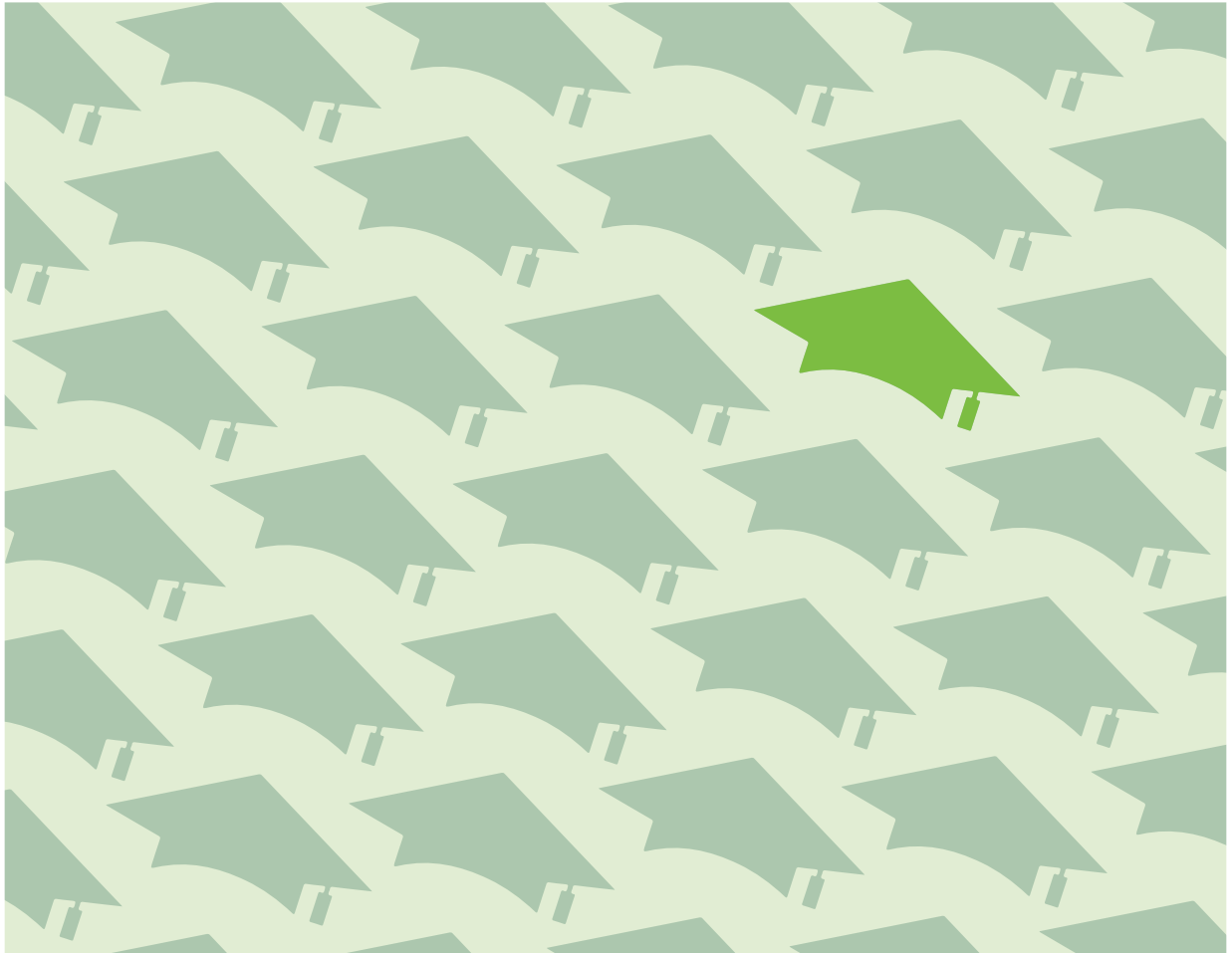


UT PROMISE



STUDENT HANDBOOK

Dear UT Promise Student,

Congratulations on successfully completing all of the steps to become a UT Promise scholarship recipient! UT Promise will serve as a great tool to help you succeed throughout your college career and beyond, and we are excited you will join us in the inaugural year of the UT Promise program.

I often talk about making this the greatest decade in UT history. In order to do this, we are committed to our mission of being accessible to those who dream of earning a college degree. UT Promise is one way in which we can achieve this mission.

By offering this scholarship, we are helping to ensure more students have the opportunity to access higher education and receive a college degree. We don't want to measure ourselves by who we exclude; we want to measure ourselves by who we include.

Our students are at the very heart of this University, and we are committed to serving you throughout your collegiate journey. This handbook has been thoughtfully developed to help guide you through the UT Promise scholarship program. It provides guidance on how to maintain your eligibility, guidelines for community service and deadlines you'll need to remember, as well as requirements and tips for your critically important relationship with your mentor.

The keys to success are really quite simple – be proactive, be present and stay up to date with upcoming deadlines both for UT Promise and your classes. Rest assured that we will walk alongside you and support you as you journey through your college experience as a UT Promise student.

We are thrilled to have you at one of our UT campuses this fall and cannot wait to see what the future will hold for you.

A white, handwritten signature of Randy Boyd on a dark green background. The signature is stylized and appears to be 'Randy Boyd'.

**Randy Boyd, President
University of Tennessee**



For assistance, contact Ashton Braddock, UT Promise Coordinator, at utpromise@tennessee.edu.

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UT Promise Info.



UT Promise is an undergraduate scholarship program guaranteeing free tuition and mandatory fees for qualifying Tennessee residents attending UT's campuses in Knoxville, Chattanooga, Martin and Memphis.

Launching in fall 2020, this innovative scholarship will cover a student's last-dollar amount of tuition and mandatory fees after other financial aid is applied (such as Pell grants, HOPE Scholarship or other institutional scholarships) to students who qualify for HOPE and whose family household income is under \$50,000 a year.

