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Consistency in Scholarship Hunting

Saturday, October 12th, 2019. 8 pm WAT

Lecturer: **Scholar OBASEKORE, Hammed Olatunde (E-JUST, Egypt).**

His Profile:

BEng Mechanical Engineering (4.16/5.00), University of Ilorin, Nigeria (2015)

MSc Mechatronics and Robotics Engineering (3.55/4.00), Egypt-Japan University of Science and Technology (E-JUST), Egypt (2019)

Awards and Honours:

1. Petroleum Technology Development Fund (PTDF), Local Scholarship Scheme (LSS) (2011)
2. Academic Excellence Award: Academic Excellence Initiative (2015)
3. Young Inventor, University of Ilorin 2016 Lab-To-Product (#50,000)
4. PHARCO Scholarship for MSc degree through Egypt-Japan University of Science and Technology (2017)
5. King AbdulAziz University (KAU) Postgraduate Scholarship for MSc degree, KSA (2018)

Moderator: **Scholar Gafari Lukumon (Lukgaf).**

Transmission Crew: **Scholars Mutiu, Ajiboye, Halogen, Monsur, Biodun, Mic, Etubi ([Telegram Chat Link](#)).**

Admin: **Researcher Bankole & ISFM Scholar Obasekore Hameed**

Lecture Agenda:

1. Consistency defined.
2. Reminder: documents needed for international scholarships and fellowships.
3. Writing winning personal essays.
4. Testimonials.
5. Your scars will make you a master.
6. Questions and Answers.

My Opening Remarks:

I would like to commend the brains behind this platform, I personal have really learnt a lot despite joining 2 years after its creation. In fact, this is the least out of what I could to give back to the community.

Consistency Defined

To start with, I would like to put forward what the definition of consistency means literarily.

According to Cambridge Dictionary: always behaving or happening in a similar, especially positive, way.

According to Oxford Dictionary: the quality of always behaving in the same way or of having the same opinions, standard.

This lecture is going to take a case study approach.

In simple terms, consistency can be:

not changing or

agreeing with something said or done previously.

With consistency, I have seen people with HND becoming PhD holders on scholarship
<https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/ibrahim-waziri-from-hnd-in-nigeria-to-phd-in-america.html>
<https://iiwaziri.com/index.html>

With consistency, I have seen people with 3rd Class (with neither IELTS/TOFEL nor GRE) getting MSc scholarship.

And I have seen people with 1st class giving up on scholarship hunt.

Most Mathematicians especially have been exposed to one form or the other.

Many programmers have ran into several days of debugging just because of inconsistency.

One of my undergraduate lecturers once said, *"Even if you're writing rubbish, just be consistent. I will follow you consistently to the end."* - Dr. Engr. Adekunle (2012)

Hardly will you find any facet of career that doesn't cherish consistency.

Fellow scholars, let me tell you where your consistency starts from.

Reminder: Documents needed for International Scholarships/Fellowships

1. Transcript / statement of results.
2. Proof of English test (IELTS, TOEFL, GRE or medium of instruction letter). In UK, some universities accept a credit pass in your WAEC in lieu of other proof of English.
3. Certificate, if available (or notification of result).
4. Curriculum Vitae (CV).
5. Statement of Purpose (SOP) / Statement of Intent (SOI) / Letter of Intent (LOI) / Personal Statement (PS) / Motivational Letter.
6. Published literature(s) (journals) (sometimes optional but it is an added advantage).
7. Two or three recommendation letters from a Professor or associate Professor.
8. International passport.
9. Browsing phone with data/WiFi.
10. Faith in God (Prayer and Fasting).

These are needed prior submitting your application.

When you finally get there, reach back and pull someone else up. Touch lives. Again, touch lives.

On the minimum:

International passport => Statement of Purpose (SOP) => Curriculum Vitae (CV) => Transcript/statement of results => recommendation letter from a Professor.

However, the following really defines your consistency;

SOP

CV and

Study Plan (for some scholarships).

Let see a typical example:

Professor, Yun-Jung Lee

Professor of Electronics

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Robotics (walking robot, service robot, industrial robot).

Intelligent control (fuzzy control, learning control).

Embedded Systems (Microcontrollers and DSP Hardware / Software).

A prospective student with Mechanical Engineering background needs to convince this Professor while consistently matching his previous work with that of the professor.

Notice how he incorporated the area of the professor in his despite having a different background.

