



## **U.S. SOUTH PACIFIC SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

The U.S. South Pacific Scholarship Program (USSP), authorized by the U.S. Congress and funded by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State, is a competitive, merit-based scholarship program that provides opportunities for bachelor's and master's degree studies at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM). The Program will include a mentoring component with the possibility of a follow-on summer internship, and readily accessible opportunities for participation in host family and volunteer service programs. Candidates from the following countries, who meet specific selection criteria, are eligible for the program: **Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu**. The USSP Scholarship Program is administered by the East-West Center (EWC) on behalf of its funder, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

### **Program Objectives**

The Program provides educational opportunities for academically talented individuals from South Pacific countries to pursue bachelor's or master's degree studies at UH Mānoa in fields that are directly relevant to development needs in the Pacific Islands region. The Program is also intended to provide participants opportunities to obtain a broader understanding of the United States.

### **Eligibility Requirements**

- Bachelor's degree applicants must have completed secondary school by the deadline for submitting a university application for admission to their undergraduate program. In some countries this means having completed "Form 6." In other countries, this may mean having completed "Grade 12." **Note:** "Form 6" is not a EWC form that you must complete and return to the EWC.
- Individuals who have completed some undergraduate level courses but have not obtained the equivalent of a U.S. bachelor's degree, are also eligible and strongly encouraged to apply for a USSP bachelor's scholarship; certain courses may be transferrable. Individuals who have already received the equivalent of a four-year United States bachelor's degree **are not eligible** to apply for bachelor's degree study but may apply for the bridging program leading to a master's degree.
- Master's degree applicants must have completed at least a three-year baccalaureate program. Those with a three-year bachelor's degree may apply for a bridging program of up to one year, which, upon completion, allows for application to a master's degree program. Master's programs may not require a bridging component, depending on prior study and academic performance during the first year. The USSP program does not generally permit direct application and admission to a graduate degree program. Those who currently possess both a bachelor's degree and a post-graduate diploma or honors degree or will have earned a post-graduate diploma or honors degree before the scholarship's August start date, are strongly encouraged to apply.
- Applicants must be citizens of one of the sovereign Pacific Island countries listed above. Individuals who have dual citizenship, one of which is from the United States, **are not eligible**. U.S. non-citizen nationals and U.S. permanent residents are also **not eligible** for USSP.

- Because an objective of the program is to provide an educational exchange experience to those not previously afforded such an opportunity, preference will usually be given to candidates who have not had recent extensive experience in the United States. Preference may also be given to candidates who have not had extensive opportunities for study at educational institutions outside the Pacific Islands region (i.e., outside the countries listed in paragraph one above).
- Scholarship recipients must meet the requirements of the Exchange Visitor (J-1) visa program.
- Participants are expected to return home following the conclusion of this scholarship award to complete the J1 visa two-year home residency requirement and to share the knowledge and experience they have acquired during the program with those in their home countries.

### **U.S. Baccalaureate Degree**

Scholarships are available on a competitive basis to individuals who wish to pursue bachelor's degree study in the United States. Awards are given initially for a one year period but will be reviewed annually and may be extended up to a maximum of four years. Bachelor's degree candidates will enroll in a four-year undergraduate program offered at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. The program may be completed in less time if the student has transferrable courses from another university. USSP bachelor's award recipients may not continue under this scholarship funding to pursue a master's or doctoral degree program in the United States; upon completion of the bachelor's degree, they must return to their home countries.

### **Bridging Program Leading to a U.S. Master's Degree**

Scholarships are available on a competitive basis to individuals who have successfully completed a three- or four-year bachelor's degree, or both a bachelor's degree and a post-graduate diploma or honors degree, and who are interested in pursuing a master's degree at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Awards are given initially for one year of coursework. During this period, scholarship recipients are given the opportunity to qualify for application to an eligible master's degree program offered at the UH Mānoa campus. Applicants will receive additional scholarship support contingent upon being admitted into a UH Mānoa master's degree program.

Some master's programs may not require a bridging component, depending on prior study, academic progress and performance during the first year, and departmental application deadlines. Thus, a master's program may take between two and three years to complete. USSP master's award recipients may not continue under this scholarship funding to pursue a doctoral degree in the United States; upon completion of the master's degree, they must return to their home countries.

