

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA



UCF SCHOLAR

2024

THE NEWSLETTER FOR NATIONAL MERIT SEMIFINALISTS

CONGRATULATIONS...

On being named a National Merit Scholarship semifinalist. The University of Central Florida recognizes and rewards your achievement. It's one reason why we're ranked among the top 25 universities in the nation for National Merit Scholar enrollment.

Orlando is a hub for in-demand industries, and with our industry partnerships, you'll be in the best place to study and gain hands-on experience through internships, collaborative learning and research projects. Yes, even as an undergrad you can lead your own research project at UCF. You'll benefit from connections to faculty and peer mentors who'll guide you to greatness as you discover new possibilities through the Burnett Honors College.

Describing all that UCF and our Scholars Program has to offer is incomparable to experiencing it firsthand during a campus visit, either virtually or in person. By visiting, you'll have the opportunity to:

IN-PERSON

- **Speak with faculty in the Burnett Honors College and your academic area(s) of interest**
- **Meet current UCF National Merit Scholars**
- **Take a private, personalized golf cart tour of campus**
- **Explore exclusive housing for honors students in the Towers at Knights Plaza**
- **Enjoy lunch in one of our on-campus dining halls**
- **Review the National Merit Scholarship process and UCF program details**

VIRTUALLY:

- **Speak with faculty from the Burnett Honors College**
- **Meet with faculty from your academic area(s) of interest**
- **Meet current UCF National Merit Scholars**
- **Review the National Merit Scholarship process and UCF program details**

Please contact us for availability and to schedule your visit. We look forward to introducing you to campus and showing you what UCF has to offer.

The Scholars Program

Office of Undergraduate Admissions

407.823.6179 | scholarsprogram@ucf.edu

BURNETT HONORS COLLEGE

The Burnett Honors College combines the intimacy of a small liberal arts college with the benefits and academic resources of a metropolitan research university. In classes limited to 20 or fewer students, you'll study, conduct research and connect with a close-knit community of UCF student scholars and expert faculty. The college offers a scholarly environment where you'll have access to upper-division honors classes, interdisciplinary seminars, service-learning opportunities and additional one-on-one time with faculty and advisors.

The college's state-of-the-art facility houses a computer lab, reading room, multimedia classrooms and a meditation garden. Honors students also get priority registration, scholarship opportunities, invitations to special events and dedicated on-campus housing.

To learn more about the college, call **407.823.2545** or visit honors.ucf.edu.

LEAD SCHOLARS ACADEMY

The LEAD Scholars Academy is a leadership development experience for select students to learn in and out of the classroom. In this two-year program, participants pursue the academic study of leadership, learn how to use it in their careers, and develop ways to use their skills to give back to their peers and the community.

If you're interested in joining a group of active and motivated people who cover all the necessary elements for leadership growth — people who try as hard and care as much as you do — apply to the LEAD Scholars Academy. Call **407.823.2223** or visit lead.sdes.ucf.edu to learn more.





NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

There are tons of colleges to choose from, but more students each year are putting UCF at the top of their list. One reason is the dedicated support we provide for our most ambitious students. National Merit qualifiers receive:

SEMIFINALISTS

- Expedited admission decision
- Priority consideration for merit scholarships

FINALISTS

If you are named a finalist and designate UCF as your first choice with the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) by the deadline, you will receive the following scholarships

Florida Residents — UCF Cost of Attendance

The following awards will be stacked to total your cost of attendance and include:

- Benacquisto Scholarship
- Corporate-Sponsored Award or UCF College-Sponsored Award
- Florida Bright Futures
- National Merit Scholarship Corporation Award

Non-Florida Residents

The following awards will be stacked and include:

- UCF Merit Scholarship valued at \$80,000*
- Waiver of non-resident fee for tuition

All finalists who are first choice designees also receive:

- Expedited admission decision to UCF
- Guaranteed admission to the LEAD Scholars Academy (upon application)
- Guaranteed admission to the Burnett Honors College (upon application) with benefits that include:
 - Priority registration
 - Special orientation program
 - Access to faculty mentoring
 - Exclusive research and internship opportunities
 - Access to honors housing in the Towers at Knights Plaza
- Guaranteed on-campus housing for four years with available housing preference (upon application)

**Limited to 30 students*

ALUM

FINDING LIKE MINDS

Annalicia Burns '14 knew UCF was the right place to start her future because of the university's energetic atmosphere and diverse opportunities. With the encouragement of faculty, the biomedical sciences major balanced her intense pre-med coursework with personal interests as she double-majored in anthropology. Between studying abroad in the Caribbean, conducting research on campus and involvement with the Burnett Honors College, Burns found a rewarding academic journey at UCF that went beyond the classroom and helped prepare her to complete her residency at Duke's pediatric program.

