

Park Ambassador Reference Guide 2020-2021

Park Ambassadors increase the national name recognition of Park Scholarships and NC State, and assist in recruiting diverse and highly qualified Park Scholarships applicants from all over the country.

Thank you for becoming a Park Ambassador! We sincerely appreciate your time, initiative, and enthusiasm in support of Park Scholarships.

To access this guide and all other Park Ambassador reference materials online, visit park.ncsu.edu/park-ambassadors

Should you have any Park Ambassador-related questions or concerns, contact:

- Park Scholarships office: park_scholars@ncsu.edu or 919-515-3794
- Renéé Tutchtón: rmtutcht@ncsu.edu or 919-513-0115

Volunteer Opportunities

There are several ways Park Ambassadors may help promote the Park Scholarships name and recruit highly qualified students to apply. **Note:** For the 2020-21 academic year, most activities/events will be **virtual** due to COVID-19 concerns. Virtual events will take place over a variety of websites/software, including Zoom, Webex, and Skype. We encourage all Park Ambassadors to explore these options, particularly with regard to high school visits.

College Fairs: We invite Park Ambassadors to represent NC State and Park Scholarships at college fairs in their regions by joining the Office of Undergraduate Admissions' Pack Partners program. College fair coverage entails setting up a table and answering students' and parents' questions as they stop by. Their degree of familiarity with NC State and Park Scholarships will vary depending on the location of the fair and other factors; however, you can expect to be asked a broad range of questions. For a list of upcoming college fairs in your area, visit <http://admissions.ncsu.edu/pack-partners/>

High School Visits: We encourage Park Ambassadors to visit 2-4 high schools in their region each year to speak about the opportunities available at NC State and within the Park Scholarships program. School visits typically take place during the school day and run about 20-60 minutes. In some cases, you'll find yourself giving a formal presentation to a roomful (Zoomful?) of students; in others, you might have a more intimate conversation with a small group of students and/or a college counselor.

Community Outreach: Park Ambassadors are also welcome to represent the program and at their workplaces and at local non-profits, businesses, and religious-, service-, and community-based organizations. Occasionally, opportunities arise for Park Ambassadors speak with targeted groups, such as high school counselors, teachers, and high-achieving 8th and 9th grade students.

Pack Previews, University Open House, and other Undergraduate Admissions-sponsored recruiting programs: These and similar programs take place both on-campus and across the state.

Assistance with the Park Selection Process: While our Park Selection Committee plays a critical role in reviewing applications and conducting candidate interviews, our staff also needs assistance in coordinating the non-evaluative aspects of our selection process. These include leading informational presentations at Semifinal Interviews, serving on panels during Finalist Weekend, and contacting students who have been selected as Park Scholars to encourage them to accept the award.

Logistics

Planning an event/visit:

1. Refer to the email template (go.ncsu.edu/park-visit-template), if needed.
2. Have a school or event in mind? Check the [Opportunities and Coverage document](#) to see if it is listed (if it isn't, add it!). Next, add your name(s) under the Ambassador column(s). Schedule the visit and add information about it on the spreadsheet. Finally, contact Reneé if materials need to be mailed.
3. Don't have a school in mind? The [Opportunities and Coverage document](#) lists some schools and events that have requested visits in the past and/or have a significant underrepresented or underresourced population. After you've chosen a school(s) to reach out to, follow the directions above.
4. Interested in suggesting school(s) that aren't on this list and that you are unable to visit? Email Reneé.

What to use, if virtual:

- A copy of this reference guide
- Software (Microsoft Word, email, etc.) or pen and paper to jot down notes or questions
- Any digital materials provided to you by Park Scholarships and/or NC State Admissions

What to bring, if in-person:

- A copy of this reference guide
- A pen/pencil and paper to jot down notes or questions
- Any handouts or materials provided to you by Park Scholarships and/or NC State Admissions
- Photo ID if you're visiting a high school, as many schools require visitors to present ID upon arrival

If virtual, test your technology in advance of the meeting. It is important for you audio and video to be working properly. You will also want to test sharing your screen for the presentation. Contact Reneé Tutcht on at mtutcht@ncsu.edu if you need assistance testing these features.

If in-person, unless you've made special arrangements when scheduling your presentation, there is no guarantee that you will have access to A/V equipment. Be prepared to speak confidently without the benefit of visual aids by reviewing the "Recommended Talking Points" section of this guide ahead of time.

What to wear: Business casual or professional attire is appropriate for college fairs and high school visits. Be aware that virtual visits tend to lean more towards business casual. Also, remember to wear your Park Scholarships nametag if you have one!

What to do after you've completed each event: Please submit a program evaluation within one week of each event you attend. The more detailed the feedback you provide us in your evaluation, the more strategically our staff is able to adjust our recruitment efforts in the future.

