

HTAi Educational Scholarship Program Guideline

I. Program Description

Overview

The Health Technology Assessment International (HTAi) Scholarship Program provides funding support for individuals studying or working in the healthcare field in [low or middle income countries \(LMICs\) as determined by the current World Bank](#), to advance their knowledge and skills directly related to health technology assessment (HTA). The goal of the HTAi Scholarship Program is to increase capacity for the production and use of HTA in LMICs by supporting graduate/post-graduate students or employees of HTA-related organizations in LMICs to complete education programs or training in HTA for the purpose of applying their knowledge and skills in their country of origin.

Table 1 provides an overview of the main program goal and objectives, and Appendix A contains a process diagram which summarizes the main steps of the program.

Table 1. Program goal and objectives

Primary Program Goal:	To build capacity in low and middle income countries to produce and use HTA by supporting individuals to complete education programs or training in HTA for the purpose of applying their knowledge and skills in their country of origin.
Program Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase HTA knowledge and capacity among individuals and organizations in LMICs • Foster long-term relationships between HTAi and organizations and individuals in LMICs • Enhance the credibility and international profile of HTAi • Satisfy requirements associated with HTAi’s charitable status

HTA Programs Eligible for Scholarship Support

A broad range of HTA programs are eligible for support under the HTAi Scholarship, and applicants are encouraged to apply for programs that meet the specific needs of their individual, organizational and regional context.

Scholarship funding may be requested to support completion of a Masters, PhD, Fellowship or other certification or training program in HTA or a closely related field.

Scholarships may also support participation in an internship with an HTA agency or body, other public sector body, or non-governmental organization (NGO) to gain practical experience and/or contribute to specific research projects in HTA. Both formal and informal internships will be considered; however, the latter require a clear statement of the scope of work, role and duties of the internship position and how this will lead directly to capacity building and development of the individual’s knowledge and skills in HTA.

The HTAi Executive Committee may evaluate the credentials of an educational institution or internship host organization to verify eligibility. Workshops, non-credit educational courses, and conferences are not eligible for HTAi Scholarship support. *Note:* Should the HTAi Executive Committee be unable to reach a decision on a candidate, the applicant may be passed for to the HTAi Board for consideration and review.

Responsibility and Administration

The HTAi Executive Committee of the HTAi Board of Directors approves the criteria for awarding of scholarships, adjudicates scholarship applications, and approves the awarding of scholarship funds.

The HTAi Secretariat administers the collection of applications, communication with organizational sponsors and individual applicants, and the payment of scholarship funds to recipients. All communication concerning the Scholarship Program should be directed to the HTAi Secretariat.

I. Application Process

Applications for HTAi Scholarships are made jointly by the individual who will participate in the HTA education or internship program (referred to as the “individual applicant”) and a representative of the LMIC HTA or health organization where the individual works or studies (referred to as the “organizational sponsor”). The connection between the individual applicant and the LMIC organizational sponsor is intended to ensure the achievement of the primary scholarship program objective (i.e., to increase HTA capacity in LMIC) by providing support for the integration of the HTA capacity and skills learned into the health system of the country of origin.

The organizational sponsor is represented by a senior manager, supervisor or department head who can attest to the quality of the applicant, their competencies and career interests in HTA, and also agrees to support the individual during and after program completion to apply the skills and knowledge gained to advance the production and use of HTA in LMIC settings. Support provided by the organizational sponsor may include, but is not limited to providing: a job for the applicant during and/or post-program completion; grant support to the individual for HTA-based research in LMIC settings; professional mentorship during and after the program; and/or sharing the organization’s network of contacts with the individual so they may find suitable LMIC work or study opportunities in HTA or HTA-related fields. These are but a few examples of the range of possible support arrangements HTAi is open to considering. The key element of the proposed support is that it will contribute to the achievement of the primary scholarship program objective by supporting the integration of the HTA capacity and skills acquired by the applicant into the health system of his/her country of origin.

The organizational sponsor is not required to make a financial contribution to the program, but rather to attest to the strengths of the individual applicant and provide a network of support for the individual within the HTA field both during and after program completion.

