

Application Insights

Post Secondary & Scholarship Application insights & approaches.

Saudah Gazi | September 18, 2025

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Application Insights

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University Applications Open - UBC

- Typically done via EducationPlannerBC portal
- Entire application (including housing preferences and Personal Profile) is filled out through the portal

Recommendation: Draft Personal Profile responses in a separate document, then paste responses into the portal before submitting

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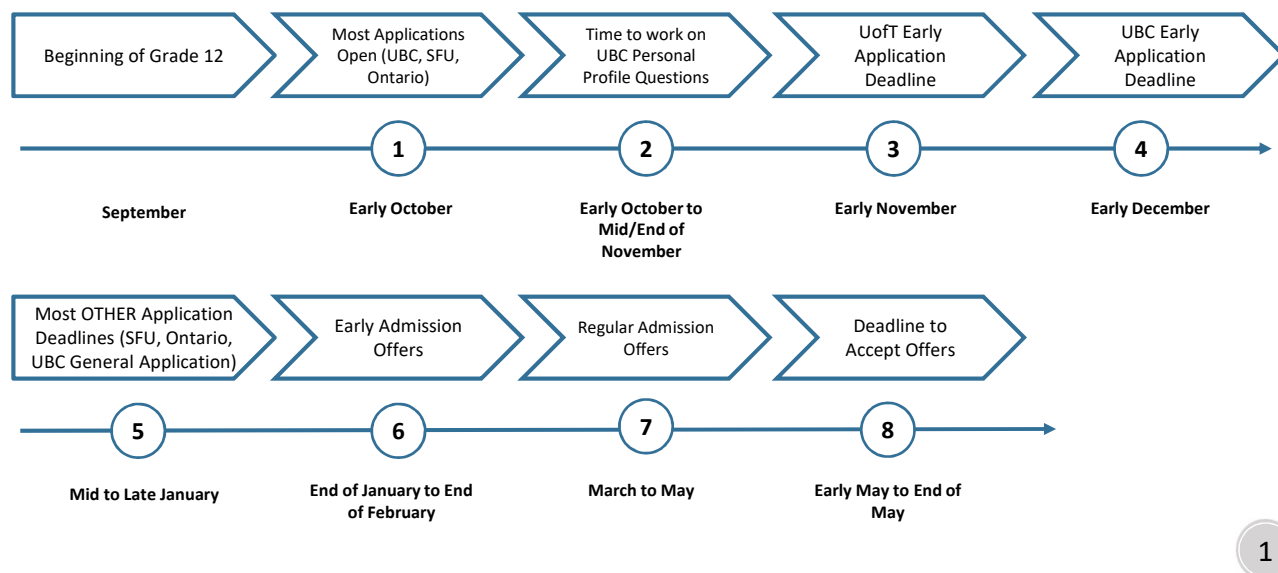
University Applications Open - Ontario

- Applied through OUAC (Ontario Universities' Application Centre), where out-of-province/international students use OUAC 105.
- Centralized application system – Rank program choices, and pay fees through OUAC
- Some programs (e.g., U of T Engineering, Western Ivey) require separate submissions (e.g., essays, video interviews) via university portals after OUAC submission.

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Application Timeline - Universities



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A Early Acceptance Application Deadline

- Early December (often December 1st)
- Ensures consideration for the Centennial/Presidential Scholarships
- IF you are not given an early acceptance offer, your application will be evaluated in the Regular Application pool as well!

B Regular Acceptance Application Deadline

- Mid or late January
- NOT considered for the Centennial and Presidential Scholarships
- Application is evaluated with all of the others

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Answering Personal Profile Questions

Do:

- Write **truthfully** and (semi) formally
- **Connect** extracurricular activities to main ideas/messages
- Avoid cliches and informal language/slang/sarcasm
- Explain the **impact** that your extracurricular activities have had on you and/or others
- Write about topics or activities that are meaningful to YOU!