"Whatever interest you may have, however obscure it may be, I feel like you can always find people at UCF who share that interest."

UNLEASH YOUR POTENTIAL. CHANGE YOUR WORLD.

Our mission is to unleash the potential of people and ideas to positively change the world.

Founded in 1963 with the mission to provide talent for Central Florida and the growing U.S. space program, we've been making an impact on the state, our nation and outer space ever since.

Just like you, we're always looking to the future, reaching for the stars and pursuing bold ambitions.

- UCF ranks among the nation's top 20 most innovative colleges, according to *U.S. News & World Report*.
- UCF ranks among the top 30 universities in the nation for new National Merit Scholars enrolled.
- We've earned the Carnegie Foundation's highest classification for research activity.
- Our graduates earn Fulbright, Goldwater, Mellon, Rhodes, Truman and Udall scholarships.
- *Washington Monthly* ranks UCF No. 22 Best National Public University.
- UCF is committed to creating a culturally diverse learning community. With 29% hispanic enrollment, we're designated a Hispanic Serving Institution by the U.S. Department of Education.
- For the sixth consecutive year, UCF's Rosen College of Hospitality Management is ranked among the top five best hospitality and hotel management schools in the world, by *CEOWorld* magazine.
- UCF awards more than 18,000 degrees a year and is one of the top producers of graduates among public universities.



LEARN MORE, ACHIEVE MORE.

From the start, you'll have more than options here — you'll have unlimited opportunity to launch a new era of you.

You'll find inspiration and motivation in the academically excellent community at UCF. With caring faculty here to guide you to greatness every step of the way, you'll be empowered to think critically as you take on new challenges and explore groundbreaking research. Feel supported with our expert advisors and coaches who will help you choose your path to success and stay on track.

Explore our 13 colleges and more than 240 degree programs.

OUR DEGREE PROGRAMS

- 104 bachelor's degree programs
- 97 master's degree programs
- 33 research doctoral degree programs
- 3 professional doctoral degree programs
- 3 research specialist degree programs

TAKE YOUR DEGREE TO THE NEXT LEVEL

We offer more than 130 minors and certificates to customize your education, so you can combine your career goals with your passions or unique interests.

You can also explore more than 250 study abroad, exchange and internship programs from Ireland to Australia — and almost everywhere in between.

Find a degree program that's right for you: ucf.edu/degree-search





RESEARCH WITH AN IMPACT

Every day at UCF, you can find students and researchers working together to generate real-world impact, improving the lives of our local and global community. For instance, dive into field sites with the Marine Turtle Research Group to study sea turtle nesting spots on Florida beaches and track their movements in the Gulf of Mexico. Research opportunities are wide-ranging and on-going in the areas of energy, tourism, HIV, cancer, mental health, human behavior, civics education, language acquisition, cybersecurity, sea-level rise, building energy conservation, species conservation and the impact of art on health.

IMAGINATION IN ACTION

Turn your big ideas into reality with UCF makerspaces. Students across all disciplines can gather, conceptualize, test and create in collaborative labs featuring state-of-the-art technology. This ecosystem of opportunity includes the Texas Instruments Innovation Lab, which is equipped with 3D printers, laser cutters and other high-tech equipment, and a manufacturing lab to finalize prototype designs. The Lockheed Martin Cyber Innovation Lab — which serves as a learning hub, classroom and the practice center for the university's cyberdefense club, Hack@UCF — helps hone future leaders in STEM and cybersecurity. And the Games and Interactive Media Makerspace at UCF Downtown (pictured right) provides students with the resources to experiment and create games, websites and interdisciplinary projects.



