

Scholarship Applications Checklist

Scholarships help cover the cost of attending university and completing a degree. Since scholarship applications are competitive, you need to write to the best of your ability. Here are some general tips for completing scholarship applications, but always tailor your response for each separate application.

Preparing to Apply for Scholarships

- ❑ **Find scholarships** by visiting a school counselor or advisor, university websites, and the Federal Student Aid website. Universities, the government, and private entities all offer scholarships.
- ❑ **Check the validity of scholarships** that ask you to pay a fee, lack eligibility requirements, or seem too good to be true.
- ❑ **Gather your ideas and outline** what experiences or personal traits make you a strong and unique applicant, and note how you intend to spend funds or acknowledge the donor, so you are prepared to write about those topics as part of applications or scholarship essays.

Completing Scholarship Essays and Applications

- ❑ **Follow the requirements** for each scholarship application. Provide all materials requested (e.g., essay, resume, transcript, and letter of recommendation), and adhere to writing prompts, character or wordcounts, and due dates.
- ❑ **Understand your audience**, and write in a way that is respectful, establishes common ground, highlights shared values, and engages readers.
- ❑ **Make it personal** by focusing on your experiences, qualities, motivation, and goals.
- ❑ **Reuse your work** instead of writing new content for each application. If a scholarship essay you have previously written is appropriate for another application, alter it to fit that application's requirements.
- ❑ **Avoid common mistakes** such as writing in an overly formal or casual tone, focusing more on your achievements than how they have helped you learn or prepare for the future, and giving general or generic answers instead of helping readers connect to you personally.
- ❑ **Double-check your work.** Review your application, read essays aloud, get feedback from others, visit the Writing Center, and run spellcheck. Doing so can help you eliminate irrelevant or inappropriate ideas and spot any errors to ensure your work is polished and ready to submit.
- ❑ **Ask for a letter of recommendation** early if one is required for an application. Ask an instructor or employer who can write about your best traits, and let the person know how and when to submit their recommendation, ideally about a week before the final scholarship deadline.

Other Considerations

- ❑ **Apply for multiple scholarships** to increase your chances of receiving funding.
- ❑ **Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** to see if you are eligible for grants or other funding.
- ❑ **Explore university fellowships and assistantships** that provide tuition assistance or funding for those working as a teaching assistant, research assistant, or graduate instructor.