Family household income is defined as “the accurate, verifiable total combined amount of parent and student adjusted gross income and untaxed income of less than \$50,000, AND a total maximum asset amount of less than \$75,000, as defined on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

UT Promise is a student-success scholarship program. As a UT scholarship recipient, each semester you are required to complete eight (8) community service hours and work with a volunteer mentor to ensure a successful experience.

This handbook serves as a guide to you as you complete your scholarship requirements and provides information on your role as the UT scholarship recipient.

CONTACT US

If you need any assistance or guidance with your UT Promise scholarship experience, please contact Ashton Braddock, UT Promise Coordinator, at utpromise@tennessee.edu.

PARTNERSHIPS

tnAchieves is a nonprofit partnering organization to both the TN Promise and UT Promise. tnAchieves works directly with high school students as they complete the scholarship requirements prior to enrollment at UT, including attending mandatory meetings, completing the FAFSA, working with a mentor and submitting community service hours.

What does last-dollar mean? What will UT Promise cover?

Last-dollar programs consider any additional public funding or grants that the student is eligible for, like a federal Pell Grant. The amount of last-dollar funding that will cover the tuition and mandatory fees will vary from student to student as it will depend on other public funding for which the student is eligible.

UT Promise covers the last-dollar amount of tuition and mandatory fees. UT Promise does not pay for books or other post-secondary expenses, including, but not limited to, program of study fees (course fees/differential fees), late registration fees, housing fees, meal plan fees, etc.

Below is an example of how UT Promise will cover the last-dollar amount for three different students. These examples are based on an average of UT's campuses' tuition costs, but do not reflect actual costs:

	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3
Tuition & Mandatory Fees	\$11,000	\$11,000	\$11,000
Program of Study	\$600	\$0	\$0
HOPE	-\$3,500	-\$3,500	-\$3,500
Pell Grant	-\$6,000	-\$4,000	-\$2,000
Institutional Scholarship	-\$0	-\$1,500	-\$1,500
Total Cost after Financial Aid	\$2,100	\$2,000	\$4,000
UT Promise	-\$1,500	-\$2,000	-\$4,000
Student Pays*	\$600	\$0	\$0

* Students will still be responsible for covering any costs beyond tuition and mandatory fees such as book expenses and room/board.

Student Guidelines

Maintaining Eligibility

Once you begin college, you still have to meet requirements to maintain your UT Promise eligibility! See the list below for a few to keep in mind:



Complete and Submit 8 Hours of Community Service Before Each Deadline

Eight community service hours must be submitted by the established deadline prior to each semester. Community service hours do not roll over from the previous semester.



Complete Mentoring Requirements Before Each Deadline

Three meetings with your mentor must be completed by the established deadline prior to each semester. Mandatory meeting requirements do not roll over from the previous semester.



File the FAFSA by the Established Deadline Each Year

Submit your FAFSA at www.fafsa.gov by the established deadline. The FAFSA opens Oct. 1 every year. If selected for financial aid verification, you must complete verification by your UT campus' priority date each year.



Enroll as a Full-Time Student Each Semester

You must maintain enrollment in at least 12 credit hours each semester. You must also maintain continuous enrollment. Remember, in order to maintain full-time enrollment, you must attend and participate in all courses. Failure to attend class could result in the loss of your UT Promise eligibility.



Maintain the Tennessee HOPE Scholarship

You must maintain the minimum GPA requirement and make satisfactory academic progress to keep the HOPE scholarship. If you lose HOPE, you will also lose UT Promise. You can regain the HOPE scholarship once. Visit the TN HOPE website for more information on HOPE requirements.



Continue to Check Your University Email

You will receive regular email communications from UT Promise, so be sure to check your email often.

Community Service



Eight hours of community service MUST be completed and submitted by the established deadline prior to each semester!

Why?

Community service is a way to give back to your community, to become involved and to foster a mindset of bettering our communities! It is also a great way to meet new people and learn about your community.

What?

Community service is time contributed to a nonprofit or public service organization. The community should be benefitting from the work you do! Make sure you are not being paid and you are being supervised by someone who is not a family member. Students can volunteer with more than one organization to meet their eight-hour requirement. Travel time to and from destinations does not count as service. Make sure your service aligns with your UT campus service guidelines.

YES! That counts!	NO! That does NOT count!
Volunteering at an animal shelter	Job shadowing*
Tutoring at a school or community center	Tutoring your friend or grade school neighbor
Participating in an environmental cleanup day	Picking up trash on a hike
Volunteering on a service-oriented trip	Volunteering for academic credit
Volunteering for race registration	Paying to run in a race
Serving meals at a homeless shelter	Raising money for the homeless shelter
Doing laundry for nursing home residents	Donating blood*
Helping setup and take down an event	Attending a philanthropy event

* Please note that job shadowing and donating blood were acceptable forms of community service for high school seniors completing service for UT Promise through tnAchieves; however, they will not count as acceptable forms of community service hours for UT Promise once enrolled at UT.

How?

- 1. Find an organization!** Looking for places to volunteer? Contact your appropriate campus office, local United Way or ask your mentor! Already have a place in mind? You are welcome to complete your hours anywhere that meets the requirements. You do not have to complete service in the city your campus is located in; you can serve in other cities, states or countries!
- 2. Complete at least eight hours!** Don't forget: Every service hour completed will be reviewed and verified by your UT campus service tracking administrators. Before you leave your service site, ask your supervisor for his/her name, email address and phone number so they can confirm you were there if needed.
- 3. Submit your form!** Visit your campus service tracking site and complete the service submission form entirely. You can find instructions and links to your campus service tracking site at utpromise.tennessee.edu.

