

## 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.

### **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 other than items already included in the standard budget, such as textbooks, computers, etc.

For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid.