

Have a Dream

A Post-Secondary Guide for African Nova Scotian Students

Set **goals**

Ask for **help**

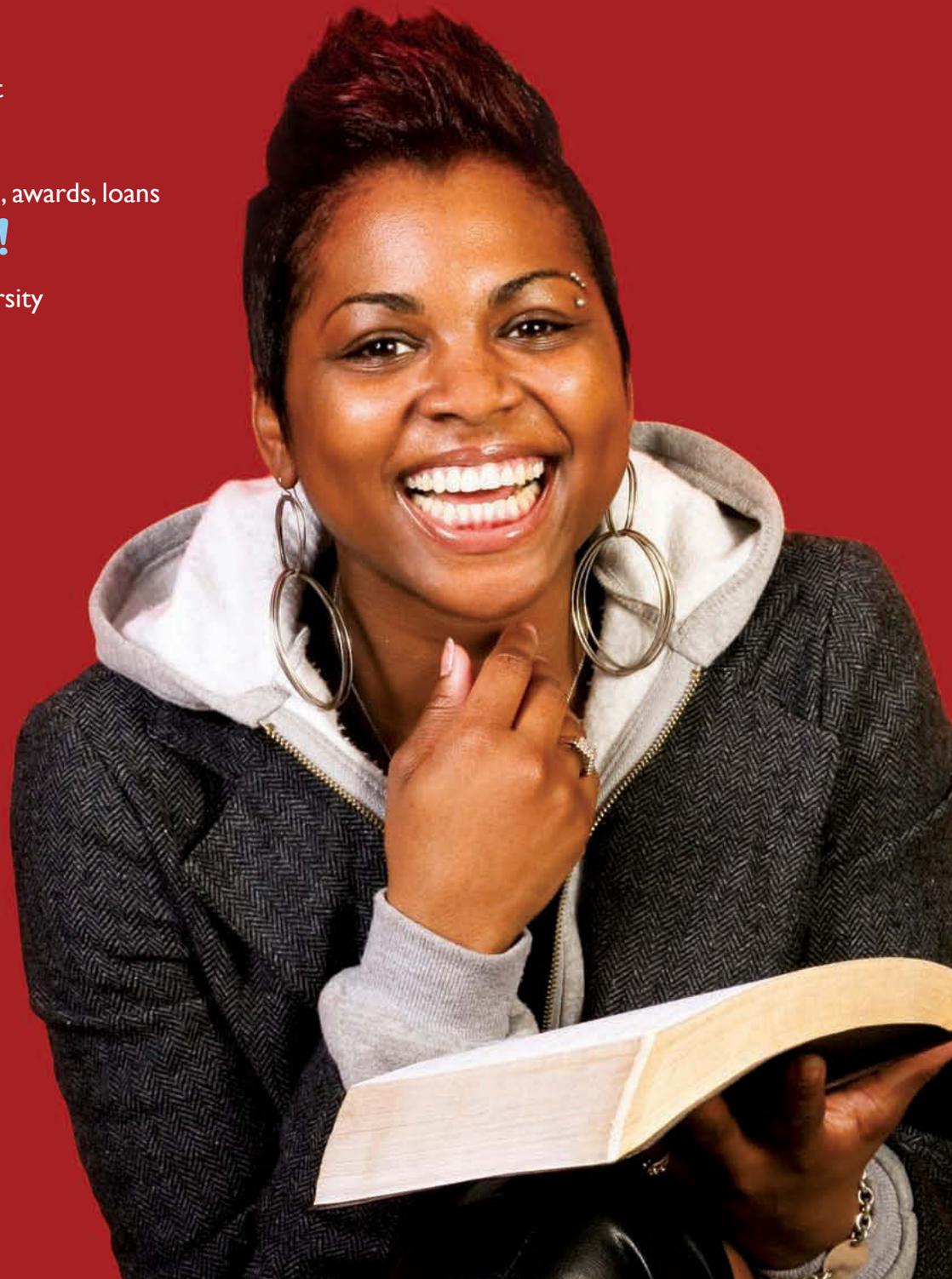
Make **high school** count

Find the **right** program

Get **scholarships**, bursaries, awards, loans

Create applications that **Pop!**

Thrive at college or university



Halifax Regional
School Board

A Message from the Superintendent

Dear Students:

I am pleased to share this important resource for African Nova Scotian students. It has been developed to help you plan for your post-secondary education—at university, college, or through apprenticeship training. It offers tips about choosing a career path, finding the right school or program for your needs, getting financial help, and more. Most of all, it offers a wide-open invitation to a positive future and a welcoming challenge to take the next steps.

You are standing at the threshold of a new age—a new time in your own life, and a new era for this province. Nova Scotia needs an educated, diverse, confident workforce that draws wisdom from the past and is equipped for the 21st century. I believe that you can succeed and make a constructive difference in this world, and I am committed to helping you reach for your highest potential. My role is to ensure that your school experience provides you with the best possible education up to Grade 12, and that you graduate with the skills and passion to continue learning throughout your lifetime.

It is never too early, and never too late, to start gathering information about your options for a post-secondary education and future careers. I invite you to take an important step now by reading this guide, on your own and with your family. I hope that the information you find here will spark your interest in post-secondary education, fuel your determination to succeed, and help you to take the next positive steps toward a satisfying career and the life you really want.

A Note to Families

You have heard the African proverb, “It takes a village to raise a child.” For each child to succeed, we all need to work together—students, families, schools, and communities. Know that you are not alone in seeking the best for your children. Get to know the people and resources at the school and in the community, and stay in regular contact with them.

Throughout the high school years, it is important that you continue taking an active role in your children’s education. Keep track of how well they are doing; help them to maintain a healthy, balanced life; and encourage them to continue their studies. Let them know that you will be there for them through the tough times, and that together you’ll learn what to do next to help them reach their goals. Above all, keep an open mind, dream together, and plan together for the future.

I wish each of you the inspiration to realize your dreams, and the tools to succeed.



Carole Olsen
Superintendent, Halifax Regional School Board

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About This Guide

This guide was compiled by a dedicated team of African Nova Scotian Student Support Workers and Student Support Workers, led by **Sheila Lucas**, Facilitator, African Nova Scotian Student Support, Program Department, Halifax Regional School Board.

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Thanks also to the members of Youth of Today, a student organization at Auburn Drive High School, for their encouraging messages.

Other quotes and proverbs that appear throughout this guide were drawn from *The Complete Kwanzaa: Celebrating Our Cultural Festival*, by Dorothy Winbush Riley (New Jersey: Castle Books, 2002).

