

UMEA Scholarships: Q & A

Q. Are state specialists eligible or only field faculty? The criteria only mention getting regional director approval and the application refers to region/regional director.

A. Yes. State faculty with at least a 50% Extension appointment are eligible to be members of UMEA, and as such are eligible to apply for the scholarships. The approval of the immediate supervisor should be secured for the proposed professional development activity.

Q. Is there a cap on how many scholarships you can receive? If so, who would know how much money someone has left to use?

A. Yes, there is a cap. The guidelines state that, "Applicants can only receive one award per year with a 5 year, \$1,000 limit on funds... After receiving two awards or up to \$1,000, the applicant must be a member for 5 consecutive years to apply for additional funding awards."

Q. Another form of funding came through so I won't need my UMEA award after all. Am I eligible to apply again this year?

A. Yes, if you did not actually use or receive any UMEA funding this year, regardless of whether funds were awarded.

Q. With regards to the scholarship limits, when does a year begin?

A. A year is marked as the application due date. For example, to apply in the first round of 2020, you must have been an Extension employee and UMEA member for two years as of April 1, 2020. Similarly, please note that you may only receive one award per application year – if you were awarded funds last September, you are not eligible for funds the following March as that is only six months later. If your event is in May the suggestion is to apply in March, UNLESS you need funds earlier. In that case, application should be made the previous August.

Q. What is the time limit to use the funds?

A. The expectation is that the funds will be used within a year. However, that is not explicitly stated in the guidelines. Therefore, if you expect to need the funds for longer than a year (for example, needing conference early-bird registration fees soon but the event won't be held for several months) make sure to include a timeline and detailed explanation to that effect.

Q. The conference I wish to attend typically doesn't get their information out until late, and I miss the UMEA scholarship deadline. Can I submit a budget based on last year's event, and amend it if necessary?

A. Yes, that is preferable. However, we cannot award any additional funds based on the amended budget.

Q. One item on the application is, "What methods will be used to evaluate the activity? Describe the expected impact." I am not sure what is being asked. Is it what I will do to ensure there is a direct result of my attending the national meeting, or is it the results of my attending the meeting on a personal and professional level?

A. We will reconsider the wording of the question. It can be difficult to assess the value of some activities before you participate in them. Try to be as specific as possible. For example, if you are attending a professional conference, are there particular break-out sessions or tracks that interest you, programs that you hope to

bring back to Missouri, skills you hope to enhance, specific resource people you wish to meet with? What we do NOT recommend is being too general and vague, along the lines of: "I'm going to go to our annual professional conference, network with people, and learn a few things." We believe the original intent of the UMEA scholarships was for specialists to use them for trainings other than professional meetings, since we can only use our professional meeting funds once a year. For example, someone would be trained in a curriculum, bring it back and implement it. However, the rising cost of professional meetings have led MU Extension faculty to seek to supplement their professional meeting funds.

Q. I serve on my association's national board, and there's an annual board retreat that bites pretty deeply into my personal pocket. Is this activity eligible for a UMEA scholarship?

A. Yes, if you can make the case of why this activity benefits the organization and the other criteria.

Q. I've applied for other funds but I won't hear whether I've been approved before the UMEA scholarship application is due. How do I handle this?

A. Note the anticipated revenue and that it has not been awarded/approved - it is best to be up front and transparent about these things. But, it is recommended that you not include that amount in your requested scholarship total. If you are awarded a scholarship from UMEA and the other funding does come through, we expect you to notify UMEA and have your UMEA scholarship award reduced by that amount (or declined, depending on the amount of funding from the other source). This seems clear, but you should not submit the same expense to UMEA and another funding source. If you need to submit the same receipt to different sources, make sure you are clear about which expenses you are submitting to each funder.

Q. What is the process for receiving the funds? Is it reimbursement?

A. Yes, the funds are distributed on a reimbursement basis. After your event has concluded, complete the UMEA expense voucher, found on the UMEA web site under "Documents and forms."

*<http://extension.missouri.edu/umea/organdocs.aspx> and submit to UMEA treasurer. **Make sure to scan and attach all of your receipts for submitted expenses, including meals.** UMEA has their own guidelines and does not follow the University fiscal policies for expenses and reimbursement.*

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