

Rewarding scholarly excellence: An outcome-based analysis of a graduate's ability to qualify for prestigious international scholarships

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As Spady noted, an “Outcome-Based Education [OBE] means clearly focusing and organizing everything in an educational system around what is essential for all students to be able to do successfully at the end of their learning experience.” (Spady, 1994: 1). While most OBE programs focused on employment at the end of the learning experience, some students opted for further learning. This involves studying for Masters, MPhil or PhD within Sri Lanka or outside it. They resort to applying for prestigious scholarships such as the Chevening, Erasmus Mundus, Fulbright, Gates, Monbukagakusho (i.e. Mombusho), and Rhodes.

According to the University Grants Commission (UGC) records, 142,516 students became eligible to apply for the universities in Sri Lanka in 2011 and 14.31% of all those who were eligible were admitted as undergraduate to different universities. Of these, almost one-third or 7,064 were admitted to different Arts faculties within Sri Lanka. In 2010/11, 795 students were taken in by the Faculty of Arts (FoA), University of Colombo – the most number of Arts students taken in within the university sector (University Admissions 2012: 19)

The *objective* of this research is to analyze the different criteria in these scholarships to examine what they require from graduates. To come to the *conclusion* that only a select few have the ability to apply for the prestigious scholarships, the *research methodology* comprises utilizing primary including interviews with potential scholarship applicants (i.e. recent graduates) and those select numbers who received one of the above scholarships to conduct further studies. The exploration of scholarship criteria is also part of the research. The paper subsequently conducts a SWOT analysis of the skills and abilities of graduates – from the class obtained to their knowledge of English – through analysis of courses to explore a graduate student's chances of obtaining the requirements to obtain a scholarship.