Guidelines for Applying for Scholarships

A good scholarship application will stand out from the rest; will impress the Selection Panel, and convince them that you are the best candidate for this scholarship.

To make your scholarship application stand out please note the following points:

• Read the regulations carefully, especially the Eligibility Criteria, to ensure you are eligible for the scholarship before you embark on completing the application process. If you are in doubt, check with Massey Contact (0800 MASSEY). They are experienced in Scholarship advice. Please also carefully read the selection criteria as this will give you a feel for the attributes the Selection Committee will be looking for when they award the scholarship. By reading the regulations well, you will ensure that you don’t miss including any vital information in your application.

• There are different application forms for different scholarships, so ensure you are completing the right form.

• Complete the form in black pen. Scholarship application forms are photocopied for the selection committee and black ink is the most visible.

• Write neatly and spell correctly when filling out the application form. Remember that the Selection Committee often have a large number of applications to read, so first impressions count. The Selection Committee will not be impressed with your application if it is untidy and has spelling mistakes. They may well conclude that this scholarship is not important to you.

• Most applications ask for a supporting statement, this is your opportunity to tell the Selection Committee why you should be awarded the scholarship. Your supporting statement should preferably be word processed, but if this is not possible, use neat, legible handwriting.

• When completing budget sheets please take the time to ensure they are accurate and, if necessary, re-print the form and enter the information again so the form attached to the application is neat and tidy.

• Ensure you answer every question on the application form and provide all requested documentation, e.g. birth certificate (ensure this is a verified copy), photo etc. Make sure you attach verified copies of any academic records from other tertiary institutions at which you have studied. Copies of originals can be verified by the Scholarships Office and College Administrators. You do not need to attach a copy of your Massey transcript as the Scholarships Office can print these for you.

• Attach only the documentation requested, if too much information is attached, the Selection Committee may miss the really important document. Only provide Curriculum Vitae (CV) if it is requested.
**Hardship Bursaries:** Your supporting statement should clearly demonstrate your hardship by providing an overview of your financial circumstances and which shows that you have a greater need than your peers (we do not need to know the reasons for your hardship in fine detail but must be given a clear picture). Applications that are based on a personal desire to avoid typical levels of financial constraint or use of student loan debt while studying will not usually be considered as demonstrations of hardship.

**Academic and General Scholarships:** Re-read the eligibility and selection criteria in the regulations as these will tell you what the selection committee will be looking for. Include all information relevant to the application, for example, details of proposed future study and career, sporting or community involvement, if appropriate.

- It is important when writing statements for postgraduate applications to use language that will be understood by people outside the immediate discipline because members of the selection committee are drawn from a range of areas.

- If the application requires referees’ reports, approach your referee early to give them time to prepare a good report. Also provide them with a copy of the regulations and update your referee on your achievements.

- Ensure your applications are single sided and A4 size. Staple once only in the top left hand corner, and do not send to the Scholarships Office in a folder. All applications are photocopied for the Selection Committee and this instruction makes the administrative process much easier for the Scholarships Officer.

- Before you send your application, check the address it should be sent to and ensure it is sent on time.

The best applications take time to write and organise. Think about what you want to write, proof read well and include relevant information.

**Tony’s Top Ten Tips**

**Applying for Scholarships Summary:**

1. Apply, apply and apply again!
2. Have the best academic record you possibly can.
3. Timing - Is your application timed to coincide or capitalize on appropriate achievements that fit the criteria of the award you’re applying for?
4. Asking for a reference:  
   - Ensure your referee is aware of your achievements and provide a copy of the regulations.
5. Don’t leave items blank.
6. Follow instructions to the letter.
7. Make sure your application is legible and well presented.
8. Proof read your application. Get someone who writes well to do this for you.
9. **The Personal Statement:** The Statement of Purpose is one of the most important components of your application process. This document provides the selection committee with information that allows them to become more acquainted with who you are; what you want to study and why; experiences you have in the field; and what you plan to do with the degree once you have mastered it. A statement of Purpose also serves as a writing sample and interview.

The following section is an excerpt from the Yale University Undergraduate career Services’ publication entitled Applying for Fellowships.

“The personal statement presents an opportunity for you to speak about yourself. Your essay should show that you have ideas and opinions, are able to think logically, and can express yourself clearly, with economy and elegance.

Clear writing is the result of clear thinking. The first and most important task is to decide what you want to say. This is a short essay. You must be highly selective. Consider carefully what you wish to impress upon the reader. Remember the nature of your audience. It is composed of people who are probably as intelligent as you are, well educated, and vastly experienced in this work. Do not try to fool or second guess your reader; you will seem silly if you do. Do not write in a cute, coy, or gimmicky style: selection committees have heard it all already. Do show that you have thought deeply and broadly about what you have learned in your academic career and what you hope to learn next.

When you have written a first draft, start the work of refining, simplifying, and polishing. Do you say exactly what you mean? Is any section, sentence, or word superfluous, ambiguous, or awkward? Are your verbs strong and active? Have you removed unneeded qualifiers? Are you sure that each accomplishment and interest you mention supports one of your main ideas? Do not apologize. Do not misrepresent yourself. You are writing as an adult who wishes to join the community of scholars and other professionals. You must write as a peer and potential member of such a community.

Correctness and style are vital. Neatness counts. Check and check again your spelling, the agreement of verbs and persons, syntax. Your thoroughness demonstrates that you have learned and mastered this art and that your future teachers and colleagues will not be troubled with sloppy thinking or writing. Ask several individuals whose judgment you respect to read and criticize a draft of your essay. Possible reviewers include faculty members, writing tutors, and friends who can assess how well your essay represents you.”

10. **Interviews:**

- Presentation is important, dress and groom appropriately. You may become a representative or ambassador for the scholarship/bursary or award.
- Be prepared and familiar with the subject of the interview.
- Show your interest in and knowledge about your subject. Humility helps.
- Stay calm and take a few moments to think about the question before responding.
- If you don’t understand a question, ask for clarification.
- Keep answers succinct and to the point and avoid jargon.
- Don’t worry about being nervous – panels are used to it and it tends to show you care!
- Check out the ‘Preparing for a Scholarships Interview’ Guidelines which are also on this Scholarships website.

(Courtesy of Professor Tony Parker – Representative on the Scholarships Committee).