

All-USA Academic Team Applicant & Nominator Guide

The All-USA Academic Team seeks to honor outstanding students from a variety of backgrounds and disciplines to hold up as representatives of all outstanding students enrolled in associate degree/certificate programs. Because each school is limited to nominating a total of four students per campus (2 transferring by fall 2019 and 2 entering the workforce prior to fall 2019), the work students put into their application will determine how competitive they will be in the national competition. Weaving their story in a coherent fashion is critical in letting nominators and judges know who the student is, what they are doing, and why they feel qualified to receive this recognition.

All-USA Academic Team nominees may also be considered for the Coca-Cola Academic Team, New Century Pathway Scholarship programs, and All-State Academic Teams where applicable. **To be considered for these scholarships, students must be nominated by the designated nominator on their college's campus.**

The online application opens September 15, 2018, for access by both students and nominators. Student access will close at 5:00 pm CT on November 15, 2018. Nominators will have until December 1, 2018, at 5:00 pm CT to submit their nominations. Student applications and nominations must be submitted online; incomplete applications will not be considered for nomination.

Eligibility – Students MUST:

- Be enrolled through December 2018 in a minimum of six (6) semester credit hours [or nine (9) quarter credit hours] of associate degree, college-level coursework at the time of application.
- Hold a minimum of a 3.50 cumulative grade point average out of a possible 4.0 on all college-level coursework completed in the past five years.
 - Include all transcripts, fall 2013 – present.
 - GPA is evaluated at the time of application, and no courses can be marked as incomplete. Student must maintain a 3.50 or higher GPA through the fall 2018 semester to remain eligible.
- Be on track to earn an associate or a bachelor's degree (or the equivalent of a U.S. associate or bachelor's degree).¹
- Applicants must have a minimum of 36 semester (or 54 quarter) [college-level credit hours](#) completed at or transferred into an associate degree or certificate program by December 31, 2018, and 48 semester (or 72 quarter) college-level credit hours by August 31, 2019.²
 - *To be considered for the **Coca-Cola Academic Team**, the student must be enrolled at least part-time at a college for the fall 2019 semester. Proof of enrollment will be requested.*
 - *To be considered for the **New Century Transfer Pathway Scholarship**, the student must be enrolled at least part-time at a college for the fall 2019 semester. Proof of enrollment will be requested.*
 - *To be considered for the **New Century Workforce Pathway Scholarship**, the student must be entering the workforce prior to fall 2019 after completing a certificate or associate degree.*
- Not have previously been nominated for the All-USA Academic Team or the Coca-Cola Academic Team.
- Hold permanent or temporary residency in the country of the college the student is attending or possess a visa considered appropriate by the college. Please see the [help article](#) or application for acceptable documents verifying proof of citizenship.
 - Students who attend college in the United States do not need to be a member of Phi Theta Kappa.
 - Students attending colleges outside of the United States need to be members of Phi Theta Kappa and may only apply for the New Century Pathway Scholarship programs.
- Have a college record free of suspension, probation or other disciplinary action.
- Not have a criminal record, or if a convicted felon, must have all conditions of sentencing, including parole/probation, completed.³

¹ Workforce Pathway applicants must be on track to earn an associate degree, career or technical certificate prior to fall 2019.

² Workforce Pathway applicants must have a minimum of 6 semester (or 9 quarter) college-level credits of associate degree-level coursework completed by December 31, 2018.

³ Having a criminal record does not disqualify applicants; however, they will not be considered for Coca-Cola-related scholarships.

All-USA Academic Team Applicant Guide

Overview

Applicants considered as nominees may be pursuing an associate degree, career or technical certificate, or intend to transfer to the four-year school. The All-USA Academic Team is a merit award based on your accomplishments while pursuing your associate degree. Judging criteria include academic excellence and intellectual rigor; leadership and service; and how you have extended your education beyond the classroom to benefit society. Nominators are asked to consider a wide variety of information in the application: the body of the student's academic work; the student's participation in honors programs; any awards, honors, and recognitions for academic or leadership achievement; and service to the college and community when selecting the college's nominees. Nominees selected may be considered role models on their campus. Nominators are asked to consider students they feel would be a proud representation of their college.

Leadership Considerations

The centerpiece of your application is the 500-word essay describing your most significant endeavor since attending college in which you applied your academic or intellectual skills learned during your college experience to benefit the school, community or society. Judges look for innovative, creative, original and lasting achievements or undertakings. Your endeavor can be based in community service, research, the arts, journalism or public affairs. Students who have demonstrated leadership and initiative in service learning, who contributed to scholarly research, or who have made lasting contributions to their campus or community make excellent candidates. If endeavors are not yet complete, they must be far enough along so that the nominee and recommender can discuss the specifics of work done thus far.

Academic Considerations

The program is an "academic" team as well, so your academic record is important. Judges look at the overall academic record and how well your courses match your career goals. Transcripts are evaluated when a student's application is received, and GPAs are evaluated at the point of submission. Remedial or developmental courses are removed and are not counted toward the student's required total courses or toward the cumulative GPA. The application allows space for you to explain circumstances that may have affected your transcript, so if you have experienced several withdrawals or a temporary drop in grades, please detail the reasoning on your application. It will not necessarily rule you out of the competition; however, research shows statistically that students with several withdrawals do not achieve high academic rigor. As a result, a student nominee with more than a couple of unexplained withdrawals will not typically advance in competition. Judges will view your course information over the history of your college attendance.

The discussion questions posed are structured to give judges a sense of your background. The program is open to part-time as well as full-time students, so the answers to discussion questions give the judges a sense of your commitments outside of school so that your achievements can be seen in context. The questions should not be interpreted to mean that you must have overcome obstacles or be somehow disadvantaged in order to be named to the All-USA Academic Team.

Questions?

Contact scholarship.programs@ptk.org.

All-USA Academic Team Nominator Guide

Thank you for considering nominating students to the 2018-2019 All-USA Academic Team! Please read the following carefully even if you have nominated students in the past.

Who to Nominate

Nominees may be pursuing an associate degree, career or technical certificate, or intend to transfer to the four-year school. The All-USA Academic Team is a merit award based on the students' accomplishments while pursuing their associate degree or certificate. Judging criteria include academic excellence and intellectual rigor; leadership and service; and how students have extended their education beyond the classroom to benefit society. In selecting nominees to represent your institution, nominators are asked to consider outstanding academic rigor and grade point averages; participation in honors programs; awards, honors, and recognition for academic achievement; and service to the college and community. The nominees you select may be considered role models on your campus. Consider students in which you would be proud to represent your college.

Leadership Considerations

The centerpiece of the nomination is the 500-word essay describing the nominee's most significant endeavor since attending college in which the student applied his or her academic or intellectual skills learned during their college experience to benefit the school, community or society. Judges look for innovative, creative, original and lasting achievements or undertakings. It can be in community service, in research, the arts, journalism or public affairs. Students who have demonstrated leadership and initiative in service learning, who contributed to scholarly research, or who have made lasting contributions to your campus or community may make excellent candidates. If endeavors are not yet complete, they must be far enough along so that the nominee and recommender can discuss the specifics of work done thus far.

Academic Considerations

The program is an "Academic" team as well, so the student's academic record is important. Judges look at the overall academic record and how well students' courses match their career goals. The application allows students to explain circumstances that may have affected their transcript(s), so students with several withdrawals or a temporary drop in grades should not necessarily be ruled out. However, carefully consider those students with several withdrawals as statistically they do not achieve high academic rigor. As a result, a nominee with more than a couple of unexplained withdrawals will not typically advance in competition. To ensure a quality applicant, it is wise to review a nominee's transcript in advance for both academic breadth and depth.

The discussion questions posed are structured to give judges a sense of the nominee's background. The program is open to part-time as well as full-time students, so the answers to discussion questions give the judges a sense of the student's background and commitments outside of school so that the student's achievements can be seen in context. The questions should not be interpreted to mean students must have overcome obstacles or be somehow disadvantaged in order to be named to the All-USA Academic Team.

Program Details

Nominees to the All-USA Academic Team may also be considered for the Coca-Cola Academic Team, New Century Pathway Scholarship programs, and All-State Academic Teams where applicable. Nominator instructions are emailed directly to nominators. If you do not receive login instructions by October 1st, check your spam folder, and call the Scholarship team at 601.987.5741.

How to Change the Nominator at Your School:

Each year Phi Theta Kappa will contact the college president or CEO and nominator from the previous year to determine the individual who will serve as the college/campus nominator for the current year. If a response is not received, the college president or CEO is automatically designated as the nominator. Nomination instructions and login information will be sent directly to the designated nominator. The college president can change their designated nominator [here](#).

How to Nominate a Student

In order to increase the quantity and quality of student applications, the All-USA Academic Team program is open to all eligible students. This increases the number of applicants received and provides a greater variety of student representation from which to choose. Each college may self-select a total of four students per campus (2 transferring by fall 2019 and 2 entering the workforce prior to fall 2019) to nominate for the program.

Nominators may view a grid of their students who have started an application. This grid will include Status and Action icons that will allow nominators to view or track the student's application status. By hovering over the Action icons with their cursor, nominators will be able to view the function of each icon.

One change to the application this year is that students are only required to upload one letter of recommendation speaking to their leadership accomplishments as well as civic involvement. Applications submitted without the uploaded letter of recommendation will be considered incomplete. It is the student's responsibility to request and upload the letter of recommendation before the application deadline.

If the college would like to build in more time to review and determine nominees prior to the deadline, please consider establishing and publicizing an earlier internal deadline for completion of student applications.

Important Considerations

Nominees must realize anything they submit in the application could be made public through the media. Students must consider carefully the possibility that should they win, publicity about their accomplishments – work with support groups or advocacy, for example – could carry implications about their personal lives or immigration status. In fairness to all nominees, and because winners' forms are used as the basis for news coverage of the teams, contents are subject to fact-checking. Please note that all nominees will be required to go through a verification process. As a nominator, you are requested to notify Phi Theta Kappa if a nominee faces any type of disciplinary action during the time between nomination and public awarding at the AACC Convention and/or the Association of Community College Trustees Congress.

Transcripts are evaluated when a student's application is received, and GPAs are evaluated at the point of submission. Remedial or developmental courses are removed and are not counted toward the student's required total courses or toward the cumulative GPA. If there is a question about the student's grades or credits and whether they are eligible, it may benefit the student to have the transcript evaluated prior to submission. All nominees must send transcripts reflecting fall 2018 grades and credits upon request. Failure to submit these transcripts will result in the application being eliminated from consideration of national scholarships.

Should your student be selected as an All-USA Academic Team Scholar or New Century Transfer Pathway Scholar, your college is responsible for covering the scholar's travel and accommodation expenses to the recognition program held at the AACC Convention. Should your student be selected as a New Century Workforce Pathway Scholar, attendance at the Association of Community College Trustees' (ACCT) Congress where scholars will be recognized is not required. If the student chooses to attend this event, travel expenses are the responsibility of the student and/or college.

Questions?

Contact scholarship.programs@ptk.org.