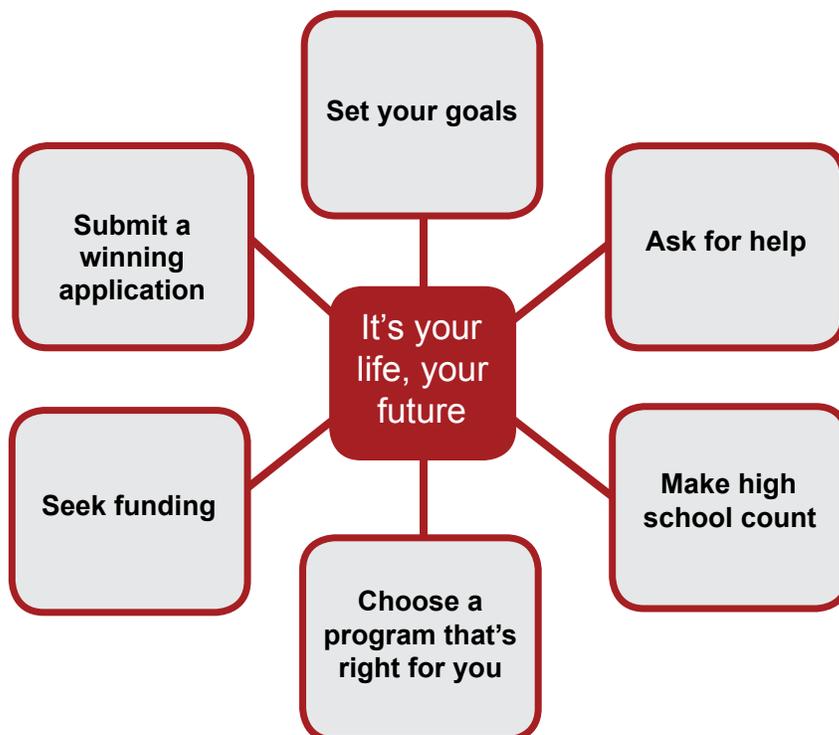
A Note About Web Links

This guide includes several links to external Internet sites. These are provided as a convenience and for educational or informational purposes only. HRSB is not responsible for the availability, accuracy or content of these external sites, nor does HRSB endorse, warrant or guarantee the products, services, opinions, or information described or offered on these sites.

Quick Tips

The following graphic summarizes the main ideas in this guide. Each square represents one chapter. Within each chapter you'll find quick tips, practical pointers, and quotable quotes to inspire you on your post-secondary journey.

For definitions of some of the terms used in this guide, see the Glossary of Terms, starting on the next page.



Glossary of Terms

academic advisor. A person assigned by your post-secondary institution to advise you about the courses you must complete and other expectations you must meet in order to graduate. The advisor is usually a professor or other member of the faculty.

advanced standing. Credit granted for meeting certain requirements of a program without having to complete those requirements at the institution where you are studying. For example, you may be able to skip an introductory-level course in a program if you pass a qualifying exam or if you are able to demonstrate that a course you completed elsewhere meets the same requirements. In some programs, you may qualify for advanced standing if you are a mature student and have relevant work experience.

affirmative action. A way to improve opportunities for education or employment by reserving a number of placements for people who historically have not had equitable access (e.g., for students from First Nations or African Nova Scotian communities). Unlike a transition year program (*TYP*), where the admission requirements might be modified or waived, an affirmative action program requires the candidates to meet the standard admission requirements in order to secure a designated spot.

apprenticeship. A regulated program for learning a skilled trade or craft, involving a combination of paid on-the-job experience, technical instruction, and supervision by a certified journey person.

articulation agreement. An agreement between two institutions (for example, between a college and university) allowing a student to use credits earned at one institution toward a degree or diploma at another institution.

bursary. A cash award to help you pay for your post-secondary education. A bursary is different from a loan because you do not have to repay it. In most cases, bursaries are awarded based on a combination of your financial need and your academic or life achievement. (For other types of financial assistance, see *grant*, *scholarship*, and *student loan*.)

community college. A post-secondary institution that offers technical and/or vocational courses leading to a diploma or a certificate. In some cases, credits earned at a community college can be applied to a university degree.

compulsory course. A course that you must complete in order to fulfill the graduation requirements for your program of study.

concentration. A focus of study. Some professional programs require you to choose a concentration in one subject area, and to complete a certain number of credits in that subject. (Also see *major/minor*.)

co-op program. A co-operative work/study program that combines academic study with practical, on-the-job experience. Through co-op studies, students have the opportunity to gain relevant work experience, career contacts, employer references and, in some cases, payment for work.

co-requisite. A course that you must take at the same time as, or in combination with, another course. (Also see *prerequisite*.)

elective. An optional course that is not required for you to complete your program of study.

faculty. The teaching staff at a school, college, or university.

grant. A government-funded financial gift to help you pay for your post-secondary education. A grant is like a bursary but different from a loan because you do not have to repay it. In Canada, government-funded grants and loans are administered through the Canada Student Loans Program. (For other types of financial assistance, see *bursary*, *scholarship*, and *student loan*.)

major/minor. An area of specialization or focus of study in a degree-granting program. If you are majoring in something, it means that you are taking the majority of your courses in a particular subject area. If you are minoring in something, it means that you are taking at least some minimum number of courses in one particular area. A program of study may include only a major focus, only a minor focus, or a combination of major and minor interests. For example, you might major in Business Administration with a minor in Sociology. (Also see *concentration*.)

prerequisite. A condition that you must meet (for example, a course that you must complete) before you can register for a program or specific course. (Also see *co-requisite*.)

private career college. A private business that offers occupational training programs for adults in fields such as secretarial services, massage therapy, paralegal services, business, cosmetology, information technology, truck driving, and more.

probation. (Also called academic probation). Conditional acceptance in a program of study. If you are on probation, it means that you must meet certain standards or qualifications in order to continue in the program.

registrar. An official or office responsible for managing student admissions, student records, and course timetables at a college or university.

résumé. A brief summary of your qualifications, designed to support your application for a job, program of study, or financial assistance.

scholarship. A financial award or fee exemption to encourage you to attend a particular college or university program. Scholarships are usually awarded based on a student's achievements and on his or her potential to bring honour to the college or university. (For other types of financial assistance, see *bursary*, *grant*, and *student loan*.)

student loan. Financial assistance that you must repay, usually with interest. (For other types of financial assistance, see *bursary*, *grant*, and *student loan*.)

transcript. The official record of the courses you completed and the marks you earned at school or in another program.

TYP (Transition Year Program). A program offered by some institutions to ease the transition into full-time post-secondary studies – especially for students who do not meet all the academic requirements for admission. (Also see *affirmative action*.)

undergraduate. A person taking his or her first level of post-secondary studies at a university – for example, in a program leading to a Bachelor of Arts degree or a diploma or certificate. If you continue your formal studies after obtaining a Bachelor's degree (for example, in a Master's program), you are considered to be a graduate student.

1 Set Your Goals

Online Career Cruising
Options and Opportunities



“If you think you can do it then I know you can do it. If you know what you want to be or where you want to go, then there’s nothing or no excuse to stop you from achieving your goal.”

~Ryan Vaillancourt, Auburn Drive High School

Remember these Quick Tips:

- **Know what you want.** Choose a post-secondary program that leads to the life and career you want.
- **Explore your career options.** Ask about online Career Cruising and about the Options and Opportunities (O2) program.

Your success in school and in life begins with the belief that you can make it happen. Oprah Winfrey said it well: “Your belief combined with your willingness to fulfill your dreams is what makes success possible.”¹

In addition to your belief and willingness, there’s a third essential ingredient for success: practical information! To be able to plan the future you want, you need practical information about your strengths and interests, and about careers and career training.

Online Career Cruising

There are some excellent online resources that will help you learn about careers that might suit you. One popular resource is Career Cruising. To access it, you will need a user name and password, which your guidance counsellor will provide. Career Cruising is very easy to use. These are the main features:

- **Career Matchmaker** – a survey to help you find careers that match your interests.
- **Explore Careers** – information on a wide range of careers, featuring multimedia interviews with real people in real careers. This section is very user friendly and extremely popular with students. Use it to find out about all kinds of career options – from carpentry to crime scene investigation, and much more.
- **Explore Education and Training** – tips on where to get the education and training you need to start your career.
- **Portfolio** – a place to keep track of information about yourself and the careers and training that interest you, for personal reference and for résumé building.

