

## GE STAR Awards: A GE Foundation Program Frequently Asked Questions

### Program Description:

The GE STAR Awards competition is open to children of eligible GE employees worldwide. Recipients, chosen through a selective application process, are awarded a one-time award in one of two categories to defray first-year higher education expenses. The first category is for those attending a four-year college/university (or equivalent outside the U.S.); the second is for those attending a two-year community college/vocational-technical school.

Recipients attending a four-year school will be awarded a \$3,000 award. Recipients attending a two-year school will be awarded a \$1,000 award.

Recipients are determined in a highly selective global competition independently managed by the Institute of International Education (IIE), an international non-profit educational exchange organization. Applicants will be selected on the following criteria:

- Academic achievement and potential (rank-in-class, grade point average, test scores, etc.)
- Extracurricular and community activities, including work experience
- The student's personal experiences and goals, as described in a written statement
- One Reference form and letter

### Eligibility:

#### ***Who is eligible to apply?***

- ✓ The birth child or adopted child of an eligible GE employee; a stepchild who lives with an eligible employee; or another child who lives permanently with an eligible employee, depends solely on that employee for support, and for whom the employee or his/her spouse is the court-appointed permanent guardian; **and**
- ✓ Currently enrolled at the highest level of studies available at the higher/upper secondary school level in a public, private, or parochial school (or equivalent of a high school senior, including students who are home-schooled). *(For non-US applicants, please see specific link for your country); and*
- ✓ Enrolling for the first time in post-secondary education – a full-time undergraduate course of study at an accredited four-year college or university; or an accredited community college or vocational-technical school.

**Note: If your first enrollment in post-secondary / university study will be during the calendar year 2020, apply now for the 2020 competition. If your first enrollment in post-secondary / university study will be during the calendar year 2021, you should apply for the 2021 competition, which will be announced in Fall 2020.**

If military service is required or you intend to take a "Gap Year" before beginning your post-secondary studies, please refer to the questions below under Distribution of Award – "What if I take a Gap Year?" and "What if my country mandates military service duty between higher/upper secondary school and post secondary studies?"

If you are applying from outside the US, please refer to the country-specific links below:

#### **Canada:**

Quebec applicants must have attained CEGEP or a Secondary Leaving Certificate. For Quebec students enrolling in a CEGEP program:

- For pre-university CEGEP programs, you will apply for the 4-Year Category in your 2<sup>nd</sup> year of CEGEP.
- For career CEGEP programs, you will apply for the 2-Year Category in your last year of high school.

#### **India:**

- If you are planning on attending a 3-5 year university program, you will apply for the 4-Year Category in your final year of higher secondary school (12<sup>th</sup> year).

- If you are planning on attending a 2-year (or equivalent) non-university level post-secondary program such as a technical or vocational program, you will apply for the 2-Year Category in your final year of secondary school (10<sup>th</sup> year).

#### **Hungary:**

- If you are planning on attending a 3-5 year university level post-secondary program where you will graduate with a college degree (Egyetemi vagy Foiskolai Oklevel), you will apply for the **4-Year Category** in your final year of secondary school (12<sup>th</sup> year).
- If you are planning on attending a 2-year non-university level post-secondary program, such as a technical or vocational program, where you will graduate with a certificate (Bizonyitvány), you will apply for the **2-Year Category** in your final year of secondary school (12<sup>th</sup> year).

4-Year Category: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bachelor\\_degree](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bachelor_degree)

2-Year Category: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Associate\\_degree](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Associate_degree)

#### ***Who is an eligible employee?***

- ✓ Employees of the General Electric Company or a majority-owned affiliate as of the application deadline (December 12, 2019). Note: employees whose children are selected to receive awards must remain eligible as of the award announcement date (mid-April 2020)

NOTE: A valid GE SSO ID is required. Children or dependents of Executive Band employees, Senior Executive Band employees and Company Officers are not eligible. Employees who have retired directly from the General Electric Company or a majority-owned affiliate; or acting on behalf of an employee who has died while in active service for, or after retiring directly from the General Electric Company or a majority-owned affiliate, are not eligible to apply.

#### ***Is my GE Global ID the same as my SSO ID?***

Yes, the GE “Global ID,” “Single-Sign-On ID,” and “Oracle ID” all refer to the unique 9-digit numbers assigned to all GE employees. If you are unsure of your ID number, please check with your Human Resource Manager.

