Your Reference Letter Checklist

One of the most important documents that can impact your scholarship application is the reference letter.

Here is a handy checklist to help you get a strong recommendation:

✓ Your referees (the term for the reference letter writer) should be current and chosen with care. Choose someone who knows you well. Employers, religious leaders, teachers, guidance counsellors, coaches, community leaders, etc. can be great referees!

✓ Provide a résumé or a list of your achievements and activities to the referee. This will guide them in their letter-writing, and will help them highlight your strengths, skills, and achievements.

✓ Ask the referee to speak to the scholarship’s requirements. If leadership is emphasized, for example, ask the referee to tailor the letter to showcase your leadership skills and to give concrete examples.

✓ Provide the referee with all of the information he needs: the link to the scholarship website, the submission deadline, specific instructions as to how to submit the letter (online, an email to you, a hard copy sent to the scholarship provider or to you, a form provided by the scholarship provider to be completed and returned, etc.).

✓ Give your referee enough time to write the letter (10-14 days). Writing a quality letter takes time!

Write a note of THANKS to the person who vouched for you! And also, be sure to let them know the outcome of your scholarship application!

NOTES for GRADUATES

You’re almost at the finish line. Congratulations! But before you go, be sure to see those teachers, counsellors, and coaches who have been in your corner throughout your high school years. You may want to check if you can contact them for references at some later point.

Also, try to start budgeting—it will be good practice for your first year in postsecondary education.

If you applied for OSAP, monitor your OSAP Message Centre and university email. When you are asked to confirm your income, be sure to report accurately or your eligibility for future aid may be impacted.

And as a final note, here are 10 Things Every High School Senior Should Know Now.

“Oh, the places you’ll go!”
Make Your Summer Count . . . for Scholarships!

The end of the school year is always hectic, so be sure to take some time to relax. But when you are feeling refreshed again, it may be a good time to start thinking about scholarship prep, and how best to make the most of your time off.

Here is a list of ideas to consider:

- **Find a part-time job:** This demonstrates a work ethic and responsibility, and if you’re lucky, scholarships may be offered at your workplace.
- **Try an internship or job shadow:** Explore your interests. It could even connect you with a potential career and impact your future!
- **Volunteer:** Community service is a prerequisite on many scholarship applications. Volunteer in a field that interests you; remaining as a volunteer long-term demonstrates dedication and commitment.
- **Develop leadership skills:** Lead in a volunteer capacity, in your job, or in your activities. Even better, start your own initiative!
- **Create a résumé:** Check out résumés here and here to get you started. Keep fine-tuning your résumé as well as adding and deleting items as appropriate.
- **Make a list of people you can ask for recommendation letters:** Choose those people who have seen you “in action” and can speak to many of your great character traits!
- **Begin thinking about the universities or colleges you want to apply to, and where:** Although you may change your mind during the year (after the presentations!), it’s never too soon to start considering options.
- **and…Start a scholarship profile:** Organize and keep track of achievements, accomplishments, activities, awards, jobs, volunteerism, leadership. This will be SO helpful to you when you begin to fill out applications.

If completing some, or all, of these items, your résumé and applications will certainly be strengthened! Your jobs, volunteerism and activities are developing character and skills, and you are also building relationships and potential references which you will most certainly need if applying for scholarships, bursaries, and awards. Then, at end of summer, you will be able to hit the ground running!

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**OSAP:** Haven’t applied yet? Watch this [video](https://example.com) for guidance on HOW to apply! ** When completing the application, be sure to note the 2 options for how your funding will be disbursed: If you direct OSAP funds to the university, your payment will automatically be remitted. Otherwise, it is your responsibility to submit payment before the deadline.

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**SOCIAL MEDIA TIP**

Your online reputation matters. It is common for employers and admissions officers to check the social media sites of applicants. It would be fairly reasonable to assume scholarship committees will do the same. Every organization wants someone who represents them well. Don’t lose out on opportunities. Make a clean sweep of your social media sites or make them private. Check out these [tips](https://example.com) to help showcase your best self on social media!
Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) Scholarships
To a PSAC member or a dependent child; submit essay, video, infographic, or audio recording responding to a question posed by PSAC (see website)
Awards: $1000-$4000
Deadline announced: June 23, 2017

Osler Epilepsy Scholarship
For a student with epilepsy who is enrolled or is about to be enrolled in a post-secondary education program in September in Ontario
Awards: four $15000 scholarships
Deadline extended to June 26, 4 p.m.

