

## Tips for a Successful Scholarship Application

1. Plan ahead! Keep a calendar of deadlines for scholarships. Some programs require that you apply as much as one year in advance. It can often take one month or more to get all the information and documents you need for a scholarship application.
2. Read all of the application instructions and the entire scholarship application before you complete! Not following instructions correctly will count against you in the final selection of scholarship winners. Knowing all the questions you must answer on the application will help you plan how you would like to answer each question and avoid repeating yourself in different parts of the application.
3. Make sure you are eligible! Read the eligibility requirements carefully. Many programs have age limits, nationality restrictions, or are intended for specific academic fields. If you are not eligible, your application will be disregarded.
4. Know your audience! Tailor your application to the interests of the organization sponsoring the scholarship. Make sure the goals you express in your application match the goals of the scholarship program. Your essays should speak to the selection committee. If you are applying to a scholarship intended for a specific academic discipline, such as botany or anthropology, the selection committee will be experts in those fields. You must impress them with your in-depth knowledge of the subject. Don't write about things that are obvious to experts. If the scholarship supports many fields, such as conservation and public health and engineering, the selection committee will probably not be experts in your field. You must educate the committee through your essays about why your field is so important.
5. Know your competition! All individuals who meet the eligibility criteria for the scholarship to which you are applying are your competition. Are you competing against others from your own country or many countries? Are you competing against people in other fields or academic disciplines? To stand out among the competition, you must tailor your responses to the questions to show how you are the best choice for the scholarship.
6. Show your strengths and explain your weaknesses! Do not be shy when talking about yourself and your accomplishments. Your application should give the selection committee a clear idea of who you are, what you are studying, and your future goals. Be creative and honest. If there are weaknesses in your application such as poor grades or lack of work experience, be prepared to explain them.
7. Be clear and concise! When responding to essay questions do not exceed the maximum number of words or pages allowed. Use the minimum number of words required to clearly and completely express your ideas. Ask faculty

members, writing tutors, or friends to read your essay before you submit your application. Your thoroughness demonstrates that you have learned and mastered this art and that your future teachers and colleagues will not be troubled with sloppy thinking or writing.

If you are not a native speaker of the language in which you are writing, have someone who is fluent in the language read your essay. When possible use a word processor or typewriter to complete your application, and remember to use spell check.

8. Request letters of recommendation from people who know you well! Letters of recommendation are a very important part of any application. You should ask for letters only from people who are able to talk about your unique abilities and skills. A well-written letter from a professor or supervisor at work who knows you very well is more impressive than a letter from an important figure who may know little about your academic goals. Make sure those who are writing letters of recommendation for you are familiar with the scholarship program. And, don't wait until the last minute to ask for your letters of recommendation.
9. Double check your budget! If you are asked to provide a budget for your scholarship, make sure your costs are realistic—don't ask for too much or too little. Ask only for funds for items that are covered by the scholarship, and don't ask for more than the maximum amount allowed by the scholarship. If you are receiving financial aid or other scholarships, be sure to mention this in your application.
10. Take steps to make sure that your application gets where it needs to go! Make a copy of the entire packet and keep it for your files. Make sure that your name appears on all pages.