### **Cultural, Educational, and Professional Enrichment Component**

In addition to degree study, USSP students participate in educational, cultural enrichment and leadership training activities at the East-West Center. Enrichment programming may include lectures, group discussions, seminars, and projects designed to help participants develop a broader understanding of the United States and shared concerns facing the United States, the Pacific, and Asia. At the East-West Center, a weekly Wednesday Evening Seminar brings in renowned experts on a variety of themes relevant to the needs of the South Pacific. Informal and structured opportunities to enhance leadership skills and cross-cultural awareness at the East-West Center and UH Mānoa are numerous including local community service projects, student-organized events and activities, and mentoring and host family program involvement. Scholarship recipients are required to enroll in academic courses during their university's summer term and/or engage in other approved activities of direct relevance to their programs of study.

### **Eligible Fields of Study**

Priority areas of study are agriculture, business, communication/journalism, education, environmental studies, gender studies, NGO management, political science, public administration, public health, STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, mathematics), and other related fields. If a desired area of study is not among the priorities, the applicant should give special attention to explaining how this course of study would support the

goals of the program. Support is not available for professional degrees such as architecture, law, and medicine. Bachelor's and Master's degree scholarship recipients will be placed at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa campus.

Therefore, applicants should carefully study the degree program list at the appropriate university link below and select the one that most closely matches their academic and career goals:

- UH Mānoa Bachelor's degrees: <https://manoa.hawaii.edu/undergrad/advising/majors/>
- UH Mānoa Master's degrees: <http://manoa.hawaii.edu/graduate/content/graduate-programs>

### **Selection Process**

Selection will be made by a U.S.-based academic review committee that may include Pacific Islands and other specialists from the East-West Center, the University of Hawai'i system, a representative of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, and a Pacific Islands student representative. In selecting scholarship awardees, the review committee will consider academic merit as well as other attributes including evidence of leadership potential and experience; civic engagement including volunteer community service; cross-cultural knowledge, experience and sensitivity; capacity for change; adaptability; ability to pursue independent study; career potential and employment history; English language proficiency; creativity; initiative; self-expression; and, anticipated kinds of post-graduation contributions to home country and region. Preference may be given to those with little or no previous U.S. or other international study experience.

### **Award Provisions and Conditions**

Scholarship recipients will receive the following:

- Tuition and fees payable to the University of Hawai'i.
- Housing in a student residence hall.
- Monthly allowance for food, clothing, and incidental expenses.
- Health insurance in accordance with Exchange Visitor (J-1 visa) regulations.
- An initial settling-in allowance.
- An annual book allowance.
- Initial and terminal transportation to all official activity sites.
- A mentoring program with the possible opportunity of arranging a follow-on summer internship.

This scholarship is subject to U.S. Federal government taxes as well as to State of Hawaii government taxes. Payment of taxes is the responsibility of the student.

**Note:** The USSP scholarship covers the costs of the scholarship recipients' study, travel, and living expenses. The USSP scholarship does **not** cover any dependent (spouse or children) costs. Applicants with dependents should inquire about the scholarship's policy on bringing dependents to the United States by writing: [USSP@EastWestCenter.org](mailto:USSP@EastWestCenter.org)

### **Visa**

Scholarship recipients are required to come to the United States on the Exchange Visitor (J-1) visa and are subject to all provisions of the Exchange Visitor Program. The intent of the Exchange Visitor Program is to have

participants return to their home countries upon program completion to share and apply the knowledge and experience gained during their program. Exchange visitors on U.S. Department of State sponsorship are required to return to their home country for an aggregate period of two years after completing their exchange visitor program per Section 212(e). For further information on the J-1 Exchange Visitor visa including the two year home country physical presence requirement see: [www.eastwestcenter.org/j1visitor](http://www.eastwestcenter.org/j1visitor)

Applicants must apply online at: **USSP Application Procedures**  
<https://www.eastwestcenter.org/apply/us-south-pacific-scholarship-program>

### **Application Deadline**

- A complete application must be **received** by the EWC Registrar's Office at the East-West Center **no later than January 15, 2024 (Hawaii Standard Time)**.

