



**A Guide to Planning, Searching, and
Applying for Scholarships**

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THE SCHOLARSHIP KIT



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INTRODUCTION

THE MYTHS: *Scholarships are only for the brainy. Scholarships are only awarded to the book-worms and the nerds. Scholarships are for everyone else but not for me. Scholarships are scarce, because money is scarce.*

These are some of the popular misconceptions that exist about scholarships. If you are performing well at school, actively participate in extracurricular activities, and are involved in community service, you may be competitive winning some of the millions of dollars in scholarships awarded each year across Canada.

Usually awarded to recognize and reward excellence, scholarships do place an emphasis on academic achievement, but are generally awarded to those individuals who demonstrate academic ability as well as non-academic achievements. Therefore, do away with the idea that a scholarship may not be awarded to you, and set out on a systematic and organized path to planning, searching and applying for scholarships.

In addition to the millions of scholarship dollars that are awarded each year, millions also go unclaimed. Why? It is simply because no one applied for them. Therefore, even by sheer chance and probability alone, if you apply for scholarships that have not been claimed in previous years, you stand an excellent chance of winning.

Why should you apply for scholarships? In addition to the prestige and recognition - which are good to have as proof of accomplishment, scholarships are an excellent way to finance your postsecondary education. While tuition costs at Canadian postsecondary institutions continue to increase, government funding continues to decrease. Many students, including yourself, may find they have to subsidize their postsecondary education costs through part-time work, taking bank loans, or postponing their studies to work until the necessary funds can be saved.

These methods of financing your postsecondary education could potentially make it more difficult for you to focus solely on achieving the highest level of success. You want to focus on your ability to devote yourself exclusively to making the most of your postsecondary education, on your motivation and drive to excel, and on your ability to attend the best institution for your chosen area of study.

Accessibility to postsecondary education, now and in the future, continues to depend more on the availability of funding than any other factor. On the other hand, admission to the best institutions is not determined by your ability to finance your education, but by your outstanding achievements and demonstrated qualities of being a well-rounded individual.

Millions of dollars of scholarships go unclaimed each year simply because no one applied for them.

While tuition costs at Canadian postsecondary institutions continue to increase, government funding continues to decrease.

The changing mix of revenues over the last decade has resulted in students paying a greater share of the costs of their postsecondary education.

- Ontario Ministry of Education



Applying for and winning scholarships, therefore, will enable you to finance your postsecondary education, and provide you with the opportunity and flexibility of obtaining the maximum benefit without compromising the quality of education you receive.

This kit is a step-by-step guide to help you on your way to planning, searching, and applying for scholarships. By conducting an organized, well-documented search and application process - which entails putting in time and effort – you can apply for several scholarships. Once your information gathering is complete, and you are eligible for application, only your own limitations restrict the number of scholarships you can apply for. If you are putting forth the effort of applying for one or five or ten scholarships, why not twenty, why not thirty?

In Canada alone, there are thousands of scholarships available to postsecondary students. If you win one or two out of thirty or more applications, you have done well.

Remember, though it is a definite advantage to achieve academic excellence - and that should be one of your fundamental goals. You do not have to be a genius to apply for scholarships. Scholarship sponsors are looking for individuals who can relate to people and who:

- Are likely to succeed in attaining their goals
- Can provide leadership
- Stand up for themselves and their beliefs
- Can demonstrate that they are and will be good citizens of society
- Show initiative, ambition and motivation
- Strive to do their best in whatever they do
- Have the desire to serve their communities on a voluntary basis
- Have the desire to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of fellow human beings

\Schol"ar*ships\, \Bur"sa*ries\, \A*wards"\ AND \Fel"low*ships\ DEFINED

SCHOLARSHIPS: Scholarships are awards of money or financial rewards to students for the purpose of education. Usually based on merit, scholarships are awarded to those who are involved in various academic and non-academic areas - extracurricular activities, voluntary community service, hobbies, sports, and entrepreneurship.

Scholarship amounts vary considerably, from a few hundred dollars to tens of thousands of dollars over an entire four-year undergraduate period at university. In cases where the scholarships are awarded for more than one year of study, the sponsor usually expects that you will

Set out on a systematic and organized path to planning, searching, and applying for scholarships.



maintain a certain acceptable level of academic achievement, in order to receive the funds for subsequent years. Certain scholarships, though merit-based, also take into account financial need.

