



# Scholarship and Financial Aid Management Policy

## POLICY INFORMATION

**Policy Number:** ADM.01.04

**Policy Category:** Administrative

**Section:** Office of the Executive Vice President

**Responsible Executive:** Executive Vice President (EVP)

**Originally Issued Date:** 14 July 2025

**Last Date Revised:**

**Effective Date:** 01 January 2026

## 1. POLICY STATEMENT

Bethlehem University (BU or University) is committed to fostering an inclusive educational environment by providing financial support to students who demonstrate academic potential and financial need. To uphold this commitment, a dedicated committee, "Scholarship and Financial Aid Committee" (SFAC or the Committee), oversees all aspects of scholarship and financial aid distribution, ensuring equity, accountability, and alignment with the University's mission. The Committee comprises the specialized representatives from relevant University departments, ensuring diverse perspectives and expertise in financial management, academic affairs, and student support. The Committee will be composed as follows:

1. Executive Vice President (Committee Chairman),
2. A representative of the Advancement office (Nominated by the Vice President for Advancement),
3. One Faculty Dean or Academic Chairperson, nominated by the EVP,
4. Students Finance Unit Representative (Nominated by the Vice President for Finance),
5. Representative from the Scholarships and Financial Aid Department, nominated by the EVP,
6. University Coordinator responsible for the Ministry of Higher Education "Student Loan Fund" (SLF) Program in the Deanship of Students Affairs,
7. The Head of the Students' Senate (Only for the discussion of the needy students' fund).

The Committee's operations and decisions shall be guided by the following principles:

1. **Financial Need-Based Allocation:** Priority shall be given to students demonstrating verifiable financial need, ensuring that economic barriers do not impede access to quality education.
2. **Merit and Potential:** While need-based, scholarships may also consider academic merit, leadership potential, extracurricular involvement, and other qualities that align with the scholarship's specific objectives and the University's values.
3. **Transparency and Fairness:** All application processes, eligibility criteria, and selection decisions shall be clearly communicated, objective, and free from bias, ensuring equal opportunity for all eligible applicants. Students shall be entitled to reviewing the justification for application rejection and this should be stated using the best means possible.



4. **Confidentiality:** All personal and financial information submitted by applicants shall be treated with the utmost confidentiality and used solely for the purpose of scholarship assessment.
5. **Sustainability:** Decisions regarding scholarship allocation shall consider the long-term sustainability of the University's financial aid programs and donor relations.
6. **Compliance:** All scholarship and financial aid processes shall comply with relevant University policies, regulations, and donor agreements.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

**Admitted Student Questionnaire (ASQ)** is the required questionnaire that is available on MyBU portal which all newly admitted students must complete before they are able to access their course schedule and is also necessary to complete before one may request financial assistance for tuition and fees.

**Bloomerang** refers to the University's Constituent Relationship Management (CRM) system which includes, among other information, donation records of as well as communication with benefactors, MoUs, etc.

**Financial Aid** refers to a form of financial support or 'tuition waiver' given to a student against agreed upon terms and conditions as determined by the agreed criteria outlined herein and/or other applicable policies of the University.

**Scholarships and Financial Aid Department** is the unit that assists students with information about scholarships and financial aid opportunities – and administers the Financial Aid Application, assisting students in completing this application – and engaging students who received financial assistance and scholarships to assist them in writing letters of appreciation and/or videos to the donors. This unit reports to the Executive Vice President.

**Scholarship** refers to financial support that is given to a student on the basis of merit or other factors as determined by the agreed criteria outlined herein and/or other applicable policies of the University, whether funded by the University or any external party.

**Scholarship and Financial Aid Committee (SFAC)** comprises representatives from relevant University departments, ensuring diverse perspectives and expertise in financial management, academic affairs, and student support.

**SLF Program** refers to a sum of money provided by the Student Loan Fund (SLF) within the Ministry of Higher Education to students of Palestinian universities, covering a portion of the student's university tuition.

**Student** is any person enrolled in a program of study at Bethlehem University that permits the award of scholarships.

## 3. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

This policy establishes the framework for the creation and operation of the University Scholarship and Financial Aid Committee (SFAC). Its primary purpose is to ensure a fair, transparent, and effective process for the allocation and distribution of scholarships and financial aid to deserving students, particularly those demonstrating significant financial need, thereby promoting access to education and student success. It governs the composition, responsibilities, and guiding principles of the Scholarship and Financial Aid Committee



## 4. APPLICATION / SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees who award University scholarships or financial aids to University students. It applies to all University-administered scholarships, grants, and financial aid programs intended for students at all undergraduate academic levels, excluding those managed by specific academic departments that are covered by specific grants and covering students attending certain programs as per the stipulation of the fund provider and following the grant guidelines. These grants sometimes cover graduate and/or diploma students.