In exceptional circumstances, if the individual applicant does not have a suitable LMIC organizational sponsor, a 500- word letter is to be submitted describing the reasons why, and providing compelling evidence that the candidate has strong career interests in developing HTA capacity in LMIC.

Eligible Applicants

Individual applicants

To be eligible to apply for HTAi Scholarship, an individual applicant must:

- that the applicant must be enrolled in an internship program with the sponsoring or academic institution for a minimum of 6 months prior to time of application (to validate any endorsements of the candidate's application);
- Be a current student at an educational institution or employed by a health sector organization in a [low or middle income country, as defined by the World Bank](#).
- Be registered or accepted for registration in a qualifying educational or fellowship program in HTA or in a closely related field, or have been accepted for an internship with an HTA body, other public sector body or NGO.
- Agree to complete the educational/fellowship/internship program for which the scholarship is sought.
- Agree to attend the HTAi Annual Meeting the June following the completion of the educational/fellowship/internship program to present a short report of the research undertaken and/or the experience gained through the program. Funding support for economy travel and accommodation costs will be provided by the HTAi for participation in this event.
- Attest that he/she intends upon completion of the program to apply to the best of their ability the knowledge and skills gained towards the advancement of HTA in low and middle income countries.

Organizational Sponsor

The organizational sponsor is an HTA or health organization or an educational institution in a LMIC where the individual applicant works or studies. The organizational sponsor is represented by a senior manager, supervisor or department head within the organization who can attest to the quality of the applicant, their competencies and career interests in HTA, and also agrees to support the individual in the applying the skills and knowledge gained in the educational or internship program in LMIC settings. The organizational sponsor is required to complete the corresponding section of the scholarship application form.

An organizational sponsor must:

- Operate in a [low or middle income country as defined by the World Bank](#) and have an organizational mandate and/or undertakes activities in areas relevant to the field of HTA.¹

¹ Examples of eligible organizational sponsors include HTA bodies, Ministries of Health, regional or municipal health authorities, public or private hospitals, professional groups and associations, health-related post-secondary education institutions or departments, health sciences research bodies or other public health system agencies or organizations that may be an appropriate fit for the objectives of the program, as determined by the HTAi Executive Committee.

- Be an organization where the individual applicant is an:
 - employee; and/or
 - Student in an undergraduate, Masters, Doctoral or Post-Doctoral program.
- Be represented by a senior manager, supervisor, department head or equivalent, who is to complete the organizational sponsor portion of the application form.
- Agree to foster the individual applicant to apply the knowledge and skills gained in the scholarship program for the advancement of HTA in low or middle income countries. This may include, for example, the offer of a position of employment or study for the individual after completion of the program, mentorship of the applicant during or after the scholarship period, or by connecting the individual by sharing network contacts or making formal introductions of the individual to other health or HTA organizations where their skills and competencies can be applied to achieve the goal of increasing HTA capacity in LMIC. HTAi will consider a range of possible arrangements of support to the individual, depending on the sponsoring organization's nature and resources.

Application Documentation

Applications are to be completed jointly by the individual participant and representative of the organizational sponsor. Application forms are available the HTAi website (<http://www.htai.org/>).

All application packages are to include the following:

1. The *HTAi Scholarship Application Form* completed and signed by both the representative of the organizational sponsor and the individual applicant.
2. Letter of support from the organizational sponsor representative on organization letterhead.
3. Written confirmation of acceptance/registration of the individual applicant from the institution or organization offering the educational, fellowship or internship program.
4. Documentation demonstrating the program costs and other eligible expenses (see below), with original receipts included wherever possible.

Scoring of Applications

Applications will be reviewed by a scholarship taskforce which includes HTAi Executive Director, the past HTAi president and the SHPI senior manager. Applications will be assessed and ranked according to completion and screening criteria based on the submission and passed forward to the HTAi Executive Committee according to the degree to which requirements described in this guideline are met, the relevance and impact of the applicant's program of study/training in enhancing capacity for the production and/or use of HTA in LMICs, and the overall strength of the submission. The amount awarded by the HTAi Executive Committee will reflect a balance between the needs of the applicant, the strength of the application, and the overall budget available for scholarship awards, up to a maximum of \$20,000.00 CAD. Preference may be given to applicants from low income countries and to applicants who have a clearly demonstrated employment position, research or other opportunity in the field of HTA in their country of origin or other LMIC after program completion. This criterion is to help ensure the achievement of the primary program objective to increase HTA capacity in LMIC.



