

Scholars of Distinction: Civics Program Overview

Program Criteria

Civics, for purposes of the Minnesota Scholars of Distinction, is defined by the knowledge and skills that must be exhibited by the applicant. Students must demonstrate skills necessary to identify, access, analyze and present complex civics information. They should be able to apply principles of civics to public policy issues, utilizing founding documents and demonstrating knowledge of the role of civics participation.

Each applicant is expected to pursue the study of Civics to demonstrate knowledge of how civics is used to develop understanding of human behavior, laws, government, citizenship and public policy; how events and policies impact individual, community and government behavior; and how the application of Constitutional principles can have varied consequences and enact social change.

Assessment Elements

The assessment process will involve three reviewers that will use a rubric to evaluate evidence of civics skills comprehension, the effectiveness of the project based on student goals and presentations, and the student's ability to research and analyze at a high level.

Project Specifics

Applicants must submit a research-based Civics Project demonstrating scholarly excellence and personal experience.

Project is to be submitted electronically in a format that is clearly organized. The content must include all of the following items (see below for more details):

- Annotated K-12 resume, with testimonials
- Personal statement
- Project development narrative
- Project content
- Annotated bibliography and reflective essay
- Documentation of public presentation of project

Personal Statements and Supporting Documents

1. Annotated K-12 resume

- a. The resume should reflect the pathways and experiences that have led the student to qualify as a Scholar of Distinction in Civics.
- b. List educational experiences that prepared the student for excellence in Civics, including specific coursework or training and independent studies.
- c. Identify engagement with Civics and the development of skills and understanding.
- d. Word-process and follow a resume format.

2. Testimonials (included in resume)

- a. Identify two individuals familiar with scholar's research and actions related to the project.
- b. Obtain permission and submit the individual's name, position/title, telephone number and a sentence on why you identified this person.
- c. Contact may be made at the discretion of the reviewers.

3. Personal statement of one to two pages

- a. In your own words, describe what Civics is and why it is important.
- b. Explain your previous experiences, present studies and future goals in the study of Civics.
- c. List project goal(s) and clearly explain how and why project goal(s) were established and the research and actions taken to accomplish the goal(s).
- d. Word-process and double-space.

4. Project development narrative of two to three pages

- a. Describe the scholar's significant commitment and project's goal(s) and objective(s), as well as challenges and successes.
- b. Explain project process from start to finish, outlining key steps that led to project completion.
- c. Review personal growth as well as project results/impact on others.
- d. Scan in supporting material and place within narrative or reference and use as addendum. Examples may include photos, press notices, event programs, etc.
- e. Include project log(s), journal, reports and self-evaluation.

- f. Conclude narrative with recommendations for others seeking to replicate the project.
- g. Word-process and double-space.

5. Project Content

- a. The final format of the project could be one of the following: research paper, tabletop exhibit, documentary video, or interactive website.
- b. The project content should state a clear thesis statement or argument that explains the relevance of the chosen topic and convincingly support the thesis within the project.
- c. The project should demonstrate that the applicant can
 - i. Apply principles of the Constitution and other founding documents to public policy issues, current or historical
 - ii. Show knowledge of the role of civic duty and participation in a democratic society
 - iii. Acquire, organize and analyze primary and secondary governmental sources
- d. The project should use a variety of sources to analyze and compare perspectives, and should cite and document sources in a bibliography.

6. Annotated bibliography and essay

- a. Prepare an annotated bibliography with a substantial number of primary and secondary sources that show depth and breadth of scholar's understanding of Civics and the scholar's particular research topic. Citation and annotation formats must be consistent.
- b. Reflect on the sources and prepare a one-to-two page essay on how the sources influenced the project's intent, analysis and components.
- c. Word-process and follow a structured format.

7. Documentation of public presentation of project

- a. Document public presentation(s) to audience(s) outside classroom/school environment. Examples may include organizations with an interest or stake in the project: a civic group, peer education, public library, etc.
- b. Documentation may include script/outline, photos, program or CD.
- c. Include evidence of feedback, review or evaluation and personal reflection.

