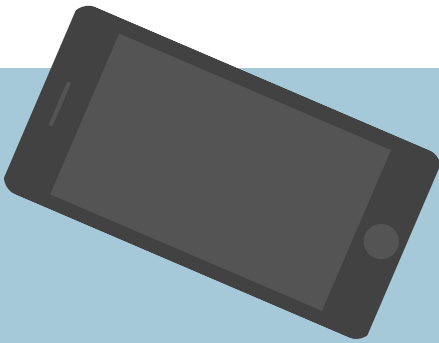
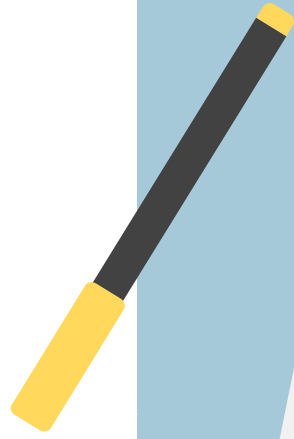




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presents

THE GRADE 12 SCHOLARSHIP CHECKLIST[©]

What to do in the first part of
grade 12 to maximize your success
with scholarships!

THE GRADE 12 SCHOLARSHIP CHECKLIST

Why do you need a Grade 12 scholarship checklist?

Grade 12 is busy. On top of all of the regular academics and activities you were involved in during Grades 10 and 11, in Grade 12 you have the added responsibility of planning for the following year. You must research universities and programs, complete university applications, and find time to look for and apply for scholarships. Oh yes, and let's not forget all the fun grad events!

And here's the other thing: **Grade 12 is also your BEST opportunity to win scholarships!** There will NEVER be another time in your life when there are more opportunities!

To make sure you're prepared, this is a checklist of some of the main activities you should do in Grade 12 to prep for university scholarships. I hope you find it useful!

But first, we need to talk about timing...

Scholarships start to be offered a lot sooner than most people realize.

Scholarships start to be offered in September of Grade 12. Yes, the very first month of Grade 12!

There isn't one time of year when all scholarships are available, and there isn't a single deadline for all of them. They will open and close throughout every month of the school year. The time when most are available is between December and May.



There are two main funders of scholarships: 1) those funded by universities and 2) those funded, or offered, by organizations other than universities. These "other" awards are often referred to as "external scholarships" because they are funded by organizations external to the universities. External awards encompass those offered by funders such as community groups, employers, banks, foundations, and others.

Some of the biggest scholarships in Canada are external awards (the largest are \$100,000 each!). Some of these have deadlines before the December school break. Also, some universities have earlier deadlines for scholarships than for admission, so make sure you check the website of each of the universities you're considering for their scholarship deadlines.

Some university and external scholarships require a school nomination. Your school may have an internal application process for these kinds of awards, so that means an extra step (and more lead time) will be necessary if you wish to be considered for these awards.

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Here are some of the main activities you should be doing in the first part of Grade 12 to maximize your success with scholarships:



SEPTEMBER

☐

Let's start with some scholarship basics:

- Scholarships are offered by both post-secondary institutions and by other organizations, like banks, foundations, employers, and community groups.
- All scholarships are different because all of the funders are different. Everything about the scholarship is determined by the funder (the organization that is offering the money). Therefore, no two awards are the same because no two funders are the same.
- When a scholarship opens and when it closes (the deadline) is determined by the funder. Because they are all different, you will see scholarships open and close throughout the entire school year. There isn't one time when all scholarships are available and one common deadline. Therefore you must look for scholarships every month of the school year, starting in September.

☐

Meet with your School Counsellor to inform him/her you are actively seeking university entrance scholarships. Take a resume or a list of your activities to give to the Counsellor, and discuss your interest in potential universities and programs. (See page 4 for instructions on how to write your activities list.) Ask about the school's process for announcing/posting university and external scholarships -- how and when are they posted or announced? What is the process for applications that require a school nomination?

☐

If you intend to apply for any major university awards check the websites of the universities you plan to apply to. What are their deadlines? Do any require a school nomination? The deadlines for these bigger entrance awards are often **before** admission deadlines.

☐

Put time in your schedule for the next 6-8 months to actively seek and apply for scholarships. Don't wait for "free time". **Make time.** I suggest you think of it as a part-time job and set aside 2-4 hours per month (actually block out the time in your schedule as you would a meeting). If possible, both the student and a parent should make time each month to find and apply for scholarships.

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- ☐ Create your **activities list** for scholarship applications. An activities list is a list of your extra-curricular activities from Grades 9/10 - 12. It includes your involvement in clubs, sports, music, etc., plus your paid work and volunteer work experience. Some scholarship applications will ask you to submit a list of your extra-curricular activities.

I suggest you create a spreadsheet with the name of the activity, your role, the dates you were involved, a brief description of the activity, and the name and email address of a person who can verify your involvement (such as a teacher or a coach). Keep it updated as you change activities.

By making the list in advance and saving it, you can easily access the information from your activity list, and then transcribe or copy and paste the information into applications. You can use the information over and over again, saving time -- time you can use to apply for even more scholarships. Re-using this kind of information is how students win multiple scholarships!



Add your own "to dos" for SEPTEMBER:

OCTOBER

- ☐ Scholarships have officially started! **Make time to find scholarships.** You can start by signing up to ScholarshipsCanada.com, a free scholarship search engine. Also search the university websites you are planning to apply to, and check in with your school counsellor or Google classroom.



- ☐ Grade 12 marks matter. This term or semester's academic record will have a direct impact on admission to your schools of choice, and for university scholarships too. Now is the time to get help from a tutor if you're struggling. Don't wait until exams. Or, if you're doing well, keep up the good work!

