

USC Office of Academic Programs

Norman Topping Student Aid Fund

2024-2025 Exceptional Funding Overview

Purpose

In keeping with the spirit of the Norman Topping Student Aid Fund (NTSAF) to offer educational equity opportunities to Scholars and Fellows, the Exceptional Funding Program provides additional/supplemental financial assistance to Scholars and Fellows as they advance in their chosen field of study. Exceptional Funding encourages Scholars and Fellows to take full advantage of University-sponsored opportunities to enhance their higher education experience.

Eligibility

Topping Scholars and Fellows in **good standing** with the Fund may be approved for Exceptional Funding. (For more information regarding good standing, please consult your 2024-2025 NTSAF Agreement.)

Scholars must have completed 30 units over the past two semesters at USC prior to applying for Exceptional Funding. Fellows must have completed 8 units over the past semester before applying for Exceptional Funding (units may vary for Fellows).

Types of Exceptional Funding Available

Scholars & Fellows may be awarded up to one (1) request from each eligible category. The following types of Exceptional Funding are available through the NTSAF (**The minimum request amount for all Exceptional Funding is \$500.**):

- Academic Travel (available to Scholars & Fellows)

Academic Travel can include transportation and lodging related to the following:

 - Academic programs, service-learning opportunities, leadership conferences, academic conferences, and short-term programs (i.e., ASB, GLP, LINC, Maymesters, etc.).
 - *Note: Travel to/from internships are **not** considered academic travel.*
 - Maximum travel allowances: **\$2,000 for domestic & \$2,500 for international**
- Examination Fees (available to Scholars & Fellows)
 - Maximum Examination Fee allowance: **\$2,000**
- Preparatory Courses (available to Scholars & Fellows)
 - Maximum Examination Fee allowance: **\$2,000**
- Progressive Degree Program Grant (available to Scholars)
 - Scholars who complete their Bachelor's degree in four (4) years and have been accepted into a Progressive Degree Program that will allow them to earn their Master's degree in their fifth year are eligible for this funding.
 - Students must submit an approved course plan from their Academic Advisor.
 - If approved, students will automatically be moved to Fellow status for their fifth year and receive up to \$10,000 for their NTSAF award.
- Summer Tuition (available to Scholars)

Summer Tuition funding is intended for Scholars who need one (1) USC course to complete their undergraduate degree, up to four (4) units. Students pursuing multiple programs of study (including a minor) do not qualify for Summer Tuition funding.

Process for Application & Approval

Exceptional Funding approval will follow the following process:

1. Students must confirm there is space in their Financial Aid package by checking their FAST Portal.
 - a. If no space is available, students must submit a budget increase through the FAST Portal.
2. Students must apply for NTSAF Exceptional Funding online through Scholarship Universe.
 - a. Applications are due the first Sunday of the month (September through April).

September 8th	October 6th	November 3rd	December 8th*
January 12th**	February 2nd	March 2nd***	April 6th

** December 8th is the deadline for the Progressive Degree Program Grant*

*** January 12th is the Sunday before the start of the Spring semester*

**** March 2nd is the deadline for Summer Tuition Grants*

- b. All requests for Academic Travel must be submitted at least six (6) weeks prior to the date of travel.
 - c. All requests for Preparatory Courses must be submitted at least six (6) weeks prior to the start of the course.
3. Exceptional Funding applications will be reviewed by the appropriate NSTAF Governing Board Committee within two (2) weeks of the submission deadline.
 - a. The NTSAF Programming Committee reviews requests for Academic Travel, Examination Fees, and Preparatory Courses.
 - b. The NSTAF Executive Committee reviews requests for the Progressive Degree Program Grant and Summer Tuition.
4. If approved for Exceptional Funding, funds will be added directly to the student's Financial Aid account. Financial Aid will disperse funds according to their normal process.

For questions regarding the Exceptional Funding Process, please email ntsaf@usc.edu or schedule a meeting with Dr. Rick Trevino, NTSAF Director.