Scholarship Application Guide

A step-by-step process from first search to final decision





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1. About This Guide

This guide takes you through a scholarship application from the first search to the final decision. Follow the steps in order, use the checklist and timeline to stay organised, and adapt the email templates to your own situation. Always follow the specific rules of each scholarship provider, because requirements differ.

Please note
No guide can guarantee that you will receive an award; decisions are made by the scholarship providers. You should never have to pay a fee to apply for a scholarship itself. Treat any request for payment, bank details or passwords with caution.

2. The Process at a Glance

1 Research	2 Eligibility	3 Plan	4 Documents	5 References
6 Write	7 Review	8 Submit	9 Follow up	10 Outcome

3. Step-by-Step Guidelines

1 Research and shortlist

- Search trusted sources: university websites, government schemes, foundations and verified platforms such as JobSchoLink.
- Shortlist opportunities that match your level of study, subject, nationality and goals.
- Check that the provider is genuine and that applying is free.

2 Check eligibility

- Read the criteria carefully: academic level, grades, nationality or residence, age, subject and financial need.
- Note what is funded (tuition, living costs, travel) and for how long.
- If you are unsure, ask the provider before investing time.

3 Plan your timeline

- Record every deadline, including time zones, and work backwards from it.
- Aim to start at least 8 to 12 weeks before the deadline where possible.
- Plan to submit a few days early to avoid last-minute problems.

4 Gather your documents

- Collect identification, transcripts, certificates, a current CV and proof of enrolment or an offer, where required.
- Prepare language test results or financial evidence only if the scholarship asks for them.
- Check file formats, sizes and whether copies must be certified.

5 Request references

- Choose referees who know your work well, such as a teacher, tutor or manager.
- Ask politely at least 4 to 6 weeks before the deadline and give them clear information and the deadline.
- Send a thank-you afterwards.

6 Write your statement and essays

- Answer the exact question asked and stay within the word limit.
- Use specific examples of achievements, challenges overcome and what you plan to do next.
- Explain why this scholarship and why you, in your own words.

7 Review and proofread

- Leave at least a day between writing and proofreading.
- Ask a teacher, mentor or friend for feedback.
- Check names, dates, spelling and that every required section is complete.

8 Submit your application

- Submit before the deadline and keep the confirmation email or reference number.
- Save a copy of everything you submitted.
- Never share passwords or bank details to submit.

9

Follow up

- Watch your email, including spam folders, for requests or interview invitations.
- If interviewed, prepare examples, research the provider and practise answers aloud.
- Contact the provider only if the decision date has passed or they invite questions.

10

Outcome and next steps

- If successful, read the award terms carefully before accepting, and reply by the deadline.
- If unsuccessful, thank the provider, ask for feedback if offered and apply again or to other awards.
- Keep a record of all applications to reuse and improve.

4. Suggested Timeline

Use this twelve-week plan as a starting point. If the deadline is closer, shorten each stage but keep the order, and protect time for references and proofreading.

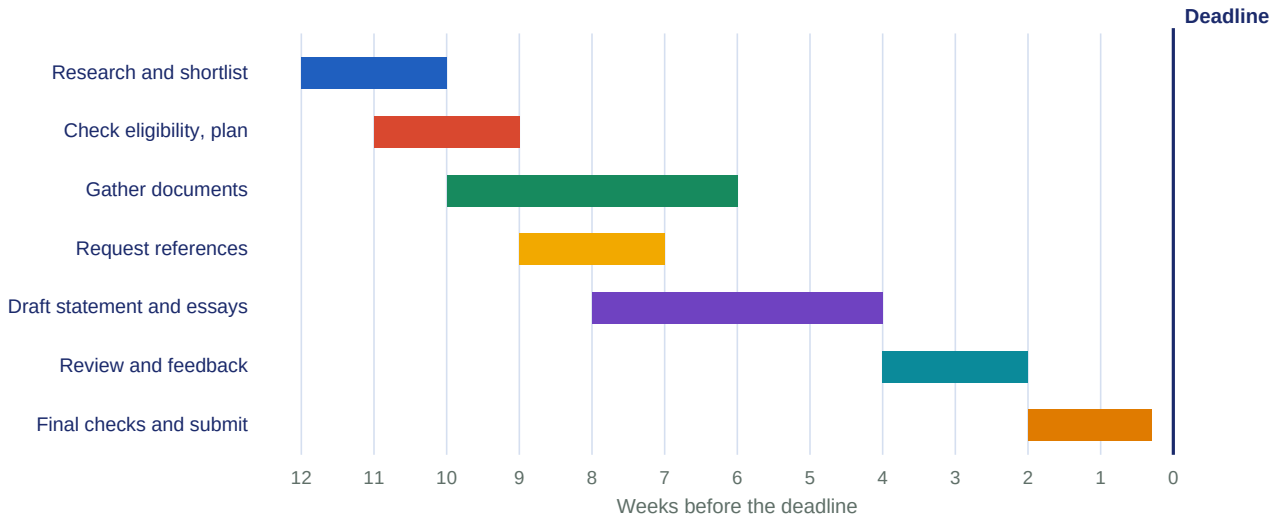


Figure 1. Suggested timeline (weeks before the deadline).

