

University of
Western Sydney

Bringing knowledge to life



Office of Marketing
Scholarships

Guidelines for competing for **UWS Scholarships**



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Being competitive for a scholarship competition generally requires the same type of preparation asked of job applicants. As a result, if you are laying a strong foundation for the career you intend to pursue, you will likely be a good candidate for scholarships in your field.

Start early!
Many scholarships have application periods several months in advance of the actual award, and require extra preparation. Students should visit the scholarship website to research scholarship opportunities.

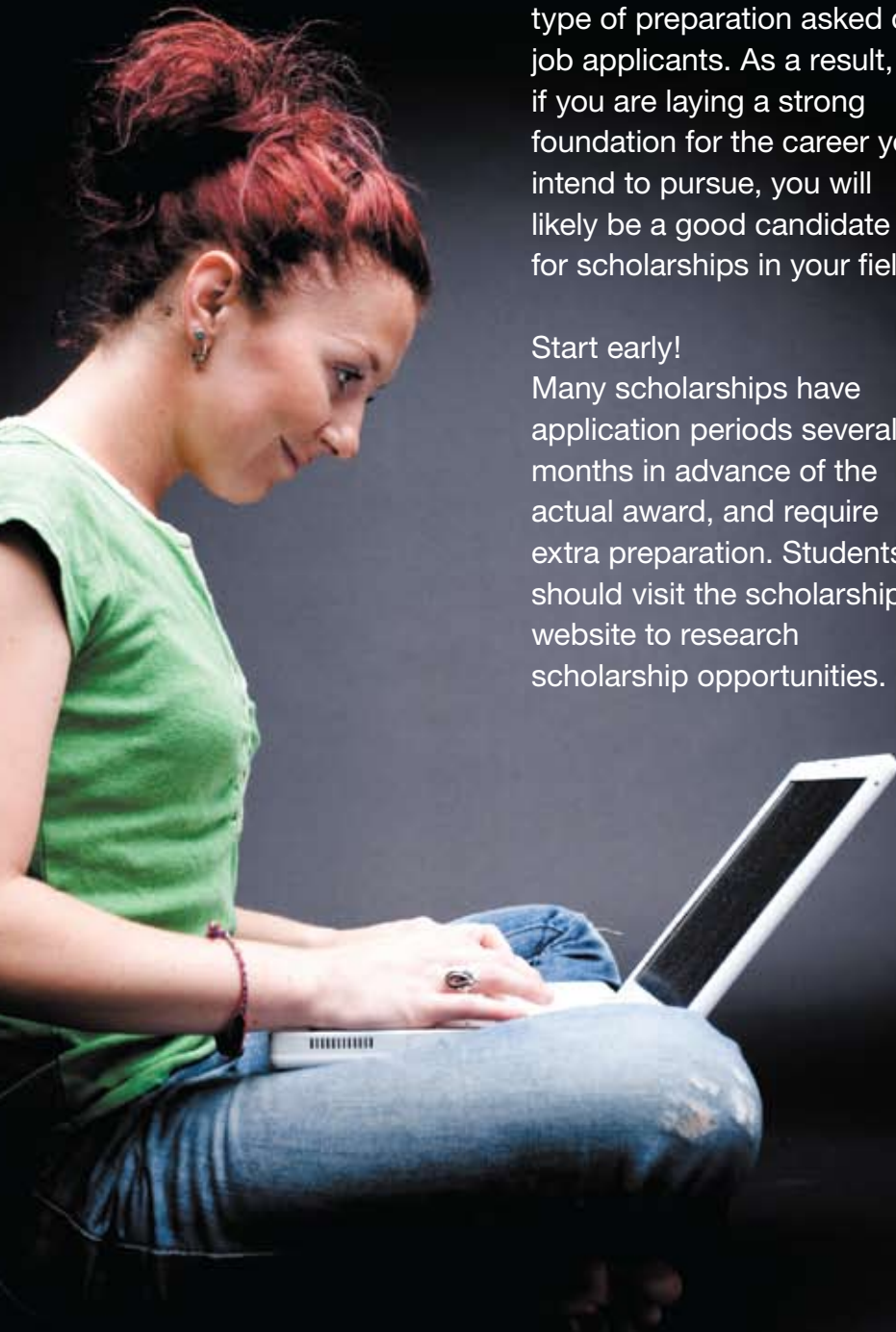
What can I do to be a good candidate for scholarships?

