



SUMMARY GUIDELINES

VERTICAL FLIGHT FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

The Vertical Flight Foundation (VFF), the philanthropic arm of the Vertical Flight Society, was established in 1967 and began awarding scholarships in 1977. It is an independent charitable trust dedicated to supporting education in vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) technology. All VFF scholarships are funded entirely through tax-deductible donations, which contribute to the Foundation's endowment. The Vertical Flight Society covers all administrative and operational expenses, ensuring that 100% of donated funds directly support students.

Each year, the VFF awards merit-based scholarships to college-level students who are pursuing engineering careers related to vertical flight technology. To date, the Foundation has awarded nearly 700 scholarships.

Scholarship awards are **solely merit-based** and range from \$1,000 to \$6,000 (USD) and are available to full-time students attending accredited universities or colleges anywhere in the world, regardless of nationality.

The top-ranked applicant each year receives the prestigious **\$6,000 Bell Scholarship**, funded through an endowment by Bell. Additionally, the **Jing Yen Cost Awareness Scholarship**, also valued at up to \$6,000, is awarded to a student who demonstrates exceptional interest in improving the affordability of vertical flight. This award is generously funded by Dr. Jing Yen.

Eligibility

- High school students are **not** eligible to apply.
- **All applicants must be full-time students as of the application deadline (February 1)**. Additionally, students must be enrolled in a relevant engineering degree program for at least one academic term following the scholarship awards, which are presented at the Society's Annual Forum in May.
- Students pursuing technical disciplines related to complex aeronautics or aviation systems—including those not specifically focused on vertical flight—will receive equal consideration.
- Students are eligible to receive a VFF scholarship once at each academic level: once as an undergraduate, once as a master's student, and once as a doctoral (Ph.D.) student.

- To be considered for the **\$6,000 Jing Yen Cost Awareness Scholarship**, applicants must clearly demonstrate a strong interest in improving the affordability of vertical flight. This should be reflected in both the applicant's narrative and resume, emphasizing specific ideas or experiences related to cost reduction and affordability in the field.

Degree Eligibility by Category

Undergraduate / Bachelor's (BS) Degree

Category

- The applicant must be pursuing an eligible undergraduate engineering degree.
- The applicant must have at least one term of university coursework toward their Bachelor's program **after** the awarding of scholarships at the Annual Forum (May 5–7, 2026).
- Students graduating with a BS degree in May 2026 are **not** eligible to apply in the BS category.
- However, a senior graduating in May 2026 may apply under the **Graduate (MS)** category **if** they have been accepted into a relevant graduate program (MS, PhD, or combined MS/PhD) and will begin immediately following graduation.

Master of Science (MS) Degree Category

- The Master applicant must be pursuing an eligible MS engineering degree.
- The applicant must have at least one term of university coursework toward their MS program **after** the awarding of scholarships at the Annual Forum (May 5-7, 2026).
- Students enrolled in a combined Master's/PhD program are eligible under the **MS category** if they have **not yet passed their qualifying exams** as of the application deadline in **February 2026** and **do not already hold a Master's (MS) degree**.

Doctoral (PhD) Degree Category

- Applicants must either hold a Master's (MS) degree or be enrolled in a combined MS/PhD program and have formally met a key doctoral milestone, such as passing qualifying exams.
- Applicants must have **at least one term remaining** in their current PhD program **after** the awarding of scholarships at the Annual Forum (May 5–7, 2026).

A complete application package must include the following to be eligible for review:

- Completed Scholarship Application Form
- Resume
- Narrative

- Official University/School Transcript*
- Professor Letter of Recommendation*

****Documents must be sent directly by the school registrar or the recommending professor. Transcripts or letters of recommendation submitted by the student will not be accepted or reviewed.***

Other information

- Applications will be reviewed by the VFF Scholarship Review Committee.
- The Foundation will award several scholarships annually unless there are no qualified applicants.
- Scholarship recipients will be notified by the VFF Coordinator of the decision in April.
- **All decisions are final.**
- VFF documents can be found at www.vtol.org/vff.

Selection Criteria

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

DUE DATES

ALL VFF documents must be received by the VFF Coordinator by **February 1, 2026, at the email or address below in order to be eligible for review.**

There are no extensions or exceptions to the above deadline date – so you must plan to have your application, transcripts and recommendation letters arrive **ON OR BEFORE THAT DATE.**

VFF Coordinator Contact Information:

Vertical Flight Society

Attn: VFF Coordinator, Julie M. Gibbs

2700 Prosperity Ave., Suite 275

Fairfax, VA 22031-4340 USA

Email jmgibbs@vtol.org Phone 1-703-684-6777 x103

Student Guidelines: VFF Scholarship

Due Date Feb. 1, 2026

Please follow all instructions carefully and submit materials accurately and concisely. You may **apply online** or **download a fillable VFF** application from the VFS website: www.vtol.org/vff.

