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THE GRADE 12 CHECKLIST

*What to do in the first part of
Grade 12 to maximize success
with scholarships*

THE GRADE 12 CHECKLIST

Why do you need a Grade 12 checklist?

Grade 12 is busy. On top of all of the regular academics and activities your student was involved in during Grades 10 and 11, in Grade 12 they have the added responsibility of planning for the following year. They 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 the BEST opportunity to get a scholarship for university.** There will NEVER be another time with more opportunities and less competition!

To make sure you're prepared, this is a checklist of some of the main activities students should do in Grade 12 to prep for university scholarships. I also provide some helpful resources you can check out for more in depth information (the bolded titles are clickable links). 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. They start to be offered in September of Grade 12. Yes, the very first month of Grade 12!

Unfortunately, there is no one time of year when they all are available; they will open and close throughout every month of the school year, and some (although not many) will be offered over the summer. The main time when most are available is between December and May.



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

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. Do you know the answer to these questions:
- What's the difference between a scholarship and a bursary?
 - What are the different kinds of university scholarships?
 - What are the other kinds of scholarships? And what are some of their advantages over university awarded ones?
 - Why are some scholarships less competitive than others?
 - Besides the money, what are the other benefits of scholarships?

Watch my video to get the answers to these questions, and more. **Resource (video): Scholarships 101**

- Meet with your School Counsellor to inform him/her you are actively seeking university entrance scholarships (ones awarded by both universities and external organizations). 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?

- If you intend to apply for any major university awards (Chancellor's, President's, National, etc.) check the websites of the universities you plan to apply to. What are their deadlines? Do any require a school nomination? Remember, the deadlines for these kinds of awards are often before admission deadlines.

- Put time in your schedule for the next 6-8 months to actively seek and apply for scholarships. I suggest you think of it as a part-time job and set aside at least 2 hours per month. Both students and a parent should make time each month (yes, actually put it into your schedule like a meeting!) 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.

Make a table and in the columns put the following information:

Column 1: the name of the activity/group

Column 2: the position you held/role, and your responsibilities

Column 3: the dates of your involvement (month and year)

Column 4: the number of hours per week you participated in the activity

Column 5: awards or certifications you earned, if any (e.g. 2nd place science fair, Royal Conservatory Level 8, etc.)

Column 6: the name and contact information of a person who can verify your involvement, e.g. a coach, direct supervisor at work

Resource (blog): How to make your best activities list

- Add your own "to dos" for SEPTEMBER:

OCTOBER

- Scholarship season has officially started! Need help finding scholarships? I have a comprehensive guide to help you find and apply for scholarships!

Resource (paid guide): How to Find and Win Scholarships



- Grade 12 marks matter. This term/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! **Resource (website): Khan Academy, a free online academic resource**

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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! Here's how to do it. **Resource (blog/video): How to get a GREAT reference**

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. 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) the more chances you have to win! Need help? I hold scholarship essay writing workshops that teach you how to write a great essay! **Resource (paid service): Scholarship Essay Writing Workshops**

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. **Resource (blog): How to partner with your child for scholarship success**

Have you booked time into your calendars to work on finding 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:

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NOVEMBER

- Are you falling prey to mis-information about scholarships? Don't let tired, old myths hold you back from applying for--and winning--scholarships! **Resource (blog): [Five scholarship myths BUSTED](#)**

- 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. **Resource (blog): [How to read a scholarship application](#)**

- Reminder: check the websites of the universities you intend to apply to. Do they have any scholarship information on their websites yet? 

- Have you signed up for ScholarshipsCanada.com, and ScholarTree.ca? These are the biggest scholarship search engines in Canada. You can 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 you should look for scholarships, since they don't list all of the available scholarships, especially local ones. But it's a good place to start. Don't forget to check your match results regularly! **Resource (websites): [ScholarshipsCanada.com](#) and [ScholarTree.ca](#).**

- 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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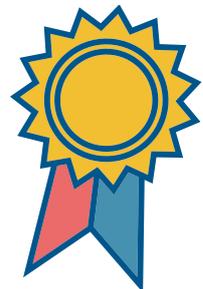


Add your own "to dos" for NOVEMBER:

DECEMBER

SCHOLARSHIP WRITING TIP: Having difficulty pushing past the feeling that you're bragging? This is a natural feeling. Many students feel this way, but now is not the time to hold back. The scholarship committee wants to hear about your accomplishments! Here's how to discuss your successes without feeling "braggy". **Resource (blog): How to talk about accomplishments without feeling like bragging**

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. That's why I say "scholarships beget scholarships". **Resource (blog): The "hidden" benefits of scholarships**



Are you checking your email regularly? Most, if not all, university's 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! **Resource (LinkedIn article): Why grade 12 students need to manage their email, and how to do it**



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- Reminder: Grade 12 is your best opportunity for a scholarship! 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 media tells us that every year millions of dollars in scholarships goes unclaimed. I think this is true. I was once asked by an organization to help them advertise their award because they had so few applications for it. The amount of the award was \$50,000!

Resource (LinkedIn article): Millions in unclaimed scholarships? Here's proof it's probably true

- 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!



Add your own "to dos" for DECEMBER:



Now, are you ready to take it to the next level? Get in touch to discuss how I can help you prepare your best scholarship applications!



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