ADVENTURE IS EVERYWHERE

With more than 7,000 events and activities that unite Knights throughout the year, there are endless ways to make friends, make memories and make the most of your college experience. From Spirit Splash to UCF Celebrates the Arts, these time-honored and fan-favorite traditions are just a few of our top picks.

- 1 The **KNIGHTING** is UCF's official welcome ceremony for new students, and it kicks off a week of exciting events called Pegasus Palooza. Make new friends, explore campus, laugh at comedians and so much more.
- 2 Grab your game day gear and rally with Knight Nation at **SPORTING EVENTS** throughout the year. You'll get free admission to every sporting event on campus, giving you a chance to be a part of a new era — with UCF's rise to the Big 12 Conference — and embrace the unbelievable atmosphere and fan community at games.
- 3 At **SPIRIT SPLASH** — voted one of the best college traditions in the nation — you can run into the Reflecting Pond and catch collectible rubber ducks and commemorative T-shirts during Homecoming Week.
- 4 You won't want to miss **UCF CELEBRATES THE ARTS**, a 10-day festival featuring musicals, living art and concert performances that showcase creativity, innovation and collaboration across the university.
- 5 Visit **LAKE CLAIRE** to soak up a little serenity in the sand, borrow a kayak, canoe or stand-up paddleboard for free — or host your BBQ or picnic on the edge of campus.
- 6 If you like roller coasters, you'll love **UNIVERSAL KNIGHTS**. Each spring, thousands of UCF students enjoy exclusive, late-night access to Universal's Islands of Adventure.
- 7 **STUDENT RESEARCH WEEK** is a showcase of discovery and scholarship where students participate in workshops and events, including poster sessions where they present research and creative scholarship to the UCF community.





STUDENT

FINDING LIKE MINDS

Sage Kehr is a political science student minoring in music, mathematics and international business, while also earning a certificate in teaching English as a foreign language. During his time at UCF, he has served as the Chief Justice of UCF Student Government, participated in the Honors Congress, volunteered at UCF Global with English language learners and served on the Student Conduct Board. Outside of his academic involvement, Kehr has also participated in many social activities including homecoming events and intramural sports.

"With support from the Burnett Honors College, I had the opportunity to study abroad in Seoul, South Korea, where I studied business, joined a music club, participated in many cultural activities and more."



FREQUENTLY

ASKED QUESTIONS

How can I be considered for a National Merit Scholarship at UCF?

First you must qualify as a National Merit Scholar Semifinalist. You should then apply for admission to UCF. National Merit Semifinalists are eligible for scholarship consideration. Students advancing to National Merit Finalist standing are eligible for sponsorship as a National Merit Scholar if they select UCF as their first-choice institution and adhere to the deadlines specified by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC). Finalists who designate UCF as their first choice with the NMSC by their deadline will be considered for a UCF merit scholarship. Visit nationalmerit.org for more information.