WHO OFFERS SCHOLARSHIPS? Universities and colleges offer scholarships – including entrance scholarships for first year students, to attract the highly talented students to their academic institution. Any institution's culture is defined by the quality and calibre of its constituents. Attracting the best students, those who will enhance and contribute to an institution's culture, is the institution's way of rewarding and recognizing excellence, and helping to ensure this excellence will continue.

Among many entrance scholarships, most universities also offer prestigious scholarships known as the President's Award or Chancellor's Award, given to outstanding students. These prestigious scholarships are also quite lucrative and may last the entire period of studies.

Scholarships are also offered by private foundations, government departments - provincial and federal, unions, corporations and other organizations and are open to the public. There are numerous tightly-defined scholarships that pertain to innovative fields of study.

Many corporations also offer scholarships to dependents of their employees only, and therefore are not open to the public.

BURSARIES: Sometimes confused with scholarships, bursaries are financial awards based on financial need. While it may also require demonstration of academic excellence, a bursary is not likely to be awarded to one who has adequate financial assistance. Bursaries are often misunderstood to be grants - those that are given totally on the basis of financial need. If a sponsor is willing to provide you with a bursary, the sponsor needs to know and has a right to know, that you have the capability of taking full advantage from the education that the bursary will allow you to pursue. Academic and non-academic achievement is therefore important, even though the overriding factor is financial need.

AWARDS: Awards are one-time cash prizes, usually based on outstanding achievement in a particular area, and are usually given out by private corporations, groups, and foundations. Examples are awards for outstanding achievement in Math or Science or Drama or Literature.

FELLOWSHIPS: Fellowships are awards and grants that are awarded for post-graduate education, involving specific areas of research and study.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR A SCHOLARSHIP?

The following is a step-by-step process to take you through the planning, searching, and application process for scholarships. Each



step will require time, effort, thought, and commitment. However, each step is crucial in your overall chances of success in attempting to win scholarships. You must be in it for the winning, and the winning formula is not a half-hearted, rushed and sloppy attempt to apply for scholarships. What then is the winning formula? The following is a summarized version. Details for each of the steps follow after the summary.

THE WINNING FORMULA: A Detailed Step-By-Step Guide

THE WINNING FORMULA - summary

- I. THE PLANNING PROCESS
 1. Prepare yourself
 - a. Get involved
 - b. Document all achievements and activities
 - c. Identify people who can help you
 - d. Do your best
 2. Identify your needs, aspirations, goals
 - a. Career planning
 - b. Identify institutions for your potential areas of studies
 - c. Identify specific groups or categories you fit into
- II. THE SEARCH PROCESS
 1. Conduct research
 - a. Where is information available?
 - b. What information to look for
 - c. Identify potential scholarships
 - d. Obtain forms & scholarship history
 2. Identify potential helpers
- III. THE APPLICATION PROCESS
 1. What is required?
 2. Completing your application package
 - a. Basic application form
 - b. Essay questions
 - c. Letters of recommendations/references
 - d. Transcripts
 - e. Interview
 - f. Other requirements
- IV. EVALUATION

Each step will require time, effort, thought, and commitment.



The entire process of applying for scholarships involves three major steps, each of which are further broken down into more detail. Filling out the application form in itself is not a formidable task. What is formidable is the content you put in it and the manner in which you do so. The content, in turn is determined by your achievements, involvement, and plans. Your achievements are in turn determined by what you do with your time and how well you do it.

Let this guide take you through the three major processes: **Planning, Searching and Applying**

The Planning Process

Why is planning important? You know that scholarships are not awarded only on the basis of academic achievement. If you are determined to apply for scholarships, then you must undertake a planned and organized effort in involving yourself in non-academic activities, in such a way as to demonstrate your commitment, dedication, leadership qualities, and good citizenship.

There are various sources of information about scholarships available, that if you don't know what you're looking for, you will be lost in a maze. You therefore have to know what to look for. In order to know what to look for, you must know and write down information about yourself.