¹Riley, Dorothy Winbush. (2002). *The Complete Kwanzaa: Celebrating Our Cultural Festival*. New Jersey: Castle Books. p. 281.

Options and Opportunities (O2)

Some students learn better by doing. That's where the Options and Opportunities (O2) program can help. It gives high school students the chance to get out of the classroom and learn what jobs are really about, so they can decide if they'd like to make a career out of one of them.

Options and Opportunities can help you successfully move from high school to work, a career path, or a post-secondary program. The academic curriculum is connected to a career theme that shows how you can apply what you learn in school to a job after you graduate.

The O2 program started at Auburn Drive High School in 2005-06 as a pilot project. It seems to have paid dividends. Students are more interested in school, and are earning better grades.

In 2009-2010, the program expanded to these schools:

- Sir John A. MacDonald
- Sackville High
- J.L. Ilsley High
- Charles P. Allen
- Lockview
- Citadel High
- Dartmouth High
- Millwood High
- Auburn Drive High
- Prince Andrew High
- Eastern Shore District High.

The participating schools offer O2 programs in the following subject areas:

- Trades and Technologies
- Business Education
- Health and Human Services
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Arts, Culture, and Recreation
- Information Technology (IT).

“Make plans, explore your options, learn from past experiences, share knowledge, and work hard in school.”

~LaMeia Reddick, Auburn Drive High School

2

Ask for Help

At High School

At Home

At the College or University

In the Community



“The work of human beings is to watch out for each other.”

~Whoopi Goldberg

Remember these Quick Tips:

- **Know where to go for help** – at school, at home, and in the community.
- **Stay in touch.** Make it part of your routine to stop by Student Services to visit your guidance counsellor, African Nova Scotian Student Support Worker, or Student Support Worker. New applications are always arriving, and information about new programs and awards can usually be found there.

At High School

Preparing for your post-secondary destination can be exciting, but it involves a lot of planning and decision-making. Often, as the Grade 12 year progresses, the excitement can turn into stress as the pressure mounts to meet application deadlines and make sure all of your courses are in order. Take heart: help is nearby.

The first and most accessible support is your high school guidance counsellor. High school guidance counsellors have lots of information and strategies to help you deal with the following:

- course selection
- the post-secondary application process, including deadlines and academic requirements
- financial assistance
- emotional issues
- social interactions
- school assignments
- reference letters.

Support is also available from your teachers, African Nova Scotian Student Support Workers or Student Support Workers, peer groups, public health nurses, and other individuals.

“Don’t fall behind in your work, and do go to your teachers for extra help.”

~Sarah Johnston, Auburn Drive High School

At Home

Your parents, guardians, and other family members are important allies in the quest for a post-secondary education. Talk to them, ask questions, share your hopes and dreams, and include them in your search to learn more.

At the College or University

The college or university where you hope to study will have individuals and whole departments that exist to serve students. Get to know them now and learn ways to make the most of their services in the years to come. For example:

- The **registrar's office** is responsible for processing applications, and can provide information and advice on the application process.
- An **academic advisor** will be assigned to you after you are accepted by the college or university. This person will give you information about how to meet your degree or program requirements. You may have to meet with your academic advisor before you register for classes.
- **Black student advisors** are employed at some post-secondary institutions, such as Dalhousie University and St. Mary's University. Nova Scotia Community College has a Coordinator of African Canadian Student Success. Ask the registrar's office for contact information, since this can change from year to year.
- The **counselling centre** can help you with personal issues and can also help you make career decisions. In some institutions, personal and career counselling are in separate locations. Use the insight you gain in career counselling to help you make good course choices.

Appendix A lists basic contact information for many of the post-secondary institutions in the Halifax Regional Municipality.

In the Community

The following organizations provide direct and indirect support to students and their families:

- **Black Educators Association**
2136 Gottingen Street
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3K 3B3
Phone: 902-424-7036
Fax: 902-424-0636
Toll Free: 1-800-565-3398
Website: <http://bea.eastlink.ca>

The Black Educators Association (BEA) helps African Nova Scotian communities to develop strategies for an equitable education system. BEA representatives sometimes act as advocates for families and youth in the African Nova Scotian community. BEA also offers a tutoring service for students from elementary to senior high school.

- **African Canadian Services Division**

Nova Scotia Department of Education
2021 Brunswick Street
P.O. Box 578
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2S9
Phone: 902-424-3151
Fax: 902-424-7210
Website: <http://acs.ednet.ns.ca>

The Division was established in February 1996 to implement the Department's response to the *Black Learners Advisory Committee (BLAC) Report on Education: Redressing Inequity – Empowering Black Learners*. Visit the Division website for valuable information about scholarships and awards.

- **Council on African Canadian Education (CACE)**

2021 Brunswick Street
P.O. Box 578
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2S9
Phone: 902-424-2678
Fax: 902-424-7210
Website: <http://www.cace.ns.ca>

CACE provides advice to the Minister of Education on educational issues and concerns, and plays a key role in monitoring implementation of the BLAC Report recommendations. It does not generally provide direct support to students and their families.

**“Let nothing and nobody break your spirit.
Let the unity in the community remain intact.”**

~Jesse Jackson

“When you do the things you have to do when you have to do them, the day will come when you can do the things you want to do when you want to do them.”

~Zig Ziglar

3 : Make High School Count

- Meet Graduation Requirements
- Know Your Post-Secondary Prerequisites
- Get the International Baccalaureate Edge



“If you are planning to further your education, get your act together and get your grades and routine in order.”

~Nyesha Sparks, Auburn Drive High School

Remember these Quick Tips:

- **Know what you need to succeed.** Ensure that you have the credits you need to earn your high school diploma and that you have the courses *and* marks to qualify for your preferred post-secondary program.
- **Higher marks = Higher dividends!** Admissions and scholarships are often awarded based on your marks. Higher marks can lead to more options and bigger scholarship awards. Remember that the first marks you get in your graduation year might be the ones you report on your application for scholarships and awards, so make them count!
- **Manage your time wisely.** Maintain a healthy balance between your studies and other activities, including sports and community life.
- **Consider the International Baccalaureate (IB) program.** The IB program started in 2007 and is for high-achieving students in Grades 11 and 12. It might give you an edge to win scholarships and admission to your preferred university program.

Meet the High School Graduation Requirements

For information about the courses you must complete in order to graduate from high school, see your high school course selection guide or talk to your guidance counsellor. The graduation requirements are also contained in *Public School Programs, 2003–2004*, published by the Nova Scotia Department of Education (available online at http://www.ednet.ns.ca/pdfdocs/psp/psp_03_04_full.pdf).

Definition of a Credit

A high school credit is awarded in recognition of the successful completion of an approved course that would normally be completed in a minimum of 110 hours of scheduled time.²

“Work hard in Grade 12 because those are the marks that will get you where you want to go.”

~Kaitlin Sparks, Auburn Drive High School

²Nova Scotia Department of Education. (2003). *Public School Programs, 2003–2004*. p. B-14

Credit Types

There are four types of high school credits:³

- **Academic.** Academic courses are designed for students who expect to enter college, university, or other post-secondary institutions.
- **Advanced.** Advanced courses are designed to meet the needs of students who have demonstrated an exceptional degree of academic ability or achievement.
- **Graduation.** Graduation courses are designed for students who wish to earn a graduation diploma with a view to proceeding to employment or some selected area of post-secondary study.
- **Open.** Although none of the open courses are designed to meet the specific entrance requirements of any post-secondary institution, individual courses may meet entrance requirements of some institutions.