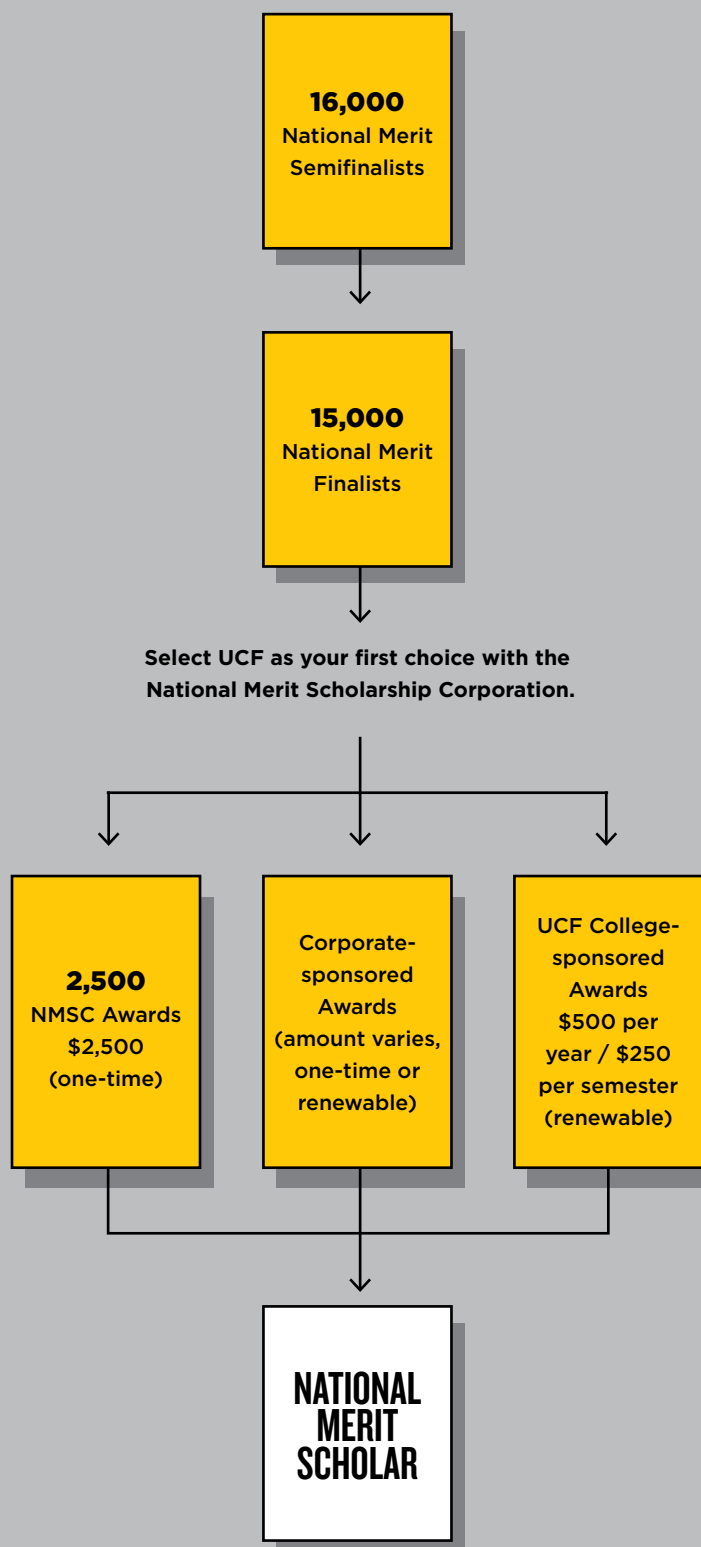
How do I select UCF as my first choice with the NMSC?

Students are responsible for indicating their first-choice college or university with the NMSC. Be careful to complete all required documentation in accordance with NMSC guidelines and deadlines. If you have questions or concerns, contact NMSC officials at **847.866.5100** or visit nationalmerit.org.

How can the National Merit Scholarship be used?

The scholarship may be used in addition to the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program, Florida Prepaid College Plans, institutional scholarships, private scholarships and, in some cases, need-based assistance. It will be applied to tuition and fees first, but can also cover part, or all, of the cost of on-campus housing when combined with other awards.

NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION





ALUMS

SERVING GREATER CAUSES

Orlando natives **Aliya Centner '21** and **Safia Centner '21** chose to attend UCF to stay close to their community, their family and each other, as well as take advantage of scholarship opportunities as National Merit Scholars and leadership experiences as LEAD Scholars. Their academic journeys as Knights continue as they pursue medical degrees at the UCF College of Medicine. Both hope to better the lives of others and have already started down that path by serving on the executive board for Relay for Life and helping found the UCF chapter of Be the Match.

"We've learned more about our personalities and strengths and have applied our skills to meaningful organizations while at UCF."