Curling Canada “For the Love of Curling Scholarships”
For young curlers who will, or are continuing to, study at a Canadian university or college; athletes who have competed at the provincial/territorial level or higher; high level of academic standing (min. 80% average) and commitment to curling; personal essay
Awards: thirteen scholarships: ten $1000, three $1100
Deadline announced: June 30, 2017

Fraser Institute Student Essay Contest
Three separate categories: high school, undergraduate, and graduate students; essay 1000-1500 words; 2017 Topic: Regulating the Sharing Economy: Do the Costs Outweigh the Benefits? Essay can have more than one author; see application rules for specifics on essay.
Awards: $500-$1500
Deadline extended to July 4, 2017

Additional Scholarships with June / July Deadlines

Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW) Lila Fahlman Scholarships
For Canadian Muslim students who are enrolled at a Canadian college or university; making a recognized positive contribution to society through civic engagement and/or volunteering experience; preference may be given to those who have supported CCMW through their volunteer work; essay
Award: $1000
Deadline: June 20, 2017

Navy League of Canada Maritime Affairs: Rear-Admiral Fred Mifflin Memorial Scholarship
For an active Sea Cadet entering an accredited postsecondary program of a maritime focus.
Award: $3000
Deadline: June 30, 2017

Canadian Society of Club Managers (CSCM) Val Mason Scholarship
For a student currently enrolled in a school, college or university intending to pursue a career in club management; must be nominated by a member of the Society; applicant must be employed, or recently employed, at a member Club of the Society; essay
Award: one $2000 award
Deadline: July 14, 2017

Canadian Society of Club Managers (CSCM) Ontario Branch (OB) Scholarship
For a fulltime student enrolled in a degree or diploma program at a recognized postsecondary institution in Ontario; minimum average 70%; student is working or has recently worked in an Ontario Branch Member Club of CSCM and shows a continued commitment to the club industry
Awards: two $2000 awards
Deadline: TBA (July 15, 5 p.m. in 2016)

Province-Wide Scholarships: August

Bill 7 Award
For individuals who are attending or accepted by a postsecondary institution in Ontario and in their first program of study; who have demonstrated financial need; who identify as LGBTQ2S
Awards: between six and eight scholarships of $2,000 each
Deadline: August 4, 2017, 5:00 p.m.

Skills Ontario Scholarship
For students who are pursuing a postsecondary education as an apprentice or through a postsecondary institution in Ontario to pursue a career in skilled trades and technologies & who have received a bronze, silver or gold medal at the Ontario Technological Skills Competition
Awards: $500 scholarships
Deadline: Postmarked no later than August 14, 2017

Canada-Wide Scholarships: August

Children’s Aid Foundation Bursaries
For students demonstrating both financial need & the potential to succeed in their program of study; a current Crown Ward, or have been a Crown Ward
Awards: $2,000 for a full academic year, or $1,000 per semester
Deadline: Applications are accepted on a rolling basis throughout the year. There is no deadline, but it may take 3 weeks to review your application, and an additional 3 weeks to process your first payment, so it is best to apply as early as possible.

Canadian Office Products Association (COPA) Scholarship
Students entering first or second year postsecondary studies who work for, or have worked for, or whose parent/guardian/grandparent works for a COPA member company; 80% average in the final year of high school prior to graduation.
Awards: Four $1000 scholarships -- one each in east and west coasts, two in central Canada
Deadline: August 1, 2017

Dennis McGann Bursary
For those studying, or planning to study, Communications who demonstrate a commitment to the issues and actions affecting working people; enrolling, or enrolled, in full- or part-time Communications studies at an accredited public postsecondary institution in Canada. Financial need must be demonstrated. This bursary also considers community service. Short essay.
Award: $1000
Deadline: August 1, 2017

International Union of Operating Engineers (I.U.O.E.) Canadian Conference Bursaries
For a dependant of a member of a Canadian local of the Operating Engineers; must be entering first or subsequent year of a fulltime course of study at a Canadian college or university. Applicants must submit a 1,000-word essay.
Awards: ten $750 bursaries
Deadline: August 1, 2017

Spinal Cord Injury Canada
Copnick / Hilliard Scholarship: To assist students with a spinal cord injury; enrolled at the postsecondary level.
Award: three $500 awards
Sun Life Financial Peer Support Scholarship: To assist peer volunteers with a spinal cord injury to advance their postsecondary education
Award: three $1000 awards
Deadline: August 15, 2017

Telecommunications Workers Union (TWU) United Steelworkers National Local 1944 Scholarships
For children of active union members graduating from high school. This scholarship program considers leadership values and labour knowledge; registering for courses at a public institution
Awards: three scholarships of $750 and four scholarships of $1000
Deadline: August 1, 2017

Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity (CCGSD) / Jeremy Dias Scholarship
For a youth that has taken initiative in addressing discrimination in their school or community; those who address homophobia / heterosexism will be given special consideration; essay
Award: $500
Deadline: August 15, 2017

Eva Smith Achievement Association (ESAA) / Eva Smith Bursary
For Canadian African youths who wish to pursue their dreams in completing their postsecondary education
Award: $1000
Application deadline: August 15 or last business day of the week

Sun Life Financial Peer Support Scholarship:
Award: $1000
Deadline: August 15, 2017

Johnson Inc. Scholarship Program
For students commencing postsecondary education in 2017 & who place in one of the following categories: have a home or auto policy through Johnson; have a parent/guardian or grandparent who has a home or auto policy through Johnson; have a parent/guardian or grandparent who is a member/employee of a Johnson sponsor/client group; or who is a child/grandchild of a Johnson employee
Awards: fifty scholarships of $1,000
Deadline: August 31, 2017

SOS Safety Scholarship
For students who are active in their community and in safety initiatives; between the ages of 13-19 who plan to attend a Canadian postsecondary institution; students must creatively prepare and upload an essay, action plan, or resource guide that outlines prevention of the social issues covered in SOS Safety magazine i.e. bullying, suicide, gang/youth violence, etc.
Award: one $5000 bursary
Deadline: August 31, 2017

Diversity (CCGSD) / Jeremy Dias Scholarship
For students who have been out of school for at least one year, who have since decided to return to school, & who have been back at school for at least one full year (including part-time studies or pursuing a trade certificate). A written essay is required which details your efforts to get an education.
Awards: $1000 (in 2016, twenty-four scholarships were awarded)
Deadline: August 31, 2017

For a dependant of a member of the International Union of Operating Engineers (I.U.O.E.) National Employment and Immigration Union (CEIU) National Scholarships: fifteen $2000 scholarships
Deadline: August 18, 2017

Canadian Somали Scholarship Fund (CSSFUND)
For Canadian Somali Students entering first year postsecondary institutions in Canada; academic achievement; essay
Award: $1000
Deadline: August 1, 2017

We post great #pse info!
Province-Wide Scholarships: September

Ontario Public Servants Employees Union (OPSEU) / The Hospital Professionals Division (HPD) Scholarship Fund
Open to OPSEU members/their dependents enrolled in a Hospital Professionals program; response to questions with an essay of 1500 words or a photo series, short video, poem, audio file, or visual art piece
Awards: seven $750 scholarships (one per region)
Deadline: September 1, 2017

Ontario Parks Partners Bursary
Open to students who work in all facets of park operations and demonstrate high levels of customer service, initiative, leadership, volunteerism, and dedication; must be Ontario residents and returning to secondary or postsecondary school (not necessarily in Ontario); must be nominated by peers, park visitors or employee’s supervisor; nominees may be an employee of Ontario Parks, the Stewardship Youth Rangers program, “Friends” organization or park volunteer group
Awards: $500 bursaries
Deadline: Nomination forms (available at all Ontario Parks offices) must be submitted to the Park Superintendent / Park Office Manager by Labour Day (September 5, 2017)

Ontario Public Servants Employees Union (OPSEU) / The Carol McGregor Scholarship
Open to children of OPSEU members who have a visible or invisible disability and are pursuing postsecondary education. Extra consideration given to students who have participated in a collective action or community organizing on disability or human rights issues
Award: $1500
Deadline: September 15, 2017

Young Heritage Leaders Scholarship
Open to youth age 24 and under; must be nominated: resident of Ontario; made exceptional volunteer contributions to conserving Ontario’s heritage
Award: $2000 scholarship
Deadline: September 30, 2017
Note: Individuals must be nominated for the Lieutenant Governor’s Ontario Heritage Award for Youth Achievement to be eligible for the scholarship.