Do NOT:

- Write only what you believe the evaluators want to read
- Prioritize the quantity of activities and words over quality
- Write in a boastful or prideful tone
- Use excessively descriptive or complex language

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Notes on ChatGPT / AI

You CAN:

- Ask ChatGPT for synonyms
- Ask for general advice : Word count advice, planning/deadline strategies
- Ask for various interpretations of the Personal Profile questions
- Use ChatGPT ONLY as a spell-checker

*Rewrite this question in such a way that a 5 year old can understand it:
"What are you the most passionate about?"*

You SHOULD NOT:

- Ask ChatGPT to generate a response for you based on your inputs, and make your own edits
- Use ChatGPT to re-write sentences for you or make major changes to your paragraph structure
- Submit half-completed paragraphs/responses and ask ChatGPT to complete them

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Note: The following writing samples are for UBC Personal Profile questions, but the writing tips are applicable to any University Application!

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UBC Personal Profile Question 1 - Essay

Tell us about who you are. How would your family, friends, and/or members of your community describe you? If possible, please include something about yourself that you are most proud of and why (250 words).

Very open-ended

Demonstrates self-perception

No right/wrong answer

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Example Approach 1

Connecting your **identity** (*who you are*) to a **value**, which is **demonstrated by an activity** that you have participated in.

"Throughout my secondary school education, I have always been dedicated to improving the experiences of those around me. This led me to volunteer in places where I would see the positive impacts that I made, such as at the Vancouver Food Bank."

Value that describes who you are
Activity that is a
Support/Description of that value

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Example Approach 2

Discuss a **few traits/goals** that you have, and tie them to your **experiences and activities** throughout high school.

As a driven and empathetic leader, I am motivated to contribute to the well-being of my surrounding environment. Recalling the challenges I faced with course planning during my early years of high school, I led a club to help junior students navigate course selection every Spring.

Personal traits & goals
Activity that supports those
traits/goals

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UBC Personal Profile Question 2 - Essay

What is important to you? And why? (250 Words)

Open-ended

Communicating
personal values

No right/wrong
answer

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My Challenges with Question 2

Last question attempted

6 drafts

~11 total hours spent on rewrites

~4 total hours spent editing final version

5 peer reviewers

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Question 2 - Good Approaches



Answer the question clearly: A sentence like “x and y are important to me” or “My experience with x has taught me the importance of y”.

Your answer should not fully be up to the reader’s interpretation- CLEARLY state what is important to you, ideally earlier on in your response.



Support your response with clear examples. Show how X is important to you by giving examples of how you have acted upon it.

*Ex. If you state that contributing to the well-being of your community is important to you, give examples of **what you have done** for your community, and how it has **increased or shown you** the importance of this.*

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Question 2 - Things to Avoid



Avoid using this question as a chance to talk about extracurriculars. You will get a chance to do so in a future question!

- Avoid vague statements like: “Playing on my school’s volleyball team has always been important to me.”
- Instead, focus on a **value** that is important to you
- Show how your **volleyball participation supports** that value



Try not to highlight too many things that are important to you. Focus on quality over quantity.

- **One clear sentence** stating what is important to you.
- Develop this idea **throughout your response**.
- Avoid listing multiple values with **incomplete reasoning**.

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Personal Profile Question 3 - Short Form Descriptions

(50 words each/300 chars) Describe up to five activities that you have pursued or accomplishments achieved in one or more of the following areas. Please outline the nature of your responsibilities within these activities:

- Club
- Family/community responsibilities
- Creative or performing arts
- Work/employment
- Athletics
- Volunteer
- Service to others
- Other(s)

Direct and Specific Responses

Concise (50-word) Descriptions

No right/wrong answer

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Personal Profile Question 3 - Approaches

Tip #1: Create a list of all of your extracurriculars, and describe them all in 50 words. Then, choose the most meaningful ones to you!

Tip #2: Make sure to explain the **IMPACT** behind your activities, don't just give a description of what you did.

Tip #3: Maximize the word count. 50 words is not a lot - try to use all of them.