The Park Ambassador program evaluation form is available online at:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/park-amb-eval-20-21>

What *Not* To Say

Bear in mind that you are an official representative of NC State and Park Scholarships. As such, you should never say:

Anything about another school or program: Audiences can misinterpret your remarks – even those that aren’t disparaging. There is no need to compare or criticize when sharing information about the NC State and Park Scholarships experience. While Park Ambassadors are, in essence, “selling” the program to prospective students, you are not earning commission for each student you recruit! Your goal should be to educate your audience so its members can decide for themselves whether NC State and Park Scholarships are the best fit for them. In other words, be authentic; avoid exaggeration and hard sells.

Generalizations about Park Scholars: Personal experiences and anecdotes are great ways to illustrate the value of the Park Scholarships program; however, be mindful that as an official representative of the program, your remarks will be perceived as facts. Place your emphasis on the core tenets of the Park Scholarships program and the broad range of opportunities the program affords its students.

Anything that’s not politically correct: Humor can be a valuable tool for a presenter, but use it with caution! Be sensitive to your audience, and avoid making comments that could be misconstrued.

Anything you are not absolutely certain is truth: It is entirely possible your audience will ask questions to which you don’t have the answers, and it is perfectly okay to say, “I don’t know.” Write down the question and the inquirer’s name and email address, and send these details to Reneé for her to follow up. This simple step will help ensure interested parties are receiving only the most accurate information about NC State and Park Scholarships.

Frequently Asked Questions

Application Process

How do I apply for the Park Scholarships?

To access the Park Scholarships application via the Park Scholarships portal, you must either be endorsed by your high school by October 15 or self-endorse by November 1 of your senior year.

Who is eligible to apply for the Park Scholarships?

To be eligible for the Park Scholarships, candidates must be United States citizens, permanent residents, or graduating from a high school located in the United States (regardless of citizenship) **and** be applying for fall, first-year admission into a baccalaureate program at NC State.

Can I be considered for the Park Scholarships even if I am not endorsed by my high school?

Yes. If you meet the selection criteria but do not attend a high school on the endorsing schools list, you may self-endorse. Outstanding home-schooled students may also self-endorse. Finally, if you attend an endorsing high school and are not endorsed, but believe you are at least as competitive a candidate as those endorsed by your school, you may also self-endorse.

What is the deadline for submitting Park Scholarships application materials?

By 11:59 p.m. EST on November 1. Late materials are almost never accepted, and then only at the discretion of the program director. This deadline also applies to the NC State admissions application and all supporting materials.

Are there minimum academic scores, averages, or ranks that students must have in order to apply?

No, there are no minimum ACT, SAT, or grade point averages to apply for the Park Scholarships. However, most successful candidates have an A average and score higher than the average standardized test scores (SAT: 1330 on a 1600 scale; ACT: 29 on a 36-point scale) of the current freshman class at NC State.

Are official ACT or SAT scores required?

(NEW) For Fall 2021 applicants, submitting the ACT or SAT will be optional due to the limited testing opportunities caused by COVID-19. In the application process, if you feel your test scores are reflective of your academic ability, you can choose to submit them. If you do not have scores available or choose not to submit them, your application will not be negatively affected.

If you choose to submit your test scores, self-reported test scores may be submitted through the Common Application or Coalition Application for consideration. When submitted to NC State, official scores will need to be sent directly from the testing agencies (ACT code #3164, SAT code #5496).

Is there a citizenship requirement for the Park Scholarships?

You must be a United States citizen, permanent resident of the United States, or graduating from a high school located in the United States (regardless of citizenship status) when you apply.

What do I need to submit as part of the application?

In addition to asking about your most meaningful academic, extracurricular, work, enrichment, and service activities and honors throughout high school, the Park Scholarships application requires two essays. You also must provide the names and email addresses of two recommenders, and follow up with each of them to ensure

they submit letters of recommendation by the November 1 deadline.

The Park Scholarships Selection Committee will refer to your high school transcript submitted by your counselor/advisor via the application for admission. (You *need not* send a separate copy of your transcript directly to the Park Scholarships office.) Likewise, we will refer to your Honors, Activities, personal essay, short-answer essays, and Additional Information from your application for admission.

May I mail my application materials?

No. All Park Scholarships application materials must be submitted online through NC State’s wolfPAW system and the Park Scholarships portal.

What tips do you have for writing essays?

Your essays should delve beneath the surface and reveal insights about your candidacy based on our four selection criteria: scholarship, leadership, service, and character. Essays that go beyond merely describing an experience, person, or project help our Selection Committee learn more about you.

Who should write my letters of recommendation?

The best recommendation letters are from people who know you well and can provide specific examples of how you meet the selection criteria. At least one of your recommenders should be a high school teacher, counselor, or principal.

Can recommenders submit paper copies of their recommendation forms and letters?