#### ***What if I don't know my SSO ID?***

Please check with your Human Resources Manager (HRM) to retrieve your SSO ID.

#### **Online Applications:**

##### ***When is the application deadline?***

Online applications and supporting materials must be submitted by 11:59 pm EST on December 12, 2019.

**LATE SUBMISSIONS AND INCOMPLETE APPLICATION PACKAGES WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED. THERE IS NO APPEAL PROCESS.**

##### ***How do I access the online application?***

A GE Employee may initiate an online application on behalf of his/her dependent by accessing it through the program website, <https://apply.iie.org/GESTAR>.

##### ***In addition to my online application form, do I need to submit anything else?***

Yes, the following must also be submitted with your online application by the December 12 deadline:

1. Your most recent (3-4 years) transcript of grades/academic record provided by the school. If you are unable to submit an official transcript with your application electronically, please upload an unofficial transcript with your online application. Then have your official transcript mailed with a postmark by the December 12th deadline.
2. Reference form and letter. An emailed request for a letter of recommendation will be sent to your recommender through the online application system at the time of application. The email will provide directions to the recommender regarding how to upload their letter to your online application.

3. (Optional:) Results of university entrance examinations, standardized academic test scores, etc. (if applicable and/or available Test scores reported on official transcripts are acceptable. Please report any test scores through the online application system.

**\*IIE is unable to accept any of the above documents or full application packages via email or fax.**

***Do I have to submit a reference?***

Yes. Your reference can be completed by a teacher, counselor, employer, etc. who is familiar with your academic record and/or work and volunteer experience. **Please note that this cannot be completed by a family member.** This reference will provide the selection committee with additional information about you when reviewing your application.

As stated above, an emailed request for a letter of recommendation will be sent to your reference through the online application system at the time of application. The email will provide directions to the recommender regarding how to upload their letter to your online application. The reference will be kept strictly confidential.

All reference letters are due by 11:59 pm EST on December 12, 2019.

***What if I only have one official copy of a required supporting document?***

If there is only one official version of the document, we will accept a photo copy bearing an official signature or stamp (for example, a copy of your official transcript with the principal's signature on the copy). Please upload this document to your online application.

***Will IIE accept supporting documentation via email or fax?***

No. IIE is unable to accept faxed or emailed documents.

***How will I know if my application and supporting documents were received?***

IIE will send a confirmation e-mail to the valid e-mail address associated with your application.

Please be advised that due to the volume of application submission activity, IIE staff cannot verify receipt of applications and supporting documentation via telephone inquiry.

PLEASE NOTE: IF YOU HAVE NOT RECEIVED CONFIRMATION BY FEBRUARY 3, 2020, IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO FOLLOW UP WITH IIE.

**Mailed (Hard Copy) Applications:**

***\*Please note: We highly encourage the use of the online application, but we do have PDF versions of the application available for those who cannot access the online system. The PDF application is available in the following languages: Simplified and Traditional Chinese, Czech, French Canadian, French, German, Hindi, Hungarian, Indonesian, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish, Thai, and Vietnamese.***

***When is the application deadline?***

All applications and supporting materials must be postmarked by December 12, 2019.

**LATE SUBMISSIONS AND INCOMPLETE APPLICATION PACKAGES WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED. THERE IS NO APPEAL PROCESS.**

***Where can I get an application?***

PDF versions of the application can be downloaded from <https://apply.iie.org/GESTAR>. A GE Employee may also obtain an application by making a request to their appropriate GE country contact.

***In addition to my application form, do I need to submit anything else?***

Yes, you must mail to IIE a package including all of the following:

1. Signed copy of the completed application form
2. Your most recent (3-4 years) transcript of grades/academic record provided by the school in a sealed envelope

3. Reference form and letter (returned to you from the referrer in a sealed envelope). Please do not send more than one reference form and letter. Additional forms and letters will not be considered.
4. (Optional:) Results of university entrance examinations, standardized academic test scores, etc. (if applicable and/or available). Copies of test scores or test scores reported on official transcripts are acceptable.

**\*IIE is unable to accept any of the above documents or full application packages via email or fax.**

***Do I have to send a reference?***

Yes. The reference form that accompanies the application is required. This can be completed by a teacher, counselor, employer, etc. who is familiar with your academic record and/or work and volunteer experience. **Please note that this cannot be completed by a family member.** This reference will provide the selection committee with additional information about you when reviewing your application.