Tip #4: UBC likes seeing long-term commitments. If you've put a decent amount of effort in for 2+ years, it's a worthy mention on your profile.

Tip #5: Don't use complex / flowery language when it is not necessary!

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I have spent the last three years serving as an executive member on my school's math club. I was inspired to do so after my experience struggling and feeling isolated in grades 8 and 9 with my math homework. I was president this year after three years of hard work.

In hopes of motivating and supporting students who experienced challenges in math, I led lunchtime and after-school math tutoring sessions as an executive and president of the math club. I coordinated with available teachers and planned sessions and content based on student feedback collected from eight different math classes.

49 words each.

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I have spent the last three years serving as an executive member on my school's math club. I was inspired to do so after my experience struggling and feeling isolated in grades 8 and 9 with my math homework. I was president this year after three years of hard work.

Discusses the role, not the actions

Does not explain impact

In hopes of motivating and supporting students who experienced challenges in math, I led lunchtime and after-school math tutoring sessions as an executive and president of the math club. I coordinated with available teachers and planned sessions and content based on student feedback collected from eight different math classes.

Uses strong words (motivating, supporting)

Explains goals/impact

Explains some detailed actions

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UBC Personal Profile Question 4 - Essay

Tell us more about one or two activities listed above that are most important to you. Please explain the role you played and what you learned in the process. You will be asked for a reference who can speak to your response. **(350 - 400 words)**

Detailed response

Demonstrates
interest, thorough
understanding of
impacts

Discuss learning

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- A** Describe activities that are **IMPORTANT TO YOU**. Choose an extracurricular that you have dedicated lots of time and energy to you, or one that is meaningful to you.
- B** **POSITION vs. ROLE:** Position = "President, VP". Role = How your actions and participation contributed to the overall picture. What impacts did you make?
- C** Don't shy away from discussing challenges and how you overcame them. This can help answer the question: What did you learn?

Key idea: This is your chance to talk about an extracurricular activity, your contributions, and how you made a difference or gained skills. Talk about mistakes, challenges, and highlights.

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1 Beedie Luminaries Scholarship (SHINE)

- For BC Grade 12 students facing financial adversity
- Canadian citizens or permanent residents (3+ years)
- Supports any post-secondary program in BC
- Award up to \$44,000

