Requests for Deferral of Merit Scholarship Awards for Enrolled Students

Policy Background:

While the expectation is that the Richmond Scholar and Presidential merit scholarships will be used in eight consecutive fall and spring terms, scholars enrolled at the University of Richmond might request deferral of their merit scholar award for a variety of reasons including personal development and health and well-being. Student personal and medical leaves can be important tools to help scholarship recipients make the most of the time they spend enrolled and active at UR. At the same time, granting student requests to defer use of scholarship monies from one semester or year to another affects the total pool of funds available for the recruitment of new students each academic year. Therefore, student requests for merit scholarship deferral are considered and reviewed in a systematic, fair, and equitable manner that balances the needs of current students with the ability to benefit future scholarship recipients. Deferrals may be granted to the extent that the resources for the following year are not appreciably impacted.

Student Requests for Deferral:

Students wishing to request a deferral of their merit scholar award should submit an Application for Deferral to the Office of Scholars and Fellowships prior to the semester in which they request to defer. Students requesting deferrals mid-semester should submit the Application for Deferral as soon as feasible, and requests will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The Application for Deferral will be reviewed by the Director and Faculty Director of the Richmond Scholars program. Applications will require students to describe the length, purpose, and rational of the requested deferral and proposed activities during the deferral period. Merit scholarship deferrals are granted for a single semester only; students wishing to defer merit awards for longer periods must submit additional application requests in future terms (note schedule of deadlines for academic year 2020-2021 below).

It is important to note that not every deferral request may be granted based upon current circumstances. Scholarship recipients are encouraged to consult with Office of Scholars & Fellowships staff as they plan their requests. There are two types of deferrals which can be requested: Medical Deferrals and Non-Medical Deferrals. The type of deferral requested should correspond to the type of withdrawal filed with the scholar’s college dean. Information on withdrawing from the university can be found here.

Evaluation Criteria – Deferral during Medical Withdrawals:

Deferral of merit scholarship awards will generally be granted for students taking medical withdrawals provided that the student follows the policies and procedures of the Richmond or Westhampton College Dean’s Offices for requesting the medical withdrawal and re-admission to the University. Scholars must notify the Office of Scholars and Fellowships directly once they have plans to re-enroll.

Evaluation Criteria – Deferral during Non-medical Withdrawals:
Requests for Deferral due to non-medical (personal) withdrawals will typically be evaluated based on the academic or professional merits of the student’s reason for withdrawal and proposed activities during the deferral period using the criteria below. Requests within a given period will be considered relative to one another in terms of these criteria.

1) The Directors will first consider the extent to which a requested deferral would increase access to University of Richmond sponsored educational opportunities. Examples of such situations include instances in which a student’s personal circumstances (e.g., death or illness of a family member) or global conditions beyond the student’s control (e.g., access to instruction for an international student unable to return to the U.S.; study abroad if this experience was cancelled) in a given semester would substantially impact access to UR sponsored opportunities. Student seniority may also be considered in determining the extent to which a deferral would impact access to a University sponsored opportunity.

2) In considering remaining deferral requests, the Directors will next consider the extent to which a deferral would promote access to non-University sponsored educational, professional, or personal opportunities during the period of withdrawal. Examples may include internships, work experience, research opportunities, or other non-UR sponsored educational experiences.

Other Considerations

Merit award recipients should be aware of possible implications of withdrawing from the University in the Fall and re-enrolling in the Spring, including sequencing of courses and housing. Specifically, students cannot be guaranteed on campus housing in the Spring if they withdraw for the Fall semester. This applies to all UR students who defer, even those with merit awards that provide guaranteed or priority housing. Additionally, if housing is not available, students with merit awards covering the cost of on-campus housing will forfeit this benefit for the spring term, as only on-campus housing is included.

Please note that separate Deferral applications are required for each fall and spring term. Applications will be reviewed and decisions will be sent via email to students within two weeks of the application deadline. Student deferrals will be considered binding, and any student granted such deferral will have their merit award removed for the specified term. If a student has changed their mind and would like to withdraw their Application for a Deferral, it must be done within 48 hours of deferral decision notification.

Upcoming Deadlines for 2020-2021 Academic Year

Deadline to submit Application for Deferral for Fall 2020: 9am EST July 13, 2020
Notification of Deferral Decisions: July 24, 2020

Deadline to submit Application for Deferral for Spring 2021: 9am EST December 14, 2020
Notification of Deferral Decisions: December 28, 2020

Please contact scholaroffice@richmond.edu with any questions regarding the deferral policy or application process.