Hints and Tips

The following information is designed to help school leavers (students currently completing their final year of high school) to complete the University of Sydney Scholarship Application Form.

The following topics are covered:
Personal Statement
School Report
School Reference
Presentation of Application
Nominating a Faculty

This information is based on questions commonly asked by applicants in each scholarship round, however you will also find other information throughout the Scholarships Office website.

Personal Statement

The Personal Statement is used by the Faculty to find out more about each scholarship applicant than is evident from the school reports/trial marks etc provided in the application. The committees who assess scholarship applicants want to know that the students they choose to become recipients will not only perform well academically at the University but will also contribute to University life in a positive way. Your personal statement can set you apart from an elite field of high achievers also applying for a Scholarship.

Faculties like to see:

- evidence that the proposed degree of study is of particular interest to the applicant e.g. through involvement in relevant activities beyond what is normally required in the standard curriculum.
- involvement in a wide range of activities throughout the senior years of high school e.g. artistic pursuits, sport, debating and community engagement.
- an outstanding academic record.
- an interest in future careers related to the proposed degree of study.
- applicants with excellent marks and who have been active in their community and/or school, show well rounded interests, and an interest in pursuing a full University life and experience.

The personal statement gives you a chance to show the qualities you have that make you stand out from the other applicants and what makes you particularly suitable to receive a University of Sydney Scholarship.

Faculties don't like to see:

- handwritten personal statements.
- poor spelling and/or grammar.
- small and/or illegible font.
- excessive use of bullet points (or CV-style statements).
- achievements too far in the past (e.g. from the first two years of high school or from primary school).
- statements significantly shorter than a full A4 page.

Presenting a dot point list of achievements dating back to the Year Seven swimming carnival doesn’t tell the selection committee much about you as an individual, or about your superior communication skills (one of the suggested selection criteria). We encourage you to write in a more engaging style and remember that the people reading your statement will also be reading thousands of others. They want to know as much about you as they can, so don’t be scared to sell yourself. You should try to show them why you are the best suited for this opportunity, why you will make the most of it and why it will be the best thing for you to be a Scholarships recipient and student at The University of Sydney.

School Report

You should include your most recent school report to show your current academic achievement.

Faculties understand that many schools won’t have finished their Trial HSC (or equivalent) by the application due date, and that not all students will have their final mid-year report. If this is the case, you can include your end of year school report from Year 11.

There is no need to explain the substitution in your application. The Faculty assumes that you have supplied the most recent school report that you have available, whether it is your end of year report from last year or your mid-year report from this year.

School Reference

If you have a school reference, then you may include this as well with your application. Some schools may not give students a reference, or will not give a reference until you have successfully completed your final exams.

Faculties understand that school references vary from school to school, including what they do and do not include and whether they are or are not given. You will not be disadvantaged if you are unable to include a reference in your application.

Presentation of Application

Faculties do not want to see any inclusions other than those listed above. Please do not include photos, certificates, etc. as these have not been asked for in the application.

Your application should be printed on clean, plain white paper with a single staple or clip in the top left-hand corner. Any plastic envelopes, binding etc, will be discarded before your application is sent to the Faculty to ensure that all applications appear the same.
Nominating a Faculty

You are only allowed to submit one application for a University of Sydney Scholarship and must therefore decide by which Faculty you would like your application to be considered. Applications are not assessed at the Scholarships Office. Your application will be sent to the Faculty you have nominated on the Application Form and to no other Faculty. You should therefore think very carefully about which Faculty you would like to have considering your application.

Some students want to apply for degrees in more than one faculty and this is fine - you can submit preferences to UAC for as many degrees as you like. Unlike preferences through UAC, however, your application will only be considered by your first and only choice, as listed in the Application Form.

If you are offered a scholarship by the Faculty nominated on your Application Form then you can study any degree program administered by them - including combined degrees (provided you meet the ATAR requirement for entry to your preferred course). Choosing one faculty for the application isn’t necessarily restrictive as you still have many options within that area of study. For example, a student applying for a scholarship in the Faculty of Arts could consider enrolling in courses such as Social Work, Languages, History, Arts/Law or Arts/Medicine.

You can change degree choices within the Faculty once you are in receipt of a Scholarship. You cannot change to another Faculty.

If, for instance, you are offered a scholarship by the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technologies to study a Bachelor of Engineering/Bachelor of Science, but decide that you would rather study a Bachelor of Computer Science and Technology there would be no problem because the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technologies administers this degree program also. If you changed your mind, however, and decide that you actually want to study Bachelor of Physiotherapy, you would not be able to transfer your scholarship offer from the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technologies to the Faculty of Health Science.

If you are unsure which Faculty administers the degree you are interested in check the UAC course code against the table in the Application Form (this changes from year to year for some combined degree programs). If you aren’t sure which specific degree you wish to study when you apply, make sure that the Faculty you nominate administers the sorts of degrees that you would find interesting.

The Faculties assessing applications for University of Sydney Scholarships want to see that applicants are passionate about the subject area they intend to pursue, and this is something that they look for in the Personal Statement.

Research the different Faculties of The University of Sydney and what Schools, Departments, Centres they are responsible for, as this will help you to understand the Faculty and its subject area(s). Even though the names of Faculties are similar between universities, or seem straight forward in their title, they can be involved in very diverse areas, and allow what students to pursue very divergent interests within the same Faculty.

* Please note that a scholarship offer does not guarantee you entry to your preferred degree program. You may achieve the required ATAR to be eligible for a scholarship (95 or above) but not achieve the required ATAR for your top degree preference. For example, Arts/Law has an ATAR cut off over 97. If you were on the shortlist to receive a scholarship from Arts and your ATAR came in at 96, the scholarship offer would be confirmed for you to study any degree in the Faculty of Arts for which you were eligible based on your ATAR. With an ATAR of 96 you would not be eligible for entry into Arts/Law, but you could take up the scholarship for any other degree program which required an ATAR of 96 or below in the Faculty.
Students interested in Health Science degrees should be very careful when nominating their Faculty as we often see applicants who have nominated Science on the application form, even though they have spoken at length about their life long dream to study Sports Science and Nutrition at the University of Sydney in the Personal Statement. The application will be sent to the Faculty nominated on the Application Form for assessment, so it is worth checking the table to be sure.

As stated on the Application Form, for combined Law or Nursing degrees, you must nominate the Faculty that you intend to combine with Law or Nursing e.g. for Bachelor of Health Sciences/Master of Nursing you should nominate Health Sciences, for Commerce/Law nominate Economics and Business.