How to Apply for the CAP Phelps Scholarship

Welcome! This guide explains what the CAP scholarship is looking for and how to write an application that shows the committee who you are, where you are headed, and why an investment in you is worth making.

Important Points to Remember

- **What CAP stands for:** Contribute, Achieve, and Pay-it-forward. The committee wants to see how these three values show up in your life.
- **Name on every document:** Add your first and last name to your essay, resume or CV, and faculty endorsement. Documents without your name are considered incomplete.
- **Financial literacy requirement:** CAP recipients must register for and successfully complete either BAFN 240 or the online CAP Financial Literacy Canvas course before their anticipated final semester and graduation. The application asks whether you are willing to do this.

What You Need to Submit

Upload all documents to your scholarship application by the deadline.

1) **Essay (750 words maximum):** Answer the question, "To what extent do the values of Contribute, Achieve, and Pay-it-forward (CAP) apply to your life?" To help the committee get to know you, your essay should also include:
    i) Your academic and professional goals, and what excites you about your program at UNC
    ii) Any jobs or responsibilities that compete with your time, and how this scholarship would make a difference (two to four sentences; share only what you're comfortable sharing)
2) **Resume or CV with references:** No more than 2 pages. You may also include up to 3 pages of optional supporting documents.
3) **Faculty endorsement:** A short, signed statement from a faculty member who knows you and can speak to your suitability for the award.
4) **Financial literacy agreement:** Confirm that you are willing to register for and complete BAFN 240 or the CAP Financial Literacy Canvas course.

Understanding the Three Values

Value	What the committee means
Contribute	Volunteering your time, skills, talents, abilities, experience, and passion around issues in service to the community.
Achieve	Showing a bias toward action and performance, self-reliance, overcoming obstacles, and accomplishing academic goals.
Pay it Forward	Making a meaningful, positive difference in others' lives through small or large, random or planned acts of kindness, caring, and giving back.

You don't need to give the three values equal space, but touch on each one with a real example, and spend more time on the ones that are strongest in your life.

Writing Your Essay

The prompt asks about CAP, but the committee also wants to know who you are as a student and where you are headed. The strongest essays use the three values to tell that story. Aim for about 500 to 750 words, and don't go over 750.

- **Use examples, not adjectives.** Instead of saying you are hard-working or caring, describe something you did and what came of it.
- **Show how you stay successful.** Under Achieve, describe an obstacle you faced, what you did about it, and what habits keep you on track.
- **Describe the kind of student you are.** What excites you about your classes and program at UNC? What are your academic and professional goals?
- **Help the committee see the investment.** Show where your effort and growth are headed, and how you plan to use your degree.
- **Share your financial need.** See the next section.
- **Don't just repeat your resume.** The essay is where you explain the story behind the activities listed there, including jobs and other involvement.
- **Use your own voice.** It's fine to talk about your accomplishments. Let specific examples do the work.

Sharing Your Financial Need

The committee also wants to understand how this scholarship would affect you. In two to four sentences, include:

- **Your situation:** Any jobs you work, how many hours, or other responsibilities that compete with your time, including how you pay for school.
- **What the scholarship would change:** For example, fewer work hours, more time for your classes and involvement, or the ability to stay on track to graduate.

You decide how much personal detail to share. Being specific and honest matters more than including every hardship.

Your Resume or CV

- Keep it to 2 pages. Use the optional supporting pages (up to 3) for items that strengthen your story, such as certificates, awards, or work samples.
- Include references, and let them know they may be contacted.
- Include jobs, volunteering, leadership, and involvement.
- Put your first and last name on the document.

Getting Your Faculty Endorsement

- Choose a faculty member who knows you well, such as an instructor whose class you excelled in or an advisor who has seen your growth.
- Ask early, at least 3 weeks before the deadline.
- Give them the scholarship description, your resume, and your draft essay so their statement is specific and consistent with yours.
- The endorsement should be short and signed. Remind them to include your first and last name.

Sample Essay Outline

Replace with your own details. Please don't copy this word for word.

Opening: A short moment or sentence that introduces who you are and what drives you.

Contribute: How you volunteer your time or skills in service to a community, and what it has taught you.

Achieve: An obstacle you faced, what you did, and what keeps you successful. Include your academic and professional goals.

Pay it Forward: A way you have made a positive difference for someone else, large or small.

UNC and your future: What excites you about your program and where you plan to go next.

Financial need: Your jobs or responsibilities and what the scholarship would change.

Closing: How these values will shape the rest of your time at UNC and beyond.

Before You Submit

- ☐ Essay is 750 words or fewer and answers the CAP prompt
- ☐ Essay includes concrete examples, your goals, and a brief note on financial need
- ☐ Proofread for spelling and grammar (consider asking someone to read it)
- ☐ Resume or CV is 2 pages or fewer, with references
- ☐ Optional supporting documents are 3 pages or fewer
- ☐ Faculty endorsement is signed and includes your name
- ☐ Your first and last name is on every document
- ☐ You have confirmed your willingness to complete the financial literacy course
- ☐ Everything is uploaded by the deadline