5. Document Checklist

☐ Valid identification (passport or national ID)	☐ Reference letters or referee contact details
☐ Academic transcripts and certificates	☐ Language test results, if required
☐ Proof of enrolment or offer letter, if required	☐ Evidence of financial circumstances, if the award is need-based
☐ Current CV	☐ Passport-style photograph, if required
☐ Personal statement or essays	☐ Confirmation email and copy of the submitted application

6. Writing Your Personal Statement

SECTION	WHAT TO INCLUDE
Opening	A clear, personal start that shows who you are and why this subject matters to you.
Achievements	Two or three specific examples: results, projects, leadership, volunteering or work experience.
Challenges	A difficulty you faced, what you did about it and what you learned.
Goals	What you plan to study or do, and how the scholarship will help you reach it.
Why this award	How your values and plans match the provider's purpose.
Closing	A confident, brief summary and a note of thanks.

- Write in your own words. Providers want to hear your voice.
- Show, do not just tell: use facts and examples instead of general claims.
- Follow the word limit and any formatting rules exactly.

7. Email Templates

Replace the words in square brackets with your own details. Keep emails short, polite and clear.

Template A: Enquiry to a scholarship provider

SUBJECT **Question about the [Scholarship Name] application**

Dear [Name or Scholarship Team],

I am a [level of study] student in [subject] and I am interested in applying for the [Scholarship Name]. Could you please confirm [your question, for example whether students from my country are eligible]?

Thank you for your time.

Kind regards,
[Your full name]
[Your phone number]



Your future starts with one application

Take it one step at a time and keep going.

Template B: Requesting a reference

SUBJECT **Reference request for [Scholarship Name], deadline [date]**

Dear [Referee's name],

I hope you are well. I am applying for the [Scholarship Name] and would be very grateful if you could write a reference for me. The deadline is [date]. I have attached my CV and a short summary of the scholarship and my goals to help you.

Please let me know if you are able to help or if you need anything further from me.

With thanks,
[Your full name]

Template C: Thanking your referee

SUBJECT **Thank you**

Dear [Referee's name],

Thank you very much for supporting my application for the [Scholarship Name]. I really appreciate your time and kindness, and I will let you know the outcome.

Best wishes,
[Your full name]

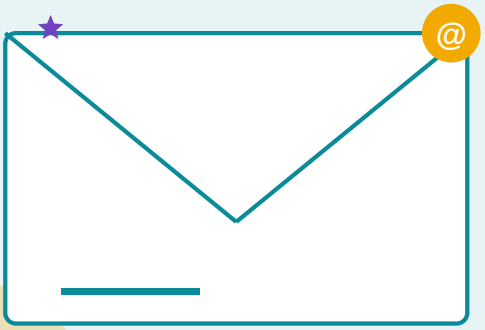
Template D: Following up after the decision date has passed

SUBJECT **Application status: [Your name], [Scholarship Name]**

Dear [Scholarship Team],

I submitted my application for the [Scholarship Name] on [date] (reference [number]). I understand that decisions were expected by [date]. Could you please let me know whether there is an update on my application?

Thank you,
[Your full name]



Short, polite and clear

Good emails to providers and referees make a strong impression.

Template E: Accepting an award

SUBJECT **Acceptance of the [Scholarship Name]**

Dear [Name],

Thank you for offering me the [Scholarship Name]. I am pleased to accept and I confirm that I have read the terms and conditions. Please tell me if you need any further documents from me.

Yours sincerely,
[Your full name]

8. Common Mistakes and Scam Warnings

COMMON MISTAKES	WHAT TO DO INSTEAD
Starting too late	Work backwards from the deadline and follow the timeline.
Ignoring eligibility rules	Check every criterion before you begin writing.
Using one generic statement for every application	Tailor each application to the provider's purpose.
Asking referees at the last minute	Ask at least 4 to 6 weeks ahead with clear information.
Skipping proofreading	Leave a gap, then check and ask someone to read it.
Missing documents or formats	Use the checklist and read the instructions twice.

Warning signs of a scam

- You are asked to pay a fee to apply, or to pay to "guarantee" an award.
- You are told you have won a scholarship you never applied for.
- The provider cannot be found on an official website, or the email comes from a free personal address.
- You are asked for your bank login, passwords or card details.
- The offer is rushed and pressures you to reply immediately.



Stay safe: never pay to apply

Real scholarships do not ask for fees, passwords or bank details.

9. Key Terms

Bursary	Financial support, often based on need.
Eligibility criteria	The rules you must meet to apply.
Fellowship	A funded programme for research or professional development.
Grant	Money awarded that usually does not need to be repaid.
Merit-based	Awarded for achievement, such as grades or talent.
Means-tested	Awarded according to financial circumstances.
Referee	A person who writes a reference supporting you.
Stipend	A regular allowance for living costs.
Transcript	An official record of your grades.
Tuition waiver	Reduction or removal of tuition fees.

10. Contact Us

JobSchoLink can help you find scholarships and prepare your applications. Please get in touch to learn more.

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Your journey starts here

Find scholarships, jobs, fellowships and internships with JobSchoLink.