



# *Penda Scholarship Application (a step-by-step guide)*

3 September 2022

# Presentation Objectives

*Penda – the organization*

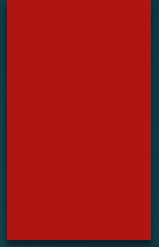
Awarded over 50 scholarships within four academic years.

*Why is this session important?*

For the past four years, the Penda Evaluation Committee has received hundreds of applications and has noticed common and recurring mistakes in the application documents.

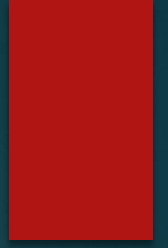
This presentation aims to offer information that may aid college, employment and especially Penda scholarship applicants to maximize their chance of success.

# Today's Agenda



- ❖ 10:00 - 10:15 Introduction
- ❖ 10:15 - 10:30 CV
- ❖ 10:30 - 10:45 Motivation Letter
- ❖ 11:00 - 11:15 Break
- ❖ 11:15 - 11:30 Reference Letters
- ❖ 11:30 - 11:45 Interview
- ❖ 11:45 - 12:00 Q&A

# Overview of the Selection Process



## Phases of the Process

1<sup>st</sup> phase: Call for applications

2<sup>nd</sup> phase: Scanning of the application documents and preparation of the shortlist

3<sup>rd</sup> phase: Interviews

4<sup>th</sup> phase: Discussions and deciding on the winners

## What does the evaluation committee look for?

- ❖ Does the student have necessary qualifications and qualities for the scholarship?
- ❖ Is the student conscientious, hardworking and unlikely to drop out?
- ❖ Do they have a genuine interest in their fields of study and a desire to learn more?
- ❖ What are their communication skills like?

# Preparing Your Application Package

List of documents needed:

- ❖ Application Form
- ❖ CV
- ❖ Motivation Letter
- ❖ Two Reference Letters
- ❖ Transcripts
- ❖ Household income verification

Awarded amount

5,000 MKD/a month (for the period of 9 academic months)

Dates

Scholarship announced: 15<sup>th</sup> of July 2022

Deadline : 16<sup>th</sup> of September 2022

**Only completed applications sent within the deadline will be considered!!!**

# CV (Curriculum Vitae)



*What is a CV? Why is it important?*

A CV is a short summary of your education, work history, awards & achievements.

Your CV is a tool to introduce you to the reader and help you move from an application to an interview.

It is important that your CV is well laid out in a clear format, which makes it easy to read and find the relevant information required.

Simplicity is always best!

# How to Format Your CV?

The document tends to be organized chronologically and should make it easy to get an overview of an individual's full education and working career.

A properly formatted CV includes:

- ❖ Personal/Contact Information
- ❖ Education
- ❖ Work Experience
- ❖ Skills
- ❖ Interests

# Personal/Contact Information

Make sure this section clearly states your:

- ❖ Name
- ❖ Residential address
- ❖ Phone number
- ❖ Email address
- ❖ Date of birth (optional, but helpful)
- ❖ Photo
- ❖ Include your URL address for Linked-in



# Personal/Contact Information Example



*Name: Kaltrina Rexhepi*

*Date of birth: 13/02/2001*

*Address: Ilindenska #63, 1200 Tetovo, North Macedonia*

*Email: [Kaltrina.Rexhepi@gmail.com](mailto:Kaltrina.Rexhepi@gmail.com)*

*Phone: +38970136333*

*LinkedIn: [www.linkedin.com/in](http://www.linkedin.com/in)*

# Education

In a chronological order, a list of your degrees earned or in progress, institutions, and years of graduation.

Format:

- ❖ Degree
- ❖ Month/year obtained or expected
- ❖ Institution
- ❖ Field of study

A brief summary of important courses you've taken might also be helpful

# Education Example

*M.A. in Economics*

*2003–2005*

*South Eastern European University*

*Economics of Public Finance*

*Bachelors in Business Administration*

*2001–2003*

*State University of Tetovo*

*Business Administration*

*The Google Project Management Professional Certificate*

*June, 2022*

*Coursera*

# Work Experience

In a chronological order, give the name of your employer (company/organization), job title, location, dates of employment and, of course, your tasks.

Be sure to include internships and unpaid positions if they are relevant.

Volunteer experience can be listed if it is meaningful and appropriate.

Format:

- ❖ Job title
- ❖ Employer (company/organization)
- ❖ Dates (start-end)
- ❖ Location
- ❖ Responsibilities

# Work Experience Example



*Intern*

*United Nations Development Programme (UNDP Skopje)*

*[ 01/04/2019 – 31/05/2019 ]*

*City: Skopje*

*Responsibilities: Organizing and updating schedules in the human resource department*

# Skills

Skills can be divided into two categories:

1. Soft Skills - skills applicable to all professions. These include critical thinking, problem solving, public speaking, professional writing, teamwork, etc.
2. Hard Skills – skills that are teachable, abilities or skill sets that are easily measurable. These include technical skills, computer skills, analytical skills, etc.

