

5 things to check before submitting your scholarship

Provided by the Wisconsin Angus Auxiliary

1. Eligibility. It seems straightforward, but before you put in the time filling out an application and gathering all necessary materials – make sure you qualify for the scholarship.

- Do you or your parents need to be a member of the organization offering the scholarship?
- Are you the right age/class rank to apply?
- If you applied previously, can you reapply?

Reading through the fine print up front could save you hours of time if you aren't eligible.

2. Transcript requirements. Most scholarships request an official transcript and specify that unofficial transcripts will not be permitted. Official transcripts vary from school to school but are often signed and sealed. Transcripts typically include language on them stating when the transcript should be considered void or unofficial – ie, if it is not signed, not sealed, if it has a void watermark, etc. Always read language on the transcript to determine if it is official or not. Allow enough time to mail an official copy, in case scanning or emailing renders the transcript void.

Another important aspect of the transcript is making sure it covers the most recent grading period. Scholarships often request the most recent grading period – but, even if it's not specified, assume you should include it. If one applicant submits an extra semester's worth of grades, it might give their application a leg up.

3. Recommendation letter requirements. Read recommendation letter requirements. Scholarships may dictate who recommendation letters can and/or cannot come from, and you'll want to make sure you follow those rules to avoid disqualification. It's also important for the person writing the recommendation letter to state their relationship to the applicant (ie, 4-H leader, fellow cattle producer, Chemistry 101 teacher), so it's clear to the scholarship committee that recommendation letter criteria were met.

4. Signature. If you are submitting your application electronically, make sure your application is signed and dated. A signature should not just be a typed name, unless the application states a typed name is acceptable. Signatures should appear handwritten or otherwise electronically e-signed.

5. Application formatting and length. Check application formatting and length requirements. Oftentimes, scholarships will outline the font, font size, spacing, etc. They may also have a total page limit or word count. If there are essay responses, sometimes essay responses can have word counts. Once your application is near ready to submit, make sure you go back and check all formatting, as well as response and application length.

Confused? Just ask!

Applying for scholarships can get overwhelming. If there are ever questions on if you're eligible or are doing something correctly, reach out to scholarship organizers. They are there to help and are often more than happy to help make sure your application meets requirements.