Know the Requirements of Your Post-Secondary Program

All your courses will help you get a well-rounded high school education, but not all courses will necessarily help you get into the post-secondary program you want. In particular, look at your Grade 12 courses. Do they match the requirements for the post-secondary programs that interest you? Do your grades meet or exceed the standards for admission? If yes, congratulations! If not, here are some of your options:

- Upgrade or pick up the missing courses next term, or through correspondence, online learning, night school, or summer school.
- Register for an additional semester in high school.
- Find out if you meet the criteria for a Transition Year Program (TYP) to complete your high school credits. For example, Nova Scotia Community College offers a Transition Year Program for students who are 19 years of age or older, have been out of school for at least one full year, and have successfully completed Grade 10.⁴

The following table shows examples of the admission requirements for two institutions.

³Nova Scotia Department of Education. (2003). *Public School Programs, 2003–2004*. p. B-15

⁴Nova Scotia Community College. (2006). *African Canadian Transition Program*. Retrieved from http://www.nsccl.ca/services/african_canadian_transition_program.asp

Example 1: St. Mary's University

To be eligible for consideration in the following programs at St. Mary's University, the minimum average required for admission is 65% with no mark below 60% in the appropriate courses listed below, depending on the program:

- For Arts:
 - English 12 academic
 - Four additional academic 12 courses
- For Commerce:
 - English 12 academic
 - Math 11 & Math 12 or Advanced Math 11 & 12 or Pre-Calculus 12 or Calculus 12
- For Science:
 - English 12 academic
 - Pre-Calculus 12 or Calculus 12
 - Two academic 12 Science courses
 - One additional academic 12 course

Example 2: Mount Saint Vincent University

To be eligible for consideration at Mount Saint Vincent University (the Mount), you need to graduate from high school with the following qualifications:

1. A minimum of five university preparatory courses at the Grade 12 level, with an overall average of 70% or higher, and no individual grade below 60%.

Applicants whose Grade 12 averages are between 65% and 69% will be reviewed for admission on an individual basis. If admitted to the university, these applicants will normally be required to complete Student Success Programs in addition to the requirements of their degrees.

Consideration will also be given to students who meet the following criteria:

2. English Grade 12 academic with a grade of 65% or higher, and at least four other Grade 12 academic courses approved by the provincial Department of Education and acceptable to Mount Saint Vincent University.

“It takes time to build a castle”

~Irish Proverb

Get the International Baccalaureate (IB) Edge

High school students looking for more of a challenge in the classroom will be able to enroll in the prestigious International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program.

The IB program is an advanced liberal arts diploma meant for high-achieving students in Grades 11 and 12. Pre-IB courses will also be offered in Grade 10. The IB diploma is recognized by universities.

The schools offering the IP Program are as follows:

- Citadel High
- Halifax West
- CP Allen
- Cole Harbour

For details, see your guidance counsellor or visit <http://www.ibo.org/diploma>.

4 : Choose a Post-Secondary Program That's Right for You

• Shop Around

• Stay in Town or Move Away?

• Transition Programs and Affirmative Action

• Accommodations for Different Abilities

• Compulsory Courses, Elective Courses



“Keep your head up. Take courses that fit your future.”
~Julian Colley, Auburn Drive High School

Remember these Quick Tips:

- **Watch for announcements.** Often institutions announce program openings in the local newspapers and media. Also check the bulletin board in the Student Services office at your school.
- **Attend presentations and open houses.** Colleges and universities often give presentations in high schools, or open their doors to let students know what programs they offer and what financial help is available. These are great sources of information.
- **Gather opinions.** Talk to people who have already taken the program you want or who are working in your chosen field. Ask them about their experiences, but always remember that experiences vary from person to person. Do not let someone's negative experience deter you from enrolling in the program you want.
- **Look for programs and supports to match your learning needs.** You may qualify for a transition program or affirmative action initiative. As well, if you have special needs or different abilities, you may be entitled to supports or program accommodations.
- **Think beyond a sports career.** A sports scholarship can be a great asset; however, a sports career can end abruptly due to injury. Therefore, choose courses that will prepare you for a career after sports, and keep up your studies.

Shop Around

When you have decided on a career path, the next step is to choose a post-secondary program that's right for you. This might be at a university, a community college, a private career college, or through an apprenticeship training program.

These are some things to consider when deciding where to send your applications:

- the availability of the program you wish to study
- the reputation of the institution – especially among prospective employers

- the availability of academic supports – such as career, personal or academic counselling, and accommodations for physical, sensory or learning needs
- course schedules – including options for daytime, evening, and part-time studies
- geographical location – for example, within the city or beyond commuting distance
- housing options – including on-campus and off-campus assistance
- extracurricular activities
- availability of financial assistance.

After you have narrowed your choices, you may want to arrange a visit to some of the campuses to meet with instructors and administrative staff. Some universities and colleges offer campus tours, either at scheduled times throughout the academic year or by appointment. For example, Nova Scotia Community College will let you take a “test drive” on campus, where you will have the opportunity to visit some actual classes and experience a day in the life of a college student. Your guidance counsellor, African Nova Scotian Student Support Worker, or Student Support Worker can book a tour or test drive with the registrar’s office. You may also contact the institution directly through the registrar’s office or the student association. For more information, see chapter 2, “Ask for Help”.

Stay in Town or Move Away?

There are many reasons why you might choose to move away from home to study, and making this decision can be difficult. There may be pressure from your parents, teachers, or friends to make a decision one way or the other. It is important that you make a choice that is right for you. Here are some things you can do to help you decide:

- Write a list of all the advantages and disadvantages for going away to study.
- Talk about your reasons with your family and friends.
- Research different post-secondary institutions and compare their programs.

For a list of colleges and universities in the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), see **Appendix A**.

“You must have a focus; teachers are here to help you, but it is you who must do the work to be successful.”

Simone Armstrong, Auburn Drive High School

For information about universities throughout Canada, see the *Directory of Canadian Universities*, published annually by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC). Check your local library for a print copy of the directory, or search the directory database online at http://www.aucc.ca/can_uni/index_e.html.

Find Out About Transition Year Programs (TYPs) and Affirmative Action

Some schools, such as Dalhousie University and Nova Scotia Community College, offer a **Transition Year Program (TYP)**. The Dalhousie program is designed for students from First Nations and African Canadian communities. The Nova Scotia Community College program is designed for African Nova Scotian students. The intent of both programs is to make post-secondary education available to students who want to continue their education but who do not meet standard entrance requirements.

At Dalhousie:

- The TYP faculty and staff include members of the African Canadian and First Nations communities.
- All TYP students must attend Orientation Week.
- African Canadian, non-status Aboriginal, and Métis students may be eligible for bursaries, based on financial need, during their attendance in the Transition Year Program. These bursaries include tuition, books and, in some cases, a small living allowance.
- Students who complete TYP successfully are eligible for a tuition waiver for their first degree, as long as they remain in good academic standing with a minimum 2.0 Grade Point Average (GPA).

For more information about the Dalhousie program, contact the Director, Transition Year Program, 902-494-3730, or go to <http://transitionyear.dal.ca>.

