Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Scholars Program
Application Packet
Class of 2027-2028
As of 11 November 2026

APPLICATION PACKET

Dear Students and University Administrators:

Thank you for your interest in the Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Scholars Program (SMSP). This application packet provides important information for students and university administrators regarding:

- The SMSP selection process
- Instructions for submitting an application for nomination to SMSP
- Application and submission deadlines

Please read the information carefully. If you have any questions, please contact the SMSP team or your university's designated SMSP administrator.

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Sincerely,
The SMSP Team

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INTRODUCTION TO THE SMSP SELECTION PROCESS

Students typically apply to SMSP during their second or third year of study. To be eligible to apply, students must meet the following criteria:

- Students must have completed four Fall/Spring semesters by the time the program begins in September 2027. Students may apply during their fourth semester.
- Students must be enrolled at their home university when the program begins in September 2027.
- Following submission, only applications nominated by the student's home university will be reviewed by the SMSP Selection Committee. Only complete applications will be considered.

SMSP does not require a minimum GPA or IELTS/TOEFL score. However, candidates are expected to:

- Demonstrate strong academic achievement, intellectual curiosity, and a record of accomplishment
- Possess excellent English-language competency
- Have outstanding interpersonal skills and be eager to contribute to the class
- Demonstrate creativity or other special talents or abilities
- Demonstrate leadership potential
- Be enterprising and demonstrate a spirit of adventure and flexibility

Applicants must successfully complete a highly selective three-phase selection process to be considered for the Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Scholars Program:

1. Application and Nomination Stage
2. Finalist Stage
3. Selection Days

PHASE 1: APPLICATION AND NOMINATION STAGE

SMSP does not accept applications directly from students. The application and nomination process consists of two steps:

- Interested students must submit a complete application through the NYU application system by **Monday, March 1, 2027**.
- Each participating university will review the applications submitted by its students and nominate up to 20 complete and exceptional applications to the SMSP Office at NYU Abu Dhabi no later than **Monday, March 15, 2027, at 10:00 a.m.**

Students should contact their designated university SMSP administrator, listed at the beginning of this packet, with any questions regarding the application or nomination process.

Application Submission

All students from Higher Colleges of Technology, United Arab Emirates University, and Zayed University should submit their completed application using the link below.

Application deadline: Monday, March 1, 2027

Application link: Submit your SMSP application here

NOTE: A nomination is not complete unless all required documents are received by the deadline.

PHASE 2: FINALIST STAGE

The SMSP Selection Committee reviews all nominated applications and selects up to 36 finalists from the 60 nominees. Finalists will be invited to participate in the final stage of the selection process, Selection Days.

Finalists will be announced in mid-April 2027.

PHASE 3: SELECTION DAYS

Finalists will be invited to participate in Selection Days, a rigorous final stage of the selection process held during the week of May 17, 2027. During Selection Days, finalists will participate in a combination of individual and small-group interviews with distinguished judges from across the NYU community, a group problem-solving exercise, a writing exercise, and informal interactions with the judges.

Up to 24 finalists will be selected as Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Scholars. The incoming class of Scholars will be announced during the summer, and the program will begin in early September 2027.

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APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Students and university administrators are responsible for ensuring that all required application materials are submitted by the applicable deadlines.

NOTE: A nomination is not complete unless all required materials are received by the deadline.

Student Application Requirements

Students must submit all of the following by **Monday, March 1, 2027**:

1. **Biographical Information** – text entry
2. **Student/Parent Consent Form** – upload
3. **CV or Resume** – upload
4. **Essay 1** – text entry
5. **Essay 2** – text entry
6. **Essay 3** - text entry
7. **Academic Project** – upload and text entry
8. **Video** – upload
9. **Copy of Passport** – upload
10. **Copy of Emirates ID** – upload
11. **Official Academic Transcript** – upload
12. **Two Faculty Letters of Recommendation** – text entry

University Administrator Requirements

Following the student application deadline, university administrators must complete the following by **Monday, March 15, 2027, at 10:00 a.m.**:

1. Review all submitted applications and nominate up to 20 complete and exceptional applications to the SMSP Office at NYU Abu Dhabi.
2. Certify that all nominated students are in good academic standing at their university.

ONLINE APPLICATION PREVIEW

The following section provides a preview of the information, questions, and materials you will encounter in the online SMSP application.

You do not need to complete or submit this section separately. All application materials must be completed and submitted through the NYU online application system.

