

Know what's on offer, and focus on the most suitable options

Sometimes competition for one particular scholarship is very strong and they are usually judged by panels of people. You can increase your chances of receiving one by applying for as many as you qualify for. But, focus most on those that specifically relate to you. For example, if you're an all-round cricket player and there is a relevant cricket scholarship, put more effort into that in comparison to a general **scholarship**.

Shortlist, and make sure you qualify for what you want to apply for

Make a list or document of the scholarships that match your eligibility. Be sure to double check the dates and allow plenty of time to complete the application. If you think you meet the requirements but are not sure, contact the scholarship provider well in advance to clarify.

Gather your information so you can efficiently complete every scholarship

To apply for a scholarship, you will most likely need to fill out forms and supply documents to support your application. You may also be asked to attend an interview with the selection panel. Some things you may be asked to provide with your application are:

- proof of citizenship or residency status (eg birth certificate, passport)
- evidence of community involvement, financial hardship or ethnic background
- letter of approval from your school
- list of referees
- record of learning
- bank details, IRD number

You need to collect and certify all the necessary documents. If necessary, to certify your documents, take the original and a photocopy to an authorised person* who will check both documents and sign the copy to show it is a true reproduction of the original.

*An authorised person could be a teacher, kaumātua, minister of religion, police officer, registered medical professional, solicitor or Justice of the Peace. This may depend on the individual scholarship, so it is best to check.

- [Department of Internal Affairs website - for birth certificates, citizenship, and passports](#)
- [Yellow Pages website - find a Justice of the Peace in your area](#)
- [Find a JP website](#)

Make the BEST Possible Impression, Every Time

Spend as much time on the application as is necessary to get it right. The competition is so significant that any oversights could see you miss out, even if you were the strongest applicant. What's on paper matters equally to you as a person.

Here is a list of simple tips:

- Read widely about the scholarship - know its purpose and background.
- Make sure you get as much information about the scholarship as possible by checking information on the Scholarship's website. You can never have too much information.
- If the scholarship is funded by a company, gather as much information and read about that corporation's philosophy and goals.
- Read ALL of the Instructions Carefully
- Presentation is very important - first impressions count. Make it professional. Avoid using informal language of any kind.
- Supply the documents in the order in which they are requested.
- Use the same style of writing and pen throughout the application, do not use ink other than black or blue.
- Use neat, legible handwriting and type your application if this is not possible
- Apply for each scholarship separately. Do not use the same application to apply for two separate scholarships.

Pick the Best Referees and Strive for the Best Reference

- Ensure that your referees are the appropriate people to provide the kind of information for the selection panel.
- For example, if they need to know about your sport or leadership capabilities, ensure the referee you provide has worked with you extensively and can specify your qualities in detail. Generic observations are unhelpful. Screen potential referees - your favourite teacher, trusted community leader etc.
- Always make sure that your referees know of every scholarship you have applied for so they can provide the appropriate information to each scholarship panel.
- Don't be shy about contacting referees - you need them so don't be afraid to go out there to secure their help.
- Referee's statements or references are also required before the closing date so please ensure referee's reports meet deadlines - more on this below.

MUST READ - Planning for your references and making sure you meet deadlines

- You may be under the impression that adults meet deadlines and are never late, but unfortunately this is not the case in most situations.
- Your scholarship application(s) are very important to you, but they are less important to a teacher or other referees, who may be focused on many requests from your fellow students.
- For these reasons, we suggest giving referees a due date well in advance of the actual deadline. For example, if your scholarship application on closes 30 September, asking for the completed reference by 15 August gives you plenty of time for follow up, and chasing!
- You don't want to miss out on money because your referee went on holiday or got too busy - plan ahead to avoid disappointment.

Checklist for your Financial Scholarships Application

When submitting any scholarship application, ensure that you have:

- Completed all the necessary forms.
- Supplied all the required supporting documents.
- Listed names of referees and references (if any) and make sure that you and your referees submit their references by the due date. Be sure to tell your referee what the scholarship is for and send them a copy of the details.

And when you submit, be sure to:

- **Use a paperclip not a stapler** as pages may need to be detached then copied for the panel. Attach documents in the order they are requested.
- **Be tidy** – type or write neatly. Check your spelling.
- **Be timely** – submit your application well before or by the closing date. The selection panel receives many applications and can often be ruthless in the elimination process. They will be looking for any reason to reject an application, and lateness may be one of the very first criteria.

And Finally, A Warning:

- Don't lose out on a scholarship because your application is late, incorrect or messy!
- Work hard on it and ensure yourself the best possible chance of winning a scholarship in today's competitive environment. Try to do everything you can to show that you are deserving of the award.

BEFORE you submit, ask someone else to check your application

Common complaints from scholarship providers are:

- Some of the requested documents are not attached (i.e. missing forms or references)
- The documents requested are not supplied in the correct format requested
- Page(s) of the scholarship application are not filled in
- Applicants do not read the questions properly and thus provide inappropriate or irrelevant responses - this is instant rejection territory, so be sure to answer the questions, every time.
- Applicants skip questions that they think don't apply to them. If you are asked a question, you must answer it in some way.
- Applicants do not supply their full and correct address and email contact addresses.
- The applicants handwriting is illegible. Always write clearly and in block letters.
- Inappropriate referee used, such as a parent or sibling.
- Referee not meeting the submission deadline - this is more common than you think.