



Requirements and Instructions for Semifinalists in the 2008 National Merit® Scholarship Program

REQUIREMENTS FOR BECOMING A FINALIST

As a Semifinalist named in the fall of 2007, you must advance to Finalist standing before you can be considered for a Merit Scholarship® award to be offered in 2008. You must meet all specified requirements and deadlines, or you will be withdrawn from the competition. To qualify as a Finalist, you must:

1. Continue to meet all program entry requirements (published in the *2006 Official Student Guide to the PSAT/NMSQT*®).
2. Be enrolled full time in the last year of high school and be planning to enroll full time in college in the fall of 2008 **or** be enrolled in the first year of college, if grades 9 through 12 were completed in three years or less.
3. Be a citizen of the United States; or be a U.S. lawful permanent resident (or have applied for permanent residence, the application for which has not been denied) and intend to become a U.S. citizen at the earliest opportunity allowed by law. If you have not yet become a U.S. citizen, see box below.
4. Be fully endorsed for Finalist standing and recommended for a Merit Scholarship award by your high school principal (or school official designated by the principal).
5. Have a record of consistently very high academic performance in **all** of grades 9 through 12 and in any college course work taken. Your school must provide a complete record of high school courses you have taken, grades earned, and course work you will take in grade 12. The school also is to notify NMSC of any noticeable decline in your academic performance during the current year. If you are now in college, high academic performance must continue and must be documented by an official transcript of your record (see instructions on page 2 of this leaflet).
6. Complete all student sections, A through F, of the *Merit Scholarship Application*; by September 14 (or other date set by your school), give the application to your principal or designated school official for completion of the school sections, G through K. The school official then must mail the completed application to NMSC by October 12, 2007.
7. Take the *current* SAT Reasoning Test™ and earn scores that confirm your 2006 PSAT/NMSQT performance. You must take (or have taken) a national administration of the SAT Reasoning Test between October 2005 and December 2007. Also, **it is your responsibility** to file a request with the College Board SAT® Program to have an official report of your SAT scores sent to NMSC (code 0085). See page 2 of this leaflet for detailed information about authorized SAT administrations and score reporting.
8. Provide any additional documentation and information that NMSC requests.

If you have not yet become a U.S. citizen, you must enclose with your completed *Merit Scholarship Application*:

- A letter signed by you explaining your plans for becoming a citizen, including the date on which you expect to be eligible and will apply for U.S. citizenship.

AND

- **If you are a U.S. lawful permanent resident**, a copy of your Permanent Resident Card (Green Card); **or** a copy of your passport including the identity/biographical page and the "I-551" stamp showing that you have been granted lawful permanent resident status.

OR

- **If you have applied for U.S. lawful permanent residence**, a copy of Form I-797 Receipt Notice from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS) that verifies you filed the "Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status" (Form I-485). *Note: Form I-797 Receipt Notice must be received by NMSC on or before January 31, 2008.*

TAKING THE SAT and HAVING YOUR SCORES REPORTED

To become a Finalist, you must confirm your PSAT/NMSQT performance with scores on the SAT Reasoning Test. It is **your sole responsibility** to:

1. take the SAT on a date authorized by NMSC; and
2. request that the College Board SAT Program send an official report of your SAT scores to the National Merit Scholarship Program (**code 0085**).

You can register for the SAT **online** at collegeboard.com or by mail. To register by mail you need a *Registration Booklet* which is available at your school counselor's office. If your high school does not have a copy, telephone the SAT Program to request one (866-756-7346 Domestic or 212-713-7789 International).

The SAT Program will **not** report your scores to NMSC unless you request it, and you cannot substitute a photocopy of the score report sent to you or your school for the official report. Send all testing and score reporting fees directly to the SAT Program.

- **Authorized SAT administrations**

Scores earned on national administrations of the SAT Reasoning Test **from October 2005 through December 2007** will be considered by NMSC. NMSC will not accept scores from a national SAT administration taken earlier than October 2005 or later than December 2007. Your critical reading score, math score, and writing multiple-choice subscore will be the basis for determining whether you meet the confirming score requirement.

- **If you have not yet taken the SAT**

Register NOW to take the SAT on one of the following dates in 2007 and request scores be sent to NMSC (code 0085):

- October 6
- November 3
- December 1

We urge you to take the SAT no later than November 3 and not wait until December.

- **If you have already taken an authorized administration of the SAT**

IMMEDIATELY request that an official score report be sent to NMSC (**code 0085**) by using one of the following services:

1. View and Send Scores at collegeboard.com
OR
2. Automated Telephone Service at 866-756-7346 Domestic or 212-713-7789 International

- **Be sure NMSC is to be sent a report of your SAT scores**

Look at the score report sent to you by the SAT Program to be certain it shows National Merit Scholarship Program (code 0085) as a recipient. If NMSC is not listed, immediately use one of the two methods listed above to request that a score report be sent. This is very important because you will be withdrawn from further consideration in the competition if NMSC does not receive a timely report of your scores from an authorized SAT administration.

