

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION TIPS

The following are meant to be guidelines -not rules- to assist you in the completion of your scholarship applications.

1. Research which scholarships exist.

Once you have narrowed down your university or college choices, compile a list of scholarships and awards offered by those institutions. University and College websites have links to their awards. Consider as well what scholarships and awards are available through CPET, and those offered by the public and private sector. Use scholarship websites, such as www.scholarshipscanada.com or www.studentawards.ca.

Private and public scholarships and awards are available from schools, companies and charities to governments or private individuals. Your starting point in a search for scholarships should begin at home with your parent(s). Ask whether the company or organization (even unions) in which your parents work offer any scholarships. Most companies that offer scholarships to employees or children of employees don't advertise externally. Parents could check with the human resources department for any scholarship offerings.

Veteran organizations give out a fair amount of scholarships. Maybe your parents belong to a lodge or a club that has a scholarship for members or children of members. You could also inquire whether your church, sports, service group or club has any special scholarships available.

Keep in mind that certain scholarships are automatic, in particular entrance scholarships. These scholarships are awarded simply on the basis of your academic standing (grade average). Unless

otherwise noted, you do not even have to complete a scholarship application to receive one of these awards.

2. Ask for letters of recommendation

Start early. Discuss your plans with your references now, before the application is even available. Let them know what you would like to study and why you want to apply for the scholarship.

As soon as you have the application, meet with your references. Give your references a written description of the scholarship and a copy of your personal statement and proposed academic program. You may also want to highlight activities and achievements of which your references may not be aware. Provide your references with appropriately addressed envelopes with postage, if necessary. Be sure to also give them plenty of time to write the letter; do not wait until the last minute.

3. Meet the application deadlines

Most universities and colleges do not accept late applications. In order to meet deadlines, impose a deadline for yourself that is at least two weeks before the stated deadline. Use this 'buffer time' to proofread your application before you send it off.

YOU are responsible for making sure all parts of the application arrive on time. This includes supporting materials, such as letters of recommendation and transcripts. So make sure everyone who is contributing to your application has ample lead-time.

4. Neatness counts

Make several photocopies of all the forms you receive and use the copies as working drafts as you develop your application packet. If possible, type the application that you submit. If you must print, do so neatly and legibly.

Proofread the entire application carefully. Nothing is less impressive than an application with misspelled words or grammatical errors. Ask a friend, teacher or parent to proofread it as well.

5. Be informed

Make sure you know everything about the award before you apply for it. Be sure you meet all the requirements, and be realistic in determining whether you qualify. The last thing you want is to be eligible for a scholarship but somehow have missed some important detail of the application package.

6. Sink rocks; don't skip stones

When it comes to highlighting your attributes and strengths, avoid simply listing every thing that you have ever done with details. Focus on quality rather than quantity. Offer insight on what you gained from participating in an activity, rather than provide a bulleted list.

Compile a list of activities and accomplishments. Choose those that you can match to the scholarship's criteria and elaborate.

Use the following as a starting point for your list:

- **Awards:** Were you the student of the month, student of the year? Did you receive an award for your extra-curricular activities?
- **Clubs:** What clubs at school were you involved in? Were you in any school plays? Did you write for the school paper or yearbook? Were you involved with a religious youth group?
- **Co-op Jobs:** Where did you work? What did you do? What did you learn?
- **International Exchanges:** Did you travel abroad during school to study or volunteer? What did you learn about the culture?
- **Part-time Jobs:** Were you a cashier or clerk, babysitter, delivery person, courier, waiter, lawn care worker, camp counsellor, painter, etc.? Even if you had a really menial job that you hated, include it.
- **Projects:** Did you work on any large projects that you are particularly proud of?
- **Scholastic Achievement:** Did you get high marks? What was your average? Were you on the honour list? Which subject(s) do you excel in?
- **School Associations:** Were you involved with your school music council or athletic association? Were you a student representative for the parent-teachers association?
- **Sports:** What was your position on the school team? Were you the captain, co-captain, or manager? What skills did you learn?
- **Student Government:** Were you the president, secretary, treasurer, vice-president, class representative, or grade representative?
- **Volunteer work at school:** Were you a tutor? Coach's assistant? Office helper? Library assistant? Teacher's assistant? Technical support?
- **Volunteer work out of school:** Local hospital? Local public school? Local organization? Government office? Community newspaper? Sports team? Daycare centre? Nursing home? Describe your duties and state what you learned as a result of these experiences.

7. Make duplicates

Before sending off your applications, make copies. If your application is lost, or you spill coffee on it after pulling an all-nighter, you have a back up.

8. If you are notified that you have received a scholarship, send a thank you note to the donor.

9. Definitions

An **Award** usually involves multiple criteria such as academic achievement, demonstrated financial need, and school or community involvement.

A **Bursary** is usually given to a recipient based on demonstrated financial need and satisfactory academic progress.

A **Scholarship** is given to a recipient primarily based upon academic achievement.

Entrance Awards may require an application and may be awarded to recipients prior to their starting a program.

(Source for definitions: Red River College)