1. Prepare Yourself

When do I start planning? The best time is in the early years of high school. **The earlier the better.** These are the years when you can scrutinize your own interests, abilities, skills and get involved in non-academic areas.

A. GET INVOLVED

Two major areas you can get involved in while at high school are extracurricular activities and community service. Together with your academic performance, they demonstrate that you are a well-rounded and balanced individual.

Extracurricular activities include starting or being a member of a club, team, group, or activity in any area that interests you. By involving yourself in activities that you are interested in, you will be more enthusiastic and will tend to excel in what you do. Look for challenges and leadership roles in your level and depth of involvement, rather than superficial involvement. Examples of extracurricular activities include music (choir/band), sports (team, coach, manager), drama (school play), math (math club, math contests), hobbies (stamp collecting, coin collecting clubs), etc.

Community service means any voluntary service that you provide that shows your care and concern for others, your organizational and leadership skills, your people skills, and your overall willingness to help others. This could be teaching religious education, being a

... and the winning formula is:

**PLANNING,
SEARCHING,
and APPLYING.**

Look for challenges and leadership roles.



volunteer with your local community centre or at your local elementary school, or volunteering at the hospital.

In all of your involvement, be steady and committed, strive for leadership positions, provide the best service you can - excel in whatever you do, build your contacts and maintain them over the years (**they will be the best people to provide you with references in the future**), and most importantly, manage your time well. Make the best use of your time. Any time that you give, should be the best time you can give. Be aware of how you spend your time and **do not let your non-academic pursuits take place at the expense of your academic performance**. However, also realize the value of extracurricular and community service activities in building your personality and improving your leadership, communication, organization and time management skills (thereby increasing your chances of winning a scholarship).

Any time that you give, should be the best time you can give.

B. DOCUMENT ALL ACHIEVEMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

When you are in Grade 12, do you remember what you did in Grade 10? When did you win that Math contest, or organize that trip to Stratford or write that winning article for the school newspaper?

It is critical to document or log all your activities, involvement, achievements, special awards and recognition, special training, skills and talents on an on-going basis.

Keep a special book or binder or a file on your computer, and be consistent in keeping it up to date. This task may seem silly and futile right now; however it is an excellent way to organize this important information so that it is readily available when filling out your scholarship applications in the future. At any point in time, this document will provide you with an overall picture of who you are and what you have accomplished. Try using Matrix 1 "Activity Log", found in the "Educational Funding" section of www.educationboard.ca.

SAMPLE ACTIVITY LOG

Activity Type: EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITY			
Grade	Date	Activity/Position/Accomplishment	Contact
10	Apr. 00 - Jun. 00	Softball Team	Mr. Berry
11	Sept. 00 - Jun. 01	Student Council - Social Convener	Ms. Adams

In addition, start a **portfolio** of all your star schoolwork and accomplishments. All those essays, creative assignments, art posters, term projects and science labs can be put to good use. Save them when they are returned to you, marked by your teachers. Also save electronic copies of them in a special folder on your computer. Many scholarships may require you to write an essay, or submit samples of your work, which is when your portfolio comes in handy. You may be able to adapt information and research you have already done in your schoolwork to meet part of the requirements of a scholarship application. This could save you some time in the future.

Your portfolio provides you with accurate documentation of all of your achievements at any given time.



However, if you do choose to adapt an essay you have written for a school assignment into part of a scholarship application, **a few IMPORTANT words of caution:** you must first ensure that there is no provision in the rules and regulations of the scholarship that prohibit you from submitting work previously used for academic credit; and secondly, do not become lazy about writing essays for scholarship applications. Make sure that if you adapt previous work, it is indeed applicable to the essay question the scholarship application poses.

The table to the right gives you some examples to help you start your portfolio. Types of information have been divided into categories, and then a suggestion for accomplishments to include in each category is given. Your portfolio is up to you to create. Be imaginative and creative – the more effort you put in, the more impressive your portfolio will be.

C. IDENTIFY PEOPLE WHO CAN HELP YOU

You need to identify and keep in touch with people who can help you in your endeavour to win scholarships. You need not be in the game alone. These are people who can advise you, motivate you, support you, promote you, recommend you. They may be your teachers, coaches, chairpersons, guidance counsellors or principal. They may be your parents, your relatives, your friends. Networking is the name of the game when it comes to people who can help you.