The Transition Year Program at Nova Scotia Community College started in September 2006. For more information, contact the Coordinator, African Canadian Transition Program, Akerley Campus, 902-491-4952, or go to <http://www.nsc.ca>.

Some institutions also offer affirmative action to improve access to higher education for people who historically have not had equitable access. In an affirmative action

program, some number of placements are reserved for students who are part of a designated group (e.g., from First Nations or African Nova Scotian communities). To qualify for **affirmative action**, you must meet the admission requirements of the institution. In that way affirmative action is different from a Transition Year Program, where the admission requirements might be modified or waived.

Ask About Accommodations for Different Abilities or Special Needs

Post-secondary institutions usually have accommodation services for students who need specialized equipment or additional help with their studies. If you need adaptations or special program arrangements, check to see what is offered by the post-secondary institutions that interest you. For more information, visit the following websites:

- Post-secondary Disability Services (<http://www.psds.ednet.ns.ca>)
- Nova Scotia Community College (<http://www.nsc.ca>).

Know the Compulsory and Elective Courses for Your Program

Once you have been accepted into a post-secondary program, remember to stay in contact with your academic advisor to ensure you are taking the correct courses. Your advisor will explain all about *compulsory courses*, *electives*, *concentrations*, *majors and minors*, *prerequisites*, *co-requisites*, and more. See the Glossary of Terms at the front of this guide for some help speaking the language.

“We create our own destiny by the way we do things. We have to take advantage of opportunities and be responsible for our choices.”

~Benjamin Carson



5

Seek Funding

- Scholarships, Bursaries, Awards, Loans
- Go Online

“A man who has no imagination has no wings.”
~Muhammad Ali

Remember these Quick Tips:

- **Start early.** Grade 10 is a good time to start gathering information about the programs that interest you, and the scholarships and bursaries that could help pay your way. Find out how to apply and what qualifications you need to succeed.
- **Know your financial options.** Explore all sources of funding, including scholarships, bursaries, and student loans. Know what's offered by colleges or universities, and what's available in your community. Often businesses, churches, community groups, and local organizations offer their own awards to graduating students in their communities. Also check any union groups to which your parents or family members may belong.
- **Dig deeper.** Keep going when you have received an award. Find out what other scholarships and supports are offered locally.

Know the Types of Funding

Financing your education can be a big challenge. If you need financial help, consider these options:

- bursaries
- scholarships
- student loans or grants
- summer employment or a part-time job on or off campus
- apprenticeship and co-operative work/study programs.

There is no limit to the number of bursaries, scholarships, or other awards you can apply for from year to year. For practical tips on the application process, see Chapter 6, “Submit a Winning Application”.

Bursaries

A bursary is a cash award to help you pay for your post-secondary education. It is different from a loan because you do not have to repay it. Normally you must be able to demonstrate financial need to be considered for a bursary, so in that way it is different from a *scholarship*. Some bursaries are awarded based on a combination of your financial need and your academic or life achievement.

Scholarships

Some scholarships provide a financial award or fee exemption to encourage you to attend a particular college or university program. Others are not associated with a particular post-secondary institution, but may be associated with a particular field of study (e.g., Business or Law). Scholarships are usually awarded based on your achievements and on your potential to bring honour to the institution. As long as you meet the requirements of the award, the money does not have to be repaid.

Student Loans or Grants

Student loans are available through the Canada Student Loans (CSL) program and the Provincial Student Loans (PSL) program. The CSL is funded through the federal government while the PSL is funded through individual provinces. Contact your provincial student loan office for either application. You must begin to repay your student loan six months after completing your full-time degree program. If you switch to part-time studies, you will begin to pay interest on the loan, and must start repaying the principle six months after completing the program. If you do not complete the program, you must make payment arrangements with your financial institution. If you arrange financing through a financial institution, ask the loans officer if you are eligible for interest relief.⁵

The Canada Student Loans program also offers a limited number of grants. A grant is a financial gift to help you pay for your post-secondary education. It is like a bursary but different from a loan because you do not have to repay it.

Student Employment

For tips on getting a part-time or summer job, either on or off campus, see your high school guidance counsellor or visit the student centre at the college or university.

Apprenticeship and Co-op Programs

Apprenticeship is an agreement between an apprentice and an employer in which the apprentice agrees to work for the employer in exchange for extensive supervised, on-the-job experience and technical training.⁶ Apprentices are paid for their work, and pay a tuition fee for their training. For more information, visit the Apprenticeship Training and Skill Development website of the Nova Scotia Department of Education at <http://www.apprenticeship.ednet.ns.ca>.

⁵Nova Scotia Department of Education, Student Assistance. (no date). *Maintaining and Repaying Your Loan*. Retrieved from <http://studentloans.ednet.ns.ca/info2005/maintaining01.shtml#03>

⁶Nova Scotia Department of Education, Apprenticeship Training and Skill Development. (no date). *Frequently Asked Questions: What is Apprenticeship*. Retrieved from <http://www.apprenticeship.ednet.ns.ca/faq.shtml>

A co-operative work/study (co-op) program combines academic study with practical, on-the-job experience. Through co-op studies, students have the opportunity to gain relevant work experience, career contacts, and employer references. Some professional degree programs include co-operative education options that enable you to alternate your academic terms with paid co-op work terms.

Go Online

Information about scholarships, bursaries, and awards is available on the Internet, but searching online can be intimidating and time-consuming. Here are some ways to make the task easier:

- Visit the Halifax Regional School Board website to see a list of scholarships, bursaries, and awards specifically geared for African Nova Scotian students (http://www.hrsb.ns.ca/students/ans_scholarships).
- If you know the name of a scholarship but do not have a web address, use the “Google” search engine to find out more.
- Check out the websites for post-secondary institutions that interest you, and look specifically for information about the financial aids and awards they offer.
- Visit the following government-sponsored websites:
 - CanLearn – an online service of the Department of Human Resources and Social Development Canada (<http://www.canlearn.ca>)
 - Nova Scotia Student Assistance (<http://www.studentloans.ednet.ns.ca>).

Please note: Some commercial scholarship and award websites require you to register and provide personal data that will then be used to narrow your search. These sites will process your information and provide you with a list of scholarships for which you are eligible. The sites are popular, but be aware that any information you provide will be shared with advertisers and other commercial sponsors. Here are two examples:

- <http://www.scholarshipscanada.com>
- <http://www.studentawards.com>.

“Stay focused, do all your work, and do not slack off in school. Work hard to achieve what you want to do and apply to get a scholarship so that it is easier for you.”

~Jo-bairr Downey, Auburn Drive High School

“Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed.”

~Booker T. Washington



6 : **Submit a Winning Application**

- **Make a Great Impression**
- **Highlight Community Involvement**
- **Have Back-up Plans**

“Compete, don’t envy.”
~Libya

Remember these Quick Tips:

- **Pay attention to deadlines and details.** Make sure you follow instructions to the letter. Each selection committee has different requirements. Sometimes applications are discarded because applicants have not followed instructions.
- **Do not panic over essays.** Essays are a written picture of who you are. Keep draft copies that you can customize for different applications. If you are having difficulty, ask for help from a teacher, guidance counsellor, African Nova Scotian Student Support Worker, Student Support Worker, family member, or friend who has above-average writing skills.
- **Proofread.** Ask a careful reader to look over your work. He or she can help to pick out simple mistakes you might have overlooked.
- **Have a back-up plan.** Have an alternate plan in case you don't get accepted into your first-choice program or school. There's more than one way to achieve your goals.
- **Keep track.** Keep a file of bursaries and scholarships for which you have applied, including copies of all application forms and supporting documentation. You can continue to apply for scholarships, bursaries and awards throughout your years at college or university, and your previous applications will be an important source of information when you apply in later years.
- **Keep trying.** Do not get discouraged if you are not selected for an award or program. Apply again. Next time yours might be the winning application.

