Kent Law School: Informal Guide to Writing LLM Scholarship Applications

So you have found a masters course, you may even have made an application and have been made an offer, and now you are thinking about funding. There are lots of good reasons for applying for a scholarship. Receiving a scholarship obviously makes a significant financial contribution to your studies. But it is also a marker of your abilities and qualities which should impress future employers. So it’s well worth investing the time and effort into writing a good application.

So what is it that makes a good application? There is no one “right” way to complete a scholarship application. No two scholarship holders are alike. However, there is some general advice we can give you. We hope you will find this informal guide helpful should you decide to apply for the Kent Law School LLM scholarships – and maybe other scholarships too.

1. **Research your scholarships.** Make sure you know the criteria by which the scholarship that you are applying for is awarded. Brainstorm how you fit the criteria. Write your application to these criteria. Show the scholarship panel how your achievements, experience and skills to date and your future plans satisfy these criteria.

2. **Make sure you read, understand and follow the scholarship’s formal specifications.** For example, does the scholarship require you to have been accepted already? Is this a scholarship you need to apply for, or are you automatically entered into the competition? When is the deadline? Follow the formal requirements the scholarship sets and pay close attention to word lengths. Provide all the information asked for.

3. **Do your homework.** You are likely to be asked to submit a personal statement or, for Kent Law School scholarship, a case for the award. So you will need to show you are committed to the programme and what you would bring to it. This means you need to have researched the course and the Law School. Try to be as specific as possible and personalise what is
offered to you, your experiences and accomplishments. Give evidence and concrete examples. For example, don’t just tell us you want to contribute to a better world (if indeed you do!). Instead, tell us what you want to change/achieve, and why, and how an LLM in your chosen subject area(s) might help you to do so. Each case for the award is individual to each candidate but it should be related to the specific course and scholarship you are applying for. So you will probably need to write more than one personal statement/ case for support if you are applying for more than one scholarship.

4. You may think that you are not the typical LLM student or scholar but there is no such person! Here at Kent Law School we welcome graduates from all over the world, including graduates with degrees in subjects other than in Law. But to be as convincing as possible you need to explain to us how your experiences, achievements and skills to date (whatever they are) make you a good candidate. Let your individuality shine through! Let the Committee know what is driving and motivating you.

5. Choose your essay carefully. At Kent Law School we ask for a writing sample. This writing sample can be on any topic but you should think carefully about what is your best academic work that showcases your best academic research and writing.

6. Don’t be shy. Tell us about your achievements and strengths. Remember the scholarship committee only knows about your achievements if you include them and explain their significance. You could for example highlight their significance for your chosen area of study and future plans. Usually, your most recent achievements will be the most relevant – so you probably won’t need to go back as far as primary school!
7. **Think carefully about your referees.** Ask people who know you well, who can comment on your work and who have the time to write as full a reference on your academic abilities and potential as possible. Referees should know you from an academic (or sometimes professional) context so don’t simply ask a family friend. Referees are busy people so ask your chosen referees in good time well before the deadline and take the time to explain to them your motivation for studying an LLM at Kent. Providing your referees with information on the course and scholarship that you are applying for can help them to write as full a reference as possible.

8. **Write well.** Good writing takes time. Give yourself plenty of time to write the application and then plenty more time to edit it. Think about how you are structuring your case. Proof read your work for typos and English errors.

9. **Get as much feedback on your application as you are able.** If you can, ask a “critical friend” to read your application for you. Sometimes a critical friend may be able to point to strengths or achievements that you’ve overlooked. In order to have sufficient time to ask for, and receive, feedback you will need to complete your application well before the deadline.

10. **Apply for everything that is open to you.** Remember there may be more than one scholarship or bursary that you can apply for. Search widely - the University funding pages are a good place to start. Don’t forget other sources of funding across the University and beyond.

11. **Apply.** This is worth repeating. **Apply.** Scholarship applications are very competitive but every year applicants, who doubted their chances, have been successful. If you are
unsuccessful it does not necessarily mean you were not deserving of a scholarship. There are many worthy candidates, but one thing is sure. You won’t get one if you don’t apply!

And finally, good luck!

This is not an official guide issued by the University of Kent.