



# THE PREP ACADEMY'S Scholarship Preparation Guide

Since the expense of attending college is increasing every year, most students cannot pay for their education only through savings and student loans.

Fortunately, there IS a way to reduce the heavy tuition costs for college or university – by being awarded scholarships!

Even your entire college or university budget, including travel, accommodation, and food, may be covered by some of the top scholarship options!

Not sure how to do all that the right way?  
Worry not, we've got your back.





# Scholarships 101

## What is a Scholarship?

Financial support awarded to a student to help pay for your education. Scholarships are awarded based on different criteria.

## What is a Bursary?

Financial support awarded to a student to help pay for their education. Typically comes in smaller amounts of money and provides support based on financial need

**Scholarships and bursaries do NOT need to be paid back**

## Where do Scholarships come from?

- Colleges and Universities (Saint Mary's University)
- Foundations (RBC)
- Businesses (IWK)
- Community Organizations (Business is Jammin')
- Private Donors

It is important to know where they come from because the donors are usually the ones who select the award winners





# Types of Scholarships

- » **Renewable Scholarship:** can be received for more than one year (usually depends on meeting eligibility requirements yearly (GPA/Academic Average))
- » **Non Renewable:** only awarded for the year it was received
- » **Need-Based:** requires a student to demonstrate financial need
- » **Merit-based:** based on academics, athletics, and/or personal achievements
- » **Career/Study Specific:** given to a student pursuing a particular career or field of study

## Entrance Scholarships!!!

Are generally awarded by colleges and universities and are awarded based on academic achievement, leadership, extracurricular involvement, community service, financial need and cultural identity.

In many cases, students must have already applied to their schools of choice in advance, prior to apply for entrance scholarships

**To be considered for entrance awards students must complete their applications and submit documents BEFORE March 1st of every year**

Deadlines can vary depending on the schools you are applying to.

**Students must ACCEPT their entrance awards.**





# Begin to Write a Scholarship Essay

The questions below will help you begin to write pieces of your scholarship essay to give the scholarship selection committee insight to you as a person, your experiences and why you should receive the scholarship award. Scholarship essays give you the chance to talk about clubs/societies/athletics; leadership activities; how you engage with your community (e.g., local community, cultural community, religious community, etc.); employment; service to others; family obligations or commitments; creative pursuits

It is important to note that many scholarship applications can require you to write an essay on a topic or question they provide you in advance. For example, Dalhousie Universities General Entrance Scholarship essay questions are:

- Discuss a time when you stepped outside your comfort zone. How do you feel it has shaped the person you are today?
- Outside of the classroom, describe your biggest learning experience from the past three years.
- If you have a background, experience, interest or talent that is meaningful to you that you feel would complete your application, discuss it here. Share your story and how you believe it will impact your Dalhousie experience.