### **Online Application Hints**

- Try to work on your application during **off-peak hours** when internet speeds are highest (e.g., after business hours, later in the evening or at nighttime, on weekends and holidays).
- The online USSP application uses a Submittable platform. It is recommended that you create a Submittable **Username** and **Password** so you can login/logout of your application and be able to save what you have completed at the end of each visit. That way you don't have to finish your entire application in one sitting.
- If the internet browser you are using has difficulty opening the Submittable USSP application, then **try using another browser**. For example, if you're using Google Chrome and encounter problems opening the USSP application, then try using Mozilla Firefox or Microsoft Internet Explorer.

### **Award Decisions and Start Dates**

USSP Scholarship award decisions will be announced on the East-West Center website [www.eastwestcenter.org/ussp](http://www.eastwestcenter.org/ussp). Scholarship awards will begin in **early August 2024**.

### **Inquiries**

Email inquiries may be addressed to: [USSP@EastWestCenter.org](mailto:USSP@EastWestCenter.org)

Individuals should note their (1) country of citizenship and permanent residence, (2) educational level to date, and (3) intended field of study when inquiring in order to facilitate a quick and more accurate response.

### **Having Trouble Using the USSP Online Application?**

If a prospective applicant experiences problems with the Online Application that s/he is unable to resolve, the EWC Registrar's Office should be contacted for assistance. It will be important to provide a detailed explanation of the obstacles encountered. The EWC Registrar's officer in charge of USSP applications will work directly with the individual to find a solution to her/his Online Application difficulties. For help with such issues, prospective USSP applicants can initiate contact via: *Email:* [USSP@EastWestCenter.org](mailto:USSP@EastWestCenter.org)

*Telephone:* (808) 944-7738

*Mail Service:* East-West Center

Registrar's Office/USSP  
1601 East-West Road  
Honolulu, HI 96848-1601 USA

Samples of the USSSP Application are also available at U.S. embassies or consulates located in Suva, **Fiji**; Auckland or Wellington, **New Zealand**; Port Moresby, **Papua New Guinea**; and Apia, **Samoa**; All requests should reference the 2023 U.S. South Pacific Scholarship Program competition.

### **Supporting Documents**

- If you have a passport, include a legible copy of the biodata page of your passport from one of the eleven eligible countries (biodata = the page that shows name, date of birth, and issue / expiration dates of the passport). If you do not have a passport, please include a copy of another government-issued identification card (birth certificate, national ID card, driver's license).
- Three references from academic, professional, or other referees who are familiar with the applicant's academic abilities, civic engagement, and leadership potential. The references **must be** completed on the East-West Center's USSSP Letter of Reference form, and should be uploaded separately to your application or email to the Registrar's Office by the individual providing the reference. These letters must meet the deadline requirements stated above. Please see the "Tips for an Acceptable USSSP Application" document.
- **Bachelor's degree applicants:** A certified original or certified photocopy of official academic records from:
- **High School:** Transcripts, Form 6 examination results and if available Form 7 results, Bursary examination results, and any other pertinent examination results or certificates (e.g., PSSC)
- **Prior University Enrollment:** Transcripts, degree certificates.

An official academic record bears the actual inked signature of a school official in charge of maintaining academic records and the embossed seal or stamp of the issuing school and has been sent directly to the East-West Center by that school.

- **Master's degree applicants:** A certified original or certified photocopy of academic records (transcripts and if earned degree certificates) from all previous universities or colleges attended. Official transcripts and degree certificates must bear the actual signature of a staff person in charge of academic records and the school's embossed seal or official stamp and must be sent in sealed school envelopes by the issuing school directly to the East-West Center.
- TOEFL or IELTS test scores if available. If you do not have a TOEFL or IELTS test score, you may still apply for the USSSP scholarship.
- Applicants who are re-applying for the USSSP scholarship may request that their letters of recommendation, submitted within the past **two years only**) be used for the current 2023 USSSP Scholarship Competition. However, a new 2023 USSSP application form and updated answers to the essay questions will be required for scholarship consideration.