



School of the Art Institute
of Chicago

Student
Financial
Services

Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission (SACM) Sponsorship Overview

Welcome to The School of the Art Institute of Chicago! We are excited that you have chosen to attend SAIC and look forward to meeting you on campus. The Office of Student Financial Services values an opportunity to support our sponsored students and to help ensure a smooth transition to life at SAIC and in the United States.

We understand how important attaining a full or partial scholarship from a sponsoring agency, such as the [Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission \(SACM\)](#) is, so to help answer many of the questions that come with the sponsorship and enrollment we have provided the following information:

School of the Art Institute of Chicago information at the Ministry of Education can be found here: <https://ru.moe.gov.sa/Search#/University/7758>. This includes approved degrees at SAIC

Sponsorship Documentation:

Financial documentation and proof of funds availability is required to receive I-20 from SAIC for any academic program. These are provided to students by SACM only after the following conditions have been met: 1) the student must have submitted proof of eligibility for a SACM sponsorship (generally through a “For Admissions Purposes Only” letter), and 2) the student must be provided a pre-admit letter by SAIC. This pre-admit letter must be then given to SACM in return for the Financial Guarantee. A “For Admission Purposes Only” letter is not an acceptable document for SACM to pay your bill. a Financial Guarantee issued for The School of the Art Institute of Chicago with the student’s name and active program dates.

A typical sponsorship application process may likely follow these steps:

- Apply for a SACM scholarship directly to SACM or another sponsoring agency:
- Obtain a Financial guarantee document that includes your full name, academic program and states SAIC as the host institution
- Apply to a SAIC for admissions to an approved degree program. Click [here](#) for details
- Once admitted to SAIC, provide your SAIC admission letter to the sponsoring agency
- Arrive on campus
- Register for classes at SAIC
- Send SACM or your sponsoring agency current schedule of courses
- SACM or sponsoring agency will send updated financial guarantee document directly to SAIC Office of Student Financial Services at saic.sfs@saic.edu

Please check with your sponsor to ensure that the appropriate sponsorship steps are followed.

SACM will cover most fees SAIC charges, however not all charges are covered by SACM. The list of fees SACM will not cover include:

- On Campus Housing
- SAIC Meal Plan
- Residence Hall damage fees
- SAIC Health Insurance
- SAIC Library Fees
- SAIC Media Center Fees
- Late Fees
- NSF Returned Payment Fees
- Computer Lab printing charges

Questions about Undergraduate/Graduate Academic Programs and Admissions Requirements can be emailed to saic.admissions@saic.edu

The Saudi Arabian Ministry of Higher Education has a **list of approved degrees at SAIC** that are recognized by their government. Students cannot easily change majors or fields of study once here. Not all degrees on the SACM approval list are paid for – the list at the website above shows degrees that are recognized in Saudi Arabia after a student returns to work at home. The Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission (SACM) is part of the embassy in D.C. that facilitates the funding and support for Saudi students while they are in the U.S.

SACM Sponsorship typically includes payment of **all tuition, fees, health insurance and a monthly stipend for living costs**. SACM has their own health insurance that they will provide. **Because SAIC charges all International students for health insurance, SACM students will need to waive SAIC's Health Insurance each year.** Details on waiving SAIC Health Insurance is at saic.edu/healthinsurance. If family members travel with them – health insurance and a stipend is included to cover costs for their family. SACM scholarships are given in semesterly increments and details are listed on a Financial Guarantee.

SACM's Financial Guarantee

The SACM Financial Guarantee should be provided to SAIC each semester by either SACM or the student. This guarantee goes to the SAIC Student Financial Services office for billing. Submit by email to saic.sfs@saic.edu.

The financial guarantee is to confirm that the student is the recipient of a scholarship from the Government of Saudi Arabia. The scholarship is managed and administered by the Cultural Mission of the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia (SACM), and has been granted with the following terms and conditions:

1. It provides tuition funding to the sponsored student, as long as the student is enrolled on a full-time basis in an academic (undergraduate or graduate) or English as a Second Language programs.
2. The scholarship covers the full tuition and other relevant required academic fees.