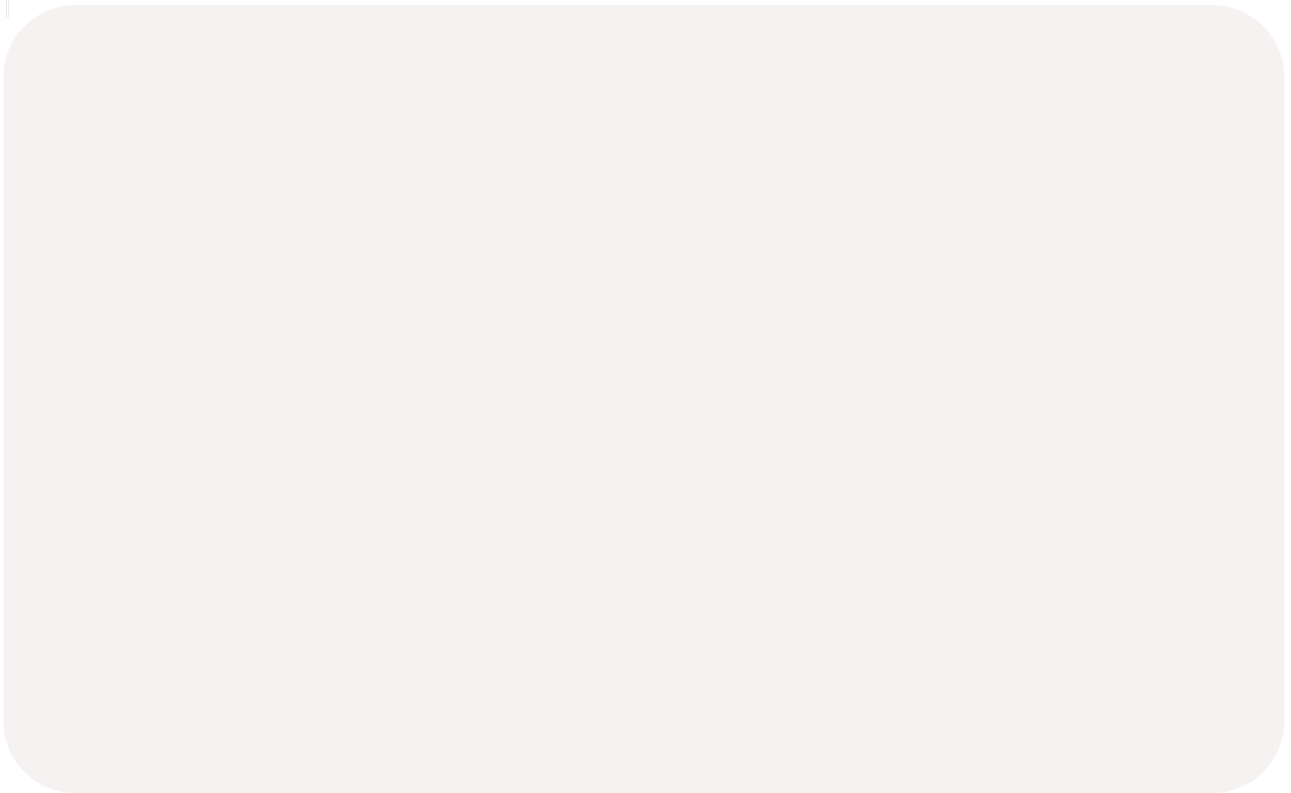
Tell us a bit about yourself and your career interests and goals.

**What do you want to do after high school?** Talk about what you want to study and why. If you have a career goal, talk about that and what inspired you to pursue this career.

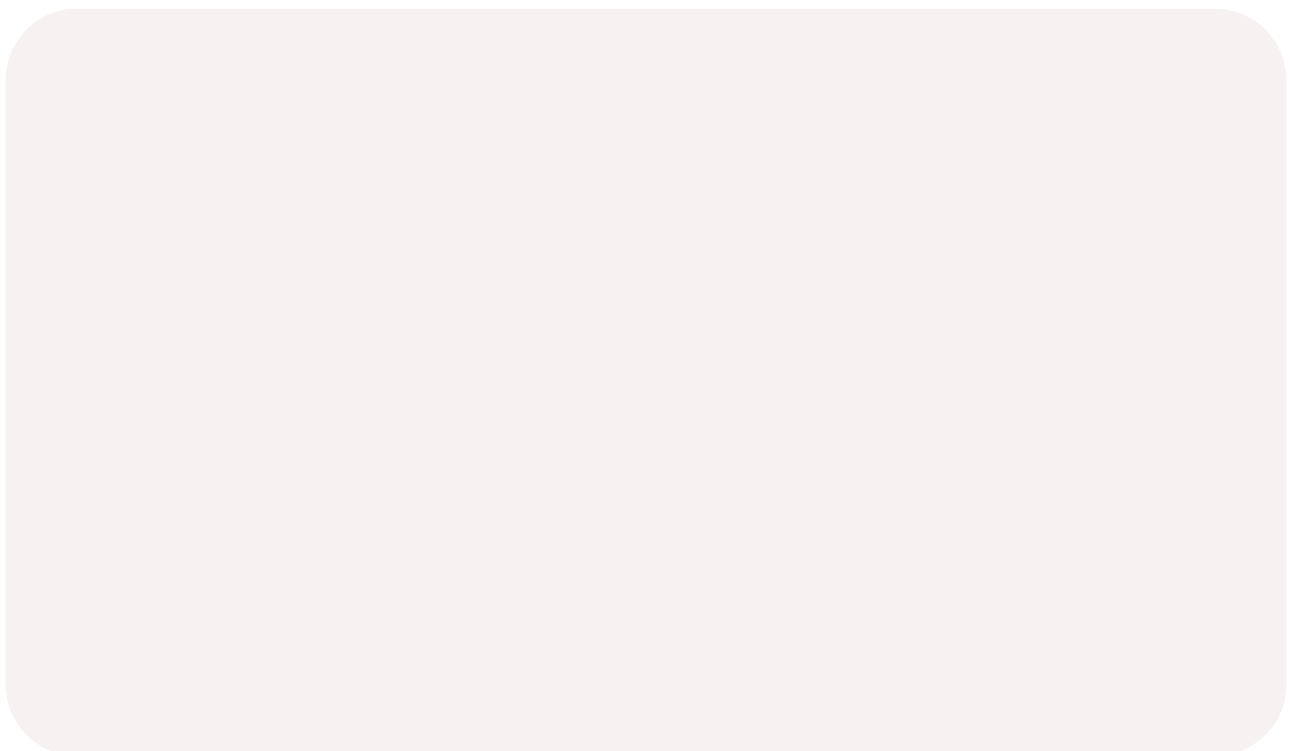
**Did you overcome any challenges in your life or at school?** How did you overcome these challenges and what did you learn from them?

