NATIONAL MERIT PROCESS

We know the path to National Merit Finalist standing can be confusing, and we’re here to help! Contact the OU National Scholars Programs at (405) 325-1290 or natlscholars@ou.edu. Visit nationalmerit.ou.edu to learn more about OU and what we can offer you.

1. TAKE THE PSAT/NMSQT
   The junior year PSAT/NMSQT is offered in October and is the only qualifying entrance exam into the National Merit competition. Cutoff scores to achieve Semifinalist standing vary by state.

2. SEMIFINALISTS ANNOUNCED
   In early September of your senior year, The National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) announces approximately 16,000 Semifinalists of those who tested.

3. APPLY FOR FINALIST STANDING
   Semifinalists will apply for Finalist standing around mid-October. Approximately 90% of all Semifinalists will advance to a Finalist in the competition.

4. SEND SAT SCORE
   NMSC will accept your best composite score through the December 2016 test date. Update or send new scores through the College Board at sat.collegeboard.org.
   You must have a record of consistent high academic performance in grades 9 through 12 and in any college courses taken. Your SAT score must complement your PSAT/NMSQT performance. Visit nationalmerit.org for details.

5. FINALISTS ANNOUNCED
   In early February, NMSC will mail notification letters to Finalists. Permanent Semifinalists (those who do not advance to Finalist standing) are notified in January. Finalists may list a “school of choice” at osa.nationalmerit.org. You may change the school listed for you as many times as you would like prior to the NMSC “school of choice” deadline.

6. CORPORATE AND NATIONAL AWARD WINNERS NOTIFIED
   A Finalist could receive one of three sponsorship offers. Those receiving the Corporate or National sponsorships will be notified in March. Corporate sponsorships are generally given to students with family ties to a NMSC partnering corporation. These corporations can be found at nationalmerit.org/sponsorship.php. Roughly 10% of Finalists in each state will receive a National Award sponsored by NMSC.

7. COLLEGE SPONSOR AWARD LETTERS MAILED
   In early May, NMSC will begin mailing the College Sponsored award letters from partnering institutions to Finalist recipients. OU is a partnering institution (not all colleges sponsor). Approximately 80% of Finalists will receive a College Sponsored award.

8. DESIGNATE “SCHOOL OF CHOICE” OR “UNDECIDED”
   To be guaranteed OU’s National Merit scholarship, Finalists must designate OU as their “school of choice” or list “undecided” with NMSC by the end of April. If you’re not sure of your college choice, list “undecided.” Students who list “undecided” have until the end of May to name OU as their college choice to receive our scholarship.

9. ACCEPT AWARD OFFER
   Somewhere between late April and June, students are designated as National Merit Scholars upon accepting the one award offer received and naming OU as their “school of choice.” The official Scholar announcement by NMSC is not made until the summer.

10. DESIGNATE “SCHOOL OF CHOICE”
    By the end of May, students who previously listed “undecided” or who received a Corporate or National-sponsored award must designate OU as their “school of choice” at osa.nationalmerit.org in order to receive OU’s National Merit financial package.
    For a complete list of competition rules, visit nationalmerit.org.