List of Campus Service Tracking Sites:

UTK: <https://trackyourhours.utk.edu>

UTC: <https://www.utc.edu/financial-aid/utpromise.php>

UTM: my UTM Portal

UTHSC: <https://uthsc.edu/track-your-hours/>

**Having problems submitting the form?
Contact your campus service tracking site administrators.**

**Visit utpromise.tennessee.edu for contact information and instructions
on tracking service at your campus.**



IMPORTANT

Simply completing your community service before the deadline but failing to submit to your campus service tracker before the deadline will result in the loss of your UT Promise eligibility. Even one minute after the deadline will result in the loss of your UT Promise eligibility.

STUDENT TIP

Think about what you are interested in or care about before choosing a place to complete community service. Love animals? Volunteer at an animal shelter! Want to work in health care? Volunteer at a hospital to get a behind-the-scenes peek into your future career.

When?

Semester	Timeframe for Completion	Submission Deadline***
Spring 2021	July 2, 2020 - December 1, 2020	December 1, 2020 by 11:59 PM
Summer 2021*	December 2, 2020 - April 1, 2021	April 1, 2021 by 11:59 PM
Fall 2021	December 2, 2020 - July 1, 2021	July 1, 2021 by 11:59 PM
Spring 2022	July 2, 2021 - December 1, 2021	December 1, 2021 by 11:59 PM
Summer 2022*	December 2, 2021 - April 1, 2022	April 1, 2022 by 11:59 PM
Fall 2022	December 2, 2021 - July 1, 2022	July 1, 2022 by 11:59 PM
Spring 2023	July 2, 2022 - December 1, 2022	December 1, 2022 by 11:59 PM
Summer 2023*	December 2, 2021 - April 1, 2023	April 1, 2023 by 11:59 PM
Fall 2023	December 2, 2021 - July 1, 2023	July 1, 2023 by 11:59 PM
Spring 2024	July 2, 2023 - December 1, 2023	December 1, 2023 by 11:59 PM
Summer 2024	December 2, 2023- April 1, 2024	April 1, 2024 by 11:59 PM
Fall 2024	December 2, 2023 - July 1, 2024	July 1, 2024 by 11:59 PM *
Spring 2025	July 2, 2024 - December 1, 2024	December 1, 2024 by 11:59 PM

* Summer semester deadlines only apply to students choosing to enroll in at least 6 hours in a summer semester and utilizing HOPE. UT Promise will only cover tuition costs charged by UT.

- » **Community service hours must be submitted each semester and additional hours over the required eight hours cannot be carried over to the next semester. Hours must be completed and submitted within the timeframe given above.**
- » **Completing your community service before the deadline but failing to submit to your UT service tracking site before the deadline will result in the loss of your UT Promise eligibility. Even one minute after the deadline will result in the loss of your UT Promise eligibility.**
- » **Make sure YOU submit your community service hours by the deadline. Do not rely on the organization or another person to complete this important step for you.**

Mentorship



Mentorship is a process in which an experienced individual helps another person develop his/her goals and skills through on-going, supportive one-on-one conversations and learning exercises. Being a mentor allows faculty/staff, alumni and friends of the University to give back in a meaningful way.

Our mission is to connect you with a mentor who will support your post-secondary journey by helping you navigate the college environment and preparing you for your transition from college to a rewarding career.

This mentoring program's purpose is to provide you with support in the form of one-on-one guidance, advice and insight from a mentor who may share similar experiences.

Role of the Mentee: Receive guidance and advice from a mentor in navigating the college environment, connecting to campus resources, developing career goals and transitioning into the workforce.

Role of the Mentor: Provide insight and guidance for the mentee based on personal experience in navigating the college environment and career and academic pursuits. Students should be receptive to guidance and support, and mentors should be invested in their students' success.

The student is...	The student is NOT...
Willing to engage and ask questions	Disengaged
Responsive to the mentor	Unresponsive
Thankful and kind	Unkind

A mentor is a(n)...	A mentor is NOT a(n)...
Resource	Academic Advisor
Encourager	Counselor
Supporter	Tutor

Mentor Platform

In fall 2020, you will be assigned a mentor as a part of maintaining your UT Promise scholarship. While you are welcome to meet with this mentor in person if available, the majority of your mentoring will take place through our UT Promise Mentor Platform. If you do meet in person, make sure to meet in a public place!

Platform Website: mentor.tennessee.edu

- » **Please do NOT try to sign up or create a profile until you receive an email from UT Promise asking you to do so. You will get an email with a link to sign up on the platform. If you create a profile before then, it cannot be approved.**

How to Create a Profile

After you receive an email with a sign-up link from UT Promise (utpromise@tennessee.edu), you will visit the UT Promise Mentor Platform and create your account. You will be prompted to activate your account. Make sure you click UT NetID to login, rather than Email. Then, complete the registration questions and profile information. We will use this information to match you with your mentor. Upon future visits to the site, click the Sign In button to login and begin.

Matching

The UT Promise Mentor Platform will use an algorithm to match students and mentors based on preferences, such as hobbies and passions, collegiate activities, social identities and industries. Mentees cannot request a certain mentor. You will be notified via email in early fall of the mentor whom you are matched. You should reach out to the mentor as soon as possible to schedule your first meeting.

Navigating the UT Promise Mentor Platform

The UT Promise Mentor Platform provides the ability to email, video chat, schedule meetings, post in discussion forums, review mentoring resources and connect with other mentors on the platform. While communication with your mentor can happen outside of the UT Promise Mentor Platform, it is imperative that you are familiar with the site.


Reference your Mentor Platform Navigation Guide PDF or User 101 videos inside the platform for a quick guide!

Mentee Responsibilities

As a UT Promise scholarship recipient, you will be required to meet with your mentor at least **three times a semester**. We recommend meeting each of these months:

Fall Semester					Spring Semester				
Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May

» **Students do not have to complete mentoring requirements for summer enrollment.**







IMPORTANT

You must complete your fall mentoring requirements by December 1 and spring mentoring requirements by July 1.

As a UT Promise scholarship recipient, it is your responsibility to engage with your mentor. This is a chance to learn how to develop meaningful relationships with mentors who can provide support and opportunities for you to grow in your education and career.