This preview is provided to help you prepare your responses and required materials before submitting your application. Where applicable, it also includes examples of forms, instructions, or information that will be sent to others as part of the application process, such as your faculty recommenders.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

In the online application, you will be asked to provide biographical information, including your contact and address information, academic history, and emergency contact information.

STUDENT/PARENT CONSENT FORM

As part of the online application, you will be asked to download, complete, sign, and upload a Student/Parent Consent Form.

The form will certify the following:

I certify that the information I have attached to this application is complete and correct and that the essays and project description have been written by me alone. I understand that any misrepresentation or omission may be cause for denying consideration for, or acceptance into, The Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Scholars Program (“the Program.”) I understand that any items submitted to the Program in conjunction with my candidacy become the sole property of the Program and will not be returned.

I understand that the Program reserves the right to deny consideration or acceptance to anyone whom it considers not sufficiently qualified and to require withdrawal of any student at any time for any reason, including scholarship, character, attendance, and/or personal conduct.

My family and I understand that this is a mixed-gender program.

I understand that the Program may include a chaperoned international trip during the academic year, and I have my family's approval to attend. To facilitate my participation in the trip, I understand that it is my responsibility to apply for the appropriate visa. The Program reserves the right to cancel the trip.

I certify that I have shared all of this information with my parents and/or guardians, and that I sign this Student/Parent Consent Form with their full knowledge and agreement. My parent/guardian's signature appears below.

_____

Student Name (Please print) Signature Date

_____

Parent/Guardian Name (Please print) Signature Date

CV OR RESUME

In the online application, you will be asked to upload your CV or resume. Your CV or resume must include the following sections:

1. Heading
Name, address, mobile number, and email address

2. Education
Major(s) and degree(s) obtained (with dates) and sought (with expected date of graduation)

3. Activities
Relevant university co-curricular, extracurricular, and other activities (with dates)

4. Work Experience
Volunteer and/or work experience (with dates)

5. Honors and Awards
Honors, scholarships, awards, publications, leadership accomplishments, and/or creative works (with dates)

6. Other Relevant Skills or Interests
Hobbies, experience with travel abroad, etc.

ESSAY 1

In the online application, you will be asked to respond to the following prompt:

Describe a challenge—local, regional, or global—that you are passionate about addressing. How would participation in the SMSP, with its unique leadership development, cross-cultural exposure, and academic opportunities, equip you to contribute toward addressing that challenge?

In your response, please specify:

- The challenge you wish to address (e.g., environmental sustainability, educational equity, technological access, etc.)
- Your personal connection to this issue (why it matters to you)
- How participation in SMSP—its leadership training, global exposure, or graduate-level advising—would bolster your ability to contribute meaningfully toward this challenge.

Word count: 250–300 words

ESSAY 2

In the online application, you will be asked to respond to the following prompt:

What is something you have wanted to understand simply because you were curious about it?

Tell us what interested you, what you did to learn or think more about it, and what you discovered along the way. Your response does not need to relate to your major or future career.

In your response, please address:

- What interested you and why.
- What you did to explore it further.
- What surprised, challenged, or intrigued you.

- What you learned from the experience.

Word count: 250–300 words

ESSAY 3

In the online application, you will be asked to respond to the following prompt:

Describe a time when you engaged with someone whose perspective differed significantly from your own. How did you navigate the difference, and what did you learn from the experience?

Word count: 250–300 words

ACADEMIC PROJECT

The online application will ask you to submit a piece of academic work and a reflective description as outlined below.

What to Submit

Important: *Reviewers will focus primarily on your reflective description. Your uploaded work is supporting evidence only.*

1. Upload a piece of academic work

- Completed at your university (e.g., essay, report, research project, presentation, portfolio).
- Include grades or feedback if available, but this is optional.

2. Submit a reflective description of your work (250–300 words) — this is the most important part.

In your reflection, focus on the aspects of your work that best showcase your thinking, learning, and growth. You do not need to cover every detail. A strong reflection typically addresses:

Your Contribution

- Briefly explain the work you did and the approach you took.
- For essays or written work: describe your research, topic selection, argument or analysis, and any challenges you overcame.
- Highlight decisions and skills you applied (e.g., critical thinking, analysis, creativity, problem-solving).

Your Learnings

- What did you learn from completing this work?
- How did it challenge or deepen your understanding of the topic or your skills?

Importance of the Work

- Why was this project meaningful to you?
- How does it reflect your academic interests, growth, or future ambitions?

8. VIDEO

In the online application, you will be asked to upload a video responding to the following prompt:

Introduce yourself to the SMSP Selection Committee and tell us something about yourself that we may not learn from the rest of your application.