Make a Great Impression

When you apply for a post-secondary program – or for a scholarship, bursary, or other award – your application should reflect your best efforts. Make sure it is accurate, complete, and compelling. You want the selection committee to know that you are the right fit for their program or goals.

The application package may include some or all of the following:

- character reference letter
- academic reference letter
- essay, including volunteer experience and extra-curricular activities
- résumé.

Reference Letters

When you ask someone for a letter of reference, it is important that you select a person who is very familiar with you and your work and who will have positive comments to offer. For example, ask the teacher of a course in which you received a high grade, or the supervisor at the program where you are a volunteer, or a respected community member who is familiar with your accomplishments. Depending on the application requirements, you may have to supply letters from more than one person.

It is very important that you discuss what scholarship or bursary you are applying for and the skills and characteristics that you wish to have highlighted in the letter. Writing letters of this nature can be time-consuming. Ask early so that the letter writers have enough time to prepare the best possible letters.

Note: Remember to thank everyone who supplies a reference letter for you.

See **Appendix B** for a sample academic reference letter, and **Appendix C** for a sample character reference letter.

Essays

The essay has one key purpose: to persuade the selection committee that you are a worthy candidate for the program, scholarship, or bursary. Most applicants can claim club memberships, sports experience, and volunteer work, but the essay is one place where you can set yourself apart from the rest of the applicants. Take the time and care necessary to give the scholarship committee some insight into your personality, interests, motivation, and goals. Tips on writing a scholarship essay can be found at these and other websites:

- Essay Writing Center (<http://essayinfo.com>)
- FinAid: The SmartStudent Guide to Financial Aid (<http://www.finaid.org>)
- International Student and Study Abroad Resource Center (<http://www.InternationalStudent.com>).

For a sample essay, see **Appendix D**.

“Never, ever, give up, especially if you want to do something in life.”

~Caitlyn Williams, Auburn Drive High School

Résumé

Your résumé gives a brief glimpse of your skills and extra-curricular activities. When writing your résumé, organize your information logically and ensure that your descriptions are clear and to the point. Include as much volunteer work experience as possible, even if it doesn't relate to the scholarship you are seeking. Also, use a simple, easy-to-read font. Make sure that you do the basics, including proofreading for spelling and grammar mistakes. Tips on writing a résumé can be found on the following commercial websites or by using the "Google" search engine:

- <http://www.InternationalStudent.com>
- <http://www.ivyedge.com>
- <http://essayinfo.com>.

For a sample résumé, see **Appendix E**.

Highlight Your Community Involvement

Leadership skills, a sense of responsibility, and a capacity for teamwork are all assets that can be developed by becoming involved in your community.

From volunteering at a local nursing home to helping with youth-related activities, volunteering is an excellent way to gather the types of experiences some selection committees look for when considering an applicant for scholarships or bursaries. On a résumé or application, include details about your involvement in your community to show you care about social issues and are willing to give your time and effort to make a difference. These characteristics demonstrate that you have the qualities of a great leader and the maturity to contribute to the world around you.

Today, some employers and scholarship selection committees value community involvement as highly as paid work experience. Some programs require community involvement as part of their admissions criteria. Paid work shows what you *can* do: it helps you build technical skills and illustrates the type of employee you will be in the future. Unpaid work, such as helping in one's community, shows what you *like* to do and is often an indication of the type of citizen you will become.

Have Back-up Plans

When applying for post-secondary education, it is important to realize that you may not be accepted into your first-choice program or institution. Don't be discouraged. Keep your grades high, apply early, and be prepared with a back-up plan. Apply for more than one post-secondary institution and/or program.

Most university applications give you the option to apply for more than one program. Take care with the programs you choose. Select the programs that will help you toward your career and future goals.

Be aware of programs and courses that may allow you to transfer credits from one institution to another. For example, if two institutions have an *articulation agreement*, you may be able to start a program at one institution (such as a community college) and then transfer your credits to the other institution (perhaps a university). This approach may help to prepare you for the workload of university and possibly save you money.

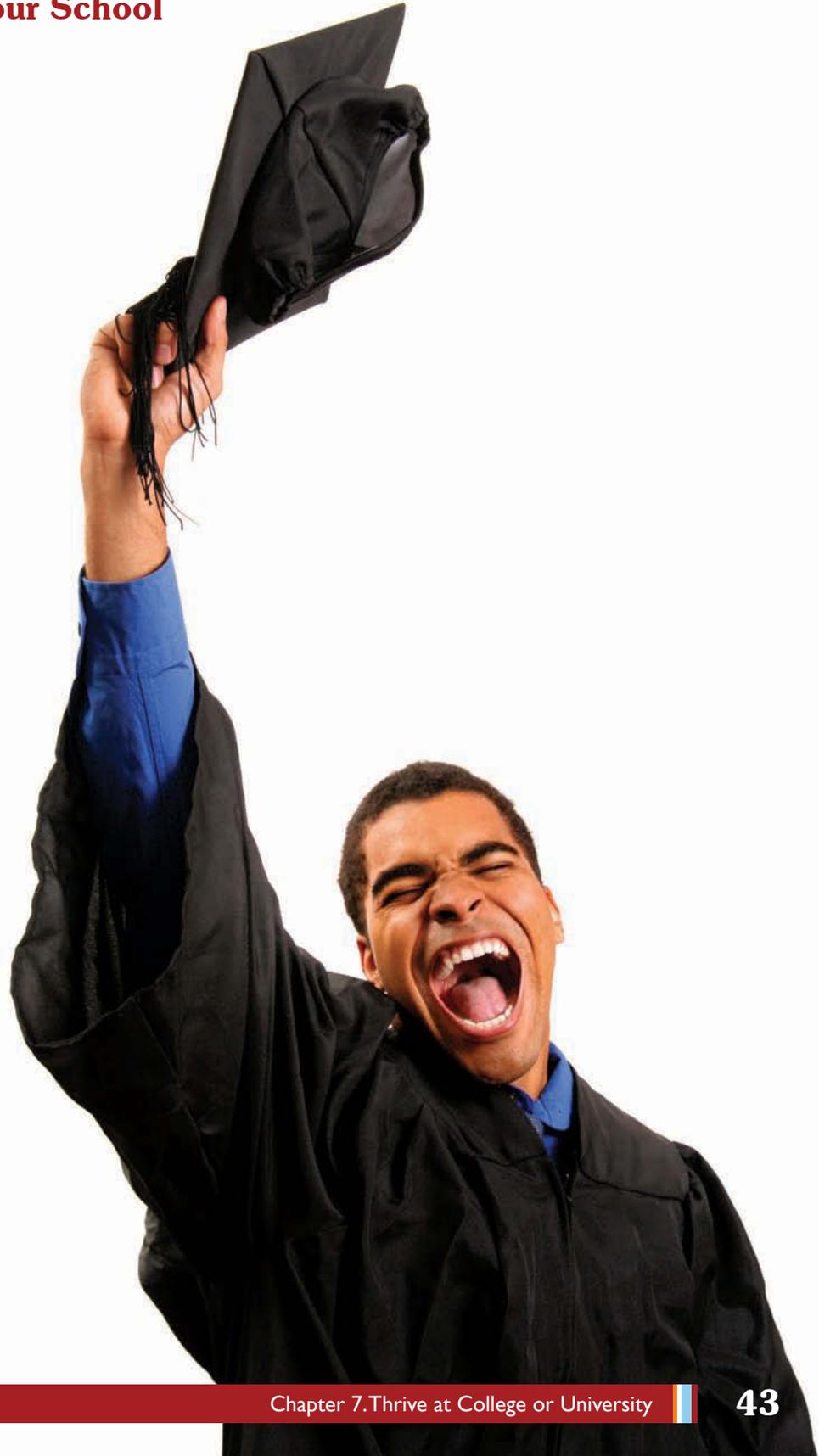
Consider this example: A student applies to the Bachelor of Business Administration program at Mount Saint Vincent University and is not accepted, then applies to the Nova Scotia Community College and is accepted. The student then takes two years in the Business Administration program and transfers to Mount Saint Vincent in the third year, finally graduating from the Mount. In this example, at least half of the courses required for the degree must be taken at the university.