Make lists of scholarship winners who are experienced at the process - seek their help, advice and support in advance. Some high schools have scholarship coaches who are specifically knowledgeable about the scholarship process.

Make sure you maintain contact with these people over the years and keep them informed about yourself, your involvement and your accomplishments.

Get your references early if you can. You do not have to wait until you have a scholarship application in front of you to request a reference from someone you trust. If you work with a particular supervisor, whether a teacher, coach or employer, it may be more effective for them to write a letter of recommendation for you while

THINGS YOU CAN INCLUDE IN YOUR PORTFOLIO

Category	Accomplishment
Personal Profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ An introduction describing yourself ■ A mission statement, or a list of goals ■ A resume ■ A career plan ■ A list of hobbies/activities you pursue
Academic/Technical Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Copy of your latest report card/transcript ■ What computer skills you have ■ Awards you have won ■ Letters of recommendation
Personal Management Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Information about your volunteer work and/or part time job ■ How you have gained leadership skills, awards or achievements that pertain to leadership ■ How you have participated in clubs, teams, groups
Teamwork Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ List of teams/groups that you have participated in ■ Describe the nature of your contribution or involvement with these
Project Work	<p>Samples of your work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Something you built (hint: take a picture of it) or your artwork ■ Something you wrote ■ A video tape of your talents ■ Something that shows your computer skills

You need not be in this alone...
NETWORKING is the name of the game.



your efforts and contributions are fresh in their mind. As part of the effective planning and preparing process, identify those individuals who you think would be good referees for you. Approach them and ask them if they would mind writing you a letter of reference. You can easily explain to them that you are planning to apply for a number of scholarships in the future and that you are trying to be prepared as early as possible. They will appreciate your good organizational skills.

You can also find out if it would be okay with them if you contacted them in the future in case any changes need to be made to the letter. Some important things you should know when using reference letters can be found in section 2C of The Application Process section of The Scholarship Kit.

To help you keep track of all your potential referees and important resource people, try using Matrix 2 “Contact List”, found in the “Educational Funding” section of www.educationboard.ca which is included as a guide.



D. DO YOUR BEST

*In whatever you do, strive to do your best. Work hard, manage your time well, be committed, be the best you can be - for yourself, for others, for the task at hand. Excellence does not only mean outshining others, but ensuring that you give everything your best shot. It means giving yourself every edge, every boost, every opportunity so that you can give your best – **do it whole heartedly**. It means evaluating yourself regularly and striving to improve yourself. It means knowing and building on your strengths, and knowing and striving to overcome your weaknesses. It means not giving up. It means not involving yourself in activities that hinder your progress and prevent you from excelling. It means using every means available to you to get what you want, while keeping in mind your ethical and moral responsibilities.*

The realities of our society are such that those who excel will be rewarded based on merit - including scholarship applicants like yourself. Strive to be outstanding and exceptional in all your endeavours: your academic activities, extracurricular activities and your community service. Ensure that people who have worked with you, will not only want to continue to do so in the future, but will seek you out and knock on your door. Your display of effort will not go unnoticed.



Work hard, manage your time well, be committed, be the best you can be.

Do things whole heartedly.



2. Identify Your Needs, Aspirations, Goals

This step is crucial to your search process. Before you begin your search, you must have some idea as to what your goals are – your direction is important. For example, what type of career path do you see yourself following? Which areas of study interest you and will help you achieve your career path? What are the strengths that you can maximize on, and what are your weaknesses that you can improve upon?

Why is this crucial? In doing your research later on, you will find that many scholarships have specific requirements or criteria, and may be restricted to those who fall within those specific categories. You therefore need to know if you fit into these categories. For example, there may be hundreds of scholarships available for studies in geography. If you do not know whether you are interested in geography, you will never know if a particular scholarship applies to you.

Moreover, you will come across thousands of scholarships. You can immediately screen out those that are not applicable to you and concentrate on detailed information gathering for those that are in your areas of interest. This way, you will make the best use of your time.

