

SCHOLARSHIP POLICY AND PROCEDURE		POLICY NUMBER: CUE-FS001
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THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN ERBIL

Scholarship Policy and Procedure

Contents

I. DOCUMENT TYPE	2
II. PURPOSE	2
III. SCOPE	2
IV. POLICY STATEMENT	2
V. DEFINITIONS	2
VI. POLICY PRINCIPLES	2
VII. SCHOLARSHIP SOURCING	5
VIII. MONITORING AND REPORTING	6
IX. POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND AUTHORIZING PARTIES	7

I. DOCUMENT TYPE

☒ Policy

☒ Procedures

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the requirements and processes for the administration of scholarships to students at the Catholic University in Erbil (CUE).

III. SCOPE

☒ University-Wide OR ☐ Departmental Specify Department(s): _____

This policy applies to all students at CUE and employees involved in the establishment and administration of scholarships

IV. POLICY STATEMENT

CUE is committed to ensuring financial accessibility for students of all backgrounds through its scholarship program. The policy ensures fairness, transparency, and accountability in scholarship allocation and reporting. It establishes clear guidelines for scholarship eligibility, application, selection, and funding sources to support student success.

V. DEFINITIONS

Appeals – A formal request for reconsideration of a decision related to scholarship eligibility, award amount, renewal, or termination. Appeals are typically submitted by applicants or recipients who believe there are unforeseen or exceptional situations beyond a student's control, errors, or new information that justify a review of the initial decision.

MHE - Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research of the Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq.

Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) Office - The office responsible for assessing the effectiveness, transparency, and impact of the scholarship program through continuous monitoring and reporting.

Scholarship - A financial award granted to students based on academic merit and financial need, covering full or partial tuition fees.

Scholarship Committee - A designated group responsible for reviewing applications, evaluating eligibility, and making final decisions regarding scholarship awards and renewals.

Student Scholarship Agreement - A formal contract between the scholarship recipient and the University outlining the conditions and expectations for maintaining the scholarship.

Vulnerability Status - The socioeconomic condition of a student, including but not limited to financial hardship, displacement, or other circumstances that may affect their ability to afford higher education.

VI. POLICY PRINCIPLES

1. Promotion and Outreach

Scholarship seats from different donors will be posted at the beginning of each academic year on the CUE website and relevant social media. CUE conducts outreach through visits throughout the Kurdistan Region, school visits, and student visits to the University.

2. Eligibility Requirements

Scholarship eligibility is determined through a combination of academic merit and vulnerability status.

- a) Academic merit
 - i) Academic merit is calculated based on the following consideration for each department: $20/[(100 - \text{Department minimum grade})/(\text{Student average degree} - \text{Department Average degree})]$.
 - ii) Students applying for scholarship programs must take the English Placement Test (EPT) in order to demonstrate their English proficiency. This test assigns a score out of 15, with a minimum score of 1 for A1-level proficiency and a maximum score of 15 for C1-level proficiency (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). Students do not need to meet a minimum score for eligibility.
 - iii) Applicants are required to submit a motivation letter that highlights their commitment to excellence beyond academics.
- b) Vulnerability status
 - i) A scoring system, found in Appendix I, is used to determine vulnerability status. This score reflects the following:
 - 1) Residency status
 - 2) Average family size
 - 3) House ownership at the household level
 - 4) Family livelihood source of income (Primary and Secondary)
 - 5) Family Income
 - 6) Vulnerabilities at the household level (disability, head of household, sex, minority, etc.)
- c) Donor-specific eligibility requirements are outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the donor and CUE.

3. Application Procedures

- a) CUE tracks all of the following information within the scoring system found in Appendix I.
- b) CUE uses a digitized system (<https://admissions.cue.edu.krd/>) for the application registration and selection process. The Scholarship Committee, along with the MEAL Office, identifies and verifies data received in the system.
 - i) Students visit the University to apply for admission and a scholarship simultaneously.
 - ii) During the student's visit, the Scholarship Office works with them in order to fill in academic merit and vulnerability status information via the application site linked above.
 - iii) The Scholarship Office adds academic merit and demographic information to the scoring system.
 - iv) Once the student has been admitted to the University, they take the EPT. This score is added to the scoring system.
 - v) Students submit a motivation letter. This letter should demonstrate the applicant's skills, experiences, and talents in areas such as leadership, communication, extracurricular involvement, or other personal achievements. The motivation letter must be written independently, without the use of AI or automated assistance, ensuring authenticity and originality in the applicant's personal expression. The letter can be written in English, Arabic, or Kurdish. The letter will be evaluated by the Scholarship Committee as an integral part of the selection criteria, with a maximum of five (5) additional points awarded to the applicant's total score. This score is added to the scoring system.
 - vi) Students who receive a certain score, which differs each year depending on the average that year and the number of scholarship seats available, will not be given a scholarship and thus not continue past this point.
 - vii) Students who continue are given an interview by the Scholarship Office to validate information collected in the admission process.