# Skills Example

## LANGUAGE SKILLS:

*Mother tongue(s): Albanian*

*Other language(s):*

*English (Fluent)*

*Macedonian (Fluent)*

*Turkish (Intermediate)*

*German (Basic)*

## OTHER SKILLS:

*Organizational and planning skills / Good listener and communicator /  
Detail-Oriented / Good time management / Excellent writing and verbal  
communication skills*

# Interests

The Evaluation Committee will often look at the hobbies and interests listed in someone's CV as it gives them a more comprehensive picture of the candidate and can give vital clues on personality and motivation. This is especially often the case if the candidate is a student with not much work experience.

These are particularly relevant if you were involved in activities in which you had leadership responsibilities, or which involved relating to others in a team.

Be precise, e.g. Reading (what exactly? i.e. 19th century fiction), Sport (which sports? i.e. tennis or soccer).



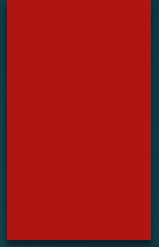
# Interests Example

- ❖ *Reading 19<sup>th</sup> century fiction*
- ❖ *Captain of the high school soccer team*
- ❖ *2021 City Chess Champion*
- ❖ *Lead singer of the band "..."*
- ❖ *Yearbook Editor, class of '21*
- ❖ *Etc.*

# Helpful Tips

- ❖ Always spell check your CV, no room for spelling or grammar mistakes!
- ❖ Don't include: your height, weight, place of birth, marital status, ethnicity/race, health
- ❖ Use a readable font
- ❖ Font size should be between 10 and 12 pt
- ❖ Save file into PDF format
- ❖ Be truthful!

# CV Builder Platforms



Two of the most commonly used platforms to create a CV are:

- ❖ Europass – Template wizard created by the European Commission

Link: <https://europa.eu/europass/en>

- ❖ LinkedIn – Save a profile as a PDF (LinkedIn ➡ View Profile ➡ More ➡ Save as PDF)

Link: <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/>

# Motivation Letter

## *What is a Motivation Letter?*

A motivation letter is an essay all about you and your interest in the field of choice, what skills and experience have been built in that field and what are your intended goals/plans for the future.

## *Questions you need to answer in a Motivation Letter:*

1. Who are you?
2. What has influenced your career path so far?
3. Your professional interests
4. Where do you plan to go from here?

# Motivation Letter Aims

*A motivation letter should reflect following qualities:*

- ❖ Motivation to enter/continue in a particular field
- ❖ Intellectual potential
- ❖ Leadership qualities
- ❖ Love of learning
- ❖ Strength of character
- ❖ Special abilities or talents
- ❖ Achievements
- ❖ Diligence and dedication
- ❖ Integrity and honesty
- ❖ Compassion

# Anatomy of a Motivation Letter

*Split into paragraphs:*

Paragraph 1: Introduction to the subject, the aspects you're interested in and why

Paragraph 2: What you have done related to the subject that isn't already on your application form

Paragraphs 3-4: Work experience placements and relevant activities at school

Paragraph 5: Your interests outside of school, particularly those that show you are a responsible and reliable person

Paragraph 6: Your goal of attending university/receiving the scholarship and a memorable closing comment

# Example of a Motivation Letter

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Jeton Bajrami and I am a third year student at Tetovo State University. I am currently pursuing a five-year Bachelor of Architecture Degree, and I plan to follow up with a one-year master's degree after I graduate.

While in high school, I worked extensively with my local Habitat for Humanity branch to help build homes for low income families. I learned about the construction process from the ground up, and I discovered the importance of function in architectural design. The homes we built during my four years as a volunteer were never extravagant, but they served their purpose and became a beacon of hope for their owners.

My education is largely focused on this mindset: function over form, stability over showmanship. I have enrolled in several classes that crossover to the Architectural Engineering major because I want to have a comprehensive view of how design meets structure. I have worked on three extra-credit residential design projects under the supervision of my architecture professors (Dr. X and Dr. Y) to accelerate my research and education.

I wanted to become an architect to create accessible, affordable housing opportunities in underprivileged communities. Living in a college town, I have seen countless rental properties available, but there are few homes for sale that are priced affordably enough for college students and first-time buyers. This is the case in many towns throughout North Macedonia, especially areas with a low standard of living. My goal is to build neighborhoods of sufficient starter homes that can help adults build equity, avoid excessive debt, and create financial stability for their futures.

I have an internship scheduled with LMNOP Architectural Firm in the summer, and I will continue my on-the-job training there after my master's degree. After working under acclaimed residential architects, I would like to open my own architectural firm focused on developing inexpensive, high-quality housing. Also, I would like to work with Habitat for Humanity again, this time as an architect instead of a general laborer. I believe firmly in their mission to build "a world where everyone has a decent place to live."