The UT Promise Mentor Platform makes it easy to communicate with your mentor, schedule meetings and meet via video chat in the platform! UT Promise will provide guided Pathways with conversation topics, discussion questions and resources all within the platform. All you have to do is follow along with your assigned Pathway! **For each month, we recommend you do the following:**

<p>1. </p> <p>Review the month's goal and pathway on the platform</p>	<p>2. </p> <p>Set up a time to meet with your mentor</p>	<p>3. </p> <p>Video chat or meet with your mentor in person</p>	<p>4. </p> <p>Ensure your mentor has checked off your goals</p>
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» **Make sure you check the UT Promise Mentor Platform to ensure your goals are checked off in the Inbox. Reach out to your mentor if they are not.**

In addition to completing the three mandatory meetings each semester with their mentor....

Students should also connect with their mentor when:

- They have a question.
- The mentor asks a question of them via email or text message.
- The student is excited/nervous/worried about a college experience.
- The student accomplishes a goal and wishes to share with his/her mentor!

Mentors should also connect with their student when:

- A UT Promise deadline is approaching.
- They have resources or opportunities that would assist the student.
- They know the student had a completed a test, interview, or something they were nervous or excited about.
- They wish to check in with the student to build a more meaningful relationship.

Mentors and students can also create their own goals to complete together or individually through the platform. Just click “Add Goal” in the goal section. Remember, adding or completing additional goals does not take the place of your required UT Promise goals. The only goals that count toward maintaining the UT Promise scholarship are the three mandatory meetings each semester.

Mentee Expectations

- » **Ask your mentor questions when you are confused or unsure about the process**
- » **Be respectful to your mentor and show up to meetings on time**
- » **Respond to emails and texts from your mentor**
- » **Reach out when you need help or when you want to celebrate**
- » **Update UT Promise if there are any problems or concerns**

Mentor/Mentee Communication

Before you meet with your mentor, you will communicate through email via the UT Promise Mentor Platform to introduce yourself and set-up a time to meet (either virtually or in person). Please be responsive to these emails. Below is an example of an email you might receive from your mentor and how you can respond.

Example of an Email from Your Mentor

Hi Jackson,

My name is **Thomas**, and I am your **UT Promise mentor**. Congratulations on being a UT Promise scholarship recipient! I am excited to connect with you and to walk with you throughout your collegiate journey.

In order for you to maintain your scholarship, we will need to meet at least three times a semester, but I am happy to connect more often if you need my support or assistance. Let's go ahead and schedule our first meeting for the semester. You can email me here with your availability or look at my calendar to find a time that works for both of us.

Looking forward to getting to know you! In the meantime, please let me know if you have any questions or need any support.

Sincerely,
Thomas

Example of an Email Reply to Your Mentor

Hi **Thomas**,

Thanks for contacting me. I am excited to meet you as well! No one in my family has been to college, so I am kind of nervous about the experience. I am thankful you have chosen to support me throughout this journey.

Does next Tuesday at 3pm work for us to have our first meeting via video chat on the UT Promise Mentor Platform?

I will see you soon!

Jackson

It is important that you always respond to mentors respectfully and in a timely manner. Your mentor is volunteering his or her time to assist you throughout your collegiate journey, so it is important that you engage with your mentor regularly. Ask your mentor questions when you are confused or unsure about the process. Seek their advice when you are applying for a leadership position on campus or crafting your resume. Do not be afraid to talk to your mentor- they are here to help you! Your mentor is only as effective as you allow him/her to be, so utilize them by connecting often.

**Always respond to your mentor's messages,
even if it's just a "Got it!" or "Thanks!"**

**Take a moment to let them know you got their message
or respond with a question if you have one.**

The UT Promise Mentor Platform is a safe place to communicate with your mentor that protects your privacy. Emails sent through the platform will go directly to the recipients' email platform's inbox.* However, if you feel comfortable, we do encourage you to share phone numbers. This will allow you to quickly check in with your mentor when you have things come up that you are nervous or excited about, like an interview or getting an A on a test. Your mentor will appreciate you reaching out to let them know how you are doing and will love getting to support and celebrate you along the way. To ensure a more successful mentoring relationship, you and your mentor should discuss expectations for the best methods and times to communicate at your first meeting.

* Please note that the UT Promise Mentor Platform's administrators will have access to all communication sent between mentor and mentees.



IMPORTANT

While emails and text messages are a great way to communicate quickly, check-in and schedule meetings, they do not count toward the 3 mandatory meetings per semester.

If a student or mentor ever encounters anything that gives them pause, they should reach out to UT Promise administrators at utpromise@tennessee.edu so the appropriate measures can be taken. In addition, if immediate action is needed, a student or mentor can report abuse and block their connection through the UT Promise platform by going to the message thread, clicking "Manage Conversation," and then click "Block User/Report Abuse."

Tips & Tricks



Connect with Your Mentor

Share your own life experiences

- You may be matched with mentors with similar identities, so we encourage you to be open about your own life experiences.

Find common interests

- Ask questions to determine what you have in common (like basketball, geography, music, a favorite TV show, etc.) and then enjoy sharing your passion for it with each other.

Communicate Effectively

Ask questions

- Ask your mentor questions about their experiences in college or in the workforce? They want to be a resource to you, so take time to learn about their experiences and ask for advice. Ask questions like: What do you know now that you wish you would have known in college? What are your best interview tips? How should I get involved on campus?

Practice active listening

- Listen to what your mentor says and ask clarifying questions. Show attentiveness and communicate respect through your nonverbal and verbal cues.

Set Clear Expectations and Boundaries

Establish communication guidelines

- Consider appropriate means and times for communicating. Is email, call or text better? When is the best time for your mentor to reach out? Set mutually beneficial guidelines early on.

