



Frequently Asked Questions about the AIMS Scholarship

- **How do I know if I am eligible for the AIMS Scholarship?**

Your High School Guidance Counselor will notify you of your eligibility for the AIMS Scholarship. If you are identified as an AIMS Scholar, you will be invited to attend the MECC AIMS Recognition Ceremony and Luncheon held each year in early May. If you are enrolled in classes (or working on community services requirements) required during your final semester of high school, your eligibility will be confirmed upon review of your final transcript.

In order to qualify for the AIMS Scholarship, a high school student must:

- Achieve grades of at least a "C" or better in each of the required high school courses
- Maintain a 95% school attendance rate from grades 9-12. (No more than 36 days missed).
- Have no out of school suspensions.
- Complete 20 hours of community service before high school graduation.
- Attend MECC full-time beginning with the Fall semester immediately following high school graduation and maintain full-time status each Fall and Spring semester until completion of the AIMS program.
- All requirements must be met by the date of high school graduation.

- **Why am I required to complete the FAFSA and how do I do it?**

The AIMS Scholarship is currently primarily funded by the Virginia Tobacco Commission. It is considered to be a "last dollar" scholarship – meaning that your eligibility for other aid must be established and that aid should be used first to cover your tuition and fees at MECC. Federal and state funds will always be used to cover tuition and fees at MECC before AIMS funds are utilized.

The FAFSA can be completed online at www.fafsa.gov. In addition, Financial Aid office staff are available to assist you with completion on this application. Additional documentation may be requested by the Financial Aid Office if necessary. Submission of the requested documentation is a requirement in order to receive federal/state aid and the AIMS Scholarship.

Failure to complete the FAFSA will result in the loss of your AIMS Scholarship.

- **I decided at the last minute to attend MECC in the Fall after high school graduation. I am an AIMS Scholar but I did not submit my MECC application by the April 15th deadline. Can I still apply for the AIMS Scholarship?**

Yes, we recognize that some students make a last minute decision to change their college choice. If you are an eligible AIMS Scholar, please drop by the Enrollment Services Office, located in Godwin Hall at Window #5 to complete an application.

- **How does the AIMS Scholarship work with other financial aid?**

The AIMS Scholarship is designed to guarantee that an AIMS Scholar will not have to pay any tuition or fees while completing their degree at MECC. This is done by filling in “gaps” that regular financial aid does not cover.

Financial situations are different for each student. Some common examples of how AIMS works for different students are noted below:

Example 1: A student does not qualify for any federal/state aid based on their FAFSA application. This student is considered a “no need” student. In this situation, the student would have to pay all tuition/fees out of pocket while attending MECC if they do not have the AIMS Scholarship. Because the student is an AIMS Scholar, the scholarship will pay 100% of the student’s tuition and fees as long as the student maintains eligibility requirements. The student will purchase books with personal funds.

Tuition/Fees = \$1668.00 for 12 semester credits
Federal/State Aid Available Based on FAFSA = \$0.00
Amount paid by the AIMS Scholarship = \$1668.00
Amount refunded to student mid-term = \$0.00

Example 2: A student qualifies for full federal/state aid based on their FAFSA application. This student is considered a “high need” student. In this situation, a student will receive enough federal and state aid to cover their tuition, fees and most likely their books. They will even have funds remaining after all of those expenses are covered. The remaining balance is refunded to the student approximately mid-way through the semester. Because the AIMS Scholar has received enough aid to cover their tuition/fees, the AIMS Scholarship will not add any additional funds. The student will remain coded as an AIMS Scholar for tracking purposes in order to receive the scholarship upon transfer to UVA-Wise. The student will receive enough federal/state aid to purchase books.

Tuition/Fees = \$1668.00 for 12 semester credits
Federal/State Aid Available Based on FAFSA = \$3000.00
Amount paid by the AIMS Scholarship = \$0.00
Amount refunded to student mid-term = \$1332.00 – cost of books charged at MECC bookstore

Example 3: A student qualifies for some federal/state aid but not enough to cover full tuition and fees based on their FAFSA application. The AIMS Scholarship will cover the difference in the cost of tuition/fees and the amount of federal/state aid received. The student will purchase books with personal funds.