"I studied Mechanical Engineering at the University of Ilorin, Nigeria. Although my interests lie at the intersection of mechanical, electronics and computer engineering, however, such a combination or its derivatives were not available in my country at that time, hence my choice.

Regardless, I became a self taught computer programmer and an embedded system enthusiast. After mastering lots of hardware interfacing and embedded system programming skills, I looked for an avenue to challenge my proficiency. With several literature review, I got engrossed in walking robot, specifically, walking mechanism based on Joe Klann Mechanism.

Thus, I embarked on an undergraduate project titled "**Design and Development of Wireless Controlled Eight Legged Walking Robot**". My interest in walking robot got re-aroused when I spot some recent works from tech giants (like Google, NVIDIA) on transferring robot simulation to real robot (sim to real), where some of the researchers used deep reinforcement learning to train simulated walking robot, thereafter, transferring the inference on a real replica of the robot. It amazed me to learn that this technique gave the robots manipulability beyond coding."

Note these:

- Even after deviating from the normal trend (from walking robot to Agricultural Robotics), he still tries to repurpose it back for consistency.
- Even after spending 2 years on Agricultural robotics, he still needs to find means of staying consistent with the interest of the Professor.

Now you need to marry the SOP with Study Plan.

Remember he talked about the recent trend in Walking RObot in his SOP.

Then married his previous experience (on Deep learning) with the recent work on the interest of the Professor.

Even the CV needs to follow the trend one way or the other.

That shows a very typical example of consistency in SOP, Study Plan and CV.

Writing winning Personal Essays

Okay.

This post is inspired by the loopholes I have found in multiple essays I have reviewed and being a season for scholarship applications; it is very pertinent that key attention is paid to how you translate your ideas and aspirations into words. While different scholarships stipulate different requirements for personal statements, it generally cuts across defining your background, your passion for an intended subject, efforts you have made into keeping that passion alive and how you hope to give back upon reception of the scholarship.

This article is largely focused on personal statements targeted towards winning scholarships and funding; not just for admission.

A few thoughts:

1. Know the indices for assessment.

Different strokes for different folks as I have reiterated. For instance, Commonwealth Scholarships are keen on selecting people with good academic grades; Chevening or MasterCard are more interested on ways you have contributed to the growth of your community - with LESS (not none) emphasis on your academic grades. Funded spaces in the US might be keener about involvements you have carried out in time past that has prepared you and made you more fit to undertake graduate studies. In summary, since you would not use the CV meant for a marketing job to apply for a lecturing job; also tailor your essays to meet the index or parameters set by the selection committee.

2. Selection Committees are made up of experts; they know when you have not done your best.

Winning an oversea scholarship is HARD work. You are expected to do a lot of behind-the-scenes stuffs and spend weeks or months coming up with the best 500-words (or more) that can efficiently sell you, your idea and plans. Do not just write an essay in 3 days and submit to a panel of Professors who have been plying their trade for decades. Sit down, read wide, reflect, ask questions, start your first draft, it might not be perfect, re-edit it, reshape it, review it, revise it, give it to others to read, look at it again, remove something, add again... it is HARD work. I got a privileged information that Asians are getting more funded places because they spend up to 6 months reviewing their essays; it is such a commitment. Do not slack.

3. Take permission to be proud but maintain honesty.

Humility is good; it is one of my core values but in this case, I take exception to sell myself. Market yourself in the best possible way. Fine, you did not graduate with a First Class; it is not a drawback. There are host of people who have gone ahead to win funded spaces that (some) class toppers could not access. Tell them you

are not just a First Class Graduate (they are many everywhere), remind them you graduated in the best 1% of your set.; you did not win Convocation Awards but you have mentions on Dean's List, put it.

You were the most punctual student in your primary school; it is an award - put it where necessary. Instead of groaning that you finished with a Second Class Lower, why not say, "despite seemingly unavoidable challenges, my drive for impact not only made me finish with 68% overall; I pressed further to garner more than 3 additional certifications in my field." You have greater things I do not have and vice-versa; maybe you have not spent adequate time to reflect and discover. You have something to market. However, maintain honesty. The big picture is more important!

4. I use to tell people, Oyinbo love figures. Do your research, get data and don't write like a layman; you are a budding intellectual.

Get figures. Be specific.

