

Guidelines for the 2021-2022 Graduate Student State Scholarship program:

1. **Scholarships should be offered, after demonstrating eligibility through FAFSA, in the amount of \$8000 per student.**
 - Scholarships cannot be divided into smaller amounts to create additional awards.
2. **Colleges distribute the awards to graduate programs at their discretion.**
 - Colleges should communicate the distribution to The Graduate School once this has been determined.
 - Programs are then free to offer scholarships to students who meet the eligibility guidelines and program-specific criteria as outlined below.
3. **Students must complete a FAFSA to be eligible for consideration for an award.**
 - Students are eligible only upon the demonstration of financial need.
 - Programs should actively encourage all applicants to complete the FAFSA.
 - FAFSA eligibility will be determined beginning in mid-March.
4. **International students are not eligible.**
 - Since international students cannot demonstrate need through the FAFSA process, they are ineligible.
5. **Awardees must qualify as full-time graduate students.**
 - Students who drop below full-time status will forfeit the scholarship.
6. **Scholarships cannot be offered to students who have been awarded Graduate Assistantships.**
 - Likewise, any student who accepts a scholarship and who subsequently accepts a Graduate Assistantship will forfeit the scholarship.
7. **Questions regarding eligibility (in general or for specific students) should be directed to the respective Graduate Program Director that has received the GSSA allocation.**
8. **Scholarship funds are disbursed evenly over Fall and Spring terms.**
9. **These scholarships are not renewable.**
 - Funding comes from a single-year Commonwealth Grant rather than an annual JMU budget source.
 - This funding may or may not be available in subsequent years.
10. **Programs that offer scholarships must articulate the criteria that will be used to choose recipients among those applicants who meet the basic eligibility requirements above (criteria from last year's allocations to specific programs will be provided from last academic year to be reviewed and approved by Dean and/or departmental designee).**
 - *These criteria must be submitted to The Graduate School prior to making offers.*
 - TGS strongly encourages programs to offer scholarships to the strongest applicants who are not awarded assistantships. The manner in which programs determine the "strongest applicants" (e.g. test scores, undergraduate GPA, additional essay, overall quality of application, etc.) is all that needs to be included in the criteria statement.
11. **Scholarships should be offered simultaneously with offers for acceptance into programs or as soon after admission as possible.**
12. **Offer letters must include mandatory language (see below) and the "Award Recipient Acknowledgement Form."**
 - Language for offer letters is below.
 - The form will be distributed by TGS to programs when they are prepared to make offers.
 - Forms must be signed and returned before the award can be finalized.

Mandatory verbiage for offer letters:

We are pleased to offer you an \$8,000 Graduate Student State Scholarship for your first year at JMU. Students must enroll full-time and demonstrate financial need to qualify for this one-time non-renewable award. Please submit your Free Application for Federal Student Aid if you have not already done so. Students cannot receive this scholarship in combination with a Graduate Assistantship. Please see the enclosed acknowledgment form for more information. Sign and return the acknowledgment form alongside acceptance of your admissions offer.