A. CAREER PLANNING

It is absolutely important that you undertake a thorough career planning exercise to help you determine your life and career goals and a few potential areas of study. You will be much better off and afford yourself the flexibility if, at the end of the exercise, you are able to identify primary and alternate career goals, and therefore multiple areas of potential study.

While you may have one specific area that you are determined to pursue, identify alternative choices, so that if you cannot pursue your primary area of interest, you can make informed alternative choices, instead of hasty, haphazard choices at the last minute. Having alternative choices also increases the number of potential scholarships you are eligible for and can apply for.

A seemingly intimidating task, career planning is essential to your future ability to position yourself for success in life. You know yourself best. You know what you like, dislike, what your strengths and weaknesses are. Knowing yourself, your abilities and your potential for success is the basis for effective career planning.

At the end of this stage, you should be able to answer the following questions:

- What level of study do I plan to enter?



- What field of study/studies do I plan to undertake? (or at least the areas I am interested in)
- Do I plan to earn a degree or diploma?
- At what institutions are these potential areas of studies available?

B. IDENTIFY THE INSTITUTIONS FOR YOUR POTENTIAL AREAS OF STUDY

After you determine a few potential areas of study, the next step is to identify the institutions where these studies are offered. Books, websites, reports, people - students, graduates, the community centre, your local school board, your guidance office - are all sources of information. Seek also to identify the best institutions that offer these studies.

Document your findings. Make a list of the books and websites you have referred to, including where you found them, and a list of all the institutions applicable to you. You can follow the format illustrated in Matrix 3, "Postsecondary Institution Resources" found in the "Educational Funding" section of www.educationboard.ca.

C. IDENTIFY SPECIFIC GROUPS OR CATEGORIES YOU FIT INTO

Make a list of specific factors that might make you eligible for scholarships that are only offered to restricted groups. Many scholarships are awarded to students who participate in a certain type of extracurricular activity or community service; for example, athletics. Some other common groups are identified below:

- Gender
- Race/ethnic group
- Place of Residence
- Citizenship
- Member of a group/organization
- Parents as members of group/organization - including Alumni Associations
- Religious affiliation
- Special talents, outstanding accomplishments

The Search Process

The key factor at this stage is to plan and start your search early, and do it systematically, in an organized fashion. Because each scholarship has its own deadline, and the entire process can be lengthy, you are more likely to succeed if you allow sufficient time to complete all the steps thoroughly, in the best

TIME-SAVING TIP:

Organize your time and the requirements for the scholarships you plan to apply for. Use your summer vacation to complete a number of scholarship applications so that your work is not affected during the academic year.



manner, giving yourself ample time to review and re-do some steps.

When should you start? Experts recommend starting the search process as early as 2 years before you actually apply for the scholarships. With less time, you may still be successful, but you may not be able to make a thorough search and you may overlook some important opportunities.

Some scholarships are awarded on a first come first served basis, as long as you meet the minimum criteria. In almost all cases, if you miss the deadline, your application will not be considered, even if you meet or exceed all other requirements. Be well organized in your search process. **Carefully document all the information you require.**

Plan and start your search early, and do it systematically.

For all the time and effort put into the scholarship process, you may as well apply for all scholarships that you are eligible for. There are thousands of scholarships offered across Canada.

There is no limit to how many you can apply for.

The more you apply, the greater your chances of success and the greater the amount of potential funds to help finance your postsecondary education.

1. CONDUCT RESEARCH

A. WHERE IS INFORMATION AVAILABLE?

Make a list of all potential places you can find scholarship information from. Some suggestions are:

- Guidance Office
- Internet/ World Wide Web
- Public Library
- University/College Library
- University/College Career Center
- Students Awards Offices at University/College
- People: previous winners, parents, corporations
- Parents' employers
- Community Centres

B. WHAT INFORMATION TO LOOK FOR

Most scholarship books and websites list thousands of scholarships. Conduct a thorough investigation of each scholarship listing that may be applicable to you.

Most scholarship books have a 'How to use this book' section. Read this section and understand the way in which scholarship information is presented in that particular book.



Identify scholarships/awards that:

- Meet your goals, interests, needs
- You are eligible for & meet their criteria (e.g. gender, ethnic group etc.)

