

Keys to Writing a Great Scholarship Application

Whether you've won multiple scholarships before or are staring at a scholarship application form for the first time, the process can certainly feel overwhelming. Writing about your self-worth to receive a financial award can be intimidating enough to cause stress, anxiety, and even avoidance of the process all together. But with these few simple tips in mind, applying for scholarships can be much easier than you'd expect:

Tell a genuine story – This is arguably the most important part of any scholarship application. The people evaluating the application want to know more about who you are and why you're deserving. Highlight the experiences, challenges, or motivations behind your achievements then explain how your future goals would be better supported with a scholarship!



Understand the grading criteria – You wouldn't take a test without knowing how you would be graded, would you? The same goes with scholarships. Be sure to review the criteria that outlines exactly how the questions are being evaluated, as well as who's evaluating them. If that information is not clearly laid out, never hesitate to reach out to the scholarship organizers for clarity.

Reach out to former winners – You aren't alone in this process. People have likely gone through the exact same application process as you, and a lot of them would be more than willing to share their secrets to success. Check the website and/or past social posts from the organizers and see if they publicize the winners. If they do, reach out to them via LinkedIn or email!



Map out your professional development goals – Scholarship awards usually need to be applied to something specific. Having a well-defined vision for your professional development goals makes it easier to show how the award will benefit both your life and the lives of those around you.

Designate a place and time to write –Setting aside a specific date and time to write your application in an environment most conducive to creative writing (including efforts to silence notifications, put your phone away, close all phone/laptop apps, etc.) is more likely to produce a result that you're proud of.

Don't wait until the last minute – Rushing to meet a tight deadline will often result in less thoughtful work than if you'd otherwise planned a little more effectively. Set aside time to complete your application well in advance, allowing yourself the opportunity to be your most thoughtful self.

Proofread, proofread, proofread – The easiest way to blemish a perfectly good scholarship application is by including typos, grammatical errors, and other simple proofreading blunders. Taking the time to review your work and/or having a friend review your application can prevent those silly mistakes.

Write it yourself... - You may think you're outsmarting the system by throwing prompts into a generative AI tool to write your application for you, but it's almost all too easy to spot when someone isn't being genuine. Scholarship applications are about showcasing your unique experiences—something ChatGPT can't fully capture!

Get creative to stand out – Scholarship applications often allow for creativity, such as submitting a video instead of a written essay or using funds in unique ways. Think outside the box and choose a format/response/submission that best highlights your strengths and helps you stand out from the competition.

Just apply! – Many people miss out on the opportunity to earn a scholarship because they fill their heads with self-doubt. As the old adage goes, if you don't ask, the answer will always be no. Similarly, if you don't apply, you can't win!

If you don't win, come back stronger next time – With so many scholarships available, there's a high chance that a quick web search or conversation with your peers could bring a new scholarship opportunity to your attention. So, whether you apply for 1 scholarship or 100, most don't limit reapplications. If you don't succeed initially, apply again!



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