

Scholarships, Grants, & Bursaries: How to Find Them & Write Applications

In the following activities, you'll explore where to look to find scholarships, grants, and bursaries and how to make an application for these that gives you the best possible chance at success.

Scholarships, Grants, and Bursaries

Furthering your education can be expensive. Often, the investment of money required to pursue your university or college education will be more than justified by the increased earning potential you'll have on graduation.

However, this doesn't take away from the fact that there are lots of initial expenses associated with continuing in education: tuition fees, accommodation fees, books, food etc. can all add up and for some people, these costs can put them off further study.



Luckily, there are many scholarships, grants, and bursaries that are available to students who find it difficult to meet the costs of continuing in education.

Activity 1: Scholarships, Grants, and Bursaries - Where to Look

There is a wide range of funding available to meet the costs associated with attending university or college. You'll need to do the legwork necessary to track these down yourself, as everyone's personal circumstances and interests are different, but here are some tips to help you know where to start looking:

1. Check Out the Universities/Colleges You're Interested In

When you have identified some universities and colleges that you are interested in attending, check out their website or get in touch with their student finance office to enquire what scholarships, grants, and bursaries are on offer for applicants in your situation.

The earlier you do this, the better. Sometimes the deadlines for funding can be earlier than the deadline for an admissions application. You don't want to miss out just because you missed a deadline, so be sure to start this process well in advance.

2. Ask Your Careers Teacher

Ask them if they know of any available scholarships, grants, or bursaries that may be suitable for someone in your situation. They are likely to have access to the most up-to-date information regarding funding opportunities and they may be able to help you find one that is a good fit for you.

3. Use Your Network

Schools, colleges, and universities are not your only potential sources for funding. Sometimes local businesses, non-profit organisations, clubs, community organisations, churches, and interest groups have funding opportunities available too. The wider you cast your net, the more you will increase your chances of success.

4. Search Online

Luckily, the Internet has made casting a wide net much easier than in years gone by. Nowadays, almost all scholarships, grants, bursaries available to you will be posted online. All you have to do is track them down!

Remember to be as specific as you can with your search terms. Simply typing in the term *scholarships* will return innumerable unfiltered results most of which will not apply to you. Be sure to include more details such as the location, subject, uni./college etc. to help narrow the results returned down to those that are most relevant to you.

A good place to start is the *Study Assist* website from the Australian government which contains some links for potential scholarships:

<https://www.studyassist.gov.au/you-study/scholarships>

5. Use a Scholarship Search Engine

Another great way to narrow down your options is to use a scholarship search tool that helps you navigate and locate suitable opportunities. The Good Universities Guide website has an excellent tool that promises “*No matter what you are intending to study and where, you will be sure to find some financial assistance on offer to help you pay for it.*”

You can search by *State* and *Field of Study*, but be sure to click on the *more options* tab to refine your search by even more criteria. The link to this fantastic tool is here:

<https://www.gooduniversitiesguide.com.au/scholarships>



6. Your School Careers Website:

You will find the link to the Scholarships page of every university in Australia on the University Info. Page. Just go to the “*Post School Options*” menu > “*University* > “*Info About Uni’s and Courses*”. You can straight away see the “*Scholarships*” link for every Uni.

Activity 2: How to Maximise Your Chances of Success

Many students think that scholarships and other forms of funding are extremely competitive. While this is often true, you shouldn't let this put you off applying. In fact, many students opt not to apply for funding for just this reason, so some opportunities have very few applicants as a result. Don't be put off. Remember, *if you aren't in, you can't win!*

So, now you know you'll be making funding applications, you'll want to do everything in your power to ensure you are successful. When applying, follow the guidance below to maximise your chances.

1. Work Hard!

One of the simplest ways to maximise your chances at success is through old-fashioned hard work. While academic grades are not the only criteria by which scholarship applications are assessed, showing commitment to your studies by working hard can only increase your chances.



2. Understand the Different Types of Funding Available

It's important that you understand all the different types of funding that may be available to you in order to maximize the amount of money you can secure to support you in your studies. This will take some research on your part, but the main types of funding awards include:

- **Needs-Based Awards** - These awards are given based on your personal circumstances, usually your parents' financial situation including factors such as parents' income, number of children, cost of living etc.
- **Merit Awards** - These awards are given based on a demonstration of excellence by the applying student. While many awards are given based on academic performance, awards exist that are based on achievements in other areas such as athletic or artistic performance, for example.
- **Institution Specific Awards** - These awards are administered by specific universities/colleges themselves and are usually based on particular subject areas or courses. They are usually awarded to students who have shown particular strengths in a given area.
- **Other Awards** - Scholarships, grants, and bursaries can be offered by a wide variety of organisations. Different criteria exist on how to apply for these and will depend on the guidelines set by the organisation funding the award. You may need to write an essay, make a video, create a piece of art, or even put your name in for a lottery.

3. Get organised

By now, you most likely have a sense of the vast number of opportunities available. The number of opportunities out there does not, however, guarantee your success. It does demand that you get organised though!

You'll need to do lots of things and it's easy to get overwhelmed if you don't get well organised. Some of the tasks you'll need to stay on top of include:

- Researching opportunities
- Keeping track of deadlines
- Organising letters of recommendation, transcripts, financial records etc

All this can be complex and time consuming, the better organised you are, the more likely you will be to be successful.

Activity 3: Put it into Practice!

We've covered quite a lot of ground in this lesson so far, now it's time to put a few of the things you've learned into practice.

Think of a course you are considering applying for or have already applied to. Use the links provided in *Activity 1*, and any of the other sources we discussed, to see if you can find 3 different funding opportunities available for that course. You can record the details in the table below.

A table such as this is a great way for you to keep track of your efforts to secure funding for your further education.

Name of Award	Awarding Body	Value of Award	Deadline	Requirements

Activity 4: How to Apply

Applying for a scholarship, a bursary, or a grant, can be quite a daunting experience. Often there's quite a bit of paperwork involved and each application will require your focused attention to give you the best chances of being successful. Here is some helpful advice on completing your applications, to help you ensure you have given yourself the best chance of securing that all important funding.

Ensure You're Eligible - Before you apply, make sure you meet all the necessary criteria for applying. Don't waste time applying for something you aren't even eligible for.

Read Instructions Carefully - This might sound obvious, but it's worth restating. Pay very close attention to the application instructions to make sure you don't unwittingly disqualify yourself through carelessness.

Assess What They're Looking For - Look beyond the eligibility criteria to uncover exactly what it is the funding administrators are looking for. This will require you to do research. Find out what the aims, objectives, mission of those assessing your application. Can you find out about the background, qualifications, experience of previous recipients of the award, for example?

Show How You Meet the Requirements - Once you've uncovered what the administrators are looking for, you'll need to show to them how you meet these requirements. Do this by giving concrete examples of how you meet each of their criteria.

Don't Miss the Deadline - Again another one that may seem obvious, but you don't want to eliminate yourself from the running through failing to get your application in on time.

Avoid Telling a Sob Story - Don't go for the sympathy vote in your application, there will be lots of people in similar or even worse situations. Simply lay things out factually and show how you are doing your best to overcome the challenges facing you. Demonstrate how this funding will make a difference to your life and how it will help you achieve your goals.

Best of luck!!!