Monetary amounts should not be a factor on this list. Winning a few small scholarships is just as good as winning one large scholarship. For larger scholarships, competition is tougher as more applicants apply for them. Rarely, if ever, does all the funding come from one source only.

For you, winning five \$200 scholarships is the same value as one \$1000 scholarship for which there is more competition.

Use the odds in your own favour; for example, general versus specific scholarships. Some scholarships require students to have contributed to the greater good of the community (general), and another one may recruit applicants who have contributed to the greater good of the community by helping the elderly (specific). Right away, the more specific requirement of having worked with the elderly eliminates some of your competition by ruling out a number of students from applying for that scholarship. You may be more successful in applying for a scholarship where you can meet specific requirements. This idea is not to discourage you from applying for general scholarships. General scholarships are just as worthy of applying for and there is a greater abundance of general scholarships – this changes the odds again. It is important that you think about the type of scholarships you apply for in connection with your skill set and achievements so that the results of your efforts are more positive. **Overall, remember that your outstanding hard work, efforts, contributions and achievements will be respected and upstanding no matter what type of requirements a scholarship has.** And once again, the more scholarships you apply for, the greater your chances of success.

C. IDENTIFY POTENTIAL SCHOLARSHIPS

Look through all the information that is available, and document your findings. The types of sources and publications that will contain scholarship information include:

- Books
- Pamphlets, brochures
- Government publications
- University and college calendars
- Internet websites

Try using Matrix 4, “Applicable Scholarships” found in the “Educational Funding” section of www.educationboard.ca.

Think about the type of scholarships you apply for in connection with your skill set and achievements so that the results of your efforts are more positive.

Identify scholarships/awards that meet your goals, interests and needs.



D. OBTAIN FORMS & SCHOLARSHIP HISTORY

Phone, write to, or e-mail the sponsor of the scholarship for questions that you might have, and specifically ask for the scholarship history. Your chances of winning scholarships are greater for those scholarships that no one applies for and that have not been awarded consistently in the last few years.

Ensure any correspondence with the scholarship organization is well written and personalized. If you send a letter, it should be typed or printed. Indicate how you found out about the scholarship and your deep interest in it. If you phone, establish a personal rapport with the person on the phone who is answering your questions.

Request a copy of the application kit/package or download the information if it is available online. Verify the deadline date.

2. IDENTIFY POTENTIAL HELPERS

This stage is similar to that in the planning process. Now it is time to identify key people who can help you with this search and application process; approach them, provide them with information about yourself, and most importantly, seek their commitment that they will support you.

Keep in touch with them formally and informally, and keep them up to date about yourself.

Refer to the list of people you outlined in the planning process, add to your list or make a new list of people who have agreed to support you and will either write a letter of recommendation for you, or help you with your application.

The Application Process

Scholarship application forms seem overwhelming and difficult to complete. However, if you have a head start, have enough time, are well-organized, and have gone through a thorough planning and search process, you will not find it daunting or hard.

The key success factor in the application process is to do an excellent job of presenting yourself on the forms, and fulfilling all the requirements of the application. A messy, hasty, incomplete, hand-written application will not get you a second glance, no matter how good your credentials are. How it looks, and what goes in it are both essential to even be considered for a scholarship.

1. WHAT IS REQUIRED?

All application packages will require one or more of the following: a form to fill in, an essay question to answer or an autobiographical sketch, resume, transcript, letters of recommendation, interview.

At every stage in the application process, be prepared to review the application - by yourself, by your parents, your scholarship coach



and other helpers. Revise the application as many times as necessary to ensure that you are portraying yourself in the best way possible. This is the last mile in the long marathon and you need to do as excellent a job as ever, to get to the finish line as a winner.

Make a checklist for each application and check it off with a date when you have completed each part of it. Ensure you complete each task in a draft and final version before the deadline date. Set a planned completion date to help check your progress on a daily basis. Use the template below as a guideline. Try using Matrix 5, “Scholarship Task List” found in the “Educational Funding” section of www.educationboard.ca.

