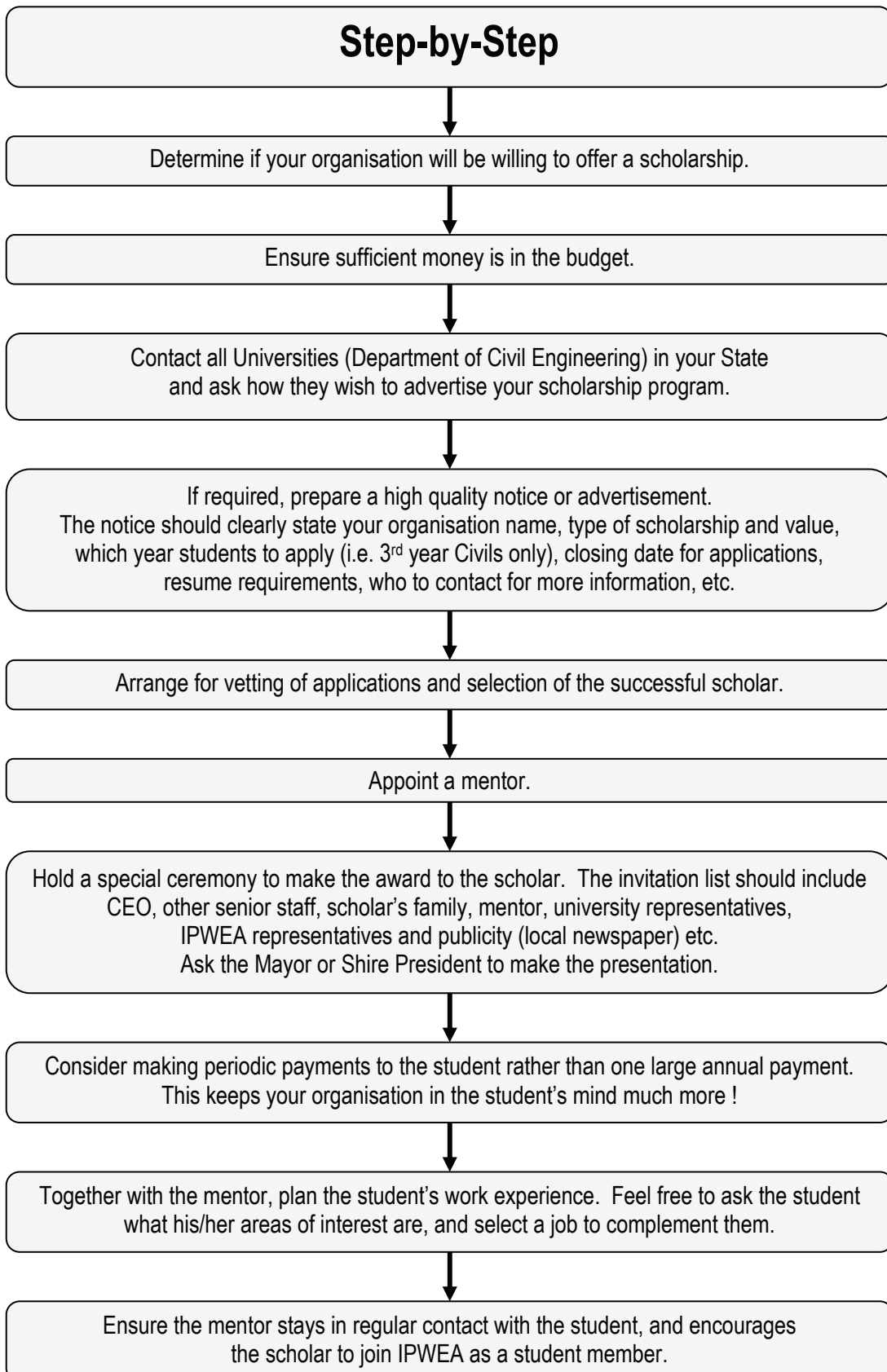




Guide to Scholarships





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Introduction

Much anecdotal evidence exists that fewer young people are choosing local government engineering today than two or three decades ago. This is in part due to young graduates not being aware of the career opportunities offered by local government.

Several strategies may be used to attract students' attention to any organisation. Two of the best known are through cadetships (see separate papers), and through some form of scholarship. Most scholarships are awarded to university students, but can be awarded to TAFE students although they invariably work part-time during their course.

Types of Scholarship

There is a large range of types of scholarships. However, most offer the student some form of monetary allowance and the probability of some form of work experience. Scholarships differ from cadetships in one key area – a scholarship does not bond the student to the organisation, although many organisations do guarantee a job to the student upon graduation.

At the 'large' end of the scale, an organisation will advertise for applicants to apply for scholarships. Normally scholarships are given for one or two years only, at the latter end of the student's course. The successful student will receive an annual allowance which may or may not cover HECS, books, computer, etc. Some travel and living expenses may be included. Sometimes the money is paid as an annual lump sum, or it can be paid by instalments.

A mentor is appointed to keep in touch with the student and to make arrangements for paid work experience during the long vacation. The mentor will arrange for a company induction and facilitate smooth integration into the (trainee) workforce. The mentor will keep in contact with the university and may suggest a company-specific final year project for the student to work on until final examination. The mentor will then liaise with the student to commence permanent employment.

At the other end of the spectrum, a small monetary payment can be given to assist students with their

studies. Some scholarships at this end of the spectrum are awarded to students who come from regional areas to assist with study in the metropolitan areas.

Some scholarships have been known to include an offer of paid part-time employment. When this happens, the arrangement is not dissimilar from a cadetship, the main difference being that no bond is enforced.

Benefits of Scholarships

Students and parents alike appreciate scholarships. The monetary allowance greatly lifts the financial burden, and allows students to concentrate on their studies rather than having to find part-time employment just to make ends meet. The success rate of students receiving scholarships is high. Naturally only 'good' students are selected to receive scholarships, but with the burden of having to earn money lifted, they remain focused and frequently achieve better results.

Sponsoring organisations receive good publicity when they call for nominations, and again when the student's scholarship is announced. During the time of the scholarship, particularly if a good mentor has been appointed, the student will be a good ambassador for the organisation. If the student works on an organisation-sponsored final year project, more publicity will be achieved. Sometimes, such work can pay the cost of the scholarship.

The organisation has control over the selection process, and therefore knows the student who will come to do work experience. The student's progress can be monitored so the organisation knows exactly who will (hopefully) be their future employee.

Conclusion

There are many types and variations of scholarships. Students appreciate them because they lift the financial burden, but do not tie the student into a fixed term employment contract at the end of their course. Scholarships offer the organisation visibility and publicity, and an opportunity to monitor the student throughout his/her student days.