4. Selection Process

- a) The selection of each student is based on the final scoring generated by the scoring system, which includes all academic merit and vulnerability status information, along with their EPT and motivation letter scores. The Scholarship Office presents scores to the Scholarship Committee, who assures eligible students are selected to fill available seats as per the criteria set previously.
- b) Students will fall into three categories:
 - i) Paying student - a student who receives 20% or less off of their tuition.
 - ii) Partial scholarship - Students who receive discounted tuition fees between 20% and 99%.
 - iii) Full scholarship - Students who receive a discount rate of 100%.
- c) Selected applicants will be informed of their award via phone call or email, and then have five (5) days to accept the award. Those who do not will forfeit their award.

5. Expectations for Continued Scholarship

- a) Once selected, students must sign the Student Scholarship Agreement, found in Appendix II, which holds them to the following requirements to maintain their scholarship:
 - i) Maintain full-time enrollment until the completion of their course of study.
 - ii) Maintain regular and punctual class attendance.
 - iii) Complete all required coursework.
 - iv) Maintain a cumulative average grade at or above 60%.
 - v) Actively participate in curricular and extracurricular activities, achieved by receiving two green tickets (for social events), two blue tickets (for academic events), and two grey tickets (for volunteer activities).
 - vi) Maintain good standing with academic and administrative staff and comply with all rules and regulations listed in the Student Code of Conduct and any issued by MHE.
 - vii) Undertake all reporting obligations required by the donor.
 - viii) Attend an English language course or English-based activities as per University direction throughout the academic year and over the summer if required.
- b) Any violation of these requirements will be subject to the provisions of the scholarship contract. Should a student be dismissed from their scholarship contract, they shall refund to CUE all the expenses and financial provisions granted to them up to the date of dismissal. An overall grade between 55% and less than 60% in an academic year will reduce the student's scholarship by 25% for the following academic year. A passing grade of less than 55% will reduce the scholarship by 50% for the following academic year. If the student violates the Academic Standing Policy and is suspended or dismissed as a penalty for their misbehavior, the scholarship will be dismissed, as they did not pass in the academic year.
- c) If the scholarship awardee discontinues their studies for reasons beyond their control, such as serious illness, an official health report shall be provided to enable the scholarship grant to be dismissed without taking back the final expenses that are duly on the scholarship awardee. If any dispute occurs between the two parties and the issue is not resolved peacefully within a period of 30 days, both parties have the right to resort to the law to resolve the dispute (Iraqi Law No. 40 of 1951).
- d) If the scholarship awardee withdraws from the University, they will be required to refund the University the amount granted to them up to that date.

6. Renewal

- a) Scholarships at CUE are subject to annual review. Renewal is not automatic and is contingent upon the availability of funds, the recipient's academic performance, and adherence to their Student Scholarship Agreement. The Scholarship Committee will review each recipient's performance at the end of the academic year to determine eligibility for renewal.
- b) Renewal Process:
 - i) The Scholarship Committee, in coordination with the MEAL Office, will assess each recipient's academic performance and adherence to their Student Scholarship Agreement.

- ii) Students meeting renewal criteria will receive formal confirmation of their scholarship renewal.
- iii) Students failing to meet academic or conduct standards may lose their scholarship. The University, in consultation with donors, may reassign the scholarship to another eligible student.
- c) Changes in Donor Funding
 - i) If donor funding is reduced or withdrawn, affected students will be notified before the start of the next academic term.
 - ii) In cases of partial funding availability, CUE may provide adjusted scholarship support instead of full discontinuation.

7. Disbursement

- a) The scholarship amount granted to each student is directly applied to their tuition fees based on the following procedures:
 - i) Tuition Fee Reduction
 - 1) Scholarships are applied as a direct reduction to the student's tuition fees before the payment deadline for each academic year.
 - 2) The Finance Office, in coordination with the Scholarship Office, ensures the correct deduction is made based on the awarded scholarship percentage.
 - ii) Refunds for Tuition Paid before Scholarship Award
 - 1) If a scholarship is awarded after the student has paid tuition, the student will be refunded in accordance with the Tuition, Fees, and Refund Policy. The refund amount will match the scholarship coverage and be processed per the university's financial procedures.
 - iii) Stipend
 - 1) Some scholarships, based on donor agreements, are given as stipends that may be applied to tuition fees, as well as housing or other expenses.

