

ESSENTIAL TIPS WHEN APPLYING FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

Applying for scholarships can be a time-consuming process and scholarship applicants often face stiff competition. By using the tips below you will increase your chances of success. It is important to recognize that most scholarship funds support full-time students rather than those studying part-time.

1. Search, search, search but don't wait for the perfect scholarship

Persistence is the key to getting a scholarship. Stop waiting for that perfect scholarship and start applying. Do a web search; use the AUT Scholarship Database www.aut.ac.nz/scholarships and national scholarship databases a list of places to start is at the end of this document. The more difficult it is to find a particular scholarship; the less competition you are likely to have. While you should avoid applying for scholarships that you are clearly ineligible for, you must also avoid waiting for the *perfect* scholarship. .

2. Only apply if you are eligible

Check the eligibility criteria in the scholarships regulations carefully and only select scholarships that fit your skills, personal attributes and research interests. Is there a minimum GPA required? Does the scholarship require demonstrated financial need? If you apply for every scholarship you stumble upon, you will submit weak, off-target applications and waste a lot of valuable time. Spend your time perfecting *those* scholarship applications that match you and you will then produce strong, relevant applications.

3. Write an up to date resume (CV)

Focus on your strengths. Before you start applying for scholarships, write a resume and then keep it up to date. This resume should include all important information such as dates, academic history, a summary of your work experience, publications *and* your extracurricular activities and interests. Even if a scholarship application does not require a CV writing one will help to focus your thoughts and remind you of what you have accomplished so far.

4. Participate in extracurricular activities

In most instances grade point average (GPA) will be important, however, many scholarship committees do not simply choose the student with the highest GPA. That is only half the story; committees may be equally interested in your extracurricular activities. Are you involved in the community? Have you volunteered your time to assist others? What jobs have you had? Have you published any articles? What are your goals? Involvement in other activities shows an ability to manage your time and a willingness to become involved. Many scholarship committees are interested in awarding to students they consider well-rounded and who demonstrate leadership qualities.

5. Identify the funder's goals

The student who best meets the funder's requirements is awarded the scholarship. As simple as this may seem, many students don't take time to ensure they know what these requirements are. Read through all the scholarship information and scan the funder's website carefully for details and clues about what the funder's goals are.

6. Arrange your references early

Ask key people now if they are available to provide you with written references or to act as your referee. Let your referee know of the closing date for references – this will, in most cases, be a day or two before the closing date. You may need both academic and personal referees. Many applications have failed due to references and supporting

statements not being received on time or the referee being unavailable or unprepared to comment. Most referees are happy to provide a reference; however, they may not be happy to write a separate statement for each application so ask them to save a copy in case you need to use them again. Unless the referee states otherwise, references submitted through CommunityForce will not be available to the applicant.

7. Watch deadlines carefully

Late applications will not be accepted and you will not be able to submit after the closing date and time noted for the scholarship. Scholarships panels will not accept late applications.

Make a calendar of closing dates and display it in your workspace. Once you determine which scholarships to apply for, begin your applications immediately. Arrange for copies of academic transcripts from other institutions well before the submission dates as you may need to upload these. Set yourself a personal deadline to complete an application two weeks before the official deadline but do not submit itand mark this on your calendar. This will guarantee that your application will get there in time and you will have time to carefully proofread your application and to ensure all documentation is available and has been submitted. Your application will be stronger if it is not rushed and last minute and your referees have plenty of time to submit their support.

8. Applying

Follow all instructions carefully. If you don't follow the specific instructions exactly, your application may be rejected in a preliminary check. Have you included all the information asked for? Is your contact information correct? Write your application statements in draft so you can make all the changes you want on the rough draft before you submit.

9. Proofread your application

By proofreading your application statements carefully you can increase your chances of success. Once you have verified the information on the application, read through any personal statements or research outlines again. Are there any spelling errors? What about grammatical errors? Is it formatted correctly? Finally, check your statements again the day after you wrote it. By checking the next day, you will gain a fresh perspective and notice things that you might have missed the day before. Simply spending a little more time can vastly increase your chance of being successful. After you have proofread your statements ask someone else to proofread them.

10. *"Never, never, never, never give up"*. (Winston Churchill)

Don't be surprised if you are not successful with your first application. Rather, be surprised if you are! Once you submit your first scholarship application, begin the next one. Remember to treat each application individually and give it the same level of care. The key to winning a scholarship is determination. If you refuse to give up then you exponentially increase your chance of being successful.

Sources of scholarships information include

- The AUT Scholarships Database www.aut.ac.nz/scholarships
- The GivME database- an extensive database of funding within New Zealand, access with your logon through the AUT Library for free access: <https://library.aut.ac.nz/pwsection/givme>
- Careers NZ - <https://www.careers.govt.nz/courses/scholarships-grants-and-awards/>
- Maori Education Trust www.maorieducation.org.nz/
- Pacific Peoples Scholarships - <http://www.mpia.govt.nz/>

Overseas Postgraduate Study

- Universities New Zealand Website <https://www.universitiesnz.ac.nz/scholarships>
- International Scholarships.com - <http://www.internationalscholarships.com/>
- Check out the websites of the overseas Universities where you may wish to study.

Once you have found schemes that fit you, if you need assistance with your application for a scholarship please contact the Scholarships Office scholars@aut.ac.nz.