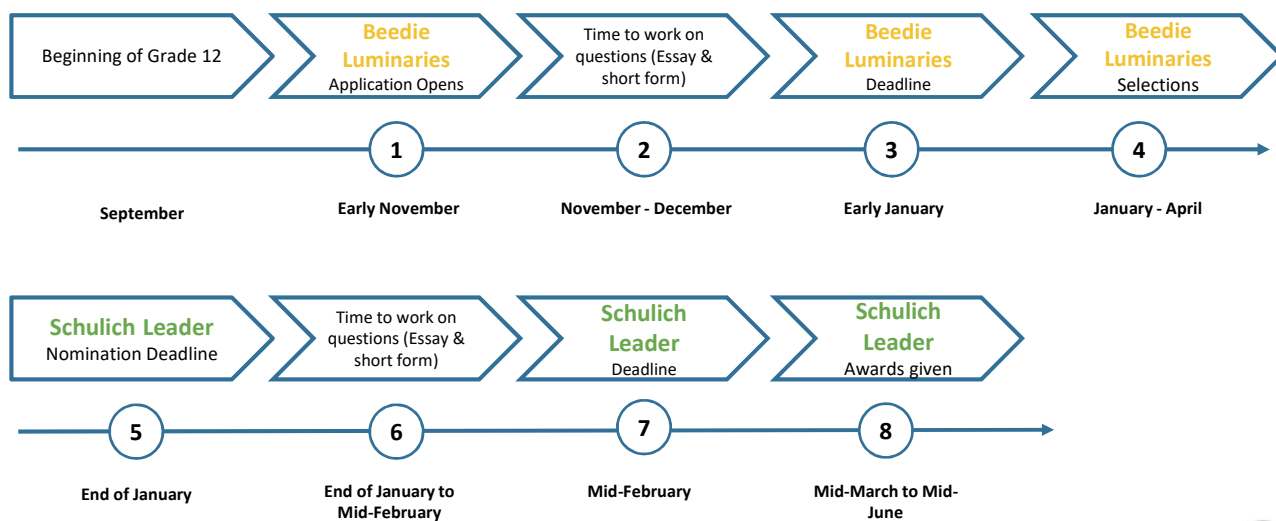
2 Schulich Leader Scholarships

- For Canadian high school graduates
- Must be nominated by their school (typically 1 per school)
- Focused on STEM degrees at partner universities (20 across Canada)
- Award: \$100,000–\$120,000 over 4 years

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Application Timeline - Scholarships



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What to Expect

Questions about **Personal Values**

Impacts of **personal challenges**, and the process of **overcoming** them

Describing the impact(s) of **financial adversity**, and receiving the scholarship

Discussing personal **strengths & weaknesses**

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Final Insights

Start as early as possible.

Give yourself time to make edits and develop your responses.

Set an internal deadline.

Setting a deadline for yourself before the application due date can help you stay on track.

Have multiple reviewers.*

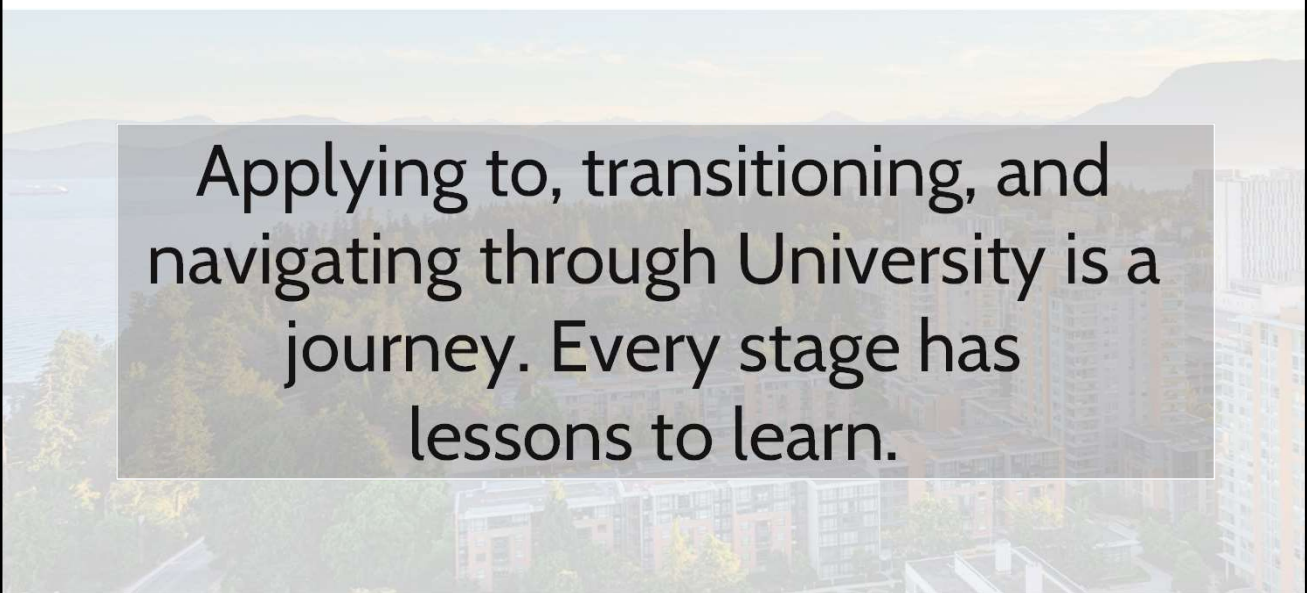
Having friends/coworkers/family members provide feedback can be very helpful!

Answer the question.

Make sure you connect your experiences and insights back to the question asked.

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Applying to, transitioning, and navigating through University is a journey. Every stage has lessons to learn.