

Quick facts for MSU departments about **SCHOLARSHIPS AND PRIZES**

How do departmental scholarships or prizes affect student aid?

Gifts or awards given to students must be counted as a resource against their cost of attendance (COA) and federal law requires the total aid and awards do not exceed the COA. In order not to negatively affect a student's aid package, departments should contact the MSU Office of Financial Aid prior to making an award.

What is counted as a resource?

Resources counted for aid purposes include any funds that are granted to a student by an unrelated third party (private donor, community organization, federal, state, or university department) that are given based upon the student's status as a student and that are intended to assist with educational costs. The only exception are Veteran's Benefits or ROTC Scholarships, which are not counted as resources per federal regulation.

What are standard educational costs?

- Tuition and fees
- Room and board
- Books and supplies
- Personal expenses, including transportation
- Medical allowance for independent undergraduate and all graduate students

What gifts or awards may qualify for special consideration so as not to require a reduction of existing aid?

Gifts or awards meant to cover:

- Tuition and fee costs over the amount included in the standard budget
- Book, supply costs over the amount included in the standard budget
- Transportation costs over the amount included in the budget if required by the student's program (e.g., the student must commute during field work)
- Thesis or dissertation costs or licensing fees
- Immunizations if required for the program (such as medical students)
- Additional medical, dental, or mental health expenses for the student in the aid period which are not covered by insurance or the standard medical allowance in the budget
- Dependent care costs, including child care or elder care costs
- Allowances for students with disabilities
- Study abroad or cooperative education costs
- Computer purchase
- Conferences (if approved by the student's department or college)
- Expenses related to residency relocation
- Interview costs

Contact the Office of Financial Aid with documentation of these special costs to arrange for an increase of the student's COA to accommodate the award.

What resources are not counted against the COA?

- Work earnings (except Work-Study earnings)
- Gifts or prizes won in competitions open to students and non-students alike
- Non-cash prizes that are not items already included in the standard budget.

For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid.