

Queen's University
Senate Committee on Scholarships and Student Aid
Report to Senate
Revisions to Renewable Awards Policy
Submitted: May 7, 2012

Background

- A new Renewable Awards Policy was approved by SCSSA in November 10, 2010, effective May 2011. At that time the academic thresholds for renewal were modified to reflect the new GPA grading system that was approved by the Senate of Queen's University in April 2010. The new grading scheme became effective May 1, 2011.
- At the February 2012 Senate Meeting, the Senate Committee on Academic Procedures (SCAP) provided information to the Senate regarding provisions Faculties / Schools had implemented with respect to grading practices and the new grading scheme.
- At the March 27, 2012 Senate Meeting, the Provost reported that the Deans of the undergraduate direct entry programs agreed to a common GPA of 3.5 for the Dean's Honours List (subject to approval of the respective Faculty Boards). Additionally, the Provost requested that the Senate Committee on Scholarships and Student Aid (SCSSA) review the academic thresholds for renewal of academic awards to be consistent with the common GPA of 3.5 for the Dean's Honours List.

Analysis and Discussion

The SCSSA-Policy working group supports the revision of the Renewable Awards Policy to be consistent with the academic thresholds of the Dean's Honours List.

Summary:

SCSSA approved the revisions to the Renewable Awards Policy, highlighted below, on April 26, 2012:

Recommendations

SCSSA moves that the Senate approve the following revised policy on renewable awards:

The Renewable Awards Policy shall be revised to adjust the Minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) academic thresholds for renewal of academic based awards as follows:

- *The GPA threshold associated with "Academic Excellence" is revised to a GPA of 3.5 (from 3.7) to be consistent with the Dean's Honours List.*
- *The GPA associated with "Transition to Academic Excellence" is revised to a GPA of 3.0 (from 3.3).*
- *The GPA ranges associated with a decision to Renew with Academic Warning, Suspend, and Terminate are adjusted to reflect the revisions to the Academic thresholds for "Academic Excellence" and "Transition to Academic Excellence".*
- *All references to letter grades associated with the Minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) are removed.*

Committee Membership

T. Alm, Interim University Registrar
J. Cordy, School of Computing (Chair)
H. Falahati, PhD '14, Chemical Engineering
B. Foo, BCom '14
D. Murakami Wood, Faculty of Arts and Science, Dept of Sociology
K. Whiting, BAH '12
S. Yousefi, Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science, Dept of Electrical and Computer Engineering
D. Zuiker, IT Services
S. McFadden, Office of the University Registrar - Student Awards (Secretary)

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY RENEWABLE AWARDS POLICIES (revised May 2012)

1. *Renewal Process Overview*

The renewal process is designed to encourage students to continue their development as creative, community-minded leaders who excel academically – the same criteria that were used during the initial selection process (e.g. Chancellor's Scholarship, D & R Sobey Atlantic Scholarships).

It is recognized some awards were selected on grades alone (e.g. Principal's Scholarship) while other renewable awards were selected on other criteria such as demonstrated financial need or athletic excellence (e.g. Wasmund Family Awards, Athletic Financial Awards). The renewal criteria will remain consistent with the criteria that were used during the initial selection process.

2. *Requirements for Renewal*

The minimum course load is identified for the respective renewal categories. To qualify for renewal the GPA will be determined on all courses attempted even where the student is registered in a greater number of units than required for renewal consideration.

2.1 *Course Load:*

2.1.1 *Academic-based Awards:*

- To be eligible for renewal of an academic-based award a student is expected to be registered in an 80% course load (typically 24 units in Fall/Winter).
- To remain eligible for funding in an academic year the student must be registered as a full-time student (60% course load – typically 18 units in Fall/Winter). *It is important to note if the student is registered in a 60% course load he/she will be able to retain the funds in the current academic year, however, will not be eligible for renewal for the subsequent academic year because he/she was not in an 80% course load.*

2.1.2 *Athletic Financial Awards:* To be eligible for renewal of an Athletic Financial Award (AFA) the student must satisfy the course load expectations of the CIS (Canadian University Sport) and the OUA (Ontario University Athletics). This means the student must be registered full-time (60% course load – typically 9 units in the Fall and 9 units in the Winter; course load averaging is not permitted).

2.1.3 Queen Elizabeth II Aiming for the Top Scholarships: the student must be registered full-time (60% course load – typically 9 units in the Fall and 9 units in the Winter; course load averaging is not permitted).

2.2 Minimum Grade Point Average (GPA):

2.2.1 Academic Excellence: Students in receipt of scholarships/awards granted on the basis of academic excellence are expected to achieve a minimum GPA of 3.5. There are a few awards (e.g. D & R Sobey Scholarships, Melvin R. Goodes Admission Award) where the students are expected to strive towards academic excellence and, as such, are granted a year to transition to the expected threshold. In these cases, students will be expected to achieve a minimum GPA of 3.0 in first year and 3.5 in subsequent years.

2.2.2 Academic Achievement: Students in receipt of awards granted on the basis of academic achievement are expected to achieve a minimum GPA of 2.7.

2.2.3 Need-based Bursary: Students in receipt of need-based bursaries where the primary criterion for renewal is financial need will be required to maintain a minimum GPA of 2.0 (e.g. Wasmund Family Awards, Robert and Eva (Bertram) Cole Bursaries).

2.3 Community Service: Major Admission Awards: Scholars are encouraged to continue to demonstrate the attributes of leadership, creativity, and involvement in extra-curricular activities. After 1st, 2nd and 3rd year students are asked to provide a *Summary of Continued Service* highlighting their accomplishments outside the classroom. It is expected the majority of the students will satisfy the renewal criteria. There is no expectation for the recipients to increase their level of community service in each successive year, although, it is anticipated most students will do so on their own accord.

A student who is not meeting the minimum service expectation will be **renewed with a service encouragement**. Students will not have their award suspended or terminated for lack of contribution to the community.

2.4 Athletic Excellence: For Athletic Financial Awards athletic excellence is defined in the Athlete Student Agreement and the assessment is determined by the Head Coach. Appeals regarding the failure to satisfy the *athletic excellence* criterion for an AFA will be reviewed by the Director of Athletics and Recreation.

3. Academic Thresholds (Queen's University Administered Awards)

3.1 Renew: Scholar has remained in good academic standing and, if appropriate, has satisfied all other renewal criteria (financial need, community service and/or athletic excellence).

| | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Academic Excellence: | GPA > or = 3.5 |
| Transition to Academic Excellence*: | GPA > or = 3.0 (first year only) |
| Academic Achievement: | GPA > or = 2.7 |
| Need-based Bursary: | GPA > or = 2.0 |
| Athletic Financial Award: | GPA > or = 2.7 |

3.2 Renew with Academic Warning: Typically, scholars who receive an academic warning are renewed, suspended or terminated in the following year, depending on their progress.

| Description | Renew with Academic Warning |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Academic Excellence | GPA 3.0 – 3.49 |

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Transition to Academic Excellence* (year 1) | GPA 2.7 - 3.29 |
| Academic Achievement | GPA 2.3 – 2.69 |
| Need-based Bursary | GPA 1.7 – 1.99 |
| Athletic Financial Award | N/A |

3.3 Suspend: A student's award will be suspended if his/her academic performance is minimal, or if he/she did not meet the expected academic threshold after having received an academic warning. A student whose award is suspended may have the award reinstated if the academic performance in the immediate following academic year satisfies the defined criteria for renewal. Students with an AFA will be eligible to have the award reinstated at any time during the first four years of their undergraduate degree program at Queen's University.

| <i>Description</i> | <i>Suspend</i> | <i>After one Academic Warning</i> |
|---|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Academic Excellence | GPA < 3.0 | GPA < 3.5 |
| Transition to Academic Excellence* | N/A | N/A |
| Academic Achievement | GPA < 2.3 | GPA < 2.7 |
| Need-based Bursary | GPA < 1.7 | GPA < 2.0 |
| Athletic Financial Award | GPA < 2.7 | N/A |

3.4 Terminate: A student will have their award terminated if he/she has not been successful in meeting the minimum established thresholds in the year in which the award was suspended. Once an award has been terminated the student is not eligible to regain the award. A student who was suspended in the previous year and fails to meet required expectations will have his/her award terminated.

| <i>Description</i> | <i>Terminate (if thresholds not met in year award suspended)</i> |
|---|--|
| Academic Excellence | GPA < 3.5 |
| Transition to Academic Excellence* | N/A |
| Academic Achievement | GPA < 2.7 |
| Need-based Bursary | GPA < 2.0 |
| Athletic Financial Award | GPA < 2.7– Year 4 only |

**Transition to Academic Excellence: refers to those awards where it is recognized a student may require an additional year to meet the academic excellence threshold (e.g. D & R Sobey Atlantic Scholarship, Melvin R. Goodes Admission Award). In subsequent years students must meet the threshold for renewal.*

4. Academic Thresholds (Queen Elizabeth II Aiming for the Top Scholarship – Government of Ontario)

The MTCU policy states a student must have at least a 79.9% average to renew the QEII.

Note: The Queen Elizabeth II Aiming for the Top Tuition Scholarship will be discontinued beginning in 2012-2013. No new awards will be offered in 2012-2013, however current holders of this scholarship will be eligible to renew their awards based on their academic progress throughout their course of study.

QEII Renew: Scholar has remained in good academic standing. The student must have:

GPA > or = 3.5

4.1 QEII Renew with Academic Warning: Typically, scholars who receive an academic warning are either renewed or terminated in the following year. The student must have:

| Renew with Academic Warning |
|------------------------------------|
| 3.0 – 3.49 |

4.2 QEII Terminate: The Government of Ontario's policy for the QEII scholarship does not permit a student to regain the award once he/she has *lost* the award. The student will have the QEII terminated if the following minimum GPA is not achieved.

| Terminate | After one Academic Warning |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| GPA < 3.0 | GPA < 3.5 |

5. Other Factors Affecting Renewal

5.1 Incomplete Courses (or Grade Deferred):

All courses must be completed before a decision is made with respect to the renewal of the award. Students will receive a communication detailing that the renewal decision is on hold pending the completion of all courses in the Fall and Winter.

The only exceptions to this policy are Pass/Fail courses where the student is permitted more than one year to satisfy the course requirements.

5.2 Disability:

- Students with a disability will be required to provide supporting documentation from *Queen's Health Counselling and Disability Services* which indicates accommodation is required.
- Generally, students will be expected to register as full-time students (60% of a full-course load) to qualify for renewal. Each case will be reviewed.
- Students will be eligible for the stated total dollar amount of the award even if the students' duration of study is extended as a result of their health concerns (e.g. Chancellor's \$9,000 x 4 years = \$36,000). At the time of review it will be determined whether the student will receive the full annual amount or if the

award will be pro-rated and disbursed beyond the duration of the award. The total dollar amount of the award will not be exceeded.

5.3 Exchange or Study Abroad

The minimum course load is identified below. To qualify for renewal while on Exchange or a Study Abroad the student must satisfactorily complete all course attempts even where the student is registered in a greater number of units than required for renewal consideration.

5.3.1 Exchange

Students participating on a formal bi-lateral Queen's Exchange will be permitted to retain the award while studying at the partner institution.

For renewal of the award in the following year the student must provide his/her Faculty Office with official transcripts from the partner institution. To qualify for renewal the Faculty Office must confirm the student satisfactorily completed all course attempts and, at a minimum, the equivalent of an 80% course load typically 24 units in Fall/Winter).

Where a student completed one term at Queen's and one term at a partner institution the renewal will be based on the GPA completed at Queen's (same guidelines as Renewals) provided the student satisfactorily completed all course attempts and, at a minimum, the equivalent of an 80% course load typically 12 units while he/she was on exchange.

5.3.2 Study Abroad or Domestic Letter of Permission

Students who wish to earn credits toward their degree program at Queen's, while participating in a study abroad experience or on a domestic letter of permission administered by another educational institution, will remain eligible for the payment of Queen's renewable merit-based awards and for consideration of renewal for a subsequent year.

Retention: A student participating in an educational opportunity on a letter of permission approved by their respective Faculty/School must provide documentation that they are registered in a minimum 60% course load (the equivalent of 9 units).

Renewal: For renewal of the award in the following year the student must provide his/her Faculty Office with official transcripts from the host institution. To qualify for renewal the Faculty Office must confirm the student satisfactorily completed all course attempts and, at a minimum, the equivalent of an 80% course load typically 24 units in Fall/Winter).

Where a student completed one term at Queen's and one term at a host institution the renewal will be based on the GPA completed at Queen's (same guidelines as Renewals) provided the student satisfactorily completed all course attempts and, at a minimum, the equivalent of at least 12 units.

The policy does not include QEII recipients as the Government of Ontario policy requires a student to be either registered at Queen's University or at one of the University's exchange partners.

5.4 Internships (QUIP)

Students participating on a QUIP placement or on an internship at The Washington Centre are not eligible to receive payment for the award while they are on the work-term placement. Students must request the award be deferred until he/she is registered full-time in a study-term the next Fall or Winter term.

5.5 Leaves

It is recognized exceptional circumstances may arise which may require the student to take a break in his/her program of study. In these circumstances every reasonable effort will be made to accommodate the student and his/her circumstances. The student must submit a written request for review which details the circumstances and the expected duration of the leave. Where possible, the student is advised to provide the notification in advance of the leave. Examples include: medical leave, unique year-long service opportunity.

Each request will be reviewed on an individual basis and an adjusted renewal/payment schedule will be established (e.g. deferred for a year; staggered renewal/disbursement). Students will be eligible for the stated total dollar amount of the award even if the student's duration of study is extended as a result of the student's accommodation (e.g. Chancellor's \$9,000 x 4 years = \$36,000). At the time of review it will be determined whether the student will receive the full annual amount or if the award will be pro-rated and disbursed beyond the duration of the award.

6. Appeals

Students who do not meet the identified renewal thresholds and who have experienced extenuating circumstances which have affected their academic performance may submit a written appeal (email from Queen's email account is acceptable) to the Senate Committee on Scholarships and Student Aid (SCSSA). Extenuating circumstances may include, but are not limited to: the student's own serious illness, or that of an immediate family member, or the death of an immediate family member. Students are directed to provide sufficient details for the Appeal Committee to assess the extent of their circumstances. Appeals based on medical circumstances or death of an immediate family member must be accompanied by supporting documentation, such as: letter from a physician (we do not request specific medical details, but rather a professional assessment with regards to how and to what extent the health circumstances impacted the student's studies) or copy of the family member's death certificate. The information provided by the student will be used solely for the purpose of determining their eligibility with respect to the renewable award. Information provided will not be forwarded to any other Department or Faculty at the University. All documentation submitted will be destroyed in a confidential manner at the completion of the appeal process.

7. Payment of Funds

Student will receive payment of funds where the award is:

- Renewed
- Renewed with Academic Warning
- Renewed with Service Encouragement

All Queen's and QEII award payment will be applied directly to the student's fee account. Once registration is complete and the Opt-Out period has ended the student may request a refund of any amount in excess to the amount owed to the University (tuition, fees, residence) or he/she may wait until the auto-refund process which takes place in February of each year.

If the student is receiving a QEII and a Queen's award then the QEII must be applied to the student's tuition charges and the Queen's award, or portion thereof, may be issued as a refund.