SEMIFINALISTS NOW ENROLLED FULL TIME IN COLLEGE

Once you have completed Sections A-F of your *Merit Scholarship Application*, send the entire application to the principal of the high school you last attended. A school official should complete Sections G-K and mail the entire application to NMSC by October 12. If you report a college choice in Section A, it should be the college you plan to attend in 2008-09.

To be considered for Finalist standing, you must meet all requirements specified on page 1 and, immediately after the end of the current term, arrange to have your college send an **official transcript** of all college course work you have taken to Educational Services at NMSC.

COLLEGE CHOICE

College choice is not considered in determining whether a Semifinalist qualifies as a Finalist. However, it is requested because every Merit Scholarship award can only be used for attendance at a college or university in the United States that holds accredited status with a regional accrediting commission on higher education. All National Merit \$2500 Scholarships and almost all corporate-sponsored awards (explained in the accompanying gray leaflet) **are** transferable from one regionally accredited U.S. institution to another, but college-sponsored awards are not (as explained in the next section).

You are asked to report your first-choice college (to which you are applying for admission) in Section A on your *Merit Scholarship Application*. However, if you are undecided, write “undecided” on your application and report your first-choice college to NMSC as soon as possible. You can report your college choice or a change in it by mailing the postcard provided in your *Semifinalist Packet*, or by faxing a copy to NMSC at (847) 866-5113. (The [college choice card](#) is also available on this site.) It is your responsibility to apply and be admitted to the college you plan to attend.

REPORT OF A SPONSOR COLLEGE AS FIRST CHOICE

Consideration for a college-sponsored Merit Scholarship award is limited to Semifinalists who qualify as Finalists and who also

1. report to NMSC that a sponsor college is their first choice (see the list of college sponsors enclosed with your materials);
2. have applied for admission to the sponsor college; and
3. have **not** been offered any Merit Scholarship award (corporate-sponsored, National, or another college-sponsored award). No student will receive more than one scholarship offer from NMSC.

A college-sponsored Merit Scholarship award can be used **only** at the institution financing it and therefore is canceled if the winner changes college choice.

Schedule specific to **college-sponsored** awards:

March 1 through May 31, 2008: A Finalist who has reported a sponsor college as first choice by March 1 will be included in the first group referred to that institution for scholarship consideration. Periodically NMSC will notify sponsors of additional Finalists who have reported (by May 31) the college or university as their first choice.

April 30, 2008: NMSC will begin mailing college-sponsored Merit Scholarship offers.

NOTE: If NMSC receives notification of a change in college choice from a Finalist **after** mailing a college-sponsored Merit Scholarship offer to that student, the Finalist **cannot** be offered another college-sponsored Merit Scholarship award. This applies even if the new choice of college is one that also sponsors Merit Scholarship awards. Therefore, a Finalist who has previously reported a sponsor college as first choice but is uncertain about it may choose to notify NMSC that he/she is now “undecided”; such notification must be **received** at NMSC, via mail or fax (847-866-5113), **before April 30**. The Finalist can subsequently report a firm college choice that NMSC receives by May 31.

May 31, 2008: Deadline date for NMSC to **receive** reports of a sponsor college as first choice. Because it is necessary to end the competition in a timely manner, only college choice reports that NMSC receives by May 31 will be used to identify the final group of candidates to a college or university that sponsors awards.

See the **SCHEDULE** on the reverse.

Schedule and Deadlines for the 2008 Merit Scholarship Competition

2007

- September 12** Names of about 16,000 Semifinalists released to news media by NMSC
- September 14** (or other date set by school) Semifinalists give *Merit Scholarship Application* to the principal or other designated official
- October 12** Schools mail completed *Merit Scholarship Applications* to NMSC
- October 6** SAT administration date
- November 3** SAT administration date
- November 3** Semifinalists who took an earlier authorized administration of SAT should have requested SAT Program to report scores to NMSC (**code 0085**)
- December 1** Last date for Semifinalists to take SAT

2008

- January 20** Selection committees begin choosing Merit Scholarship award winners
- February 1** NMSC mails notification to high school principals about the status of their Semifinalists; a *Certificate of Merit* is provided for each Semifinalist who qualifies as Finalist
- February 8** NMSC notifies Finalists of their status at their home addresses
- March 1** Finalists who have reported a sponsor college as first choice by this date will be included in the first group referred to the institution for scholarship consideration
- March 7** NMSC begins mailing corporate-sponsored Merit Scholarship offers to winners at their home addresses
- March 20** NMSC mails offers of National Merit \$2500 Scholarships
- April 30** NMSC begins mailing offers of college-sponsored Merit Scholarship awards (**see NOTE on page 3**)
- May 31** Deadline for NMSC to **receive** reports of college choice for identifying the final group of candidates for college-sponsored Merit Scholarship awards

NMSC releases announcements of Merit Scholar designees to news media nationwide:

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|---------------------------|---|
| April 16 | Corporate-sponsored Merit Scholarship winners |
| April 30 | National Merit \$2500 Scholarship winners |
| May 28 and July 14 | College-sponsored Merit Scholarship winners |

If you have questions, contact: National Merit Scholarship Corporation, Attn: Educational Services
1560 Sherman Avenue, Suite 200, Evanston, IL 60201-4897 • (847) 866-5161