



# FLINN SCHOLARS

## Information Session Q&A | September 11, 2023

Topic	Question	Answer
Academics	Is it okay if a person does not have a full high school schedule for their senior year, but they are taking classes concurrently with their local community college during the extra time?	That is acceptable. There is space on the application where you can list community college (or university) courses that you are currently taking.
Academics	Am I able to apply if my GPA is below 3.5?	Occasionally, a Flinn Scholar is selected with a GPA lower than 3.5, but the vast majority meet that threshold.
Academics	If you do not have a full schedule in your senior year, can you still apply?	Reviewers will want to understand why you are not in class full time and how you are using the time you are not at school.
Activities	Is in-school involvement valued as much as non-school involvement?	There is no one type of involvement that is valued more than another.
Activities	Can I use an active senior project as an example of my community service? I would not have the data completed by the scholarship deadline.	Yes, if you have devoted enough time to the project to have a meaningful example to share.
Activities	In the activities and involvement section, each activity listed includes a reference full name and reference email? What should we put here?	We are looking for you to list the person who can verify your involvement in the activity (i.e. confirm your hours, role, responsibilities, etc.).
Activities	Is it important to do activities that relate to your given major?	Not necessarily, but reviewers are interested in understanding how your activities and experiences inform your future interests, both majors and career.
Activities	How likely is it for someone to receive this scholarship if they don't have a large list of extracurriculars but 2-3 that they're heavily involved in?	Our reviewers usually prefer depth to breadth.
Activities	How many community service hours would you recommend?	We do not have a recommendation. But reviewers will look for commitment and depth in areas of your greatest interest.
Activities	Is it okay for my leadership experience to be from my job rather than an in-school activities?	Yes.

Awards/Honors	How important is it to get awards/honors?	It is not essential that you have received awards/honors. We are more interested in the impact of your involvement in your academic, community, and extracurricular experiences.
Awards/Honors	Does the Flinn Foundation consider College Board National Recognition Programs in the application process? Does it have any impact on my application?	We encourage you to include those recognitions in your list of awards. Their presence or absence will not by themselves determine your success in the process.
Benefits	With my predicted college credits, I'm on track to complete an undergraduate degree within 4 years. Will the grand prize and/or semifinalist cash prize carry over into a graduate degree?	The award covers 8 semesters of undergraduate funding. Scholars who complete their undergraduate degree in less than 4 years can use the remaining funds towards a graduate degree at the same university.
Benefits	How many years are funded by the scholarship?	The award covers 8 semesters of funding.
Benefits	What are the study abroad opportunities like?	The following examples will help to answer your question: <a href="https://flinn.org/scholars-directory/marla-smith-nilson/">https://flinn.org/scholars-directory/marla-smith-nilson/</a> <a href="https://flinn.org/scholars-directory/ben-strauber/">https://flinn.org/scholars-directory/ben-strauber/</a> <a href="https://flinn.org/scholars-directory/jon-gandomi/">https://flinn.org/scholars-directory/jon-gandomi/</a>
Benefits	Are the annual summer camps/seminars mandatory?	No. But they are vital parts of the experience. If a student knows that they would not be interested in participating, it's possible that the Flinn Scholars Program isn't a match.
Benefits	How long does our individual study-abroad have to be if chosen?	There is no set minimum length. It is rare that a program is shorter than three weeks or longer than a full calendar year.
Benefits	Does the Flinn Scholarship continue to provide connection opportunities for personal development past undergraduate. If so, how?	Yes. Program staff stay in contact with hundreds of alumni, and regularly provide support and connections with other alumni as Scholars further studies and professional experiences unfold.
Early Grad	I'm planning on graduating early this year as a junior. Can I still apply? Will my chances be affected if I graduate early?	Yes, you can apply this year and not be negatively affected by your early graduation.
Essays	Is it allowed to use sources like ChatGPT to edit and revise your essays?	This must be your work—not a teacher's work, not your parent's work, and not ChatGPT's work. Do not let someone—who most assuredly cares about you—rewrite your first draft, borrow your keyboard for a minute to give your essay a new focus, or add the perfect ending. Essays that are written by committee are easier to spot than you might guess.  This doesn't mean that you can't get help. We encourage you to get support with your essays and the other elements of your application. This support (checking grammar, spelling, and typos) can come from a parent, teacher, friend, and even ChatGPT. But the content needs to be your creation.
Essays	Are you able to talk about _____ for the first prompt?	Yes. The prompt is completely open-ended.