— Safia Centner



CHECKLIST NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP

SEPTEMBER — DECEMBER

- ☐ **National Merit Scholarship Corporation announces semifinalists**

In September, the National Merit Scholarship Corporation announces the names of approximately 16,000 semifinalists.
- ☐ **Submit your application early in the fall semester**

Submit your application online at apply.ucf.edu early in the fall semester. Include a short essay, but **don't** include the \$30 application fee with your submission. Instead, contact scholarsprogram@ucf.edu or **407.823.6179** to have the application fee waived. UCF also accepts the Common Application. However, the application fee cannot be waived if submitting using this method.
- ☐ **Visit UCF**

To see if UCF is right for you, come visit us. Contact us at admission.ucf.edu/visit to get a personalized or virtual campus tour, where you'll have the chance to:

 - Meet with faculty in the Burnett Honors College and your academic area(s) of interest
 - Meet current UCF National Merit Scholars
 - Take a golf cart tour of the campus
 - Explore honors housing
 - Enjoy lunch on campus
- ☐ **Complete the NMSC application**

To be considered for finalist standing, every semifinalist must complete the NMSC application. In addition, your high school must submit an official transcript and a letter of recommendation. The NMSC also requires SAT or ACT scores for consideration.

JANUARY — FEBRUARY

- ☐ **Apply for UCF Housing**

Determine whether to sign an academic or annual agreement housing contract. Then, submit your contract through your myUCF account along with the \$250 prepayment.
- ☐ **Apply to the Burnett Honors College**

To be eligible for the many benefits of the Burnett Honors College, you must submit a completed paper application. No portion of the college's application is waived. All sections must be completed in full (including the essay) and submitted as soon as possible.
- ☐ **Apply to the LEAD Scholars Academy**

If you wish to participate in the LEAD Scholars program, you must submit a completed application by May 31.

- ☐ **Designate UCF as your first-choice institution**

This is an ongoing process with the first available notification provided in early March and continuing in subsequent notification rounds. If you are "undecided" with the NMSC, the last opportunity to designate UCF as your first choice is May 31.
- ☐ **NMSC announces finalists**

The NMSC notifies finalists in February. More than 90% of semifinalists advance to finalist standing. All finalists who are Florida residents and designate UCF as their first choice by the NMSC deadline are guaranteed the UCF National Merit finalist scholarship. UCF National Merit finalist scholarships for Non-Florida residents are limited to 30 students.

MARCH — JUNE

- ☐ **NMSC notifies finalists of awards**

Beginning in March, the NMSC will offer finalists one of three awards:

 - National Merit-sponsored
 - Corporate-sponsored
 - College-sponsored

These awards are in addition to your UCF merit scholarship, and this process is handled directly through the NMSC.
- ☐ **Return the UCF merit scholarship acceptance form**

Finalists who designate UCF as their first choice with the NMSC by the May deadline will officially be awarded their UCF merit scholarship in writing. Once the form is submitted, the award will be indicated on your myUCF account under "Financial Aid."
- ☐ **Complete the FAFSA**

All National Merit Scholars receiving a UCF merit scholarship are encouraged to submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid to the UCF Office of Financial Assistance every year by May 1.
- ☐ **Register for Orientation**

Orientation registration is available in mid-spring. Go online through your myUCF account to select the orientation session you would like to attend (these also are posted on the orientation website). National Merit finalists are encouraged to attend the honors orientation, however, you may select any orientation to attend.
- ☐ **Submit the UCF enrollment deposit**

Submit the \$200 enrollment deposit, which is applied toward your first semester tuition and is not waived as part of your scholarship, by May 1.
- ☐ **Select UCF as first-choice institution by May 31**

If you have "undecided" listed as your first choice, you must designate UCF as your first choice with the NMSC by May 31, to be guaranteed the UCF merit scholarship award.



BE A KNIGHT, AND YOU CAN BE ANYTHING.

From application to graduation, you'll be inspired to do amazing things. So whether you prefer academics and research or campus activities and athletics, we'll provide you with the tools and support you need to find your place and foster your purpose.

Scan here to watch
[The College Tour](#) from
anywhere, anytime —
and explore the people,
places and programs that
make UCF a special place to
learn and grow.



THE SCHOLARS PROGRAM

The Scholars Program
Office of Undergraduate Admissions
407.823.6179 scholarsprogram@ucf.edu

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Admissions
Burnett Honors College
Housing and Residence Life
LEAD Scholars Academy
Office of Student Involvement
Orientation
Student Financial Assistance
Student Health Services

admissions.ucf.edu
honors.ucf.edu
housing.ucf.edu
lead.sdes.ucf.edu
osi.ucf.edu
orientation.ucf.edu
ucf.edu/financial-aid
studenthealth.ucf.edu

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