## 5. STATEMENT OF ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

### 1. The Scholarship and Financial Aid Committee (SFAC):

- a. Serves as the primary decision-making body for the awarding of scholarships and financial aid with transparency, accountability, and in alignment with donor intent and University policy.
- b. Reviews student applications and eligibility results submitted through the Student Financial Aid Department (SFAD) to determine awards for University scholarships.
- c. Ensures equitable and transparent distribution of available scholarship funds based on established scholarship criteria.
- d. Coordinates an appropriate annual timetable for the selection and notification of scholarship recipients.
- e. Recommends to the Vice Chancellor through the Executive Council adjustments to scholarship policies and procedures as needed.
- f. Keeps a documented record of the Committee sessions, discussions and decisions.
- g. Reports on scholarship utilization and impact to relevant University authorities, including, but not limited to: the Finance VP, the Academic VP, the Advancement VP, the Vice Chancellor.
- h. Informs the Students Finance Unit of approved financial aid and scholarship awards (e.g., student number, amounts granted, and source of funds).
- i. Reconciles reports presented by the Students Finance Unit with the approved scholarships to make sure that the scholarships entered match those agreed upon by the Committee.

### 2. The Scholarships and Financial Aid Department (SFAD):

- a. Manages the student financial aid and scholarship application process and communication with applicants - noting that the Admitted Student Questionnaire (ASQ) must be completed before having access to the Financial Aid Application (FAA).
- b. Publicizes available scholarships and financial aid opportunities excluding the SLF program that resides under the Deanship of Student Affairs, as stated in Article (6.1) of this policy.
- c. Assists students in completing the FAA – informs students if application is incomplete – and confirms with the student when application is complete.
- d. Verifies eligibility documentation for completeness and accuracy.
- e. Assists students who are awarded scholarships and financial aid in drafting letters and/or producing videos expressing appreciation and the impact / meaning of the financial support – providing the Advancement Office and the Marketing and Communications Department (MarCom) access to these stewardship items.



**3. The Advancement Office:**

- a. Solicits and secures funding and agreements for student scholarships and financial aid – recording in Bloomerang that names of such scholarships, names of the donors, donor desired and University agreed restrictions on the use of such funds.
- b. Translates donor requirements into scholarship guidelines as per University protocol.
- c. Fulfills the University's obligation for Donor Stewardship (e.g., ensuring that donors are acknowledged and kept informed about the impact of their philanthropy, etc.) .

**4. The Financial Analyst and/or the University Accountant:**

- a. Confirms a current accounting of all available scholarship and financial aid funds, including names of such funds, restrictions on the use of such funds, and amounts available – providing the Scholarship and Financial Aid Committee access to this information
- b. Provides financial reporting to Advancement Office and SFAC.
- c. Provides reconciliation reports to Student Finance Unit, SFAC, and Advancement Office to ensure transparency in fund utilization.

**5. The Students Finance Unit:**

- a. Based on the decisions of the Scholarship and Financial Aid Committee, enters the awarded scholarships to eligible students and reports to accountants to update the accounting records.
- b. Communicates updated tuition and fee balances to students, OSFA, and SFAC
- c. Reports to the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid the names of students receiving scholarships and names of donors to whom letters of appreciation should be addressed.
- d. Provides reconciliation reports to SFAC, OSFA, and Advancement Office to ensure transparency in fund utilization.

**6. The SLF University Coordinator:**

Is responsible for initiating, implementing and finalizing all the SLF program activities as stated in the "Procedures" section below.

**7. Deanship of Students Affairs:**

- a. Provides holistic oversight of student well-being and success, with a particular concern for students whose success may be vulnerable
- b. Assists the OSFA to have students who are awarded scholarships and financial aid to draft letters and/or produce videos expressing appreciation and the impact / meaning of the financial support.

## 6. PROCEDURES

**1. SLF Program Procedures:**

1. Announcing the loan application announcement issued by the Student Loan Fund (SLF) within the Ministry of Higher Education to all students.
2. After the student completes the loan application on the SLF platform, they must report to the Deanship of Student Affairs to verify the authenticity of supporting documents, finalize, and print the loan application for student signature.