Consultation

Civics project consultants are available through the Center for Social Studies Education. [Contact Jessica Winkelaar](#), (651) 582-8294.

Submission Process

1. Complete the Intent to Apply.
2. View the Scholars of Distinction Important Dates document for the current award cycle timeline.
3. Submit an official transcript via U.S. Mail to Wendy Behrens, Minnesota Department of Education, 1500 Highway 36 West, Roseville, MN 55113. Transcript must be a certified copy sent directly from the applicant's school and must be received by the project deadline.
4. If a transcript is not available, contact [Wendy Behrens](#), (651) 582-8786 regarding alternative evidence that demonstrates the required knowledge base.
5. Complete the elements listed under "Project Specifics," label each document clearly and send in PDF format to [Wendy Behrens](#).

Scholars of Distinction: Civics Scoring Rubric follows this document.

Rubric for Evaluation of Applicants for the Minnesota Scholars of Distinction in Civics

Criterion	Components reflect a level of DISTINCTION	Components reflect a level of HONORABLE MENTION	Components reflect a level of AVERAGE	Components do not qualify
<p>Personal Statement</p> <p>(1 to 2 pages)</p> <p>10 points</p>	<p>Clear and convincing articulation of importance of civics in terms of past experience, present studies and future goals.</p> <p>Scholar clearly and strongly demonstrates the development of skills over time. The work is articulate and shows a longstanding commitment to research in and application of civics knowledge and skills.</p>	<p>Substantial evidence of importance of civics in terms of past experience, present studies and future goals.</p> <p>Scholar clearly demonstrates development of skills over time. The work is well-written, and shows a longstanding commitment to research in and application of civics knowledge and skills.</p>	<p>Average and predictable evidence of importance of civics in terms of past experience, present studies and future goals.</p> <p>Scholar demonstrates the development of some skills over time. The work shows commitment to a weak or small research project.</p>	<p>Sketchy or undeveloped overview of importance of civics in terms of past experience, present studies and future goals.</p> <p>Scholar has not demonstrated the development of some skills over time. The work does not show commitment to researching the project or the skills to do so.</p>
<p>Annotated K-12 Resume</p> <p>10 points</p>	<p>Resume reflects education and experiences that have led the student to excel in civics research and application.</p> <p>Academic studies and activities have contributed to significant growth of civics knowledge and skills.</p> <p>Resume preparation demonstrates superior quality for a high school student.</p>	<p>Resume reflects education and experiences that have led the student to succeed in civics research and application.</p> <p>Academic studies and activities have contributed to substantial growth of civics knowledge and skills.</p> <p>Resume preparation demonstrates satisfactory quality for a high school student.</p>	<p>Resume reflects education and experiences that have led the student to engage in civics research and application.</p> <p>Academic studies and activities have contributed to civics knowledge and skills.</p> <p>Resume preparation demonstrates average quality for a high school student.</p>	<p>Resume reflects education and experiences that have led to civics research and application.</p> <p>Academic studies and activities have limited contribution to civics knowledge and skills.</p> <p>Resume preparation demonstrates poor quality for a high school student.</p>