Essays	For the essays, do you need to respond to all 3 prompts, or can you choose?	Applicants must complete all three essay prompts.
Essays	Are there word limits on the essays?	Each essay has a 300-word limit.
Essays	Are you looking for more creative or straightforward application essays?	The essay responses should (1) answer the questions; (2) help us understand how you think; (3) help us understand who you are beyond what is represented elsewhere in your application. Some essays are presented as poems. Some are rigorous arguments. It depends on you.
Honors College	Can we apply for the Flinn Scholarship before being accepted/enrolled into the Honors College?	Yes, applicants can indicate which honors college(s) they intend to apply to in the application.
Honors College	Do you have to participate in the honors college to get the Flinn Scholarship?	Yes.
Honors College	When do I need to apply for the Honors Colleges?	You do not need to apply before the Flinn Scholarship deadline, but you will need to have applied by December in order to advance in our process.
Honors College	How do we apply to the Honors Program?	Begin by completing the university's general application. Then see the application link for the Honors Colleges at each of the universities' websites.
Honors College	Do you automatically get accepted into an honors program of these 3 colleges if you become a semifinalist or finalist?	No. You must apply to them separately.
Majors	Are there certain majors preferred/required for the scholarship?	No.
Majors	If you don't have one particular field in mind and are rather interested in 2-3 and spread your time between those would that affect your application in any way?	No. Many (many!) Flinn Scholars have 2, 3, or more majors.
Majors	Are Flinn Scholars allowed to change majors? How easy is it to change majors?	Any student (Flinn Scholar or other) may change their major. It's easy to do so, though depending on when you change, there are implications, e.g., courses in the old major that don't fulfill requirements in the new major.
Other	I have compelling circumstances that have affected my high school experience. Where can I include this in the application?	There is a section on the application where applicants can share anything else that reviewers should know about them. You can use this space to share your situation if you do not see another spot on the application to address this.

Other	Are there summer commitments for the scholarship?	We expect Scholars to attend at least two Foundation sponsored events during the academic year, participate in a group seminar after the freshmen year, as well as academic/reporting requirements. We post our benefits and expectations on the website: <a href="https://flinn.org/flinn-scholars/details-for/current-flinn-scholars/">https://flinn.org/flinn-scholars/details-for/current-flinn-scholars/</a>
Other	Does the scholarship allow deferments for LDS missionary service?	Flinn Scholars may take a leave of up to two years, including for a religious mission, but they must complete a full academic year of college before going on leave.
Other	What does the profile (academic and extracurricular) of a Flinn scholar with a focus on humanities and social sciences look like?	Here are a few of them: <a href="https://flinn.org/scholars-directory/ruben-alonzo/">https://flinn.org/scholars-directory/ruben-alonzo/</a> <a href="https://flinn.org/scholars-directory/trevor-barroero/">https://flinn.org/scholars-directory/trevor-barroero/</a> <a href="https://flinn.org/scholars-directory/liz-dreeland/">https://flinn.org/scholars-directory/liz-dreeland/</a> <a href="https://flinn.org/scholars-directory/christina-kwasnica/">https://flinn.org/scholars-directory/christina-kwasnica/</a> <a href="https://flinn.org/scholars-directory/devin-mauney/">https://flinn.org/scholars-directory/devin-mauney/</a>
Other	Even if you don't feel like you have a very strong application with a laundry list of extracurriculars and service activities, is it still worth it to apply despite worrying you wouldn't make the cut?	Many applicants describe the process as valuable in their self-exploration and decision making about college and their futures. That said, it is always important to recognize that each application imposes a cost on your time and energy. You have to take care of yourself through this stressful process.
Other	Is the \$15,000 semifinalist scholarship stackable with other university awards?	The \$15,000 scholarship would replace tuition-specific awards like the Lumberjack scholarship.
Other	Is there an application fee?	There is no cost to apply.
Other	What are your suggestions for applying with such a small chance?	Yes, it is a <i>very</i> competitive process. Applicants often say, however, that the process taught them a great deal about themselves and strengthened their other college applications.
Other	Coming from a very rural town that doesn't offer very big international programs such as science competitions or model UN opportunities, do other extracurricular activities hold as much weight? Will the consistency in those extracurriculars help in the application?	Scholar response: I too come from a small town with less opportunities. The Flinn Scholarship takes this into account when looking at applications, so having less opportunity will not be held against you! Really, they are looking to see that you have passion and that you have pursued this passion with the resources available to you.
Recommendations	Do recommenders get notified while the application is in progress, or only after I submit the completed application?	Applicants are able to send the recommendation letter and counselor report requests as soon as they start the application.
Recommendations	How do you submit the recommendations?	As part of the application, students will provide the names and email addresses of their two recommenders and counselor. They will each receive an email with instructions for completing the recommendation and report.

