Educating Vertical Flight Leaders of Tomorrow

VERTICAL FLIGHT FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP ELIGIBILITY & APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

The Vertical Flight Foundation (VFF) scholarships are awarded solely on merit to exceptional college students who demonstrate a strong interest in pursuing engineering careers in vertical flight technology. These scholarships, ranging from $4,000 to $6,000 (USD), are funded entirely through tax-deductible donations to the Foundation's endowment.

The program is open to full-time students enrolled at accredited colleges or universities anywhere in the world, regardless of nationality.

The top-ranked applicant each year is awarded the prestigious **$6,000 Bell Scholarship**, funded through a dedicated VFF endowment established by Bell. Additionally, the **Jing Yen Cost Awareness Scholarship**—also valued at $6,000—is awarded to the applicant who best demonstrates a deep understanding of and commitment to improving the affordability of vertical flight. This award is generously funded by Dr. Jing Yen.

How to Apply: It is preferred that students apply online at VFF Scholarship Information – the online application usually opens in December. Or download a PDF copy of the VFF application at VFF Scholarship Information. **Please read the eligibility and application requirements carefully and thoroughly before applying.**

Eligibility: To qualify for a Vertical Flight Foundation (VFF) scholarship, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- **Field of Study**: Must be enrolled in a program related to vertical flight engineering or a closely related technical discipline (e.g., complex aeronautics or aviation systems).
- ***Students pursuing degrees outside traditional vertical flight fields will receive equal consideration if their studies are relevant.***
- **Academic Status**:
  - Must be a full-time student at the time of application (February).
  - Must be enrolled in a relevant engineering degree program for at least one academic term following the award, which is presented at the Society's Annual Forum in May.
  - High school students are not eligible.
- **Award Limits**: A student may receive a VFF scholarship once per academic level—once as an undergraduate, once as a master's student, and once as a doctoral student.
- **Jing Yen Cost Awareness Scholarship**: To be considered for this special $6,000 award, applicants must clearly demonstrate a strong understanding of and commitment to improving the affordability of vertical flight. This should be addressed in both the applicant's personal narrative and resume.

Degree Eligibility

Undergraduate / Bachelor's (BS) Degree: To be eligible in this category, applicants must meet the following criteria.

- Be currently pursuing an eligible undergraduate engineering degree.
- Have at least **one academic term remaining** in their undergraduate program after the scholarship awards are presented at the Annual Forum in May 2027.
- **Students graduating with a BS degree in May 2027 are not eligible**.
- Seniors graduating in May 2027 who have been accepted into a graduate program (MS or combined MS/PhD) should **apply under the Master's (MS) category**.

Master of Science (MS) Degree: To be eligible in this category, applicants must meet all of the following criteria.

- Currently
    - Enrolled in a qualifying Master of Science (MS) engineering program, OR
    - Accepted into and planning to undertake a qualifying Master of Science engineering program
- Have at least **one academic term remaining** in their MS program after the scholarship awards are presented at the Annual Forum in May 2027.
- Students enrolled in a **combined MS/PhD program** are eligible to apply in the MS category **if**:
    - They have not yet passed their PhD qualifying exams as of the application deadline in February and
    - **Have not previously earned an MS degree**.

Doctoral (PhD) Degree: To be eligible in this category, applicants must meet all of the following criteria.

- Currently:
    - Enrolled in a PhD program in an eligible engineering discipline, OR
    - Accepted into and planning to undertake in a PhD engineering program.
- Must either:
    - Already hold an MS engineering degree, OR
    - Be enrolled in a combined MS/PhD program and have **formally met doctoral candidacy requirements** (for example passing qualifying or comprehensive exams) by the application deadline in February.
- Have at least **one academic term remaining** in their PhD program after the scholarship awards are presented at the Annual Forum in May 2027.