ABC was asked why getting a scholarship to study Renewable Energy will help affect his society positively. He said, "Nigeria has no constant electricity and people cannot go about doing business easily. Therefore, when I get the scholarship and finish my studies, I would be able to change things."

I would have written: "Statistics drawn from OPEC between 2012 and 2016 revealed that Nigeria stands as the 8th largest producer of crude oil globally. It is however saddening that a country that is supposed to sell petrol cheaper than water still imports her refined products. Her most industrialized state, Lagos is covered with 67% water; her most populous region, Northern Nigeria is ferociously wasting energy from the sun and is privileged to be blessed with enough wind reserves; yet the country has not been able to exploit these avenues to meet the Millennium Development Goals set for 2020...."

Compare the two, make your conclusions. Figures, facts, specificity, you may add...

5. Improve grammar. Please. Some blunders may be pardonable but the panel can tell when an applicant is not fit enough. Grad school involves a lot of intellectual work and the most-prepared (not necessarily the best) are being sought out. Improve your grammar, read newspaper columns, listen to TED talks, learn new words, keep in touch with global trends; they help in the long run. Watching YouTube programmes channelled towards improving competencies might be better to do this time.

I might write more in the future.

Best wishes in your application.

Femi Ogunlalu, 2017.

It generally cuts across defining your background, your passion for an intended subject, efforts you have made into keeping that passion alive and how you hope to give back upon reception of the scholarship.

Testimonials

Let's take a look at some testimonies of some of our recent scholars, and indeed, I am sure every one of us will easily spot their level of consistency

I started the scholarship hunt in 2016 during my service year as a rookie ... Even then, I received so many rejection mails despite my efforts. I chose not to despair as I kept my face on the goal. Amidst many rejections, I got to be placed on reserve list by Cranfield University in 2018 under Commonwealth Shared Scholarship. That was a bit of hope for me which I was happy about.

Adetunji Toyosi (2019): Commonwealth Shared Scholarship (Cranfield University).

My first scholarship application was for AIMS 2017, my response were a total trash... Early 2018, scholar Faithful introduced me to ISF group and I was a total stranger to your terminologies(SOP, GRE, IELT, et al.) but with time, I made sure I follow up all lectures and I private chat some person's in the forum to ask some trivial questions that might sound stupid if I posted it on the group.

Jonathan Bature (2019): Erasmus Mundus (University of L'Aquila & Gdańsk University of Technology).

It was surprise to get my Congratulations mail after missing out on a countable number of scholarships since I started applying in October 2018... And lastly, I would encourage my fellow scholars not to relent or get tired, instead they should keep the morale higher, loads of opportunities are abound to explore, the secret is just to keep applying, working harder and praying harder. The road to success is just too narrow and the biggest failure is none other than not having the courage to dare.

Amusa Mutiu (2019): NAWA Poland (University of agriculture, Krakow).

The saying that says, "Scholarship hunting or application is much more harder than a University examination" is true... there is no continent in the whole world I haven't mailed except for Antarctica I could see over 700 mails and I just got one recently from one of the richest countries in Asia (Hong Kong). He demands us to try. I know pretty well we've all been trying, however don't quit 'cause obviously it's too late to quit if you understand what I'm saying.

Kayode Olaleye (2019): NAWA Poland (AGH University of Science and Technology, Krakow).

There are more than 6,000 standard Universities in the US. I checked all the 50 states, mailed grad cords and picked 5 schools per State... Mailing is free. I personally sent more than 3000 mails before I got a PhD admission with funding. We are never deterred by their rejection mails, victory is ours forever.

Nnyeneime Usenata (2019): USA (Wayne State University, Michigan).

One general thing that is common with all these scholars is that, they are consists ntand they re-learned to fine-tune their consistency.

However, consistency could be negative if you refuse to re-learn more or you tells lies.

I will end this lecture with my own personal story.

I had gotten several opportunities to start PhD even before barging my MSc., but due to what I will refer to as inconsistency, behold, I flopped it.

Below is a sample e-mail.

By just cutting communication with prospective Professor, you easily fall a victim of inconsistency.

You may not easily spot the problem.

But the problem was that, I created an abrupt stop in communication with the professor.

From 14th August - 7th September

Thank you all my fellow scholars for listening, I believe if many of us are given the privilege to share his or her own motivational talk on this path of scholarship hunt, am sure we'll have more than enough to say

In conclusion, Stay consistent, learn, re-learn and be honest.

Meanwhile, before we open Question and Answer session and before you come here to eat Eba prepared for you sir.