Recommendations	Is it true that teachers from your 12th grade year can't write the recommendation?	Only if they have taught you in a class and given you a grade by the time you apply.
Recommendations	Should we let the recommenders know about the activities and involvement we include in the application?	Yes, it is helpful for recommenders to know about the activities and awards you include in your application.
Recommendations	Is there no required letter from a guidance counselor this year? The only counselor letter would be if it is chosen as the non-teacher letter. Correct?	That is correct! Counselors are only required to submit a report, but could also serve as your leadership/service recommender.
Recommendations	Does the "counselor report" include a letter of recommendation from my school counselor? Or is it just my high school transcript? Would a letter from my counselor be the second letter of recommendation (the non-teacher one)?	The counselor report does not include a recommendation letter. Counselors are able to also provide your leadership/service recommender.
Recommendations	Do we submit the recommendations with the application or do the recommenders do it?	The recommenders will receive a link and submit the letter themselves. Applicants are required to send the requests through SurveyMonkey Apply by the application deadline of October 18.
Recommendations	Can the teacher recommendations be from senior year teachers? It says on the website they must have given a letter grade, so would that mean that recommendations must be from past teachers?	The teacher must have already taught and provided you with a grade by the time you apply.
Recommendations	Does it matter what year you had the teacher for the teacher rec?	Yes, the teacher must have taught you during your high school career.
Recommendations	Does the teacher I want to write a recommendation letter have to still be a teacher at my high school?	No. We understand that a teacher might switch schools or careers. As long as you have their contact information, you can request a recommendation from them.
Recommendations	If a student took college level courses, and if a teacher gave a grade, will that teacher be allowed to give the recommendation, or it has to be from a high school teacher?	The academic recommendation must be from a high-school teacher who has given you a grade (with the sole exception being for home-schooled applicants).
Recommendations	Are teachers writing a recommendation letter or are they answering questions?	Answering three questions. They are listed here: <a href="https://flinn.org/flinn-scholars/details-for/teachers-and-counselors/">https://flinn.org/flinn-scholars/details-for/teachers-and-counselors/</a>
Recommendations	How do I get recommendations if I transferred to a new school and the teachers don't know me very well?	It is acceptable to provide a recommendation from a teacher at a previous school.
Recommendations	Do we have to ask a teacher from a core class subject, or can it be from an elective or CTE teacher?	You are not restricted to asking a teacher from a core class subject. The primary mandate for the academic recommendation is that the teacher taught you in a course where you earned a grade. You should select a teacher who knows you well enough to respond to the following prompts:

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide an example of this student's intellectual curiosity, growth, and maturity.</li> <li>• Provide an example of this student's integrity and interpersonal skills.</li> <li>• Every student adds to the classroom learning environment in some way. Knowing that all Flinn Scholarship applicants are excellent students who are at, or near, the top of their class, how does this candidate enhance your classroom learning environment? What is different in your classroom when this candidate is, or isn't, there?</li> </ul>
Recommendations	Can we submit more than two recommendations?	No.
Recommendations	How do I request recommendations?	Once you begin your application, you will be able to provide your recommenders' email address. The application system will send them a link to complete the recommendation.
Recommendations	I have done research with a mentor in the past. Can I get a recommendation from them?	Yes, but remember that the <i>academic</i> recommendation must come from a teacher who taught you in a course where you earned a grade. The individual you select for the <i>leadership/service</i> recommendation must know you well enough to respond to the following prompts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide an example of this student's ability to influence, empower, and inspire others.</li> <li>• Provide an example of this student's commitment to service and concern for others.</li> <li>• Provide an example of this student's earned respect of peers, community members, and/or leaders.</li> </ul>
Recommendations	Can teachers also include information about your leadership in their letters or is leadership commentary limited to just the leadership recommendation?	They can. You may review the questions that recommenders will answer here: <a href="https://flinn.org/flinn-scholars/details-for/teachers-and-counselors/">https://flinn.org/flinn-scholars/details-for/teachers-and-counselors/</a>
Recommendations	For the recommendation letters, it mentions that they are from teachers or others during high school years. Do they have to know you for all of high school or a couple of years. I am interning at a place for some months so would that affect anything?	They need to know you well, but it's not essential that they know you for all four years.
Recommendations	Can our leadership/service recommendation come from a research mentor?	Yes, but you should ask yourself if the individual knows you well enough to respond to the following prompts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide an example of this student's ability to influence, empower, and inspire others.</li> <li>• Provide an example of this student's commitment to service and concern for others.</li> <li>• Provide an example of this student's earned respect of peers, community members, and/or leaders.</li> </ul>