No. Recommenders must use the link in the email they receive from park_scholars@ncsu.edu to submit their recommendation. See the “For Recommenders” page of the Park Scholarships website for details.

What kinds of extracurricular activities increase one’s chances of selection?

There is no specific activity that makes a difference. The most competitive candidates demonstrate a high level of engagement and leadership in a few meaningful activities in their school or community. Too many activities may suggest a student is over-extended or minimally involved in each activity.

What general tips do you have for preparing my application?

Applications provide the initial contact between Selection Committee members and Park Scholarships candidates. Thus, applications should show depth of thought. The strongest applications also include letters of reference that address your strengths as they relate to our selection criteria.

Will the Park Scholarships Selection Committee see the contents of my NC State undergraduate admissions application?

The Park Scholarships Selection Committee will see only your:

- Park Scholarships application
- Two Park-specific letters of recommendation
- High school transcript, submitted by your counselor/advisor
- Activities and honors information
- Personal essay
- Responses to NC State’s short-answer essays
- The Additional Information section, if provided
- Official or self-reported ACT and/or SAT scores, if submitted to NC State

You will *not* have the option to edit these after submission.

If I no longer wish to be considered for the Park Scholarships what must I do?

Should you opt not to continue in the Park Scholarships Selection Process at any point, please email park_scholars@ncsu.edu with your request to withdraw from consideration.

Selection Process

By what criteria are Park Scholarships candidates evaluated?

At every stage of the process, the Selection Committee evaluates all candidates on the following criteria: scholarship, leadership, service, and character.

Is financial need taken into consideration for the Park Scholarships?

No, the Park Scholarships are merit-based awards, and financial need is not a selection criterion. Park Scholarships candidates should also apply for need-based aid if they think they may be eligible. For more information, visit the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid website.

When are Park Scholars selected?

We notify Park Scholarships recipients in early March. The new class of Park Scholars is then announced in early May.

When will I know about my status?

All applicants will be notified at each stage via email. See the “Important Dates” sidebar on our website for specific notification dates.

How many students apply for the Park Scholarships each year?

More than 2,100 highly qualified candidates applied for the Park Scholarships during the 2019-2020 application cycle. From that pool, 475 candidates were selected to advance to the Semifinalist stage. From there, 112 candidates were selected as Finalists. Ultimately, 40 scholarships will be awarded for the Class of 2025.

Are Park Scholarships Finalists invited to join the University Scholars Program and/or the University Honors Program?

All Park Scholarships Finalists receive automatic admission to both the University Scholars Program and the University Honors Program. For information about each of these programs, please visit their websites.

Can Park Scholarships be deferred?

Yes; in fact, we encourage students to defer their university studies for one year to travel or work abroad or to engage in some other ‘gap year’ activity. Incoming students may request a deferral in writing.

What are Park Scholarships interviews like?

Interviews usually last 20-30 minutes and are conducted by a panel of 2-4 alumni and faculty Selection Committee members. Students should expect questions related to the selection criteria and their applications. Candidates do not need to study for interviews, but should review their applications beforehand. Interviews also provide candidates an opportunity to ask questions about the Park Scholarships and NC State.

May I reschedule my Semifinalist or Finalist interviews if I have a conflict?

We regret that we cannot reschedule interviews. Hundreds of alumni, faculty, and current Park Scholar volunteers are involved with Semifinalist and Finalist interviews; thus, we are unable to arrange alternate dates. We announce interview dates approximately 6-8 months in advance on our website.

Miscellaneous

What is the Park Foundation?

The Park Foundation of Ithaca, New York, is the primary benefactor of the Park Scholarships program. The Park Foundation supports scholarships in higher education, environmental protection, animal welfare, and quality media that heightens public awareness of critical issues. The Park Scholarships were established as a legacy to the late Roy H. Park '31, a distinguished alumnus of NC State and founder of Park Communications.

What are the conditions for renewal of the Park Scholarships?

The Park Scholarship is renewable for a total of eight semesters. Scholars must meet high standards in academic performance, character, conduct, and participation in program and service activities while taking at least 30 credit hours per academic year.

What other benefits do the Park Scholarships provide beyond covering college expenses?

Scholars participate in enrichment activities including class trips and leadership development seminars. They explore their academic interests with faculty mentors and may apply for grants to fund experiences such as study abroad, research projects, and service initiatives. Park Scholars receive priority registration for classes. For more information, visit The Park Experience section of our website.

Does being a Park Scholar take a lot of time?

Park Scholars do spend time on service and program activities. A student should expect to spend about the same time on Park Scholarships activities as they might spend in a three credit-hour university course.

How often do Park Scholars meet?

During the freshman year, scholars meet for a weekly seminar. After the freshman year, students meet less frequently – typically during Leadership Academy modules and on class trips. A weekly time is reserved all four years for class and project planning meetings.