**What type of impact do you want to make in the world, your community, or for certain people?** Talk about how and why you want to give back.

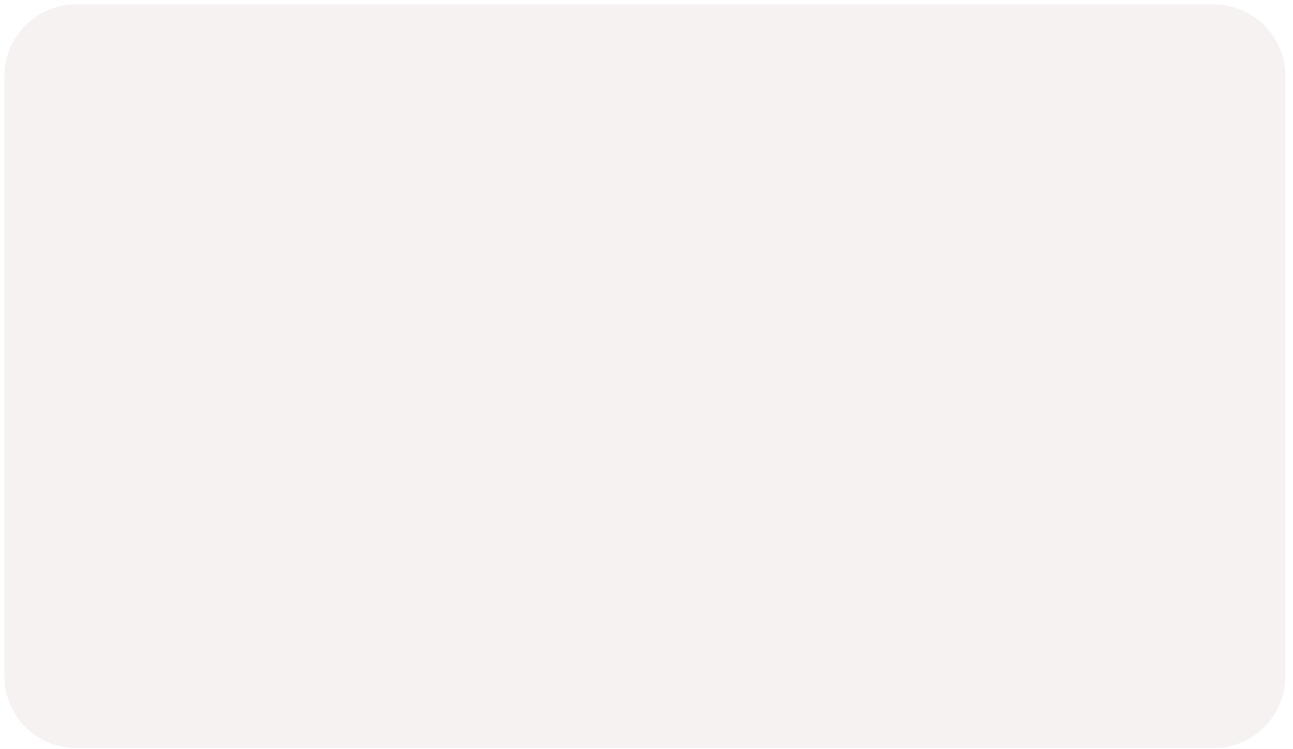
**Share your experiences.** Talk about your experiences doing community involvement, volunteer experience, employment experience, sports, school committees... things that are on your resume!