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- ☐ Need a reference for a scholarship? Or think you might need one for applications in the future? It's better to ask sooner rather than later! Think about who you will ask, and how and when you will do so.

- ☐ You don't have to wait until you find a scholarship to start preparing essay material. A smart way to approach it is to pre-write content for scholarship essays. How? Many scholarship essays focus on similar themes. Some common ones are: leadership, community involvement, challenge (meaning a time you faced a challenge, or a time you challenged yourself), and future plans (meaning what program/career you intend to pursue and why).



You can write about 300 words on each of these topics, and then use that content in scholarship application essays. Be sure to focus on what you learned from the experiences you discuss. Having a head start on your essays will allow you to apply for more scholarships in less time. And the more you apply for (with a strong application, of course!) the more chances you have to win!

- ☐ One of the best ways to have success with scholarships is for the student and a parent (or other helper) to "team up". I suggest student and parent each take responsibility for looking for scholarships; split the list of places to look, and check them regularly. Divide and conquer! Also, schedule time together to work on the applications. Hold each other accountable to show up and get the work done. Treat yourself to something you like after the work is done, such as a movie night with popcorn.

- ☐ Have you booked time into your calendar to find and applying for scholarships? Both student and parent should book 30 minutes per week EACH to find scholarships. Then, book two hours per month to work on completing applications. If that sounds like a lot of time, think of it this way: there are 720 hours in a month. Even if you devote 3 hours per month to scholarships, you'll still have 717 hours left to do all of your other activities!



Add your own "to dos" for OCTOBER:

THE GRADE 12 SCHOLARSHIP CHECKLIST

NOVEMBER

- ☐ Think scholarships are only for top students? That used to be true but it's not anymore! Today, there are all kinds of scholarships for all kinds of students. Don't just focus on university awards. Look also for scholarships from external organizations. These groups normally value community involvement just as much (or even more) than grades.
- ☐ SCHOLARSHIP WRITING TIP: Read the entire scholarship application before you start writing. There is often a wealth of information in it, and it may even provide you with a key piece of information that can help you win the award, such as an evaluation rubric.
- ☐ A great way to find scholarships is to search your affiliations. In other words, what organizations are you (or your parents) connected to, and do they offer scholarships? Examples include employers, unions, credit union, insurance company, volunteer groups, professional associations. The bonus is that because you must be a member of these groups, the applicant pool can be much smaller than for other awards! 
- ☐ Have you signed up to get matched for scholarships at ScholarshipsCanada.com? It's one of the biggest scholarship search engines in Canada, and it's free to use! I suggest you make a profile and the search engine will start to match you with scholarships that fit your profile. You can even get email reminders of application deadlines. Search engines aren't the only way to search for scholarships, since they don't list all of the available scholarships, especially local ones. But they are a great place to start. Don't forget to check your match results regularly!
- ☐ Have you done some research into the program/career you intend to pursue? There are scholarships for certain kinds of programs, and for people who are interested in pursuing certain kinds of careers. Scholarship committees look favourably on students who have put some thought into their goals for the future. It can really pay off to know what you want to pursue and why. Doing research now means you'll be able to discuss the reasons for your choice later in an application. It'll give you an edge over other applicants who appear to just be winging it.



Note: This kind of information can also help greatly with admissions personal statements for competitive university programs!

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Add your own "to dos" for NOVEMBER:

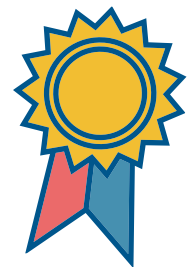
DECEMBER



SCHOLARSHIP WRITING TIP: Are you having difficulty pushing past the feeling that you're bragging? If so, it's normal to feel this way! Many students are not comfortable speaking about their accomplishments, but now is not the time to hold back. The scholarship committee wants to hear about your successes! Besides, you are not making up stuff; you're telling the story of your experience and what you learned from it. You're simply telling them what they want to hear.



Need some motivation to keep moving ahead? There are two kinds of ROI (return on investment) with scholarships. There's the free money (yaaas!), and then there are the other, lesser known benefits of scholarships. One of them is that once you win one award, it increases your chances of winning more because it demonstrates a record of previous achievement. And because a scholarship is a credential you can put on other applications, you can put it on your resume to help get a job or, later on, help to gain admission to a professional program like medicine.



Are you checking your email regularly? For most universities, their main form of communication is via email. Check regularly to ensure you're not missing important information like scholarship opportunities and upcoming deadlines. You may also be contacted by an external scholarship funder (the organization offering the scholarship) if they require further information on an application you've submitted. Or better yet - when you've been offered an award!



THE GRADE 12 SCHOLARSHIP CHECKLIST

☐ **Reminder: Grade 12 is your best opportunity to win scholarships!** Scholarship season is in full swing in December. Are you making scholarships a priority in your schedule? Don't let this golden window of opportunity pass you by! I know I keep saying the same thing, but it's because in my experience working with busy students and parents, they need (and generally appreciate) several reminders.

☐ The December holiday break is a great time to put some time into preparing for scholarships. Students have a bit of down time, and they can put some focus on them without the added stress of homework, exams, etc. Make sure to schedule a few hours over the break to work on applications. Even a few focused hours can make a big difference. You'll thank yourself for it later when applications are due and you have many other competing priorities. And don't forget to reward yourself for your hard work!



Add your own "to dos" for DECEMBER:



I wish you all the best with your scholarship journey!



mycampusgps.ca



janet@mycampusGPS.ca



Janet MacDonald
Scholarship Coach, mycampusGPS