Good evening everyone.

It is a great privilege to be given the opportunity to bless lives tonight.

By God's grace, I knew when this group was about to be created. Since then, I had this lecture on my but I have not been able to do it until now due various engagement in course of service year

I recognize all members of this group particularly the active ones, whose posts have been source of encouragement and invaluable info.

I welcome you all once again. I hope we would all gain something tonight.

Straight to business

I will share my experience on scholarship hunting and the knowledge I have garnered from posts online and success story of my colleagues

I graduated from university in 2015 as at that time, I preferred traveling out of the country for my masters (Germany, self-funded).

However, certain realities dawned on me. I realized that many people who may have forced their way out the country, are roaming about the street of our country.

A post graduate degree gives a edge in job hunting and it sometimes depends on your field of choice (e.g IT related courses).

It may not be worth it to spend 4-10 million outside the country to study a course that is not relevant in our country or a course that may still require you to start begging for job.

This clarification is particularly important because it will help us in choosing course to study at masters level.

Also because may scholarship board especially foreign government and big organization scholarships knows what each country needs at a particular time, we may have to study a course that will help our country.

Did I say our country, to be frank it makes writing of your statement of intention/purpose a lot easier because if can easily find facts and figures to back up to story.

This advice may not apply to some university scholarship because some see recruited students as cheap labour for there research work.

Lesson:

Study a course that will be relevant in Nigeria and meets the needs of Nigerians.

People appreciate what they think will help their current situation. A close friend recently disclosed to me that a First Class masters students who was employed was paid less compared to non masters holders.

Think twice and weigh your options before you compel your parents to spend 4-10m on your education outside the country. (If they can afford it).

A post graduate degree is a means to the end and not an end in itself

You're not necessarily applying for a scholarship because you don't have money but because someone must fund your study since you have the intention of helping my mankind!!!

They have to sponsor your good intentions!!!

Relevant Links

http://www.nairaland.com/3313218/he-spent-over-n6m-masters

http://www.nairaland.com/3310649/before-applying-coming-uk-studies

Please, I will like us to open those links

There are tens or possibly hundreds of whatsapp groups on scholarship hunting in Nigeria and probably millions in Africa and Asia.

Another reality is that we are all competing for little available slot and as such sponsors have unlimited options to choose from.

How do we bypass this problem???

Winning scholarships sounds pretty easy – just apply and wait for the money to roll in.

That's not how it works, of course. But you can increase your odds of success by paying attention to detail and avoiding common loop holes

It might make sense to apply to every scholarship that comes your way but consider our advice to apply only to a few scholarships.

This will not only save you time and effort but also help you improve your chances in getting a scholarship.

This advice follows the Pareto Principle or the 80/20 Rule.

Applying this principle in scholarship application, it is wise to apply only to 20% of available scholarships that would give you 80% chance of success.

Let’s try to put this into example.

You are an African, particularly, a Nigerian looking for a scholarship in Masters in Development Studies in Germany.

After your search, you were able to find 10 scholarships that are available for Africans for study in Germany.

Following the advice above, you will try to focus on applying to 2-3 scholarships that gives you higher chances of success.

The question now is, how do you pick the scholarships you should apply to?

Source Scholar4dev

I have friend that won a Belgium government scholarship meant for Africans. Applying for the write scholarship increases ur chances of winning it.

Most candidates from Asia countries often have a high qualifications

This question can be answered by considering the following criteria:

1. Which among the 10 scholarships you found are specifically targeted to Nigerians?

2. Which among the 10 scholarships are aligned to your qualifications?

3. Which among the 10 scholarships prioritize the study programme you are applying for?

The ideal scholarship you are looking for is a scholarship program that is targeted specifically to Nigerians, whose eligibility requirements matches your qualifications, and if possible, whose priority programs include Masters in Development Studies or related programs.

Applying to a scholarship that is matched to your citizenship, qualifications, and interests generally gives you better chances. As well, applying only to a few scholarships gives you more time to make a great scholarship application letter, complete all your application requirements, and submit your application on time.

This advice is not meant to be a rule; you are always free to apply to more scholarships as you wish if you would think it would increase your chances.

The general advice is to make sure you are applying for scholarships that are matched to you and not just any scholarship that presents itself.

School-specific scholarships are scholarships offered by a particular school under a University. For example, the

Institute of Education – a school/college under University of London offers school-specific scholarships such as Centenary Masters Scholarships for International Students.

School-specific scholarships are good scholarships to apply to because they are targeted to your field of study. As well, fewer people know about these scholarships because they are not as easy to find as university-wide scholarships and not as known as popular scholarships.

