

Scholarships & Awards

→ How to Apply

There are many different types of financial aid out there, and among the most popular - and understandably so! - are scholarships. If you've picked up this sheet, you're obviously interested in applying for scholarships. In deciding that you're going to apply for scholarships, you are committing yourself to a time-consuming but beneficial process. Aside from the obvious financial payoff, applying for scholarships also allows you to discover a little bit more about yourself and just why you're so unique. The following information will make you aware of the things you can do to increase your eligibility, competitiveness, and individuality when applying while participating in activities you enjoy. It will also help you identify campus resources that will help you along the way.

▼ What do selection committees look for?

Most scholarship selection committees look to reward well-rounded, active, and accomplished students, particularly in the following areas:

- **Academics:** Almost all scholarships involve some kind of academic component. Since you're attending an institute of higher learning, they want to make sure that you're dedicated to academic studies. Some things committees take into account include GPA (both cumulative and within your major), breadth of classes taken, involvement in your department, research and publishing activities, and awards and honors received.
- **Leadership:** This criterion is broadly defined and can include anything from being a student government officer to writing for the student newspaper. With this requirement, committees are looking for motivation, independence, and the ability to complete projects and lead your fellow students. Breadth also counts here, particularly in the ability to work effectively with different groups of people including students, faculty, and administrators.
- **Work Experience:** Many committees want to see how you apply your skills in the day-to-day work world. You certainly don't have to be the manager of your local bank to qualify; instead, committees look to see how you're preparing yourself for the future, whether you're interning at a nonprofit or bagging groceries at your local market. In addition, this requirement can be absolutely

pivotal in field- or career-specific scholarships for which you might apply in your junior and senior years.

- **Service:** In addition to paid work, it's important to volunteer in your community. Both public and community service are important to show that you're committed to civic involvement. This can be as simple as volunteering for a few hours a week at a retirement center. Because many civic organizations give scholarships, it's great to show that you're committed to similar ideals as them.
- **Physical Fitness:** Some scholarship committees demand very well-rounded applicants, and this often includes fitness of body as well as mind. You don't have to be a star varsity athlete to fulfill this requirement. You can show that you take care of your body simply by running every day, biking to work, or joining an intramural basketball team.

Most scholarship committees are not looking for all of these requirements. Many are only looking for one or two, and by far the most common requirements are Academics, Leadership, and Work Experience. However, as a potential applicant, it's important to keep in mind how you fulfill each of these requirements.

► How do I get involved?

Lewis & Clark has lots of ways to get involved, have fun, and make yourself more attractive to scholarship committees. Often, your campus involvement can distinguish you from those 40 other applicants for that Physics scholarship. Here are just a few opportunities:

- **Student Government:** The Associated Students of Lewis & Clark (ASLC) student government has many opportunities to get involved not the least of which is serving as an officer! However, in addition to the Executive positions, ASLC has opportunities on its many boards and commissions: the Student Academic Affairs Board (SAAB), for those of you with an academic bent; the General Allocations Board (GAB), if you're interested in giving money to student groups; the Peer Review Board (PRB), which is instrumental in campus judicial affairs; and student positions on many faculty and staff committees around the College. Contact them at aslc@lclark.edu or x7152.
- **Student Groups:** LC is unique in the variety of clubs in which students can become involved. These include language and culture based clubs such as the German or Japanese Club, activism-based clubs such as Students Engaged in Eco-Defense (SEED) or the Radical Action Group, or student media such as the *Pioneer Log*, KLC 104.1 FM, or publishing in our diverse journals. In addition, LC has several larger student groups such as Students Organized for Activities (SOFA), which brings in programming such as bands and comedians, or Free University, which acts as a forum for students, faculty, and staff to teach

classes on whatever interests them. Contact the Student Activities Office at www.lclark.edu/~activity or x7121 for more information.