Recommendations	If one of my teachers is also my club sponsor, can I use them for the second recommendation even though they are a teacher?	Yes.
Recommendations	What is the most important thing to look for when deciding on leadership/service recommenders?	You need to think about who knows you best and understands and can share most clearly the impact you have made.
Requirements	Does the Flinn scholarship accept international students too?	No, applicants must be a resident of Arizona for 2 years.
Requirements	How many college credits can I have going into my first year with Flinn to be considered a freshman. Or would I be considered a freshman regardless?	The latter. Our requirement is that you apply during the academic year that you graduate from high school, and that you start college the following fall semester.
Requirements	I'm just outside of the top five percent of my class, but I regularly take harder classes than my peers and have been deeply involved in the school community. Do I still have a chance to advance in the application?	Yes.
Other	Coming from a very rural town that doesn't offer very big international programs such as science competitions or model UN opportunities, do other extracurricular activities hold as much weight? Will the consistency in those extracurriculars help in the application?	Scholar response: I too come from a small town with less opportunities. The Flinn Scholarship takes this into account when looking at applications, so having less opportunity will not be held against you! Really, they are looking to see that you have passion and that you have pursued this passion with the resources available to you.
Selection	Where are the in-person interviews held?	The Finalist interviews are held at the Flinn Foundation in Phoenix.
Selection	Is this a merit-based scholarship only, or do you also consider income?	The scholarship is only merit-based.
Selection	Is wanting to pursue impactful careers outside of Arizona, such as working for the federal government in another state, considered a negative?	No.
Test Scores	Where in the application should I put an AP score report?	There is a section to enter scores and upload score reports.
Test Scores	I am taking the SAT on October 7th; do I have to wait until I get my results to apply for the scholarship?	No, you will be able to indicate that you are taking the exam at a later date. You will be required to submit your scores once you receive them.
Test Scores	Are we expected to submit an official report of ACT and AP scores as part of the application process?	Official score reports will be required at a later date from those who advance in the selection process.
Test Scores	Can the test scores be from last school year, or should they be from this school year?	Test scores can be from last year.
Test Scores	Are you allowed to admit a superscore of a standardized test?	No. Submit each of your scores and Flinn will calculate your superscore.

Test Scores	I took both the ACT and SAT, should I submit both or just the higher score?	You can submit either or both. It's up to you! :)
Test Scores	How strong do my test scores need to be?	For reference, Flinn Scholars have scores similar to students accepted at highly competitive universities—typically in the 95th percentile or above. Not all Scholars' scores are this high, however, and we do not have a minimum.
Test Scores	Do you require AP scores?	If you have taken an AP course, we do encourage you to include a copy of the score report in your application. We also recognize that not all students have access to AP coursework, so this is not a requirement. We only require at least one ACT or SAT test score.
Test Scores	ACT doesn't let you download an ACT score report. Can you take screenshots, put those in a PDF, and submit those as well as have the official report mailed?	Yes, we would accept a screenshot that you can upload as a PDF in the application. We only ask for official score reports from students who advance in our process. (We will send you an email with this request.)
Test Scores	What is the average ACT score of Flinn Scholarship finalists?	Most, but not all, Flinn Scholars have scores similar to students accepted at highly competitive universities—in the 95th percentile or above. But again, some Scholars' scores are not this high. And again, note that we do not have a minimum score.
Test Scores	Is there a minimum ACT or SAT score?	No. Flinn Scholars have scores similar to students accepted at highly competitive universities—most in the 95th percentile or above. But some Scholars' scores are not this high. And note that we do not have a minimum score.
Test Scores	If we take the SAT or ACT after submitting the application and get a superscore, will it still be able to be updated or will the score in the application be solidified?	Scores from the Oct. 7 SAT and Oct. 28 ACT will be accepted, and they can be superscored with previous exams you have submitted.
Test Scores	Do you superscore the SAT/ACT if I submit more than one score?	We superscore (counting the highest scores from each section) across exams.
Universities	Is the Flinn Scholarship exclusively for Arizona's public universities?	Correct. The scholarship is a partnership with ASU, NAU, and UArizona.