Tuition/Fees = \$1668.00 for 12 semester credits
Federal/State Aid Available Based on FAFSA = 1000.00
Amount paid by the AIMS Scholarship = \$668.00
Amount refunded to student mid-term = \$0.00

- **What if I receive an external scholarship in addition to the AIMS Scholarship?**

At present time, students who receive external scholarships in addition to AIMS will not see a deduction in their AIMS award based on the scholarship. For example, if a student receives a \$500 scholarship from a local agency, the funds will be placed in the student's financial aid account. The student's tuition/fees will be covered by federal/state/AIMS funds. The student will still need to purchase their books out of pocket. The \$500 scholarship funds will be split between fall and spring terms (\$250/each semester) and the student will receive a refund check for the scholarship amount mid-semester.

Example 1:

Tuition/Fees = \$1668.00 for 12 semester credits
Federal/State Aid Available Based on FAFSA = \$1000.00
External Scholarship award received = \$250.00/semester (\$500.00 annual award)
Amount paid by the AIMS Scholarship = \$668.00
Amount refunded to student mid-term = \$250.00

Example 2:

Tuition/Fees = \$1668.00 for 12 semester credits
Federal/State Aid Available Based on FAFSA = \$3000.00
External Scholarship award received = \$250.00/semester (\$500.00 annual award)
Amount paid by the AIMS Scholarship = \$0.00
Amount refunded to student mid-term = \$1582.00 – cost of books charged at MECC bookstore

- **What if I receive another MECC scholarship?**

If a student receives an MECC Foundation Scholarship, this is considered to be an internal award and the scholarship funds will be used to cover the student's tuition and fees before the AIMS funds from the Tobacco Commission will be utilized. If a student's tuition and fees have been covered by federal/state/Foundation funds and there is any surplus remaining, the student will receive a refund check mid-term.

Tuition/Fees = \$1668.00 for 12 semester credits
Federal/State Aid Available Based on FAFSA = \$1000.00
MECC Scholarship award received = \$250.00/semester (\$500.00 annual award)
Amount paid by the AIMS Scholarship = \$418.00
Amount refunded to student mid-term = \$0.00

- **Does the AIMS Scholarship cover book costs at MECC?**

No. The AIMS Scholarship only guarantees that the student will not pay any tuition or fees. Students are still responsible for book costs.

- **I did not maintain the requirements for AIMS during a semester (i.e., did not maintain 2.0 semester or cumulative GPA, did not enroll in at least 12 credit hours or did not complete the FAFSA). Can I appeal to get the AIMS Scholarship reestablished?**

No. There is no appeal process for the AIMS Scholarship. Once the student has failed to meet the requirements for the AIMS Scholarship, the student is no longer eligible to receive the scholarship at MECC or UVA-Wise.

- **I wish to attend for the Summer term. Will AIMS cover my tuition/fees?**

AIMS scholars are currently eligible for funds during the Summer term. Summer coverage is subject to change year to year based on available funds.

Students who are AIMS Scholars and who attend summer classes are still required to maintain the 2.0 semester and cumulative GPA requirements during summer term to maintain the scholarship.

- **Can I apply for, and receive, AIMS and Tobacco Settlement scholarships at the same time?**

No. The AIMS Scholarship and the Tobacco Settlement Scholarship is funded from the same source. You cannot receive both awards during the same semester.

- **I plan to transfer to UVA-Wise as an AIMS Scholar. What should I know now?**

In order to transfer to UVA-Wise with the AIMS Scholar, a student must be in an Associate of Arts & Sciences program of study. Only AAS transfer degree students are eligible for the AIMS Scholarship at UVA-Wise. For additional information and to confirm your degree eligibility for transfer to UVA-Wise, please contact Beth Boggs, Career and Transfer Counselor in MECC's Office of Student Services.

- **Is the AIMS Scholarship transferable to schools other than UVA-Wise?**

No. At present time, UVA-Wise is the only partner school for the AIMS Scholarship.

- **Does the AIMS Scholarship pay both tuition and fees at UVA-Wise once I have completed my transfer degree at MECC and am ready to transfer?**

No. The AIMS Scholars program at UVA-Wise covers tuition only. For additional information about the AIMS program at UVA-Wise, please contact the UVA-Wise Admissions Office.

- **Who can I contact for additional questions regarding the AIMS Scholarship?**

Please contact Willie Harris, MECC Recruiter at wprice@mecc.edu or 276/523-2400 ext. 321.