3. Send notifications to students approved for the loan, upon receiving the list from the SLF. Students are then required to provide electronic approval of the loan, followed by their physical presence at the Deanship of Student Affairs to confirm the loan and print the promissory note for their signature.
4. Send the original promissory note to the Students Finance Unit and filing a copy in the student's file.
5. Graduating Students: Communicate with prospective graduating students who have benefited from the SLF loans during their studies to undertake the following procedures:
  1. Complete and sign the Graduate Student Settlement form by the student and his/her guarantor.
  2. The SLF University Coordinator at the Deanship of Student Affairs will also sign and provide the student with a copy.
  3. Send the original settlement form to the SLF, and file a copy in the student's file
  4. Remove the student's name from the list of borrowers to enable them to receive their degree certificate.
  5. Inform the Student Finance Unit and the Registrar that the student has fulfilled their loan requirements.
6. Payment Notification:
  1. Submit the student's name and University ID number to the SLF to generate a payment notification.
  2. Print the payment notification and deliver it to the student.
  3. Receive a copy of the stamped notification from the bank after payment, and file a copy in the student's file.
  4. Remove the student's name from the list of borrowers to enable them to receive their degree certificate.
  5. Notify the Finance Office and the Registrar that the student has fulfilled their loan requirements.

## **2. The Scholarship and Financial Aid Scheme:**

1. The process starts with a newly admitted student logging into MyBU Portal to complete the Admitted Student Questionnaire (ASQ) – which is required to be completed by all newly admitted undergraduate students before they are able to access their academic course schedule and other information for the academic year.
2. The Financial Aid Application Wizard becomes Accessible only if a student completing the questionnaire answered with a “YES” showing intent to apply for financial aid.
3. When the financial aid application is initiated, the application status becomes IN\_PROGRESS and requires the student to fill in details and upload documents. The data remains editable at this stage.
4. Upon submission, the status of the application changes to SUBMITTED and the application becomes read-only. The student will immediately receive a confirmation email.
5. The student at this stage must print and sign a consent form that the Social Worker at SAFD uploads. At this point the application status changes to APPROVED.
6. An automated initial scoring begins.



7. The Social Worker reviews applications each semester after the initial scoring is automatically done. Upon review by the Social Worker, the status of the application becomes PENDING\_REVIEW, and an email is sent to the student automatically.
8. Each status change triggers a notification to the student.
9. A decision is made regarding an Optional Home Visit. Most applications will be judged based on official documents submitted. Only in rare circumstances a home visit is authorized by the Committee. Home visits are deemed necessary in cases when no decisive judgement can be reached by the Committee based on documents submitted.
10. The application is evaluated by the Committee and status will change to EVALUATED. At this stage, the final score is confirmed and the application is locked.
11. The System matches available scholarships & student balances considering any specified criteria associated with each scholarship as established by the donor and approved by the Advancement Office.
12. Eligible students are filtered by score thresholds.
13. The Committee processes and financial aid is finalized. This is done by the Committee that selects the appropriate fund for each eligible student. The Committee also specifies the amount of the financial aid approved for each student.
14. A final review by the Committee changes the status of the application to AWARDING\_REVIEW.
15. As soon as the award is confirmed by the Committee, the status of the application is changed to AWARDED. At this time, the system Log[s] transaction, update[s] student financial record, send[s] alerts to the student, Students Finance Unit, Scholarships and Financial Aid department, MarCom department, and the Advancement Office.
16. The system is integrated with Bloomerang (the University's Constituent Relationship Management system).
17. When an application is rejected, the status will be automatically changed to REJECTED and an email notifying the student of this fact will be automatically generated.
18. Rejected students can file an appeal at the Scholarships and Financial Aid department in two weeks of receiving the rejection letter. The appeal should be in writing and must include all supporting documents not previously submitted electronically.
19. The Scholarship and Financial Aid Committee shall respond, in writing, to all appeals within a month from the date they were received.

## 7. COMPLIANCE

The Executive Vice President is entrusted with this policy, and is responsible for implementing this policy and reporting in writing to the HR Office of any breach to the policy by any BU user, stating the breach details, action to be taken and recommending any disciplinary measures as per BU policies in this regard.

## 8. RELATED INFORMATION