Criterion	Components reflect a level of DISTINCTION	Components reflect a level of HONORABLE MENTION	Components reflect a level of AVERAGE	Components do not qualify
<p align="center">Annotated Bibliography and one page Essay</p> <p align="center">10 points</p>	<p>Extensive annotated bibliography of readings that support a broad and comprehensive study of project components.</p> <p>The essay shows a superior understanding of the impact the research has had on scholar and others.</p> <p>The writing reflects superior quality for a high school student.</p>	<p>Substantial annotated bibliography of readings showing a broad and comprehensive study of project components.</p> <p>The essay shows a positive understanding of the impact the research has had on scholar and others.</p> <p>The writing reflects high quality for a high school student.</p>	<p>Average annotated bibliography of readings that shows a limited study of project components.</p> <p>The essay shows some understanding of the impact the research has had on scholar and others.</p> <p>The writing reflects average quality for a high school student.</p>	<p>Undeveloped annotated bibliography of readings that show a cursory study of project components.</p> <p>The essay shows a weak connection of the impact the research has had on scholar and others.</p> <p>The writing reflects poor quality for a high school student.</p>
<p align="center">Project Narrative</p> <p align="center">40 points</p>	<p>Significant evidence presented that the scholar knows and is able to use key concepts and apply civics as identified in the Project Narrative component of the Project Specifics.</p> <p>Clear and convincing evidence the scholar conducted a valid study including a comprehensive and concise summary of research and activities.</p>	<p>Strong evidence presented that the scholar knows and is able to use concepts and apply civics as identified in the Project Narrative component of the Project Specifics.</p> <p>Substantial evidence the scholar conducted a valid study including a comprehensive and concise summary of research and activities.</p>	<p>Evidence presented that the scholar knows and is able to use key concepts and apply civics as identified in the Project Narrative component of the Project Specifics.</p> <p>Some evidence of scholarly research and activities is provided and process is unclear.</p>	<p>Lack of evidence that the scholar knows and is able to use key concepts and apply civics as identified in the Project Narrative component of the Project Specifics.</p> <p>Evidence of research and activities provided were not organized to inform the reader.</p>
<p align="center">Project Narrative</p> <p align="center">10 points</p>	<p>A superior approach to the project over an appropriate period of time.</p> <p>An innovative or creative project approach, content and methodology.</p>	<p>A valid approach to the project over an appropriate period of time.</p> <p>An innovative or creative project approach, content and methodology.</p>	<p>A limited approach to the project over a short period of time.</p> <p>A narrow project approach, content and methodology.</p>	<p>A sketchy approach to the project over a short period of time.</p> <p>An ordinary project approach, content and methodology.</p>

Criterion	Components reflect a level of DISTINCTION	Components reflect a level of HONORABLE MENTION	Components reflect a level of AVERAGE	Components do not qualify
Project Narrative (Continue 10 point Value)	<p>Only relevant information and supporting materials were included and reliability was assessed.</p> <p>Thoughtful reflection on the process, future research and recommendations for others seeking to replicate are included.</p> <p>Organization and writing reflects superior quality for a high school student.</p>	<p>Relevant information and materials were included and reliability was assessed.</p> <p>Reflection on the process, future research and recommendations for others seeking to replicate are included.</p> <p>Organization and writing reflects high quality for a high school student.</p>	<p>Limited relevant information and materials were included, but reliability may be an issue.</p> <p>Limited reflection and recommendations for others seeking to replicate the process are included.</p> <p>Organization and writing reflects average quality for a high school student.</p>	<p>Relevance of information and supporting materials was not apparent.</p> <p>Reflection and recommendations for others seeking to replicate were not included.</p> <p>Organization and writing reflects poor quality for a high school student.</p>
Project Presentation 15 points	<p>Scholar made a public presentation, created a strong method to assess feedback received, and has reflected on the process with maturity and objectivity.</p>	<p>Scholar made a public presentation, created a satisfactory method to assess feedback received, and has reflected on the process with maturity and objectivity</p>	<p>Scholar made a public presentation, created a weak method to assess feedback received. Little reflection on the process was evident.</p>	<p>Scholar made a presentation with limited feedback. Little or no reflection on the presentation was evident.</p>
Testimonials 5 points	<p>Identification and contact information provided.</p>	<p>Identification and contact information provided</p>	<p>Identification and contact information was limited.</p>	<p>Identification and contact information was not provided.</p>

Reviewer's Comments:

Level of Recommendation:

_____Project reflects a level of **DISTINCTION**

_____Project reflects a level of **HONORABLE MENTION**

_____Project reflects a level of **AVERAGE**

_____Project does not qualify for recognition