A reference letter should be attached to the form. If the form is not complete, your reference letter will not be considered. Please send only **ONE** reference letter. Any additional letters will not be considered.

As stated on the reference form, the reference will be kept strictly confidential and must be given to you in a sealed envelope by the referrer. Mail the reference letter to IIE in the sealed envelope with your other supporting documents.

All reference letters must also be postmarked by December 12, 2019.

***What if I only have one official copy of a required supporting document?***

If there is only one official version of the document, we will accept a photo copy bearing an official signature or stamp (for example, a copy of your official transcript with the principal's signature on the copy).

***Will IIE accept supporting documentation via email or fax?***

No. IIE is unable to accept faxed or emailed documents.

***How will I know if my application and supporting documents were received?***

IIE will send a confirmation via e-mail to a valid e-mail address.

Please be advised that due to the volume of application submission activity, IIE staff cannot verify receipt of applications and supporting documentation via telephone inquiry.

PLEASE NOTE: IF YOU HAVE NOT RECEIVED CONFIRMATION BY FEBRUARY 3, 2019, IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO FOLLOW UP WITH IIE.

***What if my application package gets lost in the mail?***

If you have not received confirmation by February 3<sup>rd</sup> that your application package is complete, it is your responsibility to follow up with IIE. IIE is not responsible for any documents lost in the mail.

**General Application Questions:**

***How do I know which program to apply for?***

If you are planning on attending a four-year college or university (or equivalent outside the U.S.), you should apply for the 4-year Category award. If you are planning on attending a community college, junior college, or vocational, trade or technical school, you would apply for the 2-year Category award.

***Can I apply to both program categories? What if I don't know if I will be attending a university or community college program?***

If you are not sure if you will attend a four-year university or a two-year vocational/technical or community college program, you may apply for both categories. However, you must submit separate application packages for each.

If you finalize your decision before April 1st, please notify the Institute of International Education (IIE) immediately. Your application will be withdrawn from the appropriate program category.

Please note, this award is not transferable between categories and may be applied only toward costs of an institution that corresponds to the application category.

If you win an award for one program category, but decide to switch post-secondary programs, please refer to the question below under Distribution of Award – *What happens if I decide to change post-secondary programs?*

***I am a home-schooled student. Am I eligible for the GE STAR Awards program?***

Yes, you are eligible for the GE STAR Awards program as a home-schooled student as long as you are in your final year of your higher/upper secondary education.

***How important is the Personal Experiences and Goals written statement (essay)?***

The essay portion of the application is an important opportunity for you to provide information about yourself that is not listed in your application, which you feel might be helpful to the reviewing committee.

There is no right or wrong way to write your essay. Each individual approaches this section differently. It is an opportunity to make your application unique and expand upon what you have already listed in the rest of the application.

**Selection**

***Are all applicants evaluated in the same category?***

No. The selection process consists of four general categories:

US students in 2 YR category

US students in 4 YR category

Non-US students in 2YR category

Non-US students in 4 YR category

Each student is evaluated within his/her individual country's education system and assessment structure.

***Are GE Foundation or GE Employees part of the review panel?***

No. All applications are reviewed by independent committees organized by IIE. GE and GE Foundation employees do not participate in any portion of the review process.

**Notification:**

***When will I be notified of my status?***

IIE will notify all applicants of their status via email. Notification letters will be sent electronically to the email address entered in the application form. Letters will be emailed no earlier than mid-April by IIE, not General Electric or the GE Foundation.

ALL DECISIONS ARE FINAL. APPEALS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.

**Distribution of Award:**

***How may I use the award?***

Awards are intended to help the students meet their first year's expenses at a four-year college or university (for the 4-Year Category) or a community college or vocational-technical school (for the 2-Year Category) and may be used to pay for tuition, books, lab fees, room and board, or other related educational expenses. ***IIE does not issue tax documents in connection with your award.***

***When will I receive my award?***

After notification, you will be asked to accept the award by submitting your signed Letter of Award. You will submit your proof of enrollment you're your academic institution when it becomes available to you. After receipt of the required documentation, IIE will send your award check to your home address or by wire transfer with the appropriate form.

Please note that because you may not obtain proof of enrollment until the beginning of your first semester, it is possible that you will not receive your award in time for your tuition due date. Upon mailing your signed original Letter of Award and proof of enrollment to IIE, please allow 3-5 weeks processing time to receive your award.

***How will I receive my award?***

IIE, not General Electric or the GE Foundation will distribute your award funds.