Generally, because of these reasons, there is lesser competition in applying for school-specific scholarships compared to university-wide scholarships and popular scholarships.

Sometimes the official scholarship page of the University lists school-specific scholarships while sometimes the University has their own scholarship database that contains the school-specific scholarships but most often than not, school-specific scholarships are buried in the college/school’s own scholarship page.

Through my search I was able to identify some school/corse specific scholarship in Norway ( university of Oslo), Denmark (university of Copenhagen), Laval university (Canada).....

The Hard Truth about Scholarships:

One important thing you should know about scholarships is that they are not given out just to anyone who asks, requests, or begs for it. They are not given just because you are POOR and DISADVANTAGED. They are not given just because you are from a developing country or just because you belong to a minority group. The truth is scholarships are not given out, they are earned.

You earn it by demonstrating your potential and establishing your qualifications.

Although it is true that your disadvantaged situation initially qualifies you for a scholarship (that’s why there are minority scholarships, scholarships based on financial need, developing country scholarships),

you will still have to satisfy other qualifications set by the scholarship provider.

Let’s look at a general overview of typical scholarship qualifications required by scholarship providers.

Minimum Scholarship Qualifications

– You must be from a country which the scholarship provider specifies

– You must be of a certain age as set by the scholarship provider. Note that this is not always the case, there are many scholarships where there is no age requirement.

– You must hold a High School Diploma when applying for a Bachelors; a Bachelor’s Degree when applying for Master’s; and a Master’s Degree when applying for PhD

– You must meet the academic requirements of the programme you are applying to.

In most cases, you have to be accepted in the progamme your are applying to before you are considered for a scholarship.

– You must have good knowledge of English language with TOEFL or IELTS scores as proof. In some cases, proof of English as medium of instruction in your university degree would suffice

The student’s academic excellence and potential in his/her proposed field of study – applicants must be able to demonstrate a connection between their subject of study and their longer-term career objectives.

• The student’s academic performance – as evidenced by grades, test scores, publications, letters of recommendation from his/her previous education.

• The student’s motivation letter (or in some cases, a motivation essay)

• The quality of the scholarship application submitted (completeness, accuracy, consistency).

• In development scholarships in particular, students are assessed based on their potential to contribute to the development of their home country.

• In the case of research students, students are assessed based on the merits and relevance of their proposed research study.

Coherence is very important in admission and scholarship application.

Your undergraduate research experience and other work experience should be related to you postgraduate field of choice particularly those who want to go into research.

Knowing these criteria, you can find ways to gain advantage over your competitors.

For example, if you don’t have very good academic grades, the personal motivation letter is your chance to show how you deserve to get the scholarship.

In another example, you can do a little extra research about the current areas of focus of the scholarship provider because sometimes, students are chosen based on their chosen field of study or research – if it aligns with the scholarship provider’s core mission/themes. It is also useful to know the profiles of previous winners on the scholarship provider website

For example, OPEC scholarship board has info about scholarship winners on their site

Look beyond your grades. You don’t have to have a 4.0 to qualify for scholarships.

In fact, because the competitiveness of many scholarships, some scholarships don’t use grades only in their assessment.

Regardless of whether you have top grades or not, it’s important to find a way to stand out from the crowd on your scholarship applications.

Before you start filling out the application, think about why you should be that scholarship winner.

What special talents or skills do you offer? Perhaps you can demonstrate your perseverance in the face of adversity as a student or leader.

These are what make you unique.

Whatever it is, make sure you highlight your strengths and personality in the application.

You can also reinforce this message through letters of recommendation from teachers and community members who know you best.

This really helped me in my application

This could include your employer, pastor, coach, high school counselor, or other adults who know you well.

We sign up for as volunteers for the few available non government organization, join cancer walks, .....

It will help your application

Try to take leadership position during your service year e.g CDS group. It can help

The info shared above are quite general. However, it quite important we all operate from the same level

I will move into approaching potential supervisors

Some of winners of popular, competitive research scholarship have published at least one article

Let's all endeavor to publish our undergraduate work.

It is very important

All thanks to God, my supervisor was able to present my work at a conference.

Some of colleagues' undergraduate research work was published.

This is important for many of us who want to apply for a research degree

Most students make the mistake of trying to convince the professor how smart and accomplished they are.

They get lots of email from smart and accomplished people. They don't get many emails from potential students who have read up on their work.

This can be difficult to do sometimes, But it worth it

I won't be providing a template mail but I will highlight things that we need to include in such mail

You would contact a professor about his research and research group to see if your background would fit in his or hers research group.

To do this, you need to examine the working and published research papers.

What you are trying to establish is a relationship based on research so by the time you apply he or her would be interested in you.