- **Center for Service & Work (CSAW):** Many students are very involved in the Portland community through CSAW's programs. This could include going downtown on Saturdays to work with Potluck on the Park or having a summer internship at PGE. CSAW's opportunities encompass community service, part-time jobs, internships and summer jobs, and leadership programs. All of these are invaluable ways to show your commitment to the community, build important career skills, gain some "real world" experience, and help you better understand yourself and others. CSAW is located in the bottom floor of Templeton Student Center. Visit them there or on the web at www.lclark.edu/~csaw.
- **Ethnic & Multicultural Opportunities:** LC is rich with opportunities to get involved with different ethnic and cultural activities. Some ethnic activities include taking an active role on the Ethnic Cultures Floor, being a mentor for the mentor/mentee program, helping plan Martin Luther King, Jr., Day celebrations, or getting involved in multicultural student groups. Contact Ethnic Student Services at x7051 for more information on this. In addition, LC has a rich multicultural community for you to explore. The International Students of Lewis & Clark (ISLC) plans many activities throughout the year, and by far the most prominent is the International Fair in the spring. Get involved with one of the country booths, perform in the talent show, or help cook cultural dishes. International Student Services, x 7305, can tell you about other ISLC activities. Finally, LC Overseas Programs are not only great ways to experience new cultures but also provide great material for scholarship. Having gone on such a program will make you more attractive to committees and will give you breadth and depth of subject matter for essays. Learn more about these programs from the Overseas & Off-Camps Programs Office at x7295.
- **Departments:** Our academic departments provide excellent opportunities to make your learning here at LC a bit more experiential. Three departments - Gender Studies, International Affairs, and Environmental Studies - host annual symposia in which you can involve yourself. Many departments also have weekly colloquia or annual speaker series. Joining one of the search committees for new faculty will allow you to help define the future of your department! Finally, the intimate nature of LC allows ample opportunity for student-faculty research. Take advantage of this, particularly the endowed summer research program over the summer. Publishing research or papers in journals, done either collaboratively or alone, can only help you later when applying for scholarships and graduate schools.
- **Athletics/Outdoors Activities:** Our PE/Athletics department offers many opportunities to get involved. Not only can you participate in a wide variety of

classes and varsity sports, but there are also a number of fun intramurals throughout the year. In addition, the PE/A department and ASLC sponsor a number of Club Sports including ice hockey, lacrosse, ultimate frisbee, etc. Find out more about all of these programs at the PE/A website: www.lclark.edu/dept/sports. LC also provides a great opportunity to get involved through College Outdoors (CO). CO leads several outdoor recreational trips throughout the year. You can not only take part in those trips but also be a trip leader! Contact them at x7116 or outdoors@lclark.edu.

► How do I find scholarships?

Now that you know what scholarship selection committees want and how to distinguish yourself from other applicants, you need to find some scholarships! Here are just a some resources that you can utilize.

- **Watzek Library:** Watzek has a collection of books that includes lists of scholarships, scholarships for specific programs, and ways to apply. Most of these books are in the Reference section and begin with the call number LB2337. In addition, you can locate more such books by inquiring at the Reference Desk or doing a keyword search on the library catalog for “scholarships and directories” or “student aid and directories.” The website www.lclark.edu/~refdesk/resources/subject/webcoll.html#finaid also allows you to search for scholarships over the web. For further information, contact the Reference Desk at x7285 or refdesk@lclark.edu. There is also a database of all of the scholarship books in Watzek. Contact the SFS Intern at sfsschol@lclark.edu for more information.
- **Student Financial Services (SFS):** SFS has a posting area for scholarships next to their office on the bottom floor of Templeton. Check it out or contact them directly at x7090 or sfs@lclark.edu.
- **SFS Intern for External Scholarships & Awards:** This individual, who is located in the SAAB Office on the main floor of Templeton near the Info Desk, keeps lists and a database of scholarships as well as useful Internet links. Drop by the office during office hours, call x7155, or email sfsschol@lclark.edu for more information.
- **Internet:** The Internet is a helpful resource for finding scholarships. It has a number of useful scholarship searches and general information on financial aid. Here are a few of our favorite websites:
 - ❖ www.fastweb.com - A great scholarship search engine.
 - ❖ www.search4scholarship.com - Another good scholarship search engine.
 - ❖ www.lclark.edu/dept/sfsschol - LC’s own website devoted to helping you find and apply for scholarships.
 - ❖ www.SRNexpress.com - Some good, basic information about scholarships and financial aid.

