Advice on Applying for Scholarships

Apply for all College of Engineering and School of Computing merit- and need-based scholarships with one application. The application is posted at [http://www.coe.utah.edu/scholarships](http://www.coe.utah.edu/scholarships).

Opens in early December.
Closes in February.
Students chosen to receive awards are contacted in April.

The application has four required parts:

1.) Academic record
   - Expect to upload your DARS and answer a few questions about GPAs, credit hours completed, and so on.
   - Merit-based scholarships have minimum GPA requirements (typically 3.5, 3.3, or 3.0).
   - College of Engineering merit-based scholarships often go to students with very high GPAs (3.6 or better). However, some School of Computing merit-based scholarships go to students with lower GPAs.
   - Some need-based scholarships have GPA minimums (usually lower) and some do not.

2.) Personal statement
   - 1 to 2 pages of relevant information. It should be related to your academic life.
   - Do not dwell too much on your past. Include your accomplishments (leave out high school unless you are a freshman or sophomore). State your education and career goals. Include what you are doing now and in the near future to reach your goals.
   - Use good writing skills and have others read it for feedback.

3.) Resume
   - 1 (full) page is best. 2 pages, if you absolutely must. Never more than 2 pages.
   - Include employment history when it is relevant to your academic path: internships, TA work, RA work, part- or full-time jobs related to your field.
   - List relevant project work from courses, work, or personal/side efforts.
   - List community involvement and leadership activities.
   - If you are a freshman or sophomore and think that your resume is too light, make clear your academic status near the top. The reader will take this into consideration.
   - If you are a junior or senior, your resume shouldn’t be too light. Ask classmates what they include, in case you are forgetting something.
   - Use good writing skills and have others read it for feedback.

4.) Letters of recommendation (2 to 3)
   - If possible, get all letters from academic references. Avoid using personal references unless necessary to get a second letter.
   - A third letter does not help your application unless all three letters are excellent.
   - The “letter” may be a form for the recommender to fill out with optional comments.

The application has two optional parts:

1.) Financial information
   - Be prepared to fill this out to be considered for need-based awards.

2.) Some scholarships require additional essays on specific topics.
   - Pay careful attention to the topic / instructions of these extra essays. Do not simply upload your personal statement again.
   - Include only relevant information. Be accurate. Use good writing skills and have others read it for feedback.
   - If you do not upload any extra essays, you will still be considered for many College and department awards.
University and third-party scholarships require more work (differing deadlines and requirements, multiple applications), but the payoff can be bigger than for College and department awards. Also, consider that you will be able to reuse common documents (resume, personal statement) for most scholarship applications.

* University scholarships
  —For a searchable database, see http://financialaid.utah.edu/scholarships/search.
  —The Women's Resource Center offers scholarships for students in special groups (not only women). Check back often, as application periods vary for each award. http://womenscenter.utah.edu/scholarships/index.php
  —The Alumni Association offers scholarships for all students. Check back often, as application periods vary for each award. https://www.alumni.utah.edu/

* Third-party scholarships
  —The College of Engineering maintains a list of scholarship opportunities specifically for engineering students at http://www.coe.utah.edu/third_party_scholarships.
  —Google (https://www.google.com/edu/students/scholarships.html) and Microsoft (http://careers.microsoft.com/careers/en/us/university-programs.aspx#tab_scholarship-program) scholarships have been awarded to SoC students in the recent past.
  —Try scholarships search engines CollegeBoard, CollegeNet, Fastweb.

* General tips
  —In preparing your personal statement and resume, as well as when asking for letters of recommendation, use the same advice given on the previous page.
  —While you will be able to reuse portions of your basic personal statement for many scholarships, don’t hesitate to alter it as needed to target specific scholarships. Do the same for your resume, as needed.
  —When a professor agrees to write a letter of recommendation for you, it is usually not much extra effort to prepare additional letters for other scholarships since the basic content will not change. However, do not assume that this is the case. Be sure to ask for each letter.
  —Be organized. Make a calendar of scholarship deadlines. In some cases, it will be most efficient to apply for multiple scholarships at once, if the required materials are nearly the same. In other cases, it will not.
  —Start applications earlier than you think necessary. Write your statement and/or resume a month or more before it is due. This gives you time to get feedback from others, and the time needed for you to look at it with your own fresh eyes after a few weeks.