1. Have a compelling research profile. Have a clarity in your undergraduate research. Your research interests should be justified by your undergraduate research experience.

There should be a link between your previous experience and the new role you're applying for.

2. Before emailing the professor read his publications and try to analyse his work and yours. Find out the correlation and elaborate that on the research statement.

3. Don’t give fancy stuff like “ You are a great professor”, “I will get salvation, if I can work with you”. Or “ I wanted to be a scientist from age 5, when I saw my first computer”.

4. Get a good LOR from your present advisor.

Note:

So dont be afraid of rejection

Note that researchers get hundreds of mail daily.

They even do not reply mail of their colleagues!!

No reply does not mean that you hated

Some mail do not get delivered because of very strict spamming filters used my supervisor.

So you have to keep sending polite reminder messages. Give such person three to four days intervals

Sometimes, you wake to receive a rejection mail. don't be discouraged. They must fund your good intentions

Endeavor to check the website of prospective supervisor. They sometimes state the skills they want their students to have!!!

This is an advantage.

If you have such skills, endeavour to include them in your introduction letter and CV

At this point, lemme state the importance of join professional boards, it gives one edge bcoz it may indicate that you're really interested in that field

Students accounts are usually not expensive.

It really gives weight to one's CV

At this point, lemme state the importance of joining professional bodies

it gives one edge bcoz it may indicate that you're really interested in that field

Whenever I compare my first CV with what I have now, I can't help but to laugh at myself

CV is important because you have to attach your CV and transcript to your introduction mail

Your CV should show your academic achievement because you want them to know you're a scholar with history (grades, awards).

You should use percentage, class rank to compare your grades with your peers in school

The information on CV should be easily accessible.

It should provide more info about ur undergraduates work/publication, presentation - basically achievements

Them must not leave the reader guessing but straight to point.

The normal mind wouldn't mind to copy and edit a mail and then send it to another supervisor

We should avoid this!!

Let us take the pain to tailor each mail to meet research interests of each prospective supervisor

Let's move recommendation letters.

Foreign supervisor all need a professional who can attest to our qualifications, skill and potential

However, most recommendation letter (we copy and edit) can not impress the common man on the street let alone a supervisor who has a ton of options to choose from

I guess we should continue some other time

Questions:

Thanks bro. Please what does it take to write a cover letter on educational and career goals

Answer:

Cover letter may be likened to a professional application letter.

How the current choice (goals) suits the current needs of your country. Back it up with facts and figures.

Depending on the word limit, you may want to quickly stage a relevant experience you had and clear pass across how the experience influence your current choice (goals).

However, avoid appeal to pity in your story e.g. no money.

Question:

Please little enlightenment. I had my first degree project in goat but due my interest in poultry. I am working presently in a poultry farm and I decided to change to poultry. A professor in Poultry Science is requesting for a cover letter.

Do you think it is advisable to write what my first degree project was about inside the cover letter?

Answer:

I think so, because the experience is somehow relevant but it won't be your main story.

Your recent experience in poultry should be your main story. You may have to include the number of months you have spent there too if it gives you an edge

You try to provide a justifiable reason to back ur transition in order to satisfy his/her curiosity.

I think you should not make your transition story your main story.

Question: He requested for two years working experience.

Answer: Include your internship experience

Make sure you explain in detail the lesson you learnt l, techniques used, role played ( to show ability to work with others and independently when required)

Present this both on your CV and cover letter

Both.... (cautiously)

The cover letter is not an opportunity to restate you already have on your CV!!

Use bullet points to show it in your CV

But you should use cover letter to provide more info, explanation about it.

Questions:

Based on your research bro, is it all universities that require one to secure a supervisor and if no, which institutions or country do require such???

Answer:

It depends on the position of the researcher in department/school. Some lecturers are sometimes on the admission committee. In such situations, it will be helpful.

I secured some supervisors who couldn't help despite submitting research proposal to them!

However, to the best of my knowledge when you contact a supervisor with pedigree/links to the admission committed such will increase one's chances.

However, the best place to get info about this is the school's/department website

Question:

Please, u know the situation here on Nigeria.. We get seminar topics not related to our project topic and even the field of our project topic is not what we are interested in for masters

Now... How do we make out previous project research come in line with the field we intend going into?

Answer:

Keep to the same field from our undergraduates can be quite challenging.

It is important to know that this problem is not unique to Nigerian alone. Whites also have reasons to change their field of interest possibly due to other reasons unique to their environment.

The main thing a supervisor needs the relevant experience we have garnered in our previous field. So do well to highlight your role/responsibilities in the research group, technique used, possibly share captivating results, duration of study