

Helpful Tips for Completing the Application

Ask yourself the following questions when completing your CSI Scholarship application:

What Are the Guidelines?

The quality of your scholarship application is critical in determining whether or not you are among those students selected for a scholarship. In addition to an overall GPA requirement, the Faculty Review Committee evaluates your application, including your essays, the two letters of recommendation, your transcript(s), your résumé, special circumstances, and all other supporting documentation, such as certificates of merit or commendations.

Is My Application Typed or Neatly Written and Legible?

All application forms included in your CSI Scholarship packet must be completed in full and typed or neatly handwritten in black or blue ink. Check to make sure the application form is clean and unwrinkled (no smudges or torn paper). If you make a mistake, it is best to download a clean application form rather than resort to erasures and whiteout. Neatness makes a statement about you and your level of interest and commitment.

Have I Been Specific in Writing My Personal Essay?

Please be sure to answer the specific questions asked. Keep in mind that good essays generally require several drafts and editing. It is always a good idea to choose someone knowledgeable about writing to provide feedback for your essays. Make revisions until you are satisfied with the quality and content.

Have I Checked for Correct Spelling and Grammar?

Review the final draft of your essay for correct spelling and grammar. Do not rely on spellcheck or other computer programs for grammar.

What about My Recommendation Letters?

Approach faculty, teachers and supervisors with respect and appreciation of their time when making your recommendation request. Make your request for a recommendation at least one month prior to the actual deadline date to avoid “last-minute” submissions of letters. Follow up with your recommendation writers to ensure a timely submission of the recommendation letter. Always have alternate(s) in mind or consider asking for a third recommendation in the event that one of your references cannot complete your request. Please remind your references that all letters should be on school or company stationary.

Have I Completed and Signed My Application?

Do not forget to sign and date your application.

Writing a Winning Application Essay

DOs:

- Keep in mind that an effective essay requires several drafts and editing. You should review your drafts for content, structure (grammar, spelling), and overall presentation. It is advisable to seek feedback from someone knowledgeable about writing, but the ultimate product must be yours and speak in “your voice.”
- In your essay, answer all questions asked. An effective personal essay combines what you want to say with what the essay is asking of you.
- Be specific when referring to qualities, skills, accomplishments, and achievements that are relevant to your application.
- Adhere to the word limit required; essays that are obviously too short or too long can jeopardize your application.
- Check and recheck the final draft of your essay for correct spelling and grammar. Do not rely on spellcheck or other computer programs for spelling and grammar.
- Make sure your application packet, including your essay, is completed in full. Essays must be typed on a separate sheet of paper. There should be no erasures, cross-outs, and/or use of whiteout. The final draft should be printed on paper that is clean and unwrinkled. Neatness makes a positive statement about you to the reviewers. Applications submitted in pencil will not be considered.
- Strictly adhere to the deadline date. There are no exceptions, and requesting additional time can make a statement to reviewers about your organizational skills and/or motivation.

DON'Ts:

- Don't wait until the last day or week to write your essay.
- Don't write too much or too little.
- Don't write a “cheerleading” statement. An essay should focus on your specific strengths and achievements with examples of what you have done rather than vague statements that can apply to anyone.
- Don't write negative comments or criticism; although being honest about yourself is important, reviewers take negative comments very seriously. This could impact the overall rating of your essay.
- Don't rely on spellcheck for grammar and spelling. Consult with someone knowledgeable regarding the content and structure of your essay.
- Don't lie or exaggerate.