

**Portland State
University**

**Scholarship
Workshop**

2020 - 2021

*Office of Student Financial Aid &
Scholarships
Portland State University*



OBJECTIVE

- Learn some basic strategies to complete all components of a scholarship application.
- Development of a unique and compelling essay.
- Strategies for securing excellent letters of recommendation.

- A *scholarship* is a form of student financial aid that does not need to be repaid.
 - Selection of scholarship recipients is usually based on a set of criteria
 - Grants and scholarships are often called “gift aid” because they are free money—financial aid that doesn’t have to be repaid
 - Grants are often *need-based*, while scholarships are usually *merit and need-based*
- National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) at the US Department of Education

SCHOLARSHIP SOURCES

- General University or School/Department
 - School of Business or Social Work

- Local and regional organizations/companies
 - Regional scholarships generally offer scholarships to students of a specific geographic and region
 - OSAC – Oregon’s statewide scholarship organization

- National Scholarship Organizations
 - Scholarships offered at the national level have a tendency to be competitive and often prestigious
 - Dell Foundation
 - Horatio Alger National Scholarship Program
 - Gates Foundation

There are different types of scholarships. Some major categories include:

- MERIT
- FINANCIAL NEED
- COMMUNITY SERVICE / INVOLVEMENT
- MAJOR / DEGREE / CAREER - FOCUS

ACADEMIC MERIT

Merit scholarships look for students with academic achievement, leadership qualities, and potential to contribute to the scholarly community

FINANCIAL NEED

Financial need scholarships are based on the student and family's financial record and most of them require applicants to fill out a:

- Free Application for Federal Student Aid - FAFSA
- Individual financial assessment

COMMUNITY SERVICE/VOLUNTEER WORK

Anything you do for others - at an organization such as:

- School, church
- Youth organization or
- Non-profit facility
- Helping a neighbor or relative who is a senior or disabled

IMPORTANT DATES:

- January 17th– Peer Mentor Application Deadline
- February 1st – UG & GR Scholarships Deadline
- Mid- April – UG Scholarship Recipients Notified
- May - June – GR Scholarship Recipients Notified

PSU Scholarship Applications

- Centralized online scholarship application used by:
 - College of the Arts (COTA)
 - College of Liberal Arts & Sciences (CLAS)
 - College of Urban Studies and Public Affairs (CUPA)
 - Graduate School of Education (GSE)
 - Maseeh College of Engineering & Computer Science (MCECS)
 - Office of Graduate Studies (OGS)
 - School of Business Administration (SBA)
 - School of Social Work (SSW)
 - Diversity & Multicultural Student Services (DMSS)
 - University Studies Peer Mentors
 - President's Equal Access
 - Honors

PSU APPLICATION PROCESS

- PSU Scholarship Applications are completed and submitted online
- Application link www.pdx.edu/scholarships/
- Letters of Recommendation are completed electronically
- Number and amount of awards vary yearly based on fund availability

Scholarship Committees review:

- Academic record
- Essay(s)
 - Content
 - Quality of writing
- Financial need
- Campus and community involvement
 - Current/recent service
 - Length of service
- Career goals
 - Focus/clarity of goals
 - Major/degree relates to goals
- Letters of recommendation

Skills and experience provide a competitive advantage.
Seek out opportunities such as:

- Internships
- Volunteer work
- Maintain or improve grades
- Student clubs or organizations

Extracurricular activities and a high GPA are extremely valuable when completing a scholarship application

Getting involved in the community and student organizations also enables you to learn new skills and knowledge that expand your perspective

- Use an outline to organize thoughts
- Answer the essay question(s)
- Give examples and be specific
- Personalize the essay and be passionate
- Write about something of interest to you
- Talk about your impact on other people
- Use clear, concise and simple language throughout the essay
- Proofread a printed copy of the essay for spelling and grammar errors
- Make sure the grammar and spelling are impeccable

ANSWERING THE ESSAY QUESTIONS



Portland State
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- Introduce yourself
- Why are you attending PSU
- Answer the essay question(s)
- Academic interests and goals
- Personal hardships or highlights
- Personal growth and success
- Conclusion

STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD

- Explain areas of emphasis you are pursuing in college and why
- Tailor the essay to the specifics of each scholarship
- Let the readers know what makes you a good investment
- Include information about your accomplishments, goals, and struggles or obstacles you have overcome
- Don't be general – use details and examples to stand out to your reader





- They are required as part of the scholarship application process
- Provide the selection committee with third-party documentation and validation of your accomplishments
- It helps to read the opinion of someone who is familiar with your background and knows you well
- References can make the difference in attracting extra attention to your scholarship application

References or letters of recommendation are an important part of any scholarship application

- Academic
- Non-Academic

Academic recommenders (in most cases, professors) provide important information about the student's intellectual abilities

When choosing non-academic recommenders, keep in mind that scholarship selection committees want to hear about significant and recent experiences

REQUESTING RECOMMENDATION LETTERS

Request in writing

Give your letter writers basic information

- Your contact information
- The deadline for each letter you need
- The type of scholarship for which you're applying - scholarship details
- Any special directions from the application

Give your letter writers information you would like emphasized in the letter

- Course of study
- Career interests
- Resume

Campus or community activities

Honors and awards received

WHO SHOULD YOU ASK?

Choose someone who:

- Has worked with you closely. (supervisor)
- Has worked with you long enough to write from real knowledge. (academic advisor)
- Is relevant to the scholarship you have chosen. (professors in the case of academic applications)
- Has a positive opinion of you and your abilities.
- Has an personal style that is warm and supportive.



[Date]

Dear [Name]:

Thank you for being willing to write me a letter of recommendation in support of my scholarship application. This letter will give you a better idea of the classes and activities that I have been involved with and I have attached my updated résumé.

I am hoping that you could focus on different aspects of my background, character, academics, and activities so the scholarship committee will get a broad sense of my life and skills.

I appreciate you taking the time to write this letter of recommendation. Please let me know if you need any other information from me. Your support means a lot!

The letter is due on [date]. [Tell them how to submit the reference.]

Thank you again.

[your name]

Funding Sources: Web Sites with Multiple Scholarship Resources :

[Abroad Planet Scholarship Resources](#)

- ◉ **<http://www.abroadplanet.com/scholarships/>**
Online community of international students studying in the United States.

[College Board](#)

- ◉ **<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search>**
Free online financial aid source for scholarships, grants, and loans for all college-bound students, including permanent residents and international students wishing to study in the United States.

[FastWeb](#)

- ◉ **<http://www.fastweb.com>**
- ◉ Free online scholarship search service.

[International Education Financial Aid](#)

- ◉ **<http://www.iefa.org/>**
Free online scholarship search service designed for international students.

[International Scholarships](#)

- ◉ **<http://www.internationalscholarships.com/>**
Free online scholarship database for international students wishing to study worldwide.

[Mobility International USA](#)

- ◉ **<http://www.miusa.org/ncde/financialaid/nonus>**
Free online scholarship resource for non-U.S. citizens with disabilities.

[OSAC: Office of Student Access & Completion \(Oregon's State-Wide Scholarship application\)](#)

- ◉ **www.getcollegefunds.org**

[United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization \(UNESCO\)](#)

- ◉ **<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/>**
Free online searchable database for scholarships to international students.
- ◉ **Protecting yourself when Searching for scholarships:**
- ◉ **<http://www.finaid.org/scholarships/protecting.phtml>**

CONTACT US

WE ARE HERE FOR YOU!

Please contact Office of Student Financial Aid & Scholarships for answers to your questions.

Questions? Need Help?

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