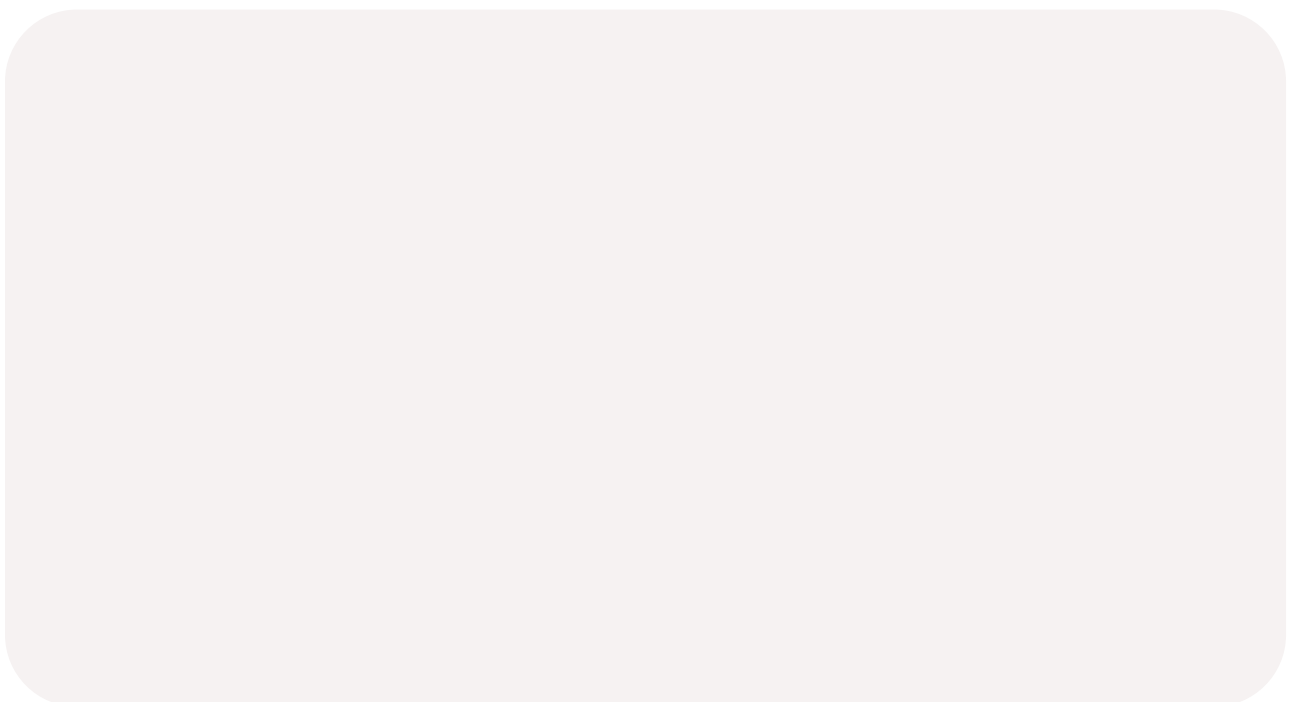
Talk about your personal and life experiences that may have influenced your career path.



What are some examples of some problems you've faced along the way? These could be things you experienced in your community, personal life, work experience, family, etc.



Talk about how this scholarship will help make a positive impact on your future education and/or career goals.