I appreciate your consideration. With your assistance, I can continue my schooling in architecture and design to bring accessible homes to those in need.

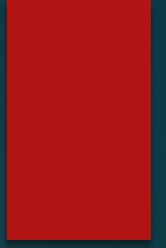
Sincerely,

# Reasons why a Motivation Letter may be rejected

- ❖ Poor spelling and grammar.
- ❖ Including discussion that is irrelevant.
- ❖ Plagiarizing motivation letters from open-access sources.
- ❖ Overly focusing on negative issues rather than exploring positives and potential.
- ❖ Making statements that are offensive.



# Reference/Recommendation Letter



*What is a Reference Letter? Why is it important?*

A “Reference Letter” has a general assessment of the qualities, interests, attitude, integrity, community involvement, and personal characteristics of a person.

Reference letter is also used to assess an individual's character and confirms details about an individual's situation or circumstances.

Effective reference letter could mean the difference between a candidate's acceptance or rejection.

# Who Should You Ask for a Reference?

Ask for a reference letter from people who know you and your capabilities, such as teachers, former employers, coaches, influential friends who have known you a long time.

Relatives are not a good choice.

Two letters are usually enough.

# How to ask them?

- ❖ Be sure to give the people you ask enough time to write the reference letter—a week to 10 days should be sufficient.
- ❖ Tell them about your goals and what they could write that would help you to achieve those goals.
- ❖ If you don't receive your reference letters within 10 days of your conversations with the prospective writers, you may need to contact them to confirm that each is aware of your deadlines.
- ❖ Once you receive your reference letters, send the writers thank-you notes. You should also let each writer know about your subsequent success and how much their letters helped you to attain your goal.
- ❖ Added tip: Although they may ask you to, do not write the letter yourself!

# Example of a Reference Letter

*Dear Penda Evaluation Committee,*

*I am pleased to recommend Gentiana Hoxha for the Penda Scholarship .*

*I have known Miss Hoxha for the past three years as a student at the South Eastern European University. As her professor, I have had an opportunity to observe her participation and interaction in class and to evaluate her knowledge of the subject matter. She is an outstanding student in all respects. Gentiana has proven that through hard work, follow through, and team work, she can accomplish tasks in a courteous and timely manner.*

*Miss Hoxha is well equipped to grow from challenges that she is presented with. I strongly endorse Gentiana Hoxha for the Penda Scholarship. Should you have any further questions about her, please feel free to contact me at 070 523 784.*

*Sincerely,*

# Interview

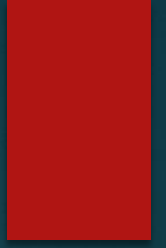
*What is an Interview? Why is it important?*

An interview is your opportunity to show your personality and tell the evaluation committee the things they couldn't fit into your application.

*Type of interview used for the Penda Scholarship*

- ❖ Panel Interview (one candidate – 4 to 6 Penda members)
- ❖ Usually about 15 min. per candidate
- ❖ Based on a point system calculated amongst all members present

# Before the Interview



- ❖ Do your research
  - Read these slides!
- ❖ Re-read your application
  - Strengths and weaknesses
  - Why you need the scholarship?
- ❖ Research questions previous students have been asked.
- ❖ Get a good night's sleep so you will be mentally alert.

# During the Interview

- ❖ Arrive about 15 minutes early.
- ❖ Be confident, use eye contact, smile!
- ❖ Don't fuss and fidget. Be calm. Don't slouch.
- ❖ Shut off cell phone.
- ❖ Be honest.
- ❖ Speak clearly. (Do not chew gum or smoke)
- ❖ Think before you answer a question. Answer sincerely. If you don't know, say so.
- ❖ If you don't understand a question, ask the interviewer to rephrase it.
- ❖ Remember that every question is an opportunity to sell yourself. Tell brief stories which demonstrate your success.
- ❖ Give examples, where the interviewer can picture you being successful doing what you are describing.
- ❖ Ask questions that were not already covered in the interview.
- ❖ Do your best; don't try to over do it.

# Possible Questions



1. Tell us about yourself.
2. Where do you see yourself in ten years?
3. Why have you chosen this specific field of study?
4. Why do you think you are a good candidate for this scholarship?
5. What is your greatest accomplishment?
6. Etc.



# Interview Tips

## *Dress*

- ❖ Appropriate

## *What to take*

- ❖ Requested documents (if needed)

## *Arrive on time*


- ❖ Plan the route
- ❖ Leave extra journey time for problems

## *Meeting the interviewers*

- ❖ Relax, but remember you are being observed body language
- ❖ Vary your tone of voice – Smile!

# Q&A

Please feel free to ask any questions or express any concerns.



Thank you for your  
attention and  
good luck!