

National Scholarships & Fellowships

Creating a Culture of Scholarships & Fellowships at the University of Maryland

National Scholarships Office (NSO)

Location: 0104A Armory
Mailing Address: 2130 Mitchell
Telephone: 301.314.1289
Walk-in Hours: Thursdays, 10am – 2pm
Website: www.scholarships.umd.edu

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National Scholarships Coordinator

Introduction

- How to locate scholarship & fellowship sources
- The application process
- Improve your chances in national competitions

Finding Scholarships & Fellowships

Scholarships & Fellowships are awards that are based more on your future potential than your past achievements—therefore:

- what **skills** do you have that are consistent with their guidelines?
- Look at your record—academic pursuits, extracurricular activities—do you meet the **eligibility** requirements?
- Are you a **suitable** candidate?

Finding Scholarships & Fellowships

Think about what you want to do —

- Begin process at least **one year** prior to need. Applications are generally available 3–4 months before deadline
- Consider funding for school, travel or study abroad, public service projects, and/or thesis/dissertation research

Finding Scholarships & Fellowships

Types of scholarships & fellowships

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professional | <input type="checkbox"/> Need-Based |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Merit-Based | <input type="checkbox"/> Minority |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Research | <input type="checkbox"/> National |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local | <input type="checkbox"/> Military |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disability | <input type="checkbox"/> Talent |

Finding Scholarships & Fellowships

What sources are available on campus?

- National Scholarships Office**
 - Website: www.scholarships.umd.edu
- Libraries**—McKeldin Reference Section
- Colleges** and Departments on campus
- Financial Aid Office**
 - www.financialaid.umd.edu/

Finding Fellowships

Internet Databases

- **Cornell's Graduate Fellowships Notebook**
 - <http://www.gradschool.cornell.edu/?p=132>
 - **The Foundation Center**
 - <http://fdncenter.org/>
 - **Fedmoney**
 - <http://www.fedmoney.org/>
 - **Michigan State University**
 - <http://www.lib.msu.edu/harris23/grants/3subject.htm>
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Finding Fellowships (cont'd)

- **Community of Science, Inc. (COS)**
 - <http://fundingopps2.cos.com/>
 - **American Society of Association Executives**
 - <http://info.asaenet.org/gateway/OnlineAssocSlist.html>
 - **Chronicle of Higher Education**
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The Application Process

Ways to Apply

- Apply directly to funding source.
 - Faculty, Staff, College/University endorsement
 - College/University Campus competition to nominate and prepare students to compete nationally
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The Application Process

General Tips

- **Read** the directions several times if necessary
 - Make **copies** of your application
 - **Review** and revise
 - **Respond** precisely as requested
 - **Reveal** interesting things about yourself
 - List activities that you have **sustained involvement** (quality not quantity)
 - Focus on activities that are in line with the award. **Show how you fit with the scholarship's mission**
 - **Focus on your leadership and contributions**, and make them known
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The Scholarship Application

Most applications have three important parts:

- **Application** (biographical information)
 - **Essay** and/or brief written statements that clarify goals and provide personal information
 - **Letters of Recommendation** from sources that can attest to your academic ability, character and potential for future success.
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The Application Process

Essays — Three Types

- **Personal** — what you have done and how those experiences have served to inform your life and present/future choices;
- **Study/Research Proposal** — details of course of study, your qualifications, how it was chosen, and how it will help you move closer to achieving career goals
- **Travel Proposal** — focus & purpose, background, future plans, itinerary, benefits, and knowledge of culture and area

Campus Writing Center is an important resource
www.english.umd.edu/programs/WritingCenterWebsite/

Scholarship Essay

- ❑ Reader's introduction to you as a scholar.
- ❑ Purpose – to craft a clear, effective statement of your academic merits, interests, & goals.
- ❑ Goal – Show your breadth, depth of knowledge and your ability to articulate a problem or area of inquiry.

Keys For Writing a Successful Essay

- ❑ Use specific examples to create an overarching theme
- ❑ Set the tone according to the fellowship's characteristics
- ❑ Address any rough spots in your transcript/academic record
- ❑ Be truthful and accurate
- ❑ Get help with copyediting
- ❑ Proofread meticulously

The Application Process

Recommendations

- ❑ Faculty, University Staff, Community Leaders, Mentors, Employers, etc. who
 - Have **first-hand knowledge** of your work
 - Can address different characteristics and **strengths**
 - Can write about you with **confidence** and **enthusiasm**
- ❑ Provide letter writers with application materials, scholarship information; previous work from their class(es), project or program to refresh their memory; *AND A CURRENT RESUME or CV.*
 - Request letter at least 1 month before deadline
 - Be prepared for a rejection, especially if asked last minute
 - Always have an extra recommender as a back-up

The Interview

If you make it to the interview,
Congratulations!

Before the interview:

- ❑ **Review** your application
- ❑ Prepare **opening and closing remarks.**
- ❑ Do **practice interviews**
- ❑ **Research the scholarship**

The Interview

General tips:

- ❑ **Be yourself, be articulate.** The Committee wants to know more about you.
- ❑ Interviewers may take contrary views to test your mettle.
- ❑ Interviewers may question you about different parts of your application.
- ❑ **Establish eye contact** with the interviewers, use their names and keep a sense humor.
- ❑ **Relax and enjoy the interview.**

The Interview

General Tips, continued:

- ❑ Think of the interview as a **discussion.**
- ❑ **Make sure that you understand a question before you answer it.**
- ❑ If one of your weaknesses is pointed out, don't get defensive; acknowledge it and move on.
- ❑ Don't **ramble** about your accomplishments. Explain them. Remember, they are in the application.
- ❑ Once you've answered a question, be quiet and wait for the next one. **Answers that are concise but thorough work extremely well.**

National Competitions

Ways to improve your chances with prestigious national scholarships

- Develop oral communication/articulation skills**
 - Take a speech communication class
 - Read avidly to improve vocabulary
 - Consider joining a debate organization

 - Cultivate your knowledge of current affairs** —
local, state, federal, & international topics
 - Read daily national newspapers and journals
 - Participate in current event discussions & debates
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Closing

If you get the Scholarship or Fellowship, make sure that you:

- Write thank you notes**
 - To your recommenders (regardless of whether or not you get the scholarship or fellowship)
 - To the foundation
- Let the NSO know about your success**

QUESTIONS