2. COMPLETING YOUR APPLICATION PACKAGE

Some tips to consider while completing your application:

- Prepare a rough draft on a photocopy of the forms before you attempt to fill out the actual form.
- Read all the instructions carefully, and follow them. Note the deadline date and any other special requirements. You cannot afford to miss out on any requirements.
- Make a checklist for each part of the application kit that is required and keep it up to date.
- Identify questions that you need help with and ask those who have agreed to help you
- Never lie or give fraudulent information on any part of the application. Remember you want to earn your scholarship on your own merit. Honesty is the best policy.
- After you have completed the first draft, review it and have it reviewed by the people you have identified on your list as helpers - review it and revise it as many times as necessary
- After the entire package is complete, organize it in a pocketed folder or binder, make a copy of it (or keep all the files saved on your computer in a special folder) for your own reference before sending it out.

Before you begin to fill out the application, get together all your documentation and determine the best information that you want to portray. Put your best foot forward in your application. Summarize the detailed information. Once this is done, you can use this information as your primary source for completing your application. You can also present this document to the people who will write letters of recommendation for you. Some scholarship applications will allow you to submit this type of information in the form of a resume. Below is a list of the information you should try to include:

- Name & Contact Information (Phone, Address, Email, Personal Web Page)
- Areas of Study Interested In

You may want to type out essay-type, long responses on a separate page and attach to the application.



- Postsecondary Institution Choices
- Overall Career Goals
- Awards/Medals/Prizes
- Extracurricular Activities
- Voluntary/Community Service
- Leadership Experience
- Special Training
- Other Hobbies, Interests, Sports
- Work
- History

A. BASIC APPLICATION FORM

Fill out the factual part of the form first. Use neat handwriting or type it. Generally this part asks for information such as: outstanding accomplishments, extracurricular activities, community service, work history. Use the information sheets and matrices you made for yourself and notice how easy the task is simply because you planned ahead and documented your well thought-out information, which you now have at your finger tips.

B. ESSAY QUESTIONS

Think about the question carefully. Many essays require you to write an autobiographical sketch. Others require you to answer a specific question or write about a specific topic. However, in all cases, these questions are designed to judge your writing and communication skills, whether you can express an idea and yourself clearly, as well as intrinsic information about yourself such as your values, attitudes, qualities, ambitions, and goals. All of these qualities must be evident in your essay.

Seek help from those who have applied for and have won scholarships. Have people who have agreed to help you, including you parents, to review your essay. Incorporate their feedback, but the final product must be your own. Write, review, re-write over and over again - until you are sure it is the best job you can do, and it portrays you at your best.

C. LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATIONS/REFERENCES

Select people who you know will give you good, glowing but honest recommendations. These are people who know you well and with whom you have kept in touch over the years. Their letters must be positive and identify your outstanding qualities and your potential.

Provide your referees with all the information necessary, such as the deadline date, the address of where to send it, and a self-addressed stamped envelope. Also provide them with your personal information or resume (as suggested in the introduction to section 2 of The Application Process) to help

Make sure you have your essay edited by someone you trust to provide you with constructive feedback.



them portray an accurate picture of your accomplishments. Follow up with them constantly to ensure that they have sent it out.

Most referees will not mind giving you a copy of their letter, but you cannot assume that they will. Ask for it. If they agree to give it to you, review it and give them your feedback, especially if you think it has errors or is not a fair representation of yourself. Do not insist they give you a copy if they are reluctant.

D. TRANSCRIPTS

Request your transcript early, so that you are not delayed. Some scholarships will require them to be sent directly to the sponsor - ensure that the school knows where and by when to send it. Sometimes when ordering a copy of your transcript early it is not complete. Let the sponsor know why it is not complete; for example, you are still completing courses.

E. INTERVIEW

An interview may be required by some sponsors. These interviews are critical to the final judgement of whether you will win a scholarship. It is a personal interaction that gives the interviewers the opportunity to further evaluate you and determine if you are the right person to receive the scholarship. For you, it is one more opportunity to tell them what you're all about. Make the most of this opportunity.

The key success factors to an interview are preparation and presentation.

Preparation includes preparing yourself mentally as well as equipping yourself with answers to potential questions - answers that are well thought-out, thorough, honest, and that will represent the best in you. Have a mock interview with your parents, friends, and helpers - evaluate yourself openly and incorporate their feedback. The more you practice the easier it will become.