- ❖ fafsa.ed.gov - The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) on the web provides a quick and easy way to file this cornerstone of financial aid. -----

How do I apply for scholarships?

There are many components to scholarship applications. Some of them are very simple, involving nothing but submitting a résumé, while others might be very long and involved processes including essays, lists of activities, and interviews. Here are just a few pointers that will help you through the application process.

- **General:** Scholarship committees look for specific individuals who share the principles they think are important for success. It is good to be aware of your principles and to stand up for them. Scholarships are about you, and you're selling yourself, so make sure that you don't underscore your activities. Committees do like a certain degree of bragging, after all, just not too much. Regarding committees, it's good to keep in mind who's on the selection committees. Doing this will help you avoid saying things that might challenge their political or religious sentiments and therefore disqualify you even if you're a strong candidate. It's important to remember that your current activities will help or hinder you in applying for scholarships later on. Preparing now will make it easier to apply later, and sometimes that may come down to sacrificing other things that you'd like to do. Chances are, however, that your sacrifice will pay off later. Also, be proactive. Search for opportunities to make yourself a better applicant. You could develop your own internship or offer to coordinate a large activity. Also, even if you think you're only barely eligible, apply! You may be the only person who was motivated enough to do so. And as a final note, not applying is the quickest way to close doors. It's much better to try and fail than it is not to try at all. The path to scholarships is littered with rejection letters, but those shouldn't dishearten you to future possibilities.
- **Essays and Written Applications:** Most scholarships involve some sort of written portion which is usually an essay. These essays are important because they communicate your values and opinions to committees and let them know what you think. Therefore, you should remember the above principles when writing these essays. It's important to consider why your view is unique. Often, these committees might be reviewing over a hundred applicants, and the more you distinguish yourself in a positive manner, the better. And make sure that you answer the questions, even if you don't like them. A pet peeve of many committee members is when applicants don't answer the question that was asked. Always type your application. While many scholarships do accept handwritten applications, typing them shows that you care about your application and put time into it. Keep grammar in mind, too. Committee

members often list typos or grammatical errors as a surefire reason for rejection. Thus, always read over your essays several times and have other people proof them, too. This can only strengthen your essay. As a general principle, try to write actively. Using verbs such as “managed,” “coordinated,” or “facilitated” sounds much more impressive than saying you merely worked in an organization. Finally, make sure that you leave yourself enough time to write your essays. It’s important to plan out what you’re going to say and have time for feedback, and writing your essays the night before they’re due often won’t suffice. Some scholarship essays are extremely common, and it would save you time and effort to keep stock answers to these questions on file somewhere, or at least be aware of your answers to them, so that you can just pull out those answers and adjust them to fit the scholarship for which you’re applying. For your convenience, here are examples of some of these common essays:

- ❖ Tell us about yourself.
 - ❖ What’s your most significant (academic) achievement?
 - ❖ Who or what has influenced you the most and why?
 - ❖ What are your career (academic) goals?
 - ❖ How will this scholarship help you achieve your goals?
 - ❖ Why should we select you for this scholarship?
- **Résumés & Lists of Activities:** Many scholarships want a list of your activities, both on and off campus. This list is not only very useful for the committee, but you as well. Your list should include the name of each event, a comprehensive description of it and what you specifically did in it, when you started and ended doing it, and approximately how many hours per week it consumed. You may find it helpful to keep a long list of everything you ever did, a “long résumé,” as some people call it. This comprehensive list should include everything that you’ve done in the past few years, and it’s not only a great way for you to remember everything you did, but you can also select certain activities which you would like highlight in your different applications. Your list should include leadership, service, work, athletics, awards and honors, internships, and work experience.
 - **Letters of Recommendation:** One important consideration many students overlook when applying for scholarships is choosing the best people to write letters of recommendation. The people who recommend you paint a picture of you for selection committees, and you want to make sure that you’re painting a positive, well-rounded portrait. While having people high in the College administration write your letters might look good, committees are really looking for people who know you well. For instance, even though you’ve spoken with the Dean of the College a couple of times, you might choose to have that adjunct professor who taught one of your classes write your letter instead if you worked together extensively on projects during class. Also, it’s