Happy reading:

YOUR SCARS WILL MAKE YOU A MASTER

Before you covet my achievements, you probably need to know that I am a product of many failed attempts at success.

Here is a list of the Scholarships I lost:

1. NLNG Undergraduate Scholarship, Nigeria (2007).
2. Lagos State Scholarship Award for undergraduate students who are indigenes of Lagos State, Nigeria (2008).
3. Potential Assistantship Position for an MS degree at the Auburn University, USA, due to a low GRE score (2011).
4. Presidential Special programme scheme for Innovation and Development (Pressid) for postgraduate studies exclusively for First-class graduates of Nigeria (2012).
5. Commonwealth Shared Scholarship for an MSc degree at the Newcastle University, UK (2012).
6. Commonwealth Shared Scholarship for an MSc degree at the University of Kent, UK (2012).
7. Commonwealth Shared Scholarship for an MSc degree at the University of Bristol, UK (2012).
8. Commonwealth Shared Scholarship for an MSc degree at the Cranfield University, UK (2012).
9. Commonwealth Shared Scholarship for an MSc degree at the University of Warwick, UK (2012).
10. Commonwealth Shared Scholarship for an MSc degree at University of Southampton, UK (2012).
11. Commonwealth Shared Scholarship for an MSc degree at the University of the West of Scotland, UK (2012).
12. Commonwealth Shared Scholarship for an MSc degree at the University of Glasgow (2012).
13. Commonwealth Shared Scholarship for an MSc degree at the University of Strathclyde, UK (2012).
14. International Postgraduate Scholarship Award at the Bournemouth University, UK (2012).
15. Westminster University Postgraduate Scholarship Award, UK (2012).
16. Postgraduate Scholarship Award at the University of Graz, Austria (2012).
17. Postgraduate Scholarship Award at the Vrije University, Belgium (2012).
18. Postgraduate Scholarship Award at the Corvinus University, Hungary (2012).

19. Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters Degree for WACOMA (Water and Coastal Management), European Universities led by the University of Cadiz, Spain (2012).
20. Felix Scholarship for a direct PhD degree at the University of Reading, UK (2012).
21. Potential Assistantship position for an MS degree at the Auburn University, USA, due to a low GRE score (2012).
22. International Postgraduate Scholarship for an MSc degree at the University of Sydney, Australia (2012).
23. International Postgraduate Scholarship for an MSc degree at the University of Melbourne, Australia (2012).
24. International Postgraduate Scholarship for an MSc degree at the University of Otago, New Zealand (2012).
25. Postgraduate Scholarship for an MSc degree at the University of Cape Town, South Africa (2012).
26. Postgraduate Scholarship for an MSc degree at the University of McGill, Canada (2012).
27. Postgraduate Scholarship for an MSc degree at the University of Alberta, Canada (2012).
28. A PhD position at the Sirindhorn International Institute of Technology (SIIT), Thailand (2014).
29. PhD position at the University of South Australia (UNISA), Australia (2014).
30. PhD position at the University of Iceland, Iceland (2014).
31. PhD position at the University of St. Andrews, UK (2014).
32. PhD position at the University of Greenwich, UK (2014).
33. Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme (HKPFS) to the City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong (2014).
34. Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme (HKPFS) to the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong (2014).
35. Erasmus Mundus PhD Scholarship for MACOMA, Europe (2014).
36. PhD position at the University of Pretoria, South Africa (2015).
37. CIMO Fellowship Programme for PhD study at any university in Finland (2015).
38. Doctoral programme in interdisciplinary environmental sciences (DENVI) at the University of Helsinki, Finland (2015).
39. Singapore International Graduate Award (SINGA) for a PhD degree in Microbiology (Bioaugmentation option) at Nanyang Technology University (NTU), Singapore (2015).
40. Joint PhD Fellowship in Soil Biology at the University College Dublin and Teagasc Johnstown Castle, Ireland (2015).
41. PhD position at the Indian Institute of Toxicology Research (IITR), India (2015).
42. PhD position in the Ecotoxicology Research group at the University of Manitoba, Canada (2015).
43. PhD position in Ecology at the ETH Zurich, Switzerland (2015).
44. PhD position in Biological Sciences at the Tennessee State University, USA (2015).
45. Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship Scheme for International Students for a PhD degree at Limerick Institute of Technology, Ireland (2015).