3. SACM provides a directly deposited monthly stipend to students and their families to cover the cost of living, including clothing, books, foods and travel.
4. The scholarship provides full and comprehensive health insurance (medical and dental) with no deductible to students and their families. Consequently, SACM expects a waiver for any imposed additional school-sponsored health insurance charges.
5. The student is required to register for the standard course load as a full-time international student, with a minimum of 12 credits for the semester system or 15 credits for the quarter system for undergraduate students and 9 credits for the semester system or 12 credits for the quarter system for graduate students. ESL students are required to attend no fewer than 20 hours per week of teacher directed classroom instruction. This does not include field trips, self study, etc. All classes should be taken on location.
6. If already paid by SACM, tuition fees related to dropped courses within the time allowed should be refunded directly to SACM; otherwise, such fees should not be invoiced to SACM, but rather invoiced directly to the student. SACM should be notified in writing when a student drops or withdraws during a semester.
7. Online/hybrid and other such courses are not allowed and will not be covered under this financial guarantee. Under certain circumstances, SACM may choose to pay for no more than 6 on-line/hybrid credit hours per degree, subject to SACM written pre-approval. If needed, it is the student's responsibility to seek prior approval; SACM will issue a separate financial guarantee letter to cover the online/hybrid tuition.
8. Excluded from the coverage of this financial guarantee are fees related to study abroad programs and tutoring.
9. The financial guarantee is valid and binding from the effective date until the void date listed above, or upon graduation, whichever comes first.

Any failure to meet SACM guidelines – certain GPA, submitting transcripts, not enrolling in too many online classes could impact students NOT being able to get monthly stipends OR Not being sponsored anymore by SACM.

Students have their own portal account with SACM and this is how they typically submit documentation and communicate with SACM. All communication is in Arabic – so student's cannot print an email or show you what they need in English. SACM has assigned academic advisors to work with all sponsored students.

Annual Sponsorship from Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education:

Students who receive this scholarship through the program before coming to the USA. Students admitted to top 100 universities OR high demand fields for the Saudi Economy.

- Students need a PDF or original admission letter to a program that is on the SACM

Approved list.

- I-20 immigration document (from SAIC Office of International Affairs).
- Official Transcript shows current semester registration and GPA.
- **Graduate Students** need to get letters on letterhead explaining their study plan from their Graduate Coordinator (# of credits in the program, estimated graduation date). If a SACM student asks you for a letter – ask for details and provide a PDF letter with details or information from the Graduate Catalog. SACM will NOT write to a coordinator - the Student has to provide documentation via a student portal to SACM.

CONTINUING STUDENTS NEED DOCUMENTATION TO UPLOAD TO SACM PORTAL:

- **Students need to provide proof they are enrolled each semester** and submit an official transcript upon completing each semester to their SACM Portal. Students can request an electronic transcript from the SAIC Registrar's Office for this to upload to the SACM portal. Students with a hold can still have an electronic transcript sent to SACM.
- **Students have to obtain a new Financial Guarantee every semester** and submit it to the Student Financial Services office for billing. If a financial hold is on an account – a student can still request an electronic transcript to be released to their SACM advisor.
- **Students who withdraw from a class typically have to pay for this themselves** – SACM does not pay for withdrawn classes or semesters. Some students with medical conditions can appeal SACM to see if they will make exceptions to pay.
- **CHANGES TO MAJOR NAMES or PROGRAM CONTENT:** can significantly impact SACM students and sometimes cause a student to lose a scholarship. Programs that use hybrid or online or weekend classes are typically not approved by SACM.
- **Completing a degree** – At the end of a degree students have to 'CLOSE THEIR FILE' with SACM – to make sure their bills are paid, their degree is recognized by the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education. Students typically have to submit a diploma and final transcripts which is why students are often insistent on getting diplomas quickly. They do not often realize how long it takes after graduation to obtain a diploma. Immigration regulations allow students to remain in the U.S. for up to 60 days after graduation if they are not continuing their studies at another level or institution. The Registrar's office also receives some documentation to confirm the student did complete their degree, the # of credits and online classes. This is going to the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education and not SACM.
- **Completing a second degree** - Students who complete an undergraduate degree who stay in the U.S. for a masters need to first provide proof they finished their degree (diploma, final transcripts and some additional paperwork) to CLOSE THEIR SACM FILE before they can get approval for their new degree. They then complete a new application with SACM to get approval for the new program. This can take several months – and is not

always approved. Students sometimes end up paying for their own classes until they get SACM funding.

- Many SACM bills are paid irregularly and financial holds can be put on student records preventing registration. Students can obtain a transcript to send to SACM when there is a financial hold to facilitate payment being sent to SAIC.

COMMUNICATION TO STUDENTS AND SACM:

SACM sponsored students who need transcripts can request them either through the Registrar's Office or online via [SAIC Self-Service](#). If additional academic documentation is needed, students are encouraged to work with their Academic Advisor or academic department to obtain documentation.

SACM sponsored students are typically studying on F-1 international student status and encouraged to reach out to International Affairs for any support related to their international student status. Questions should be email to International Affairs at intaff@saic.edu