Discuss the expectations for mentor/mentee meetings

- Do you have a preference on how often you meet or how you meet (in-person, video chat or phone call)? Who will be responsible for reaching out to set up meetings? Discuss and decide these things together.*

Respect each other

- Discuss attitudes and behaviors that demonstrate respect, such as showing up on time for meetings or not going beyond the allotted meeting time. You might encourage each other to always respond to email or texts, even with a simple thank you, so you know the communication was received and so you both stay engaged.

* Remember, the UT Promise Mentor Platform is a great place to email and video chat, and even if you meet in person, your mentor will still need to check off your goals in the platform.

Financial Aid Info.

Filing FAFSA Annually

Once you begin college, you still have to meet requirements to maintain your UT Promise eligibility! See the list below for a few to keep in mind:

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) serves as the application for federal Pell Grant; Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship (TELS), also known as the HOPE scholarship; and Tennessee Student Assistance Award (TSAA). In addition to this step being a UT Promise requirement, filing the FAFSA by the Feb. 1 established deadline increases the probability that eligible students will receive more aid.

- 1.** The FAFSA opens annually on Oct. 1. On or after this day, visit www.fafsa.gov. This is the official FAFSA website. **DO NOT complete the application at www.fafsa.com or any other website that asks you for a fee. FAFSA filing is free.**
- 2. DO NOT** submit the FAFSA prior to Oct. 1 of each year, or you will complete the wrong academic year's FAFSA. If you file the wrong year's FAFSA and do not file the correct academic year FAFSA by February 1 of each year, you will no longer be eligible for UT Promise.
- 3. Please make sure to select the UT campus you plan to attend as your first-choice school!** If you change your mind, you must log back into your FAFSA and change it so the correct campus can retrieve your information. You must also change your institution on the TSAC Portal.
- 4.** You will use the previous year's tax information on your FAFSA. For example, when filing the 2021-2022 FAFSA, you would use the 2019 tax return. If you and your parent(s)/guardian(s) have filed and completed your taxes for the previous year, you can select **I have filed my taxes** and answer the financial questions based on the previous year's taxes. If you or your parent(s)/guardian(s) have not completed the previous year's taxes at the time of FAFSA completion, you must select **I will file my taxes**, file the FAFSA based on estimations and later update your FAFSA with the filed tax information.
- 5.** Even if you are 18 years old, you will need your parent(s)/guardian(s)' information to complete the FAFSA unless you are married, have children who receive more than half of their support from you, were in foster care, are a ward of the court, are emancipated from your parents, are homeless, and/or have parents who are deceased. If you report one or more of these situations as true, you may be required to provide court documentation.

Filing FAFSA Annually Cont.

6. If you feel lost, click inside the answer box for any question. Information will appear indicating where to find the appropriate answer or a tip on how to continue.
7. At the end, you and your parent(s)/guardian(s) will sign your FAFSA electronically using the FSA IDs you created. You can create your FSA ID the same day you file. **Make sure you click Submit to successfully file your FAFSA. If you click save, your FAFSA will not be submitted.** You will receive a confirmation email after successfully submitting your FAFSA – keep it for your records!



IMPORTANT

If you lose your FSA ID and password or have trouble accessing your FAFSA, contact the FAFSA helpline at 1-800-4FEDAID (1-800-433-3243). If you need to make edits to your FAFSA, please work with your UT campus' Financial Aid Office.

Before you begin

The fastest way to sign your application and have it processed is to create an FSA ID. The FSA ID allows students and parent(s)/guardian(s) to identify themselves electronically to access FSA websites. An FSA ID is also the only way to access or correct your information online.

If you have an FSA ID but forget your username or password, attempt to log in on the FAFSA home page and click on forgot username or forgot password.

Dependency

If you are a dependent student, you will report your and your parent(s)/guardian(s)' information. If you are an independent student, you will report your information (and, if you are married, your spouse's). For clarification on your status, please visit: www.studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa/filling-out/dependency

Reporting Parent/Guardian Information

There are numerous scenarios a student may encounter when reporting parent/guardian information on the FAFSA. The answers to questions regarding parent/guardian information may differ based on your parent(s)/guardian(s)' marital status and living situation. If you have a question regarding your unique situation, you can visit www.studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa/filling-out/parent-info for a breakdown of multiple scenarios. You can also contact the financial aid office of the college you plan to attend to ask specific questions.

Filing FAFSA Annually Cont.

Making Corrections to FAFSA

Log into FAFSA on the Web using your FSA ID and password, and click Make FAFSA Corrections.

When correcting your FAFSA, you can:

- Add or remove colleges from your application;
- Change your email or mailing address; and/or
- Correct any field in your FAFSA other than your Social Security number. Any corrections you make to your application using FAFSA on the Web will be processed in three to five days. You will receive a revised Student Aid Report (SAR) reflecting the corrections that you made to your application. All of the schools you listed on your FAFSA will have access to the revised information one day after it is processed.

IRS Data Retrieval Tool

The IRS Data Retrieval Tool allows students and parents to access the IRS tax return information needed to complete the FAFSA and easily transfer the data directly and accurately into the FAFSA from the IRS website.

In the finances section of your FAFSA, click Link to IRS and log in with the IRS to retrieve your tax information. On the IRS website, you must enter the requested information exactly as it appears on your tax return. Click the Transfer My Tax Information into the FAFSA box and then review to ensure your information has been transferred into the appropriate data fields. Questions populated with tax information will be marked with Transferred from the IRS. Some data may not be visible in order to protect your information.

Note: There are several scenarios in which you might not be given the option to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool. Filing your taxes electronically or by mail will determine how quickly you can use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool. Usually the tool is available three weeks after tax returns are filed electronically or seven to eleven weeks after tax returns are filed by mail.

STUDENT TIP

Check your student account and your student email to see any alerts or notices from the financial aid office. When in doubt, call the financial aid office or stop by in person to check on your account! It is critical that you continue to follow up with your campus to ensure all required documents have been processed.



Complete Financial Aid Verification

What is verification?