“We all have ability. The difference is how we use it.”

~Stevie Wonder

7 : Thrive at College or University

- **Tips for Managing Stress**
- **Orientation: Know Your School**



“In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.”

~Albert Einstein

It is normal to have mixed feelings about starting college or university – especially if you are leaving home to do it. It can be exciting to make new friends, have new experiences, be more independent, and become more confident; but at the same time you may be feeling scared, homesick, or lonely. It is not unusual to feel nervous about leaving your familiar surroundings. Becoming involved in activities on campus can help you to make friends and settle into a regular routine.

Tips for Managing Stress

Following is a list of things that may be worrying you, and some tips to help you manage the stress.

Stressors	What you can do
Money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit the Student Services Department to find out about financial assistance on campus. • Consider a part-time job. • Make a budget to help you keep track of your income and expenses – weekly, monthly, and/or for the school year.
Being in an unfamiliar environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow yourself time to get used to the changes. • Try to take one day at a time. • Notice positive changes as you adjust to being away from home and making new friends. • Have something to look forward to. For example, you may plan to catch up with friends during the next holiday, or plan to do something special if your parents are coming to visit.
Missing old friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay in touch by e-mail, MSN, phone, or mail. • Talk to some of your old friends about how you are feeling about starting at university or college. They may be having similar concerns.

“We must use time creatively and forever realize that the time is always right to do right.”

~Martin Luther King, Jr.

Stressors	What you can do
Making new friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember that you are not alone. It's likely that other people who have just moved in have feelings similar to yours. Talk to other people about how they are feeling, or speak to some older students about their experiences of moving away from home to study. • Get involved in activities that interest you. This will bring you in contact with people who have some of the same interests. For example, you may want to get involved in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - academic groups - cultural groups - sports - music - debating clubs - student government - organized dances and dinners on campus.
Your course workload	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to your instructors. • Make a schedule that includes time for studying and time for the things that refresh you and renew your energy.
Safety on campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find out about campus police, safety patrols, and other safety measures.
Moving in and getting established	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make your space your own by bringing a bit of home to campus life. Posters, your favourite stuff, books, CDs and photos may help to make your space feel more like home. • Buy a guidebook of the area and spend the weekend exploring your new city or town.
Being pressured to do things that make you uncomfortable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know your limits and set your boundaries. • Talk to someone about how you are feeling. This may be a friend or family member. Sometimes talking to someone who is not so close to the situation may be helpful. This may be someone like a university counsellor, resident assistant, or older student. Check to see what counselling and other supports are available for students.

Orientation: Know Your School

Most universities and colleges organize an orientation program. Orientation is a very rewarding and pleasant introduction to university or college life. Often orientation activities are organized by senior and/or mature students from the university or college, which gives you a chance to learn from their experiences of moving away from home, and to ask them any questions you may have. Orientation activities will help you become familiar with the campus, the community at large, and the many services available to help new students adjust to campus life.

Orientations usually take place during *Orientation Week* in September or at the beginning of the school term, although some institutions may offer an early orientation (for example, Dalhousie University's Transition Year Program usually holds an orientation session for incoming students during the summer). Student association members work hard ahead of time to plan activities and events for orientation week. Most activities are planned to help new students enjoy themselves and learn valuable skills for academic success.

During your orientation week, take notice of the wide variety of services available to you. In particular, note where the student union building is located. This is where you'll find services such as personal and career counselling, financial aid, health services, student employment, and academic advisors. Also find out where the registrar's office is located: you'll be in regular contact with this office from the time you begin your post-secondary program until you graduate.

“Stay calm, do not get stressed and do not let girls distract you. Keep your confidence and always tell yourself you can do it.”

~Matthew Smith, Auburn Drive High School

Me, Myself, and I

...

I see myself as an African-Canadian that will get
somewhere

Make something of myself
of my life

Samuel Provo

I See

...

Sometimes I look out at the world
And wonder

Who's looking back at me

And what they see

But it doesn't matter what they see

As long as I stay true to me

...

Monica Mutale

You Don't Know Me

...

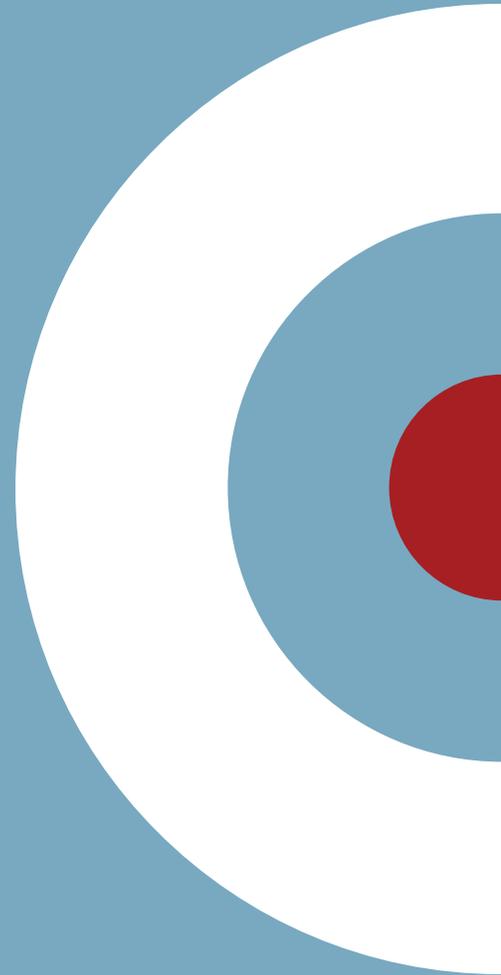
There's more

Look deeper

Take some time

You'll find it

Monica Mutale



Community

**A community should be there when you need
when you need to believe
that you too will succeed**

...

Whitley Williams

Strong, Black, Myself

...