Scholarship Application Requirements

To be considered for review, an application package must include all of the following:

- Scholarship Application Form
- Personal Narrative
- Resume
- Official University/School Transcript*
- Letter of Recommendation from a Professor*

Important:
- Transcripts and letters of recommendation must be sent directly from the issuing institution or the recommending professor.
- Transcripts or letters provided by the applicant will not be accepted or reviewed.

Narrative: Your narrative is a vital part of your application and should provide insight into your passion, goals, and perspective. This is your opportunity to go beyond your résumé and tell your story in your own voice and clearly address the following:

- Do not simply restate your résumé or submit a research abstract.
- Your passion for **aeronautics**, **aeronautical engineering**, **complex aviation systems**, and especially **vertical flight technology**.
- How your academic pursuits and career goals align with and support this passion.
- Your **unique perspective**, specific interests, and relevant experiences related to key challenges and opportunities within the vertical flight community—such as **affordability**, **innovation**, or **emerging technologies**.
- If you wish to be considered for the **$6,000 Jing Yen Cost Awareness Scholarship**, your narrative must **explicitly demonstrate** a strong understanding of the importance of **affordability in vertical flight** and provide thoughtful insights into how it can be improved.

Résumé: Applicants must submit a résumé and can use **any format they prefer**.

- Be **accurate, concise**, include page numbers
- Submit as a PDF or Word document.

Transcript Guidelines: An official transcript reflecting your most recent academic term is required for your application to be considered. Please follow the instructions below carefully:

- The transcript must include grades from your **most recent academic term**.
- You may **optionally** include transcripts from previous academic years, but they are **not required**.
- The transcript must be sent **directly from your university's Office of the Registrar** to the VFF Coordinator at **jmgibbs@vtol.org**.
- Transcripts may be submitted via **mail** or through a **secure electronic delivery link** (preferred).
- Transcripts submitted by the applicant will not be accepted or reviewed.
- If your transcript is not in English, you must submit:
    - An **official English translation**, and
    - A **signed letter from a professor** confirming the accuracy of the translation.
- Received by **February 1, 2027**.

Letter of Recommendation: At least **one letter of recommendation** is required from a professor who is familiar with your coursework and academic performance. The letter must:

- Be written on **official university letterhead**
- Be **signed by the professor**
- Be sent **directly** to the VFF Coordinator at **jmgibbs@vtol.org**
- Be received **no later than February 1, 2027**
- Letters **submitted by the student** will **not** be accepted under any circumstances.
- The professor should include a brief evaluation of how you compare to other students they have taught throughout their career. R*efer to the "Faculty/Professor" information below*

Optional Additional Letters:

- You may submit **additional letters of recommendation** from other professors or individuals outside of academia (e.g., an industry mentor, research advisor, or internship supervisor).
- However, these **do not replace** the required letter from a professor.

Professor Content Guidelines: The letter of recommendation is a critical component of the VFF Scholarship selection process. To ensure your letter provides meaningful insight into the applicant's qualifications, please follow the guidelines below:

- You should have **direct knowledge** of the student's **coursework and academic performance**.
- Include a **comparative evaluation** of the student's performance relative to all students you have taught over the course of your **entire academic career** (not just those in a single class or year).
- Clearly indicate where the student ranks—for example, **top 5%, 10%, or 25%** of students you've instructed.
- Highlight any **notable qualities, accomplishments, or circumstances** that distinguish the student from their peers (e.g., research, leadership, innovation, resilience, or technical skills).
- Be written on official university letterhead.
- Must be signed and sent directly to the VFF Coordinator at **jmgibbs@vtol.org** by **February 1, 2027**.

Other information

- Applications will be reviewed by the VFF Scholarship Review Committee.
- Scholarship recipients will be notified by the VFF Coordinator in the March/April timeframe and all decisions are final.
- VFF documents, including the online application or application (PDF) can be found at VFF Scholarship Information.

Selection Criteria

- Experience (work history, research, paper publications from resume) 35%
- Narrative – 25%
- Letter(s) of Recommendation – 20%
- Academics – 10%
- Extra Curricula Activities – 10%