have their financial aid reduced in accordance with the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarship's Policy and common assessment mechanism.
- 9.4 Students who submit false information on their application will forfeit their award and will be referred to the Disciplinary Board. The forfeited award will take the form of a charge against the student's University account.

10 ACCOUNTABILITY

The Vice-President, Administrative Services shall provide an Annual report on Financial Aid to be submitted to the University Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees will report to

Government and donors on the use and impact of their support on students at University of The Bahamas.

11 ACCESS TO AWARDS INFORMATION

Applications for awards, supporting documentation such as transcripts and letters of reference, and responses to applications shall be held by the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships. The Director, Financial Aid and Scholarships will provide information to the Office of Development on decisions regarding the names of the scholarship and award holders for the purposes of reporting to donors on their awards.

12 Implementation

The policy will be implemented upon approval by the V.P. Administrative Services and the Administrative Council. Office of Financial Aid & Scholarships will uphold this policy and make the University body aware by posting the policy in the relevant places on the website.

13 History

- a. The history table documents significant changes so that the evolution of the Policy is recorded.

Revision	Date	Changes to Policy/Comments
New	3 rd August, 2021	