IIE distributes payments electronically to participants with U.S. bank accounts. Award winners with a U.S. bank account will receive an email from IIE's bank when award funds are available. Follow the registration instructions and the money will be transferred directly into your bank account.

For award winners who do not have a U.S. bank account, IIE will request that you provide banking information so that a transfer of funds may be made by Wire/ACH. Transfers will be made in USD only and you should ensure that your bank accepts payment in USD.

Awards will not be issued or mailed to your college or university. It is your responsibility to make arrangements with your Financial Aid office as necessary.

***What are acceptable forms of proof of enrollment?***

Proof of enrollment must demonstrate your firm intent to enroll in classes at your post-secondary education institution. Letters of acceptance and confirmation of deposits paid are not sufficient. You must submit one of the following:

- ✓ A letter of verification of enrollment from the appropriate university official stating that you have registered in classes; **or**,
- ✓ A copy of your receipt from the university's office acknowledging payment of tuition for that year; **or**,
- ✓ A copy of an official confirmation of registration in classes for that year (printouts of online registrations are acceptable)

**The proof of enrollment must include your name, the name of your school, and indicate the semester for which you are enrolled.**

***What happens if I decide to change post-secondary programs? What happens to the award?***

If you receive an award for expenses at a four-year college or university and have decided to attend a community/junior/vocational/technical college instead, you will have to forfeit the award and it will go to an alternate recipient. It will be the same for the reverse situation.

**IF YOU DECIDE YOU WILL NOT BE ATTENDING A POST-SECONDARY PROGRAM, YOUR AWARD WILL BE FORFEITED.**

If you decide to defer your post-secondary studies, you will be eligible to receive your award when you enroll in classes, up to one year from your original start date. If you defer your studies for more than one year, your award status will be reviewed and approved by IIE on an individual basis with the possibility of forfeiture.

***What if I take a "Gap-Year"?***

If you plan to take a Gap Year between graduation and your post-secondary studies, you **MUST** apply for the program while still in your final year of higher/upper secondary school. Should you be selected for an award, you would defer acceptance of that award for one year until you are enrolled in post-secondary studies. You are not eligible to apply to the program during your Gap Year after you have graduated from higher/upper secondary school even if you have not yet begun your post-secondary studies.

***What if my country mandates military service duty between higher/upper secondary school and post-secondary studies?***

If your country mandates national military service duty between graduation and your post-secondary studies, you **MUST** apply for the program while still in your final year of higher/upper secondary school. Should you be

selected for an award, you would defer acceptance of that award until you have completed your service and are enrolled in post-secondary studies. You are not eligible to apply to the program during your military service duty after you have graduated from higher/upper secondary school even if you have not yet begun your post-secondary studies.

***What happens if I am unable to claim my award within one year?***

Because the purpose of the GE STAR Award is to assist in defraying first-year costs associated with university attendance, the award must be claimed within the first year of the student's enrollment at university. If you do not enroll in your degree program within this time frame, please contact us to request a deferral of your award. Approval to defer your award is based on a case-by-case basis and cannot extend beyond 3 years. If your award is not claimed by the deferral deadline, you risk forfeiture of the award.

***How do I report this award on my tax return forms?***

Each person's tax situation is different; please consult with a tax preparer in your country for more information.

**Contact Information:**

***Whom can I contact if I have further questions?***

For award program-related questions **in English**, please contact the administering organization, Institute of International Education (IIE) by phone, or e-mail at:

GE STAR Awards  
Institute of International Education  
809 United Nations Plaza  
New York, NY 10017  
USA

Telephone: 1-800-486-0308

E-Mail: [gestar@iie.org](mailto:gestar@iie.org)

For award program-related questions in your native language, please contact your designated GE Country or Business Contact.

For other GE-related questions, please contact your Human Resources office. This program is offered at the sole discretion of the GE Foundation and is not part of employee benefits.

**Privacy Statement**

Information provided through this application will only be used for competition purposes and will be treated with utmost confidentiality. All data will be available only to members of the Institute of International Education and the selection panel. Employment information, including GE Global ID, employee name, GE Industry Focus Group, GE Business and work city, state and country, for finalists will also be made available to GE and the GE Foundation for eligibility verification and award announcement and celebration purposes. Additionally, award recipients' name, school, city, state, and country will be made available to GE and the GE Foundation for award announcement and celebration purposes. An application package becomes the property of IIE once it is submitted. The application or any parts of the application package will not be returned to the applicant.