Verification is a process initiated by the Department of Education at the time you submit the FAFSA. Students selected for verification are required to submit certain documents to the college's financial aid office to verify the information provided on the FAFSA. Not all students are selected for verification, but if you are selected, no federal or state financial aid awards, as well as UT Promise, can be posted to your account until your financial aid file is verified.

What is the deadline to remain UT Promise eligible?

UT Promise strongly encourages you to submit all requested documents by July 1 to avoid problems. The longer you wait to submit documentation, the longer it will take for your file to be completed. This means you may be required to pay to keep your classes or could be dropped from your classes for non-payment!

How do I know if I have been selected?

You will be notified by your UT Financial Aid Office if you have been selected for verification. Check your college account! Your college account may show alerts when you first log in. In order to be notified if you have been selected for verification, the college must have your application and FAFSA on file. Click the links in the alerts to determine what information is being requested. You can also check the financial aid section of your college account for details. If you have trouble accessing your college account, contact your campus's Financial Aid Office directly. Many colleges begin posting verification requirements to student accounts in April or earlier. If you are selected for verification, make sure you begin working with the financial aid office as soon as possible. It is important to make sure your college campus is listed as the first-choice school on your FAFSA and your TSAC Student Portal shows the correct institution.

What do I do if I am selected for verification?

If you are selected for verification, contact your campus's financial aid office. Sometimes linking your FAFSA back to the IRS website will be sufficient. Other times, you will need to collect copies of the documents requested by the financial aid office (e.g., parent and/or student W-2, IRS tax return transcripts, etc.). Once all paperwork is submitted, the financial aid office will make corrections and process your financial aid. Remember, it can take up to four weeks for the financial aid office to process this paperwork, and processing documents may trigger the need for other documents to be submitted, so begin addressing this immediately. All requested documentation should be submitted to the financial aid office by July 1 to ensure your file is reviewed and awards are posted to your account prior to the beginning of the term. Simply turning in documents does not mean you have completed verification. The review process at the college is considered part of verification.



REMEMBER

Remember, in order to maintain your UT Promise eligibility you MUST:

- » Complete 8 hours of community service every semester, prior to the semester
- » Meet with your mentor at least 3 times a semester, prior to the semester
- » File your FAFSA by the deadline every year and complete verification, if selected
 - » Maintain the Tennessee HOPE scholarship

**Failure to complete any of these steps on time will result
in the loss of your UT Promise scholarship!**

Tips for College Success



Go to Class

- Attendance is important! Every day that you are absent from class, you miss out on information that may not be in your books but could be on your test.
- Asking questions during class is tough, but it ensures you receive correct answers. Other students in your class most likely have the same questions – you are just the brave one willing to ask! Once you start asking questions, it will become easier.
- If a class has a review session before a test, attend it. It can only strengthen your knowledge of the subject.
- Be active in class. Taking notes, asking questions and listening makes it more likely you will perform favorably in the class and will get the attention of your professor!



Organize & Prioritize

- College can be overwhelming (especially as a full-time student) and finding a healthy balance is key to your success.
- Use your syllabus! It will help set your expectations for your classes. It informs you of important dates, materials you will need and how you will be graded. If you do not know how to read it, ask your professor!
- Get organized. Use a planner, make to-do lists and sync your school email and calendar to your phone. Decide what works best for you; there is no wrong way to get organized.
- Manage your time before, between and after classes to study or work on assignments with the resources available on campus.



Plan for Additional Costs

- Some classes have additional fees that you will be responsible for along with your books and school supplies. It is important to find a way to cover these additional costs, as well as your housing and meal plans (e.g., part-time job, work-study on campus, plan of action with family), before classes begin.
- Make a budget so you know what you can spend on food, activities and gas.
- Planning ahead will help you cover your costs with as little stress as possible. This allows more time for you to focus on your classes, activities on campus and to stay on track in order to graduate on time!



Ask for Help

- Professors/instructors hold office hours and usually have time before and after class. Get to know them during these times. They will help you if you find yourself struggling during the semester.
- UT's campuses have multiple resources (e.g., math labs, writing centers, tutors, student success centers, advisors and counselors) that are all FREE. Take advantage of them!
- Fellow students are encountering the same challenges and can relate to you. Surround yourself with students you work well with and hold one another accountable.
- Remember to connect with your UT Promise mentor. They want to be a resource for you, and if they cannot answer your question, they can direct you to someone who can!
- If you meet the qualifications, additional resources and support may be available to you through your campus' student disability services office.
- Update UT Promise if there are any problems or concerns



Be Engaged

- Get involved. Campus involvement is an important part of the college experience. There are hundreds of clubs and organizations to join and campus events you can choose to attend. From sporting events, cultural attractions, community service and volunteer opportunities, comedians, concerts, speakers and art exhibits, there is something for everyone.
- Explore. Discover your passions and academic interests and get experience in your field. Meet with an academic advisor, participate in research, talk to a student success coach, or visit your career center to help you determine your strengths and reach your goals.
- Find community. Get to know the people in your residence hall and in your classes or join a club to feel connected. Step out of your comfort zone to learn about others who are different than you. Plugging in will connect you to others and help you find your place at UT.

Take advantage of the opportunities and support systems on campus to help you navigate the college experience and move towards graduation. By following these tips, you are making an investment in your own success!

UT Promise Policies

UT Promise only funds last-dollar tuition and mandatory fees. It does not pay for room and board, books or other post-secondary expenses (e.g., application fee, program and class specific fees). Federal and state grants/scholarships, tuition discounts and waivers, and institutional scholarships will be applied to tuition and fees first; UT Promise will then cover any remaining cost. Additional aid, such as endowed scholarships, private funding and departmental scholarships, can be used in addition to UT Promise to cover other post-secondary expenses. UT Promise only covers fees required of all students, as well as any applicable online course fees.

To be eligible for UT Promise, the student MUST be a TN resident eligible for in-state tuition, receive the HOPE scholarship and have a family household income under \$50,000 per year and assets under \$75,000 per year.