Strive for excellence in challenging classes. Go beyond getting good grades. Get to know people, especially professors, advisors, administrators, employers. These relationships provide opportunities for career and scholarship networking, mentoring relationships, and potential references for the future.

- Get work, internship and volunteer experience in your field or in other fields of interest to you.
- Expand your knowledge of the world, people, places and events in any way you can – by reading, travelling, or participating in intercultural events, etc.
- Get involved in interesting extra-curricular activities that are meaningful to you.
- Seek out leadership positions within groups/activities that are important to you.
- Keep up on the news, and read a variety of opinions. Learn to defend your views and admit the strengths in others' arguments.

What strategies can I use to increase my chances of winning a scholarship?

- Apply for large and small scholarships – they can work like building blocks.
- Know the eligibility requirements and deadlines for various scholarships.
- Always allow yourself plenty of time to write and review your application before the due date.
- Work on your communication skills. Many scholarships require interviews.
- Don't give up if you are turned down. Many highly qualified people are turned down at some point, but go on to find other awards or opportunities that suit their interests.



Writing a Personal Statement

When you apply for a scholarship, you will need to write a personal statement addressing the criteria. Understanding the terminology and having a plan will permit you to put together the best possible response.

First, determine what the scholarship selection committee wants to know about you:

- academic qualifications?
- social skills?
- leadership or commitment to service?

Choose examples from your life that you want to highlight in your application and which clearly demonstrate the qualities that the selection committee will be seeking. For academically oriented awards, teachers who have had you in class would be best to give you some examples of where you have excelled. For awards that seek leadership skills or service, you should speak to your employers, or organisations you are active in, advisors, or mentors to give you some key qualities to include in your statement.

Certificates or letters of recommendation from relevant people to back up your personal statement will certainly assist your application.

How much do I need to tell in the personal statement?

Put yourself in the selection committees shoes. If you want to write a strong personal statement, you want to ensure that it is concise and that you show all the qualities the committee is seeking in its ideal applicants. You don't want to leave the committee guessing.

Ask yourself the following questions when thinking your personal statement through:

- Do they want to know about academic qualifications only?
- Do they want to know about personal characteristics?
- Do leadership and service experiences make a difference to them?
- Is financial need relevant?
- Is it significant if you have overcome hardship?
- Are interpersonal skills and experience working with diverse groups important to the committee?
- What would this award entitle you to do, and how are you suited to doing this?
- Is there any particular format or length that the letter must conform to?

Other things to remember when applying: Pay attention to detail

When you are applying to several scholarships at once it is very easy to confuse the requirements specified by each and to overlook critical details. Read all of the information provided carefully. If in doubt, make a phone call. What many students fail to realise is that scholarship providers are in the business of awarding scholarships and they enjoy helping students get the financial assistance they need.

Presentation, Presentation, Presentation

Always type responses to essay questions. Take the time to type any responses, even those that seem informal. It can't hurt you but it can always help. Additionally, if the application itself must be filled in by hand use your best penmanship. No white-out, smudges, smears, etc.

Get help reviewing your application

Have a parent or friend review the information on your application. Plain paper isn't yet equipped with spell check so an extra pair of eyes will help you identify any errors.

Have a teacher give you feedback on your personal statement

This is critical. If you can't find a teacher to read your essay, find an adult or even a peer who will. They can tell you if it is cohesive, if the piece directly addresses and proves your thesis, and if a judge will like it. Scholarship selection committees are people just like your parents and teachers (sometimes students forget this), so any feedback that they can provide you with is an invaluable resource. The editing process can be tedious, but it always pays off.

Follow the submission rules precisely

Don't eliminate yourself because you sent your application in the wrong colour envelope. Scholarship officers typically outline very specific submission rules and it is important that you follow their guidelines. Find out whether your scholarship can be emailed or if a stamp and envelope is necessary. If you are unsure about a rule, call or write the scholarship provider in advance. Don't wait till the last minute.

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