# Example Scholarship Essay

The next slide provides you with an example from an African Nova Scotian student who graduated from Citadel High School in 2022. This student was successful in securing an \$80,000 scholarship due to his academic success and essay. **NOTE: do not plagiarize this essay, use it as a guide to see the layout and examples of topics to discuss!**



Find Scholarships Online  
PREP's Online Scholarship Directory  
[www.thepreacademy.ca/scholarship-directory/](http://www.thepreacademy.ca/scholarship-directory/)





## Personal Statement

My name is [REDACTED] I am a twelfth-grade African-Nova Scotian student at [REDACTED] School. I currently reside in [REDACTED] having spent most of my life living in the West End of Halifax, in a low-income community best known as 'The Pubs.'

My life-long goal has been to pursue a career in the medical field, hence the reason I am applying to the Medical Sciences program. Acknowledging the lack of representation in the medical field and the systemic racism that impacts people of color in Canadian healthcare institutions, I am committed to following this pathway to make a change, break the barriers imposed upon people like me, and inspire other Black youth.

What excites me most about the Medical Sciences program is the diverse, science-based curriculum offered. Having the privilege to explore such a wide array of topics in this program strengthens my desire to dive deeper into new educational opportunities while narrowing down on subjects engaging to me and finding my passion. The selective course options in humanities and social sciences captivate me the most. I am fascinated with the ethics, politics, and social aspects involved in healthcare. The endless possibilities offered by this program do far more than excite me, instilling a sense of curiosity and devotion within me.

In the long run, I believe this program will be incredibly impactful in contributing to my future goals and aspirations. I am faithful that this program will not only contribute to the career I wish to have but also to the person I wish to be and the impact I hope to make. Being able to step outside of my comfort zone and challenge myself to take on such a valuable opportunity would further the perseverance, compassion, and dedication I wish to foster. Additionally, the broad education in biomedical sciences that I will receive opens many doors for me, preparing me for a meaningful career in whatever path I choose to follow in my medical profession.

If enrolled in the Medical Sciences program, I can fully anticipate experiencing many challenges. Nonetheless, I will push past those challenges and put in the effort required to overcome them. Given the fact that there is a heavy course load in the Medical Sciences program, I expect to struggle most in adjusting to the transition from high school to university and finding my rhythm in balancing all responsibilities. I will, however, use all of my possible resources and the pre-existing organizational and time management skills I have to optimize my time, embrace my studies, and minimize the stress they may bring about. I believe, with my eagerness to learn, I can fully expect to excel in exploring the curriculum, connecting with like-minded individuals in the cohort, and seizing all of the learning opportunities that come my way. I look forward to combating this challenge and adding to my strengths, taking advantage of all the Medical Sciences program has to offer.

Despite the hardships I have faced in my life, I have learned that I am resilient and equally as capable of achieving my goals as anybody else. Growing up in a low-income household with parents who battled mental health and addiction issues, I have learned that your situation does not define you. Rather than continue the cycle that plagued my family, I used the





# Reference Letters

Letters of recommendation are letters written by a professional that students know very well and have a connection with. The letters should highlight positive qualities, abilities and strengths of you as a student.

It informs a scholarship selection committee about a student's character, commitment, positive influence, accomplishments and ability to succeed. Great reference letters will help a student stand out in their scholarship application.

## Types of Reference Letters:

- Community reference (church, community organization, etc)
- Character reference (mentor, employer, coach, etc.)
- Academic reference (teacher, principal, vice principal, guidance counsellor, African Nova Scotian student support worker)

### Choose good quality references:

Choose a reference that can speak to your strengths and qualities. Avoid asking family members and friends. Ask people you associate with in a professional or formal capacity (i.e. teachers, coaches, managers, volunteer supervisors, mentors and advisors).

**Ask early** Do not wait until the last minute to ask for references. Provide them with a due date when requesting for the letter. Make sure this due date is well before the application deadline. This will ensure that you receive your letter in time.

**Give as much information as possible about the scholarship.** This will ensure that the information about you given in the letter is relevant to the criteria of the scholarship. This will help guide the writer when writing your letter. It's helpful to share your resume with your reference.

**Follow instruction.** Each scholarship application may have different instructions and requirements for reference letters. Ensure you relay these instructions to your reference. (ex. teacher references may be required to be on official school letter head.)