46. PhD position at the Centre for Environmental Research, Innovation and Sustainability (CERIS) at the Institute of Technology, Sligo, Ireland (2015).

47. PhD position at the Dublin Institute Technology (DIT), Ireland (2015).

I know many of you will be surprised. I am a scientist, I love keeping records.

Despite losing almost 50 scholarships altogether mainly because I had no mentor and had to figure things out on my own, I still managed to secure 7 scholarships in my lifetime so far.

Here are the scholarships I have won:

1. Iju Scholarship initiative for undergraduate students resident in Lagos, Nigeria (2004).
2. Total/Elf Petroleum Nigeria Ltd. (EPNL) National Tertiary Institutions Scholarships for undergraduate students in Nigerian universities (2006).
3. Christ the Redeemers Ministries (CRM) Annual Bursary for undergraduate students who are RCCG (Redeem Christian Church of God) members who emerge successful in a nationwide examination (2007 and 2008).
4. Federal Government of Nigeria Undergraduate Scholarships (2009/2010).
5. London Metropolitan University (LMU) Postgraduate Scholarship Award for an MSc degree at the LMU, UK (2012).
6. Commonwealth Shared Scholarship for an MSc degree at the University of Greenwich, UK (2012).
7. Commonwealth PhD Scholarship for a PhD degree at the University of Manchester, UK (2015).

Today, I have become so skilled at giving scholarship advice and reviewing scholarship forms for several people who end up winning.

I also raised other young scholars like me and today, we have formed a formidable force globally. Little wonder Illumania keeps producing scholarship winners annually in an unbelievable fashion.

Now you know the secret to my success in scholarship affairs. The several scars I carry, earned me the unique knowledge and authority on scholarship matters anywhere in the world.

I have seen it all and done it all; made all the errors you can think of and now its made me full of knowledge on this subject.

This is why there is a higher tendency of winning a scholarship when a young hungry brilliant Nigerian meets me. They feel the light-bulb effect almost instantly.

Brace yourselves young Nigerians, my team is about to put forward a “Scholarship Mastery Boot camp”, the first of its kind in Nigeria, and it is going to be awesome! Trust me.

Be expectant.

~ Dr. MBM

Questions & Answers

<p>Q :</p>	<p>Do you apply for scholarship before or after you've gained admission?</p> <p>How do you go about applying for masters in a university abroad?</p> <p>Is having papers published important to gain admission and scholarship for masters degree?</p>	<p>A :</p>	<p>It depends on the nature of the scholarship e.g Commonwealth requires you to have admission first. For PTDF, I think it works either way. I have seen someone have admission before and I recently had someone who already got it before securing admission.</p> <p>I will kindly refer you to our lecture transcript for that. But on the minimum kindly prepare the documents stated in the lecture.</p> <p>Not compulsory, but it will definitely fast track your admission.</p>
<p>Q :</p>	<p>Can Dr recommend instead of professor?</p>	<p>A :</p>	<p>Yes! but it strictly depends on the scholarship requirements.</p>
<p>Q :</p>	<p>Can someone that finished master with 59.4%. And second class upper in BSc apply for PhD scholarship?</p>	<p>A :</p>	<p>In this our facility of scholarship hunt, department of romance and love letter, nothing is impossible.</p> <p>However, the candid advice I have for such person is to brace up in another area. Like taking GRE or doing WES to evaluate his actual grade or working on publishing some of his previous work.</p>

In conclusion, I appreciate our dear speaker once again (please put our Robot in mind), all our transmitters and all ISF Admins for their selfless efforts. May God be with us all and grant us success.

Thanks, Siyabonga and have a nice rest. See you again!



Lukgaf:

It is really a wonderful and educative one, I really learnt a lot. I really appreciate the speaker for his lecture. I will also appreciate the moderator too for staying gallant throughout the lecture.

Question from Associate Scholars:

Please, what's the best standard to use while preparing a curriculum vitae that will be easily acceptable?

Although there is nothing like one size fits all CV format, an academic CV should include the following:

1. Name and contact information inform of letterhead.
2. Education and Professional Qualification.
3. Current and Previous Positions.
4. Research & Teaching Experience (if applicable).
5. Awards, Prices and Honours.
6. Publications (if any).
7. Conferences Attended (if any).
8. Membership of Professional Societies.

9. Referees.

Compiler: **Agboola Afees Akinola**

For: International Scholarship Forum [ISF]