Applications are accepted throughout the calendar year with no specific deadline but will align to the **Travel Grant** review process beginning the calendar year with decision made during the **Jan.-May** period. The HTAi Executive Committee will assess and award scholarship funds to qualified applicants on a rolling basis over the year until the total annual scholarship amount has been expended.

II. Scholarship Funding

Scholarship Amounts and Limits

A total of \$20,000.00 CAD is available for the HTAi Scholarship Program each calendar year. Multi-year awards will be considered for exceptional applicants, up to a maximum of \$20,000.00 CAD per year for two years. Recipients who are awarded funding for a single year at a time are welcome to submit a separate application the following year for subsequent scholarship support. Upon the awarding of the scholarship, the individual recipient will also receive a complimentary 1-year HTAi membership, and be invited to join the HTA in Developing Countries Interest Group.

Additional funding will support scholarship recipients to attend the HTAi Annual Meeting the June immediately following completion their scholarship award term to present their research and/or professional experience acquired during the program. Travel funding for attendance at the HTAi Annual Meeting will not be disbursed directly to the individual. The HTAi Secretariat will coordinate the economy travel arrangements with all payments made by the Secretariat directly to the travel agent, hotel, etc., on behalf of the individual.

Eligible Expenses

Applicants may request scholarship funding to support the following expenses related to their education, fellowship or internship program:

- Tuition fees
- Books and other educational materials
- Accommodation
- Travel expenses
- General living expenses

Applicants are required to provide proof of expenses in the form of official paid receipts or cost estimates from the educational institution registrar, faculty or department; housing agency or landlord; travel agency; or other official source. The HTAi Executive Committee may request additional proof or evidence of expenses claimed. The HTAi Executive Committee will consider each application on a case-by-case basis and may choose to award partial funding support for the expenses claimed.

Disbursement of Funds

HTAi Scholarships will be disbursed from the HTAi Secretariat to the individual applicant or to the educational institution, housing authority, etc., on behalf of the individual applicant. Scholarship funds will generally not be disbursed to the organizational sponsor.

As each scholarship award is unique, the Secretariat will discuss the most efficient payment structure for the disbursement of funds, which may involve payments made directly to the educational institution, host organization, travel agency, etc., on behalf of the individual. Except for cases of acute need, scholarship recipient expenses will be reimbursed only after they have been incurred, and after the paid



receipts have been submitted to the HTAi Secretariat for reimbursement.

III. Post-Program Activity

After the scholarship term, scholarship recipients will be required to provide proof of completion of the educational, fellowship, or internship program, such as a diploma, certificate, or letter from the organizers.

The individual scholarship recipient is to attend the HTAi Annual Meeting the June immediately following the end of his/her program. The individual will provide a short presentation of his/her research, learning, skill development, or professional experience at the meeting. As described in section III, funding support for travel and accommodation will be provided by HTAi for attendance at the Annual Meeting. The presentation content and format, and the travel logistics associated with this event will be discussed with scholarship award recipient at the commencement of their HTA program.

It is anticipated that the complimentary 1-year membership in HTAi granted to the scholarship recipient will encourage him/her to become part of the dynamic society of HTA researchers and professionals. Along with his/her membership, the recipient will be invited to join the Developing Countries interest sub-group of HTAi, which works to advance the science and application of HTA in LMIC around the globe.

Post-program completion, the individual recipient and organizational sponsor will also be asked to complete a questionnaire as part of the program evaluation. This questionnaire provides an opportunity for award recipients and organizational sponsors to provide input on the success of the program in achieving the defined objectives, and to identify areas for improvement of the program in future years.

Application Submission Instructions

Your completed application form along with all requested additional documentation are to be sent via email, fax or letter mail to:

HTAi Scholarship Programs - Applications

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1200, 10405 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
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Appendix A. HTAi Education Scholarship Program – Process Overview