important to consider the scholarship's goals. If it's a Physics scholarship, it will probably help you to get letters of recommendation from your Physics professors rather than your Philosophy professors. Also, if your scholarship has more of a leadership and extracurricular activity focus, a faculty member might not be the best choice. Instead, you might opt for that staff member with whom you worked on large projects. Finally, when asking people to write letters of recommendation for you, it helps to supply them with a résumé as well as some strong project or paper you might have done in their or another class. This will allow them to write more specifically about your skills and accomplishments.

- **Interviews:** Many larger scholarships include an interview component to give committees a feeling for what you're like both on and off paper. This is an opportunity for you to show the passion you have for what you do and your desire to continue successfully. The first thing to keep in mind in an interview is neatness. Although this might seem unimportant, your appearance gives committees an impression for your degree of professionalism and how much you care about the scholarship. Therefore, make sure that you dress in semi-formal to formal business attire, even if it's not requested. Being prepared counts. Make sure that you're familiar with what you wrote in your application as you may be asked to elaborate on it. Interview questions vary widely, and some may be very general. Keep your answers succinct while still answering the questions. Interviews are only allotted for certain periods of time, and wordiness often doesn't help committees keep on schedule or your chances of receiving the scholarship. One thing that may help you are practice interviews. Gather together a group of friends or faculty and have them give you a mock interview to prepare you for what's ahead and perhaps relieve a few of those jitters. And speaking of jitters, don't worry about being nervous; committees expect it.

→ Are there resources to help me?

Yes! Our campus is rich with resources to help potential scholarship applicants. Other than those resources listed above under "How do I find scholarships," here are a few other options for you to pursue.

- **Center for Service & Work:** This office is rich with workshops and information that can help make you a more attractive candidate for scholarships. The director conducts workshops on writing résumés, interviewing, and writing cover letters and can do mock interviews with you. Pick up a brochure from the office, located on the bottom floor of Templeton, or call x7114.
- **SFS Intern for External Scholarships and Awards:** This fellow undergraduate student can help you with all stages of applying for scholarships. In addition to having resources for locating scholarships both on and off campus, this

individual can help you with your written applications, letters of recommendation, and interviewing. They're presently housed in the SAAB Office near the Info Desk in Templeton and can be reached at x7155 or at sfsschol@lclark.edu.

- **Departments:** Individual departments may have not only lists of scholarships for which you could apply, but they also know about what these scholarship committees might be looking for. For department- or career-specific scholarships, your professors are very knowledgeable about what you might do to make yourself a better applicant.
- **Student Financial Services (SFS):** SFS has many trained financial counselors who can help you to decide what sort of financial aid opportunities are available for you. They can direct you to scholarships, grants, and loans for which you're eligible and help you apply. They're located on the bottom floor of Templeton, and you can contact them at x7090 or sfs@lclark.edu.
- **Writing Center:** On the main floor of Watzek Library, we have a Writing Center with both student and professional staff who can help you with your written application. You can go to them to brainstorm, work on the overall structure of your essay(s), and make your application more clear and active. Contact them at x7505 or visit them on the web at www.lclark.edu/~writing.



We hope that this document was useful to you. If you have any further questions, the resources listed above can be a great help to you. Also, the website www.lclark.edu/dept/sfsschol contains a wealth of information about finding and applying for external scholarships. Thanks for giving us a bit of your time, and good luck in your endeavor to further finance your education!