

Exploring and Planning for Nationally Competitive Scholarship Competitions

[Truman Scholarship](#)

[Marshall Scholarship](#)

[Fulbright Scholarship](#)

[Boren/NSEP Scholarships and Fellowships](#)

[Rhodes Scholarship](#)

[Udall Scholarship](#)

[Goldwater Scholarship](#)

[Mitchell Scholarship](#)

[Gates Cambridge Scholarship](#)

What is a nationally competitive scholarship?

Nationally competitive scholarships require an endorsement by the University and are awarded through a national search. These include the Fulbright, Boren, Goldwater, Udall, Rhodes, Marshall, Mitchell, and Truman scholarships. UW scholarships are administered through different offices, including the International Programs Office, the Haub School, and various other offices.

When should I look into national scholarship opportunities?

Now! Summer is the perfect time for all UW students to start investigating the criteria and processes for national scholarships so you can explore opportunities to make yourself competitive and begin planning out your proposals. Considering a national scholarship means stretching yourself intellectually with challenging coursework and leadership in extra-curriculars. The Goldwater and Udall Foundations award scholarships to sophomores and juniors and the Truman to juniors. If you're a senior, you are still eligible for some scholarships, including the Rhodes, Fulbright, and Marshall, after you graduate.

How do these scholarships help pay for college?

Many national scholarships fund graduate school. The Goldwater and Udall are undergraduate scholarships. The Boren funds both undergraduate and graduate education.

How do I apply? Must I be nominated and, if so, by whom?

Many of these scholarships require UW's endorsement before you can compete nationally. Eligible students are invited to submit a UW application. For most, the campus competition takes place 5-8 months before the national competition, with the UW applications modeled on the national applications. A faculty panel selects candidates, and conducts finalist interviews.

Students are selected based on the faculty committee's assessment that the candidate is a good fit for the scholarship and will be a viable candidate at the national level.

Some of the nationally competitive scholarships do not require institutional endorsement, including the Boren and Gates Cambridge scholarships. Students may apply directly for these awards through an online application. Students should carefully review the requirements and seek assistance from a faculty mentor before applying.

How competitive are these scholarships?

These awards are extremely competitive.

Scholarship	2016 Number of Applicants	2016 Number of Awards
Goldwater	1,150	252
Fulbright (all student programs)	9845	1,966
Marshall	916	32
Mitchell	284	12
Rhodes	869	32
Truman	775	65
Gates Cambridge	3,730	55
Udall	464	50

What GPA should I have?

Typically, national scholarship competitions look for a minimum GPA of 3.7. The Goldwater Scholarship looks for a 3.9 and above. Some public-service oriented scholarships like the Truman or Udall, will consider a strong service record and a slightly lower GPA.

Some of the scholarship programs listed later in this page require a 3.2 or above.

Why should I apply?

Winning one of these scholarships, in addition to the financial reward, brings prestige and recognition to you and the University of Wyoming. Going through the process will help you in several ways:

- You will reflect on which academic and life experiences have been most meaningful to you.
- You will learn how to write effective and persuasive essays and how to present yourself confidently during interviews.
- You will have the opportunity to interact closely with faculty members who participate in the process.

All of these experiences will help you to apply for graduate schools, interview for jobs, and develop leadership skills. Whether you win a scholarship or not, applying is a valuable experience.

Must I be an Honors student to apply for a national scholarship?

You do not need to be an Honors student to apply for a national award. An outstanding record of academic and extra-curricular achievement can outweigh being in the Honors Program.

What is a preliminary application? Which scholarships require it?

The University of Wyoming requires an institutional endorsement application for some of the major fellowships. Check the program links for more information on required institutional endorsement competitions.

What else will make me competitive?

National and international scholarship foundations are looking for evidence of:

- strong academic record
- rigorous academic plan
- research experience ideally including presentations and/or publications
- involvement in community service, campus activities, and sports
- leadership and initiative
- creativity and vision
- strong support from faculty and other professionals
- previous honors and awards
- your ability to be a good ambassador of UW, Wyoming, and your country

Will someone help me with my scholarship application?

Yes. Once you have been chosen as a UW nominee, you will receive extensive help on the application. Be prepared to write and re-write your applications.

How do I research my proposed program of study?