Students MUST:

- 1. Begin at an eligible post-secondary institution within 16 months of high school graduation.**
 - a. A student may begin at his/her post-secondary institution prior to the fall term directly following high school graduation; however, the student will be responsible for incurred tuition and fees until fall, as UT Promise will not cover costs before the initial fall term.
 - b. A student may be granted a medical or personal leave of absence from timely enrollment in the initial semester, full-time attendance or continuous enrollment at an eligible post-secondary institution as long as all other acceptable eligibility criteria are met. A student must request a HOPE leave of absence through their campus Financial Aid office and have it approved.

- 2. Maintain full-time status each semester.**
 - a. If the student falls below full-time, he/she will no longer be eligible.
 - i. If a student is in his/her last semester of classes and needs less hours to graduate than the full-time status requirement, he or she will only be required to take the remaining number of hours for degree completion.
 - b. Co-ops, internships and other educational advancement programs (e.g., Disney College Program) will not count against a students' full-time requirement. Determining if the program will affect the student's full-time enrollment requirement is up to the discretion of the student's campus Financial Aid Office. Please check with your Financial Aid Office before making decisions on semester long programs.
 - c. If a student drops below full-time status, UT Promise will follow the institutional refund policy. Dropping classes could result in loss of your UT Promise scholarship.
 - d. Failure to attend class could result in loss of eligibility.

3. Attend a UT institution for continuous semesters in fall and spring.

- a. A student cannot leave UT for a period of time (excluding summer) and remain eligible. If a student is not continuously enrolled at a UT campus, they will lose their UT Promise scholarship.
- b. If a student withdraws from all classes or stops attending during the semester, he/she will no longer be eligible.

4. Maintain the Tennessee HOPE Scholarship. For all eligibility and termination requirements for HOPE, please visit <https://www.tn.gov/collegepays/>

- a. Students must maintain satisfactory academic progress.
- b. Students must earn the minimum GPA to maintain HOPE.
- c. If a student ceases to be academically eligible for the HOPE Scholarship, the student may regain the award one-time only. The award may be re-established once the student meets any of the above criteria and maintains continuous enrollment and satisfactory academic progress at an eligible postsecondary institution without the HOPE Scholarship. The student will still be required to complete community service for every semester in which he/she will be receiving UT Promise funds.
 - i. If a student determines they are re-eligible for HOPE after the community service deadline has passed for the upcoming semester, the student will still be required to complete 8 hours of community service during the next semester to make up for the service they did not complete previously. They will also be responsible for completing service hours for the next semester to maintain eligibility.

Example: *If a student becomes re-eligible for HOPE after the fall semester, they would have missed the community service deadline to be eligible for the spring. Thus, in the spring, they will have to complete 8 hours of service for the spring semester and an additional 8 hours of service for the upcoming fall semester.*

- d. Tennessee HOPE-Nontraditional: If a student ceases to be academically eligible for the HOPE Scholarship, the student may regain the award one-time only. The award may be re-established once the student meets any of the above criteria and maintains continuous enrollment and satisfactory academic progress at an eligible postsecondary institution without the HOPE Scholarship. The student will still be required to complete community service for every semester in which he/she will be receiving UT Promise funds.
 - i. The Tennessee HOPE- Nontraditional scholarship has different qualifiers than the traditional HOPE scholarship. Please visit <https://www.tn.gov/collegepays/money-for-college/tn-education-lottery-programs/tennessee-hope-scholarship---nontraditional.html> for eligibility requirements.
 - ii. Students receiving the Tennessee HOPE-Nontraditional scholarship must achieve 2.75 GPA after 12 attempted hours to be eligible for HOPE and, thus, UT Promise.

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- 5. Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by the established deadline each year throughout his/her post-secondary experience.**
- Failure to complete the FAFSA by the established deadline will result in permanent loss of the UT Promise scholarship.
- 6. A student's family household income must be under \$50,000/year and assets under \$75,000 a year upon initial receipt of UT Promise to remain eligible for UT Promise.**
- Family household income is defined as "the accurate, verifiable total combined amount of parent and student adjusted gross income and untaxed income of less than \$50,000, AND a total maximum asset amount of less than \$75,000, as defined on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)."
 - If the student is receiving the TN HOPE-Nontraditional scholarship, the student and spouse's adjusted gross income must be equal to or less than \$36,000, but the total family household income as defined above must still be under \$50,000.
 - Students who received the UT Promise scholarship but now have an increase in family household income that exceeds \$50,000 are still eligible for the UT Promise scholarship until the household income reaches \$60,000. At this point, the student will become ineligible for UT Promise. The student can become re-eligible if their family household income falls below \$60,000 again.
 - If you have a change of income, please contact your Financial Aid Office.
- 7. Submit all financial aid verification documents by July 1 each year, if selected.**
- UT Promise encourages students to submit all documents by July 1 to ensure the campuses have adequate time to process.
 - A student may be required to pay tuition and mandatory fees out of pocket if his/her financial aid file is not processed and verified by the beginning of classes.
 - Student must select the eligible institution he/she plans to attend as his/her first choice on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as well as direct his/her TSAC Student Portal to the eligible institution.
 - It is the student's responsibility to confirm with the post-secondary institution that his/her admissions and financial aid files are verified, processed and ready for award.
- 8. Complete and submit at least eight hours of community service prior to the start of each semester by the established deadline through your campus service tracking site. Community service must be completed under the supervision of an established organization (e.g., nonprofit, public service organization) and must align with your UT campus's service definition.**
- Students must submit all information regarding community service by the established deadline through their UT campus's service tracking site. Failure to comply by the established dates will result in permanent loss of eligibility.
 - Community service hours do not roll over each semester

9. Submit all financial aid verification documents by July 1 each year, if selected.

- a. Students must complete all mentoring requirements by the established deadline through the UT Promise Mentor Platform. Failure to comply by the established dates will result in permanent loss of eligibility.
- b. Students must complete all mentoring requirements each semester (fall/spring). Mentoring requirements do not roll over each semester. Students do not have to complete mentoring requirements for summer.

