

Scholarship Application Guide: Strategies for Building a Strong Application

Selection process

As part of the initial written application process, applicants are required to respond to selection criteria.

All scholarship applications are reviewed by a selection panel. The panel's job is to review and score the applications, to determine a short-list of candidates for a formal interview.

The Scholarships Officer is the contact person for all applicants. They administer applications, coordinate the selection process for the panel, take the Minutes of each interview and advise on the outcome.

Written application

The first step to applying for a scholarship is to familiarise yourself with the purpose of the scholarship and eligibility criteria. Applicants must meet all the eligibility criteria.

Understanding the scholarship's background is key to tailoring the application. What is the purpose of the scholarship? What does it aim to offer recipients? Who is involved and what are they looking for? Researching this will help you connect personal aspirations and experiences to the scholarship's values.

Key tip: Keep to the word limit and submit on time.

Responding to questions

Questions in the written application form are framed around the selection criteria, these outline the purpose of the scholarship and will differ depending on the type of scholarship. Selection criteria can include financial need, leadership, cultural engagement, and academic performance.

Applicants are reminded to provide original, authentic responses i.e., in your own words. The use of AI-generated content is discouraged as this doesn't allow the panel to get to know the real you. We encourage you to tailor your answers and avoid generic responses. This is your opportunity to highlight your personality, passion and aspirations.

Go beyond lists, showcase your experiences through storytelling. Instead of simply listing your accomplishments, bring them to life by sharing specific examples and anecdotes. Where you feel comfortable, consider sharing details about your lived experiences, background, or any barriers you've overcome. This demonstrates resilience and perseverance, qualities valued by many scholarship programs.

Feel welcome to express how the scholarship will benefit you. Whether that is providing financial support to allow you to focus on your studies, or the opportunity to further your career through mentorship or work placements.

A great framework for storytelling is the STAR method:

Situation - set the scene, where and when?

Task - describe what was required to be done, purpose of task

Action - explain what you did, and any tools used

Result - highlight the outcome and your contribution or learning

For example:

(Situation) During my volunteering at the Wesley Mission Emergency Relief...(Task) one of my responsibilities was to ensure that food was packed...(Action) to solve this challenge, I initiated...(Result). As a result, there was positive feedback from...I learnt that I am calm under pressure and...

Supporting documentation

You may be required to provide additional documentation to support your application such as your CV/Resume, evidence of extra-curricular activity or a letter from a referee.

Your best referees will be able to highlight the involvement in a particular context area (school, sporting, community, etc) and provide feedback that reflects the values of the scholarship. Volunteering and high school activities are also valuable if they provide an insight into your personality and values.

Make sure your CV/Resume is up to date. If you are already a QUT student, you can receive assistance with your application documents through the [QUT Job Application Feedback service](#).

Interview stage

An invitation to interview means you are a finalist in the selection process. If you have been shortlisted for an interview, you will be contacted by phone and email to confirm the time, date, location, panel members and any additional details.

The purpose of an interview for a scholarship is to get to know more about the applicant so that the panel can select a recipient/s.

QUT enjoys corporate partnerships with many high-profile organisations, many of whom sponsor our scholarship programs. For this reason, a selection panel may consist of:

- One or two QUT academic staff who are familiar with the scholarship (e.g., Director of Studies)
- One or two representatives from sponsoring organisations.

At your allocated time you will be ushered into an interview room and introduced to the panel. You will be given a brief overview of the interview process before the questions begin.

You will also have the opportunity to ask questions of the panel at the end.

Preparing for an interview

This is your opportunity to meet the panel and convince them of your suitability for the scholarship. Be prepared to discuss your aspirations and how the scholarship will assist you to achieve these.

Create a positive impression with a professional appearance, firm handshake and body language that shows you are engaged and interested. Practice your speaking skills out loud or use an interview review platform like [BigInterview](#) (available for QUT students) to help you confidently prepare.

Your preparation for the interview will be obvious in the clarity of your communication, your ability to talk about your interests and achievements; and willingness to share your personal story and future goals. Formulate these ideas into responses and practice your delivery. You may be asked to expand on your responses to the selection criteria and discuss experiences or roles you referred to in your application.

Follow up questions are common. For example, the panel may ask you a question about your discipline so that you can talk about your studies. Depending on the type of scholarship, the panel may ask you behavioural questions (i.e. "Tell me about a time when...") or situational questions (i.e. "What would you do if you were faced with...") or both to gain an understanding of how you would act in specific situations.

We also encourage you to prepare questions that show your interest in the scholarship or the panel member's area of expertise. Do some research about the panel members, this is also your chance to network and ask them questions that make you stand out.

Post-Interview process

During the interview, you will be advised on the expected timeframe for an outcome.

A successful application

If you are the successful applicant, you will receive a phone call to make the scholarship offer. You will also receive an email confirmation and Terms and Conditions that you will need to sign and return. Information regarding the scholarship payment, placement details or celebration events will be given at this point.

An unsuccessful application

If you attended an interview but were not successful, you may request feedback from the panel by contacting the Scholarships Officer. If you feel the process was unfair, you have the right to appeal by contacting the QUT Student Ombudsman, or external Queensland Ombudsman.

It is normal to feel disappointed if you're unsuccessful. The application, selection and interview processes this time may be just the preparation you needed to be successful the next time. Remember, an unsuccessful application doesn't diminish your potential. It simply means that your application wasn't the perfect fit for that particular scholarship at that specific time.

Every application strengthens your skills, builds resilience, and brings you closer to achieving your goals. Embrace the learning experience, keep refining your approach, and stay focused on your academic aspirations.