8. Appeals

- a) Students who wish to appeal scholarship decisions may visit the Scholarship Office to fill out an appeal form, found in Appendix III. The Scholarship Office will coordinate with the Scholarship Committee to provide a decision within 30 days. Students will receive written responses outlining the decisions and justifications. All appeal decisions are final and not subject to further review.

VII. SCHOLARSHIP SOURCING

- 1. CUE ensures the sustainability of its scholarship programs through diverse funding sources, including but not limited to:
 - a) University budget allocation: a form of institutional financial support where CUE grants percentage-based tuition fee discounts to students for an academic year. These discounts are provided based on specific considerations, such as financial accessibility initiatives, university policies, or other discretionary decisions made to support students in their academic journey.
 - b) External Donors: scholarships funded by private individuals, philanthropic organizations, or foundations. These scholarships are typically merit- or need-based and operate independently from institutionally sponsored or government funding, often supporting students in alignment with the donor's mission or advocacy.
 - c) Government and International Grants: financial assistance provided by national or international governments or organizations to support education, research, or capacity-building initiatives. These grants often involve competitive application processes aimed at fostering academic excellence, promoting socioeconomic development, or strengthening global partnerships in education.

- d) Sponsored programs: scholarship opportunities funded by external entities, such as organizations, institutions, corporations, or private donors, to support students' tuition fees. These programs may have specific eligibility requirements, reporting obligations, or conditions set by the sponsoring entity with their funding objectives.
- 2. Funds are allocated with transparency, ensuring alignment with the University's strategic objectives and financial policies.

VIII. MONITORING AND REPORTING

1. The Catholic University in Erbil will monitor the ongoing progress of scholarship holders in their academic merit for the fall and spring semesters. The monitoring will be carried out by the Scholarship Office, which will be working towards achieving the overall objective of the program. In addition, the Scholarship Office will conduct a process review monitoring every semester with the Quality Assurance Office (QA), pertinent faculty members, and Deans and/or Heads of Departments (HODs) to review the progress of the scholars.
2. CUE will report any required information to scholarship donors at the end of the first semester and at the end of the academic year. All reports will adhere to internal privacy and confidentiality standards and donor requirements. CUE reserves the right to exclude sensitive financial or academic data unless formal consent is provided or it is contractually required. The following are standard donor requirements for reporting.
3. End of first semester:
 - a) Narrative Report – A general update on program progress, highlighting student engagement and participation.
 - b) Student Feedback Summary – A collection of student essays, testimonials, or success stories.
 - c) List of Student IDs – A confidential list identifying all scholarship recipients by student ID only.
 - d) Signature Sheets – List of students signed by scholarship recipients, with or without any indication of academic averages.
4. End of academic year:
 - a) Narrative Report – A brief year-end summary outlining academic and extracurricular progress, student development, and scholarship impact.
 - b) Student Feedback Summary – Compiled essays or reflections from students on their academic journey and personal growth.
 - c) List of Student IDs – Updated list confirming continued enrollment and participation.
 - d) Signature Sheets – List of students signed by scholarship recipients, with final academic averages if authorized by the donor.
 - e) Group and Individual Photos – Documentation for donor visibility (shared only if permission is granted by the students).
 - f) Academic Performance Overview – Summary tables of students' grades and progression (without individual transcripts unless explicitly required).
 - g) Failed Student Feedback – Reflection reports from students who did not meet renewal criteria (shared only if donor stipulates).
 - h) Administrative Endorsement – A brief academic summary or endorsement letter signed by the CUE President or Chief Academic Officer.
5. Optional:
 - a) Financial Report – A summary statement prepared by the CUE Finance Office for the Academic Year, outlining the University's financial context. This financial background is provided only if explicitly requested by the donor.

IX. POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND AUTHORIZING PARTIES

1. Owned by: FA, May-18 2025
2. Reviewed by: Policy and Procedure Review Committee, May-18 2025

3. Reviewed by: President's Cabinet, Feb-26 2026
4. Reviewed and Approved by:

APPENDIX I - SCORING SYSTEM

APPENDIX II - STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP AGREEMENT

APPENDIX III - SCHOLARSHIP APPEAL FORM