Other Components:

1. Only UT's Financial Aid offices and UT Promise scholarship administrators may determine a student's UT Promise eligibility.

- a. Mentors are an extension of UT Promise but are not UT Promise administrators.
- b. UT Promise mentors are volunteers and may lack adequate time to answer all questions; therefore, it is the student's responsibility to confirm eligibility with UT Promise administrators.

2. UT Promise scholarship funds can be applied to summer courses if a student is receiving HOPE scholarship funds. In order to receive HOPE funds, a student must be enrolled in at least 6 hours over the summer. UT Promise scholarship funds will only be applied to UT courses.

3. UT Promise scholarship funds can be applied to fully distance education programs (also known as online programs).

4. UT Promise scholarship funds can be applied to UT faculty-led study abroad courses. UT Promise will only cover tuition and mandatory fees.

5. A student cannot be mentored by a family member.

6. Mentors cannot choose students to mentor.

- a. UT Promise will use a mentoring platform and matching algorithm to match students and mentors.

7. UT Promise follows the admissions requirements of the post-secondary institution.

- a. UT Promise will fund learning support classes at UT if the student fails to meet the ACT requirements for college-level coursework.

8. Incorrect student information does not preclude a student from ineligibility.

» **Should a student fail to adhere to any/all policies, UT Promise invokes the right to remove a student's eligibility.**

» **UT Promise values honesty and integrity. A student who submits misinformation will immediately lose UT Promise eligibility. Be respectful in all correspondence and communication, including social media.**

» **Policies may be subject to change without notice. It is a student's responsibility to refer to the policies as posted at utpromise.tennessee.edu for updates and changes to the UT Promise policies.**

UT Promise FAQs

What is UT Promise?

Promise is a last-dollar, undergraduate scholarship that will guarantee free tuition and mandatory fees to qualifying Tennessee residents enrolling at UT campuses in Knoxville, Chattanooga, Martin and Memphis.

Who is eligible?

Students who are TN residents and eligible for in-state tuition, who have a family household income under \$50,000 and assets under \$75,000, who qualify for the Tennessee HOPE Scholarship, and who gain admittance to a University of Tennessee campus are eligible.

How many semesters can a student receive UT Promise?

If a student continues to meet all requirements, UT Promise funding is available for as long as a student is receiving the HOPE scholarship. UT Promise will only provide scholarship funds when a student is receiving HOPE scholarship funds. Visit <https://www.tn.gov/collegepays/> for more information on termination criteria.

Are GED recipients eligible for UT Promise?

Students who complete a GED or HiSET diploma (and have met all other UT Promise eligibility requirements) must enroll full-time in an eligible post-secondary program within 16 months after they receive their diploma to be eligible for HOPE, and thus, UT Promise.

What if a student graduates early from high school?

Students graduating early from high school can still receive UT Promise as long as they enroll in an eligible post-secondary program within 16 months of high school graduation. Students graduating in the fall term should still follow the high school senior application process, including applying for the TN Promise.

Do non-U.S. citizens qualify for UT Promise?

To be eligible, students must be able to complete the FAFSA, qualify for in-state tuition and possess a valid Social Security number. A student must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for which the student's U.S. citizenship or eligible non-citizenship status has been confirmed by the federal government. Note: This option is only available for:

1. U.S. Citizens
2. U.S. permanent residents (with an I-151, I-551, or I-551C permanent resident card); or
3. Individuals who have an Arrival/Departure Record (I-94) showing one of the following designations: Refugee, Asylum Granted, Cuban-Haitian Entrant (Status Pending), Conditional Entrant (Valid only if issued before April 1, 1980), Victims of Human Trafficking (T-2, T-3, or T-4 visa), or Parolee (who meets certain conditions)



What does UT Promise cover?

UT Promise is a last-dollar scholarship that funds tuition and mandatory fees at UT campuses in Knoxville, Chattanooga, Martin and Memphis. These funds cannot be used for books, cost of attendance fees or fees associated with a specific program or class.

Does UT Promise cover remedial education?

Yes. UT Promise will cover remedial courses if a student should need to take them.

Will a student receive a check for the scholarship?

Students never directly receive funding from UT Promise.

How long after high school graduation will students remain eligible for UT Promise?

To remain eligible for UT Promise, students must enroll in a postsecondary institution within 16 months of high school graduation.

What happens if a student misses a UT Promise deadline

Failure to meet any UT Promise deadline will result in a student being permanently ineligible for UT Promise.

Can a student take a semester off?

Medical or personal appeals will be considered in the following situations: illness of the student, illness or death of an immediate family member, extreme financial hardship of the student or student's immediate family, fulfillment of a religious commitment expected of members of that faith, fulfillment of required military service, or other extraordinary circumstances beyond the student's control where attendance by the student creates a substantial hardship. In order to request a leave of absence after initial enrollment, a student must request a leave of absence through their campus financial aid office.

If students and their families have not filed taxes by Feb. 1, can they still file the FAFSA before the UT Promise deadline?

Students will report income information from the previous tax year. For example, when filing the 2021-2022 FAFSA, you would use the 2019 tax return. Reference pages 8-10 of this handbook for additional information.

Student Checklist



PRELIMINARY



Apply to UT Promise



File FAFSA



Complete community service for Fall 2020



Enroll at UT

FALL SEMESTER



Complete UT Promise Mentor Platform registration



Be paired with your mentor



FAFSA opens Oct. 1



Complete 8 hours of community service by Dec. 1



Meet with Your Mentor at least 3 times before Dec. 1

SPRING SEMESTER



File FAFSA by Feb. 1



Complete 8 hours of community service by Apr. 1*



Complete 8 hours of community service by Jul. 1



Meet with your mentor at least 3 times before Jul. 1

* If receiving UT Promise for summer enrollment

REPEAT Fall and Spring semester steps each year



UT PROMISE