Review university websites to learn more about curricula and programs. The Marshall Foundation website has useful links to UK graduate school rankings by departments. Talk to UW faculty professors for their guidance and suggestions on how to contact faculty with whom you would like to work in the schools you are researching.

Do I need a resume?

Some scholarship applications ask that you list resume items directly on the application, and others ask for a resume. If you are submitting your resume, format it to highlight education, academic honors and awards, research including publications and presentations, and service before listing your employment and other activities.

What is a good personal statement?

Your personal statement must be tightly crafted, tell your own individual story, and respond to

a number of important questions: Why do you want to study in a particular program? How is your graduate program a natural extension of your academic and other interests? If the program is abroad, why must you study at that particular school rather than at an American institution? What are your goals and how does this particular scholarship help you achieve them?

How many letters of recommendation do I need?

Scholarships generally require three – eight letters of recommendation. Because each scholarship has different selection criteria, you should think carefully about who can write the best letter for you for that specific scholarship. Recommendations should come from faculty members who have taught you or supervised your research.

Who should write my letters of recommendation?

The best letters are written by someone who knows you well and has outstanding academic or professional credentials. However, it's better to have a strong, detailed letter from an associate professor than a vague letter from a chaired professor. Letters from employers or professionals who can comment on your extra-curricular activities are helpful. When you ask for letters of recommendation, be sure to describe the specific scholarship and provide the letter writer with detailed information about your qualifications. Your recommender should be able to write a 1-2 page letter with specific examples of how you fit the scholarship.

Is there an interview?

An interview is required to be endorsed as a UW candidate for the Fulbright, Truman, Rhodes, Marshall, and Mitchell competitions. These competitions also have an interview at the national level. Once UW nominees are chosen, faculty committees will interview candidates to prepare them for foundation interviews. Many interview questions are based on the student's application. Be prepared to answer interview questions about current events, both national and international.

How do I prepare for the interview?

Candidates should thoughtfully consider their achievements and aspirations. They should be aware of current events related to their studies; reading papers like *The Guardian* and *New York Times*, and magazines such as *The Economist* is recommended. Candidates should be able to answer basic interview questions—including, "What is the last book you read? Who do you most admire in your academic area? If you were an advisor to the President, what policy changes in your field would you recommend?"

Candidates should practice making eye contact while answering questions honestly and sincerely. Candidates need to learn to answer questions directly and concisely; they must learn to avoid taking too long to answer a question and rambling.

How long is the application process?

UW application deadlines are 5 – 8 months in advance of the actual scholarship deadlines.

How many personal statement drafts should I be prepared to write?

Most applicants will end up writing many drafts leading up to the final version. The process of rethinking and revising will help you hone your focus and strengthen the application as a whole. The result will be a statement that demonstrates both your unique intellectual abilities and your distinctive voice.

Who should read my personal statement?

The more, the better. Ask your friends, parents, professors, and co-workers to read it. Ask them to honestly tell you if the statement sounds like you and who you are and clearly defines where you want to go and why. Other readers will be able to see areas for improvement that you may not notice.

Other National Competitions to Explore

[Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Junior Fellows Program](#)

[Laura W. Bush Traveling Fellowship](#)

[Critical Language Scholarship Program](#)

[Department of Energy Computational Science Graduate Fellowship](#)

[Emerson National Hunger Fellows Program](#)

[Ford Foundation Fellowship Programs](#)

[Health For America Fellowship](#)

[Hertog Foundation Undergraduate Opportunities](#)

[James Madison Graduate Fellowships](#)

[Mount Vernon Leadership Fellows](#)

[NPR Kroc Fellowship](#)

[National Defense Science and Engineering Graduate Fellowship](#)

[National Geographic Young Explorers Grants](#)

[NIH Oxford-Cambridge Scholars Program](#)

[Pamela Herriman Foreign Service Fellowships](#)

[USAID Donald M. Payne International Development Graduate Fellowship Program](#)

[Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowships](#)

[Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Programs](#)

[Department Defense Science, Mathematics, and Research for Transformation Scholarship](#)

[Schwarzman Scholars](#)

[Thermo Fisher Scientific Antibody Scholarship Program](#)

[Department of Energy Mickey Leland Energy Fellowship Program](#)