**I know I'm proud
black
strong
and free
you see
what you get
and what you see is
me**

Nakie Davies

Youth of Today

**Making a difference 2day
so that there'z hope 4
the future**

LaMeia Reddick

Appendix A. Post-Secondary Institutions in the Halifax Region

Following is a list of post-secondary institutions in the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM):

Dalhousie University

6299 South Street,
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3H 4H6
Telephone: 902-494-2450
Fax: 902-494-1630
Website: <http://www.dal.ca>

Mount Saint Vincent University

Bedford Highway
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3M 2J6
Telephone: 902-457-6117
Website: <http://www.msvu.ca>

Nova Scotia College of Art and Design

5163 Duke Street
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3J6
Telephone: 902-444-9600
Fax: 902-425-2460
Website: <http://www.nscad.ns.ca>

Nova Scotia Community College

Akerley Campus
21 Woodlawn Road
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia
B2W 2R7
Telephone: 902-491-4940
Fax: 902-491-4903
Website: <http://www.nsccl.ca>

Saint Mary's University

923 Robie Street
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3H 3C3
Telephone: 902-420-5400
Fax: 902-420-5073
Website: <http://www.smu.ca>

University of Kings College

6350 Coburg Road
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3H 2A1
Telephone: 902-422-1271
Fax: 902-423-3357
Website: <http://www.ukings.ca>

Appendix B. Sample Academic Reference Letter

May 2, 2009

Re: Academic Reference Letter for Janet Doe

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter on behalf of Janet Doe. I had the pleasure of teaching Janet in two courses at Kingston High School: English 11 (Academic) in the 2007–08 academic year, and English 12 (Academic) in the 2008–09 academic year. Throughout this time, Janet proved to be a very intelligent and conscientious student. All homework, class work, and assignments were well thought out and submitted by the required deadline.

Janet showed a great desire to learn about the subject matter covered in the course. She was a respectful and active participant in class during discussions and debates, making a significant contribution to the success of the class with insightful and thought-provoking questions and comments.

Janet could be relied upon to be present and punctual for class, even though she held a part-time job during both academic years. Her maturity in balancing school and work commitments was admirable and a significant example for all students. Her successes academically are a testament to her character.

I do not hesitate in recommending Janet for any post-secondary scholarships and awards. This young woman has the potential to succeed at whatever she puts her mind and efforts to achieve.

Sincerely,

John A. Smith
Teacher
English Department
Kingston High School

B

Appendix C. Sample Character Reference Letter

May 25, 2009

Re: Character Reference for Janet Doe

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this character reference letter on behalf of Janet Doe, a truly remarkable young woman. I have known Janet for four years, as she is an active member of the Youth Friendship Choir (YFC) where I have served as the Choir Director since September 2001. I had the pleasure of working closely with Janet when she held the position of YFC Secretary from April 2006 to April 2008. While in the position, Janet was hard working and took her responsibilities very seriously. She proved to be very reliable, attending all meetings and completing her assigned tasks by the required dates. Her hard work has culminated in her recent election to the role of President of the YFC for 2009–2010.

Janet is a very dedicated young woman who knows what she wants out of life. She has gained the admiration and respect of her community and her peers by being such a positive leader. In addition to being a member of the YFC, Janet holds a part-time job, while maintaining a high academic average. She also participates in organized sports in her community, and serves as a captain of both her basketball and soccer teams.

As a student and community member, Janet has proven to be a strong role model for others. She understands her commitments to her family, friends, education, and community, and works diligently to meet all of her obligations.

I am honoured to write this letter of reference for Janet and invite you to contact me if I can offer you any further assistance. I can be contacted at my home phone number at 902-555-1234.

Sincerely,

Lynn Francis

Appendix D. Sample Scholarship Essay

By way of introduction, I am a hard working, disciplined, responsible young adult. My career goals involve gaining admission to the Bachelor of Science Program at your university and eventually becoming a successful pharmacist.

Since I was a young girl, I have always been taught by my parents to do my best in whatever I was doing and to give back to my community. Those sentiments have carried me throughout my life and are demonstrated in the extracurricular activities in which I participate.

During the summers, I work as a Volunteer Leader for the Kingston Community Centre, having been a volunteer since June 2005. My duties include planning and supervising activities for children aged 10–14 at the evening drop-in program. Many of the youth in the community do not have the financial means to access other recreational activities. The drop-in program, which is fully staffed by volunteers, provides the participants with recreational opportunities at minimal or no cost.

Also, I am an active member of the Youth Friendship Choir (YFC). I have been a member since 2004, serving as the YFC Secretary from April 2006 to April 2008. I am currently the President of the YFC, having been elected in April 2009. The choir is composed of members from the various communities within the Halifax Regional Municipality. The choir was formed with the idea of using music to promote diversity and to foster friendships among youth who may not otherwise have met. The choir meets regularly from September until June, taking a break during the summer months. The YFC has performed at senior citizen centres, the Children's Hospital, and at community events.

While at Kingston High School, I have been a volunteer peer tutor for the past two years. This program was started by the school's Guidance Department to provide support to students who do not have access to a private tutor. Each volunteer is assigned a student that they meet with several times throughout the week during the lunch break. I have provided help in math, chemistry, and physics.

In addition to being a peer tutor, I am also a member of the soccer team and the basketball team at Kingston High School. I have been an active member of both teams during my three years of high school. This past year I served as the captain of both teams. I also am a member of the Tigers, a Division I team in the Dartmouth Soccer Association, where I am an alternate captain. I have been a member of the soccer association for the past seven years.

In addition to giving to others, I have also gained a lot through my experiences. Some of the things that I have learned include compassion, empathy, patience, understanding, teamwork, and resilience. Throughout my years in high school, I was able to participate in school activities and still maintain a high academic average.

I find a great deal of satisfaction in achieving a high academic standard and being involved in my community. I believe that we all have a responsibility to make this world a better place. I hope that others will see the enjoyment and pride that I get out of my activities and feel encouraged to get involved as well.

Respectfully submitted by,
Janet Doe

Appendix E. Sample Résumé

E

Janet Doe

123 Pine Street
Dartmouth, NS B3C 2Z1
Telephone: 902-444-1234
E-mail: jdoe@eastlink.ca

Objective:

To secure a position that would allow me to gain valuable work experience while I continue my education.

Work Experience:

Program Instructor

September 2007 to Present

Metro Community Centre

- Planned, implemented and facilitated various programs for children aged 5–12, including basketball, soccer, bicycle safety course and babysitting course.
- Responsible for program administration and supervision.

Child Care

June 2003 to Present

Various

- Supervised, planned activities, and provided general care for children aged 18 months to 9 years.
- General care included preparing meals, changing diapers, bathing, and helping with homework.

Volunteer Experience:

Junior Leader

June 2007 to August 2007

Metro Community Centre

June 2006 to August 2006

continued...

- Helped day camp staff members in supervising, planning, developing, and implementing activities for camp participants aged 5–12 years.
- Under the supervision of the day camp staff, planned and supervised participants in activities.

Education:

Kingston High School
Dartmouth, NS

September 2006 to Present

Expected graduation date: June 2009.

Extra-Curricular Activities:

- Member of Tigers (Division I) of Kingston Soccer Association since 2003
- Member of the soccer and basketball teams at Kingston High School since 2005
- Member and current President of the Youth Friendship Choir
- Volunteer Peer Tutor at Kingston High School.

Skills:

- Knowledgeable in program planning, implementation, and supervision
- Effective in following policies and procedures
- Able to adapt programming to meet the needs of participants
- Effective in communicating orally and in writing
- Experienced in using various Information Technology skills
- Valid Class V, NS Driver's License
- Certified in Emergency First Aid and CPR.

References:

Available upon request.

Notes

Halifax Regional School Board
90 Alderney Drive
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia B2Y 4S8
Tel: (902) 464 2000

www.hrsb.ns.ca/ans-guide