Presentation means how you present yourself. Dress well and neatly. Do not be late - arrive a few minutes early. Relax. Smile. Offer a firm handshake as you introduce yourself. Sit upright, but not rigidly. Be friendly. Offer a firm handshake as you leave. Make sure they remember you.

F. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Some scholarships may have special requirements that you must ensure you fulfill. For example, if you are required to have written the SAT or the GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test), before you apply, make sure you have written the test. Some scholarships may require you to send in the results of these tests simultaneously with your application. You must ensure you have arranged for them to be sent.



Interested In Applying For Scholarships To U.S. Institutions?

A SMALL NOTE...

Firstly, the same winning formula applies – **PLAN, SEARCH & APPLY**. The winning formula cannot be stressed enough. The process outlined in this guide also applies to preparing yourself in pursuit of scholarships that will allow you to attend U.S. institutions. *However, you should be aware that if you plan on attending a U.S. institution on a scholarship, you need to make the effort for your application to stand out even more. Consider the idea that being an international student means that the institution selected you over potential candidates from their own country. This is not to discourage you, but to prepare you at an early stage for what may be ahead.* Many institutions indeed reserve a number of places for international students. In addition, there are scholarships specially intended for those students wishing to study in the United States. But for you to succeed, the best way is for you to find this information early on, and ensure that you take the right steps to qualify. Some Canadian scholarship search websites allow you to search specifically for scholarships designed for Canadian students wishing to attend postsecondary institutions in the U.S. Alternatively, your guidance counsellor may be able to help you identify potential scholarships. Finally, browse through a scholarship book – they provide hundreds of great resources on who offers scholarships, the amount and specific interests they are applicable to – all in one place at a time.

The website www.educationboard.ca provides additional detailed information on applying for U.S. scholarships and directs you to links on the Web that can help you in your search process. It is important to note that many U.S. scholarships require U.S. citizenship as a criterion for eligibility. As an international student, you can save lots of time by screening out those scholarships that are only available to U.S. citizens.

Evaluation

If you don't win at first, try and try again. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Do not let a scholarship rejection become an "accomplishment of failure" in your life. Making the time and effort and commitment to go through the entire scholarship process in itself involves a high risk for rejection. This rejection should not be considered a failure. As long as you have put your best effort in this process, you are much better off for your genuine attempts.

However, be honest with yourself. Review your application thoroughly - the forms, the essays, the references. Ask others to help identify its weaknesses. An excellent form may still have weaknesses in it – perhaps a weak recommendation, a verbose essay that does not do you justice, a sloppy packaging effort, or perhaps misusing a word or a

SOME REQUIREMENTS FOR SUCCESS WITH U.S. SCHOLARSHIPS:

High Grades (especially in your core subjects, 85% - 100%)

Good scores on SATs see www.educationboard.ca for details

A well-written essay in you application

Extensive extracurricular activity involvement

Good recommendations from teachers or employers

If you don't win at first, try and try again.



phrase. Review and revise each step to strengthen your application for the next time.

Inquire about an appeal process. Many scholarships allow the applicants to appeal the decision, or even the amount of scholarship. If you feel there is sufficient cause to appeal, ensure that you follow all the instructions required for a formal appeal. Seek help from people if you are unsure of how to fulfill any part of the requirement for the appeal process.

If you win, congratulations! It is time to celebrate, but not abandon all your hard work over the last few years. Keep all the information you have documented handy, organized, and up to date.

If you do not have all the financing you need, you may apply for more scholarships. You may wish to apply for new scholarships each year. With life-long learning and multiple degrees being a reality in the meritocratic society we live in, you may need to use this information again.

Summarize your best practices so that you can use them again. Help other students with the planning, searching, and application process - through your school, your university or college - be a willing helper, eager to share your experiences.

Use the information you have gathered to create a resume or personal dossier for yourself. When seeking employment - summer or full-time - this well-documented information will be a blessing to have.

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

Refer to the Scholarship section of www.educationboard.ca for a full resource guide and links to numerous websites to help you with your search.

Invest your time in applying for scholarships, the benefits are worth it.

Help other students with the planning, searching, and application process.