Application Requirements: Complete the VFF Application, which includes

- **Sections I:** Application
- **Section II:** Education Information
- **Section III:** Narrative
- **Section IV:** Resume
- **Transcript**
- **Professor Letter of Recommendation**

Narrative (Section III): Your narrative should be a **personal statement** that clearly communicates:

- Your passion for **aeronautics, aeronautical engineering, complex aviation systems,** and specifically, **vertical flight technology.**
- How your academic and career goals will help you pursue and grow this passion.
- Your **unique perspective, specific interests, and relevant experiences** related to key issues in the vertical flight community — such as affordability, innovation, or emerging technologies.

Important guidelines:

- **Do not simply restate your résumé** or provide a research abstract.
- 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

Résumé (Section IV): Applicants must submit a résumé and can use **any format they prefer** or use the **basic structure provided in the PDF application.** Be **accurate, concise**, include page numbers, and submit as a **PDF or Word document.**

Transcript: An **official transcript** showing your most recent grades must be submitted. Please carefully follow the instructions below.

- The transcript must reflect your **most recent academic term.**
- Students may **optionally** include transcripts from previous academic years; however, only the transcript from the most recent academic term is **required.**
- It must be sent **directly** from your university's **Office of the Registrar** to the VFF Coordinator at jmgibbs@vtol.org.
- Transcripts **must be received by February 1, 2026.**
- **Transcripts submitted by the student will not be accepted** and will not be reviewed.
- Transcripts may be submitted either by **mail** or via a **secure electronic delivery link**

provided by your institution.

- If the transcript is **not in English**, the applicant must submit an **official English translation**, accompanied by a **letter from a professor** verifying the accuracy of the translation.

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 on **official university letterhead**, signed by the professor, and received by the VFF Coordinator (jmgibbs@vtol.org) no later than **February 1, 2026**.
- **Letters submitted by students will not be accepted** under any circumstances.
- The professor should include a brief statement assessing **how you compare to other students** they have taught throughout their career. For more guidance, please refer to the “Faculty/Professor” section.
- **Optional:** You may submit additional letters of recommendation from someone other than your professor (e.g., an industry mentor or internship supervisor). However, this does **not** replace the required professor’s letter.

Other Information

- Preference is to submit your completed application form **online**.
- Applications will be reviewed by the VFF Scholarship Committee.
- The VFF Foundation will award several scholarships within each degree category annually unless there are no qualified applicants.
- Scholarship recipients will be notified by the VFF Coordinator in April.
- **All decisions are final.**

Weighting Factors

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

Faculty/Professor Guidelines: VFF Scholarship

Due Date Feb. 1, 2026

The **Vertical Flight Foundation (VFF) Scholarships** are **solely merit-based** and open to **full-time students** enrolled in a university or college **anywhere in the world**, regardless of **nationality**.

Submission of Letters

- **Recommendation letters must be submitted directly by the professor**, preferably via email to the VFF Coordinator (jmgibbs@vtol.org).
- Letters **forwarded by students will not be accepted** and will be **ineligible for review**.

Before Writing a Recommendation Letter: Please ensure your student is eligible to apply before submitting a recommendation letter. Key eligibility criteria include:

- A student may receive a VFF scholarship **only once per academic level**:
 - Once as an **Undergraduate**,
 - Once as a **Master's** student, and
 - Once as a **Ph.D.** student.
- Eligibility under the **Ph.D. category** requires verification that the student has formally met doctoral program requirements (e.g., passing qualifying exams). Otherwise, the student will be considered in the **Master's category**.
- All applicants must be **full-time students** as of the application deadline (**February 1, 2026**) and must be enrolled in the relevant degree program for **at least one academic term after** the scholarship awards are presented at the Society's **Annual Forum (May 5–7, 2026)**.
- Applicants must be enrolled in an **accredited institution** and pursuing a **relevant technical discipline**. Fields related to **aeronautics, aeronautical engineering, aviation systems**, or other areas involving **complex or vertical flight technologies** will all be given equal consideration—even if not directly focused on vertical lift engineering.

Guidance for Professor Letters of Recommendation: The **letter of recommendation** is a critical component in the scholarship selection process and plays a significant role in determining whether a student is awarded a VFF Scholarship. Please follow the guidance below:

- You should have direct knowledge of the student's **coursework and academic performance**.
- Include a statement evaluating **how the student compares to others** you have taught over the course of your **entire academic career**—not just within the current semester or year.

- Specify where the student ranks among all students you have taught, indicating whether they are in the **top 5%, 10%, or 25%**.
- Highlight any **notable qualities, achievements, or circumstances** that distinguish the student from their peers.
- The letter must be written on **official university letterhead** and **signed** by you.