Canada-Wide Scholarships: September

Basilicata Cultural Society of Canada in conjunction with Montessori School of Kleinburg
For students of Basilicata origin attending college or university; the applicant or a family member must originally be from Basilicata; essay required in English or Italian of 1000-1500 words.
Awards: two $2000 scholarships; one scholarship will be awarded to a student residing in Ontario
Deadline: September 1, 2017

BluEarth / Aboriginal Clean Energy Scholarships (ACES)
For members of an aboriginal community, including First Nations, Metis, and Inuit; a resident of Canada; and pursuing postsecondary education, including trade certification, diploma, degree programs, etc. Successful candidates will have an opportunity for an internship at the end of their academic year and an opportunity to be partnered with a BluEarth team member who will act as a learning partner throughout their academic year; candidates will be reviewed based on academic merit, community involvement and pursuit of studies that could be transferable to the clean energy sector.
Awards: three-four scholarships up to $3000
Deadline: September 15, 2017

United Food & Commercial Workers (UFCW) Canada – BDM Scholarship Program
Applicant must be a UFCW Canada member, or a dependant of a UFCW Canada member; must also be enrolled at an accredited Canadian college, university, or other recognized postsecondary institution. “You don’t have to be an A+ student!”
Award: eighteen $1000 scholarships
Deadline: September 30, 2017
*Note: See also the UFCW BDM Scholarship Contest Prize: iPad

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Federation of Canadian Secondary Students (FCSS-FESC) Ambassador Programme
If you are a student enrolled in a secondary school in Ontario and are passionate about student voice and youth involvement, you can apply to be one of FCSS’s Ambassadors. You “will gain valuable practical experience in marketing, finances, collaboration, networking and communication that will complement” your future goals.
Applications open August 10.

Historica Canada: Encounters With Canada (EWC)
EWC is the country’s largest youth forum: 120-148 teens per week from across Canada come to Ottawa for one week during the school year. The program offers students the opportunity to explore career options through experiential learning, develop leadership skills and live a bilingual experience. To be eligible, students must be 14-17 years of age. Select from one of 13 career-oriented themes. Applications are accepted year-round: First come, first served. Cost: $675. Some provincial/territorial governments provide limited subsidies ranging from $67 to $400 per participant. (Ask your local regional coordinator for more details.). Many schools across the country also help participants financially. Participants also collect...
funds from sponsors (such as Tim Hortons, Ford, General Motors, Honda and other car dealers in their regions) and approach organizations (such as Knights of Columbus, Royal Canadian Legion, etc.). EWC is one of the many acclaimed programs of Historica Canada, and is recognized and endorsed by the Ministry of Education in every province and territory. Participation in the EWC program is also officially recognized by the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award program.

COMPETITION

Canadian Young Speakers for Agriculture Competition
An opportunity to develop public-speaking skills. Contestants prepare a 5- to 7-minute speech on one of five agriculture-related topics, and present it at The Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto on Saturday, November 4, 2017. $40 entry fee for Senior Competition. Prizes up to $1000. Apply by September 30, 2017.

AWARD

Lieutenant Governor’s Ontario Heritage Award for Youth Achievement
Recognizes those that have contributed to conserving Ontario’s cultural and/or natural heritage. The following criteria must be met in order to be nominated: Be age 24 and under at the time of the nomination submission; resident of Ontario; made exceptional volunteer contributions to heritage conservation; demonstrated leadership, commitment, creativity, positive impact on the community, region or province, and good conservation practices. Deadline: September 30, 2017

Note: Nominees to this Award are also eligible for the Young Heritage Leaders $2,000 scholarship for postsecondary education. Nominees to the Lieutenant Governor’s Award who do not receive the award can be recognized through Young Heritage Leaders if both program options have been selected on the nomination form.

OF INTEREST

Federation of Chinese Canadian Professionals (Ontario)
Interest-free Student Loans are offered to qualified students. The value of the loans is up to $3,000. Criteria for application: Canadian citizenship or landed immigrant status; Minimum one-year residency in Ontario; Currently enrolled fulltime in any Ontario postsecondary institution leading to a degree or diploma; Good academic performance; Financial need. Deadline: July 31, 2017

Spotlight on DECA

DECA is an extra-curricular program for secondary school students in Ontario that allows students to develop confidence, employability skills and demonstrate leadership. DECA is an international professional development program where members compete and network with like-minded young professionals in every field of business. It fosters leadership, organizational, and presentation skills to create one’s own unique brand and stand out from the rest. Note: Your high school must be registered with DECA in order to participate.

And…to celebrate Canada’s 150th, check out:

Here’s My Canada Video Contest
A multilingual, nation-wide contest inviting Canadians to express what Canada means to them in a 30-second video, live action or animated. No entry can exceed 30 seconds long. The subject of the entry must reflect on Canadian culture, history, or identity. The top three eligible submissions in each category selected in accordance with these Official Rules will be awarded prizes: Senior Category Ages 14-18. 1st Prize: $5,000 gift card. In addition, all entries made in each category will be automatically submitted to a People’s Choice category, wherein the entries will be voted upon by the public. The three videos with the most votes will be awarded prizes in this category as well. Submission Deadline: August 31, 2017 #heresmycanada

Have a great summer!