You may choose to share an interest, experience, passion, or something else that is unique to you. We would like to get to know you beyond your academic achievements and CV.

Video length: 60–90 seconds

9. OFFICIAL ACADEMIC TRANSCRIPT

In the online application, you will be asked to upload an official and certified academic transcript.

The transcript must be clear and entirely visible and must show that you will have completed 4 Fall/Spring semesters by the time the Program starts in September 2027. You may apply during your 4th semester.

10. TWO FACULTY LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

As part of the online application, you will be asked to provide the details of two faculty recommenders. Once you enter their information, each recommender will receive an email from the NYU application system with a link to submit their recommendation directly.

You are not required to complete the recommendation form below. It is included here for reference so that you can see the information and questions your recommenders will receive.

The recommendation will request the following information:

Student's Name:
University:
Major:
Recommender's Name:
Position:

The above-named student is applying for acceptance to the Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Scholars Program (SMSP) for the coming Academic Year 2027-2028. The SMSP is a specially designed program by New York University and New York University Abu Dhabi in conjunction with the Government of Abu Dhabi to offer exceptional university students, in their third or fourth year of a bachelor's program in one of the three national universities in the UAE, an outstanding academic, cross-cultural, and leadership development experience. The program offers the following opportunities and benefits:

- One of two academic core courses taught by NYU faculty and instructors. Each course includes an international travel component that enriches and builds upon the topic of the course, leading students to develop global and international perspectives on critical issues of our time.
- What Makes a Leader course
- Public Speaking and Public Presentations course
- Critical Thinking and Persuasive Writing course
- Cross-cultural experiences with students from throughout NYU's Global Network University
- Roundtable meetings with global leaders from around the world

- Advice and counseling on graduate education options and admissions processes

Scholars will be expected to complete all their coursework, including extensive readings, regular essay assignments, class participation, and team projects as assigned. Overall, the work is demanding and rigorous.

Scholars should:

- Be top students with noted intellectual curiosity and a record of accomplishment
- Possess excellent English language competency
- Have outstanding interpersonal skills and be eager to contribute to the class
- Be creative or have other special talents or gifts
- Demonstrate leadership potential
- Be enterprising and demonstrate a spirit of adventure and flexibility

Please complete all parts of this recommendation as outlined below:

1. WRITTEN NARRATIVE: Please answer the following questions in an attached letter about this student:
    a. How long and in what context do you know this candidate?
    b. What are this candidate's outstanding achievements, talents, and skills? Please be specific in your description.
    c. Student's level of motivation and determination.
    d. In what areas does the candidate need to grow and improve?

2. QUANTITATIVE EVALUATION: Please assess the candidate's ability in each category below:

	Below Average	Average	Good	Very Good	Superior	Unable to Judge
Analytic ability	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Leadership skills	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Creativity	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Ability to work in different situations and groups	1	2	3	4	5	NA

Positive social interaction with peers	1	2	3	4	5	NA

TECHNICAL GUIDE

Welcome to our friendly how-to page to help answer your frequently asked questions about the application and new student process. Below you'll find a guide to the application process (activating your Net ID, accessing your application, and accessing your admissions decision).

How do I log into my application?
Students who begin a multi-step application like SMSP will receive an email titled "[Program Name] Next Steps!" This email will contain your login information for the application login page. You will be provided a temporary PIN to complete the login process. After you have logged in, you will be able to continue your application.

How do I activate my Net ID?
One of the first steps of setting up your account with NYU begins with the instruction of setting up your Net ID. In your "Your NYU ID Numbers and Status Page" communication, you should have received information about your Net ID and N#.

You'll need to activate your NYU NetID and create your password by following the instructions on the NYU Start Page. If your NYU account was activated previously, you may reset your password (if needed) by clicking Reset Password on the NYU Start Page. If you cannot initially activate your credentials, we ask you to try again after 24 hours have passed. Below you'll see a short clip of how to enter your N# and birthdate to activate your Net ID.

Please note: the N# and birthdate entered below are for test purposes only. Your N# should be in the "Your NYU ID Numbers and Status Page" communication, and you should use your real birthdate.

How do I log into my Slate status page?
Logging into your slate status page is easy! Simply login to the applicant portal using your Net ID and password that you created previously. Once you have logged in, select the application that you wish to review. On your status page, you'll be able to see pending items or if your application is complete. For those who have had their applications reviewed, you will see an update to your application that indicates a decision.