

Scholarship Dos and Don'ts

There are many “right” ways to complete a scholarship application, but there are some universal truths that will assist you and putting forward the best image of yourself possible. It may feel strange, but you are essentially trying to “sell” yourself to the scholarship committee. They have several “products” from which to choose. Why should they choose you?

Consider these tips for perfecting your application packet. Good Luck!

DO

- ✓ Plan to turn it in at least two days before it is due
- ✓ Follow the directions exactly in all parts
- ✓ Proofread several times
 - Put the packet away for a day, and then proofread again
 - Have at least 2 other people proofread — you won't catch everything, and different people look for different things
- ✓ Essays
 - Use active voice
 - Vary your sentence structure
 - Make sure you answer the prompt, refer back to the prompt in each paragraph
 - Have your English teacher review it
- ✓ Find ways to prove that you will complete the degree so they know you are a good investment
- ✓ Resume
 - Ensure it is well-organized and formatted appropriately (likely in MLA)
 - Organize according to standard headings — Leadership, Work Experience, etc.
- ✓ Turn it in early — that shows your organization and differentiates you from all the others coming in five minutes before the deadline
- ✓ Review your submission before hitting SUBMIT, if online

Do Not

- ⊗ Use jargon or acronyms that aren't universal. Everyone knows what the YMCA is, but no one knows what Panther Pals is, so briefly explain.
- ⊗ Have a parent deliver it for you. It is for you, you should turn it in. The committee will be impressed.
- ⊗ Essays — go beyond the word limit, but do not go too far under either. If it asks for 500 words, it should be no shorter than 475, and no longer than 510.
- ⊗ Forget to get all appropriate signatures requested
- ⊗ Forget to include any ancillary documents requested (ACT score sheet, recommendation letters, transcripts)
- ⊗ Ask the donor/committee if you can turn it in late, even a little late
- ⊗ Exaggerate your accomplishments, or lie in any way
- ⊗ Feel uncomfortable about bragging on yourself — you MUST set yourself apart from others
- ⊗ Use several fonts — only one font