



STEM SCHOLAR PROGRAM: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Read these carefully BEFORE applying for the STEM Scholars program!

What opportunities are currently available to me in the CSMD S-STEM Scholars program?

College of Southern Maryland has been awarded a 5-year grant by the National Science Foundation (NSF), the S-STEM grant. By applying to the STEM Scholars program you may be eligible for this award. You must be a full-time student intending to pursue a degree in a STEM field.

What is considered a “STEM” field?

A STEM field is any discipline pertaining to science, technology, engineering or mathematics. This includes (but is not limited to) astronomy, biology, chemistry/biochemistry, computer science, engineering, environmental science, geology, mathematics and physics.

What if I want to be a health science professional?

Even though you may be a Nursing, or Physical, Occupational, or Respiratory Therapy student, the NSF considers these to be “health professions”, which makes you ineligible for the STEM Scholars program. These programs are typically supported by NIH and other organizations. However, if you are pre-med, pre-dental, etc. but plan to obtain a biology or chemistry degree for your undergraduate degree before applying to medical, dental, etc., then you may qualify for the scholarship.

If I get into the program and then change my major to a non-STEM degree, what will happen? You will no longer be eligible for the program or scholarships.

Is there a necessary SAT/ACT score to be eligible for the program?

No, but this score may be one of the criteria used to determine your academic potential.

Benefits of the program

As a STEM Scholar at CSMD, you will receive extensive support services and an opportunity to participate in paid undergraduate research through the S-STEM Grant.

STEM Scholars will also have the chance to explore various STEM career options, interact with experienced professionals in STEM fields, travel to professional STEM-related research conferences and participate in a paid undergraduate research opportunity or internship with faculty mentors. Additional benefits include academic advising and mentoring, peer and professional tutoring, participation in the CSMD Summer Bridge Pre-College Program, university visits and transfer preparation.

The S-STEM program supports the National Science Foundation's strategic goal to help create a diverse, competitive, and globally engaged U.S. workforce of scientists, engineers, technologists, and well-prepared citizens.

What is the S-STEM Scholarship?

The S-STEM Scholarship is a grant provided by the National Science Foundation (NSF) to the College of Southern Maryland that allows CSMD to provide eligible students with scholarships that last the duration of their two-year associate's degree. Students awarded the S-STEM scholarship at CSMD who transfer to pursue a bachelor's degree program in the STEM field at other institutions will be eligible (preferred but not guaranteed) for an S-STEM scholarship (covering tuition and fees). These scholarships are awarded to academically talented, low-income students intending to pursue a STEM career.

What are the eligibility requirements for S-STEM?

- You must be a full-time CSMD student.
- You must be planning on going into a STEM field (astronomy, biology, chemistry/biochemistry, computer science, engineering, environmental science, geology, mathematics or physics).
- Due to NSF requirements, clinical and health-science majors such as nursing, medicine, and dentistry, as well as K-12 education are excluded from this award.
- Must show evidence of academic potential from high school and maintain a 3.0 or higher GPA while at CSMD
- Must be a US citizen or legal resident (as defined on the STEM Scholars application).
- Must show financial need (see below for further detail on this) (*S-STEM only*)

Students from underrepresented minority populations (African American, Alaskan Native, American Indian/Native American, Hispanic, Native Hawaiian, and Native Pacific Islander) are encouraged to apply.

What if I am an international student?

The NSF only allows this scholarship to be awarded to US citizens and legal residents (as defined on the STEM Scholars application).

What does it mean to have to "show financial need"?

To meet these criteria a student must demonstrate Pell eligibility. You will need to complete a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) as part of your application process so this can be determined.

If I already receive other forms of financial aid, how will getting the S-STEM scholarship affect those awards?

This scholarship can be *added* to the other scholarships and/or other grant funding such as Pell.

What are my requirements if I get awarded the S-STEM scholarship?

You will need to maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher while attending CSMD. You will need to show continued financial need and remain a STEM major. You will also be required to attend and participate in events that assist in furthering your academic and professional achievement.

What are the benefits of the S-STEM scholarship?

- Scholarships covering tuition and required course materials will be awarded on an ongoing basis for up to 2 consecutive years as long as you meet the financial need requirements and other eligibility criteria.

For more information check out STEM Scholars at: <https://www.csmd.edu/costs-aid/scholarships-financial-aid/scholarships/stem-scholars.html>

- This scholarship can be added to other scholarships & grant funding (such as Pell).
- You will be given opportunities for involvement in undergraduate research, career counseling, peer and professional tutoring, internships, and other academic activities.

Will having a job or planning to keep a job affect my chance of being awarded an S-STEM scholarship?

No, but this scholarship is intended to help you work less so that you can study more. We strongly recommend you reduce your work hours as much as possible if awarded this scholarship.

If for any reason I need to transfer to another school, will my S-STEM scholarship go with me?

No, it will not. Students awarded the S-STEM scholarship at CSMD who transfer to other institutions to pursue a bachelor's degree program in STEM will be eligible (preferred but not guaranteed) for an S-STEM scholarship (covering tuition and fees).

Who should I ask for a recommendation letter?

You can ask for a letter from a high school teacher (STEM teacher preferred), counselor/advisor or a current professor from one of your classes at CSMD. The more recently the teacher or professor has had you in their class, the better for the purposes of the letter. Have your letter writer send their letter directly to the STEM Scholars program committee; the email address is on the recommendation letter form.

Where do I get the recommendation letter form?

A PDF of the recommendation letter can be printed off from the link on the application form.