

**WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY**



FAST FORWARD

**SCHOLARSHIPS - PERSONAL STATEMENTS
WEBINAR RESOURCE BOOK**



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Activity 1: Putting Yourself on a Page

The first step on the Scholarships journey is to identify key aspects of your school career or any extra curricular or community activities of note that you have been involved with. By making a quick list of your achievements, you'll have spotlighted areas that are unique to your story, or may even be supported directly by scholarship options.

Be a STAR

When providing examples of achievements, it is important to be clear, concise, and articulate both your role in the task and the outcome achieved. Try to structure your responses using the STAR method:

- Situation** Describe the event or situation that you were in
- Task** Explain the task that you had to complete
- Action** Describe the specific actions you took to complete the task
- Result** Describe the result of your actions

Examples

School-Based Achievements

Achievement	Description	Result	Category	Supporting evidence
Member of SRC (2019)	Lead sub-group responsible for organising school clean up day and raising money for environment group through mufti	Raised \$4000, which saw trees planted all around main quad. Will provide shade for students.	Leadership	Letter from DP at school highlighting contribution
Dux (2020)	Awarded Dux of school in year 12 for outstanding academic achievement		Academic	Award certificate Letter from Principal

Extra-Curricular/Community Achievements

Achievement	Description	Result	Category	Supporting evidence
Coaching little athletics (2018-2020)	For two years was coach of under 12s. Required empathy, development of ability, and directional support.	Experience encouraged me to continue volunteering as a coach, and pursue studies to be a PE Teacher.	Leadership	Letter from org/main coach

Now it's your turn:

School-Based Achievements

Achievement	Description	Result	Category	Supporting evidence

Extra-Curricular and Community Achievements

Achievement	Description	Result	Category	Supporting evidence

Personal Statements

You've identified a range of your key achievements in various categories. You've also looked at the available scholarships and targeted those you feel can best support you while you undertake higher education. You have a degree and career pathway in mind. The next step is to start drafting a strong personal statement to accompany your application that brings this all together.

A personal statement is an important part of your application, and enables the University to assess your eligibility and merit. These tend to be general responses that are applicable to all scholarship applications, and tell "the story of you" to the assessor.

Personal Statements ideally include the following:

An indication of how the scholarship will assist you in your studies and future career

A description and explanation of your background and current circumstances

Discuss relevant and recent key achievements, including your actions and results

Tips for writing an effective Personal Statement

No one size fits all

- There is no one way to write a winning scholarship application.
- Uniqueness is the key, and the first point to remember when you pick up your pen to write.
- Make your scholarship personal statement exclusive to you, personalise it, delve deep into your passion and drive to study your subject, and create a response that could only ever relate to you.
- It is this individuality that stands out, and that's likely to catch a judge's eye.

Key Themes

- Decide what key themes you will write about and understand what they mean beyond the surface level.
- Example if you talk about leadership, don't just describe the position held and your responsibilities. Identify the effects of your leadership – actions taken and results achieved under your leadership.

Getting Started

Some questions to get you started thinking about how to structure your statement, and how to explore themes of Leadership and Community involvement:

Leadership

- **The extent of your leadership experience and degree of accomplishment.** What were the results? Did you manage to grow a society from 10 to 100 members?
- **Why you got involved in the leadership experience.** What was your initial inspiration and how did the experience make you feel? This is an important aspect as it allows you to show your sincerity and demonstrates your passion.
- **What obstacles did you face and how did you overcome them?** Inspirational stories of perseverance despite adversity may make the judges want to help you succeed. It also shows that you have great leadership qualities: the ability to adapt to new situations and the determination to not give up.
- **What did you learn?** How did these lessons shape you as a leader? Every experience brings new lessons and personal growth opportunities. Speaking about these lessons indicates that you have truly reflected on your experiences and that you understand what leadership is. (In other words, you know that leadership isn't just about getting a title like "Head of SRC".)
- **What does this mean for the future?** A scholarship isn't just an award; it's an investment in your future. So if you plan to continue being involved in a particular type of leadership activity in the future, tell the judges.

Extra-curricular and Community Activities

- **How much time did you dedicate to the activity?** The scholarship committee is likely to be looking for applicants who made a fairly long commitment to a community activity.
- **Why was it important to you?** Joy from helping others? Excitement of trying something new? Opportunity to form relationships with others? Having a genuine reason helps build a convincing personal statement.
- **Why was it important to the community?** Ask the question: What would be different for your community if you didn't do what you do? It is important to show that you recognize the real needs in your communities, and act to address these.
- **What did you gain yourself through giving to the community?** It is important to show that you understand how through giving, you end up receiving more in the end. Sharing what community service has taught you and how it helped you develop, demonstrates that you have truly gained from your participation and suggests you will continue doing so in the future.

Scholarships Specific Statements

As well as Personal Statements, some scholarships may ask for an additional response on a key issue related to the purpose of the scholarship. For example: a Leadership-based scholarship may want to hear about your achievements in leadership roles; a program scholarship (such as the Fast Forward Academic Excellence Scholarship) will ask for a response related to your engagement with the program.

Activity 2: Your Personal Statement

Use the space below to draft a personal statement in response to the question:

Please provide a Personal Statement discussing your background, planned course of study, career goals, and what you hope to achieve after university. Include examples of leadership, community work, or important achievements as relevant.

Activity 3: Your Fast Forward Statement

Use the space below to draft a personal statement in response to the question:

Demonstrate your commitment to the aims and values of the Fast Forward program, and how it assisted you during your participation in the program.

Activity 4: Setting Scholarship Goals

Exploring Scholarship opportunities at Western

You may be surprised to find out just how many scholarships are available, and how many you might be eligible to apply for. Your first stop is [Western's Scholarships page](#). Here, you'll find a range of up-to-date information on scholarships, important dates, and contact points should you have any detailed questions.

To complete this activity, access the Find a Scholarship tool (available at the above link) and answer a few questions about your particular circumstances, goals, and needs. You'll then be presented with a range of likely scholarship opportunities to browse through.

Find two scholarships you are interested in applying for, and complete the tables below with the key information about each. We've completed the first table with the details of the Fast Forward Academic Excellence Scholarship as an example.

Scholarship 1

Scholarship title	Fast Forward Academic Excellence Scholarship
Scholarship amount	\$5,000 per year up to \$20,000
Pre-requisites	Complete Fast Forward program; ATAR 80+
Why this is relevant to me	I'm in the Fast Forward program and feel an ATAR of 80 is achievable.
Supporting evidence required	Fast Forward certificate at end of year 12

Scholarship 2

Scholarship title	
Scholarship amount	
Pre-requisites	
Why this is relevant to me	
Supporting evidence required	

Scholarship 3

Scholarship title	
Scholarship amount	
Pre-requisites	
Why this is relevant to me	
Supporting evidence required	



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