

# 2017 BRIGHTSPARKS SCHOLARSHIP & EDUCATION SURVEY

## EXTRACT REPORT

A study on scholarships, higher education and career preferences of students in Singapore.



# INTRODUCTION

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The BrightSparks Scholarship and Education Survey is an annual study of scholarships, higher education and career preferences of potential scholarship recipients in Singapore. Each year, the survey targets GCE 'A' Level, International Baccalaureate (IB) students and graduates, polytechnic students and university undergraduates.

The key objective of this annual survey is to provide key and valuable insights of the various student groups' scholarship and higher education preference which would allow scholarships and higher education providers to strengthen their brand awareness in order to attract the prime candidates to apply.

## SURVEY METHODOLOGY

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The BrightSparks Scholarship and Education Survey 2017 is an online study that was conducted among the two targeted group of students across two separate time periods. For GCE 'A' Level, International Baccalaureate (IB) students / graduates and polytechnic students, the online study was conducted from the period of 1st Mar to 29th May 2017. For the university undergraduates, the online study was conducted from the period of 4th Apr to 3rd Jul 2017.

All respondents participated in the survey via emailers, e-banners and other online methods adopted by BrightSparks and the respective schools. Other attempt to solicit for relevant respondents was done via targeted sponsored posts on Facebook.

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## SURVEY SAMPLE

To ensure the highest unique count accuracy, incomplete and duplicated responses were excluded and the final sample size obtained were 1,153 respondents for GCE 'A' Level, International Baccalaureate (IB) students / graduates and polytechnic students; and 641 for university undergraduates. The breakdown of the respondents by their student categories are as follows:

### International Baccalaureate (IB) students / graduates and polytechnic students

RESPONDENT GROUPS	SAMPLE SIZE
Top GCE 'A' Level & IB Diploma graduates*	384
GCE 'A' Level & IB Diploma students and graduates	347
Polytechnic students	422
<b>Total Sample Size</b>	<b>1,153</b>

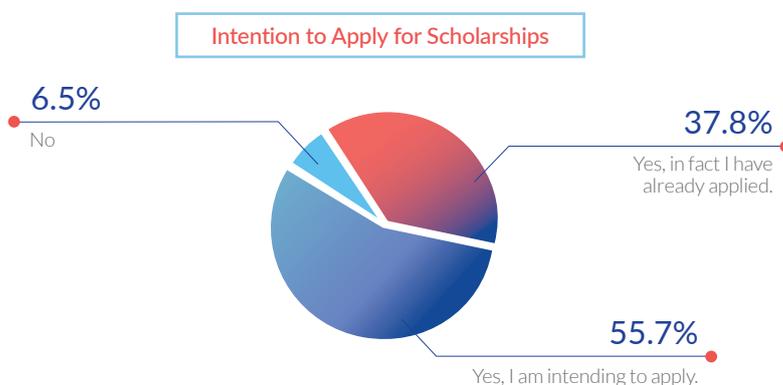
### University Mid-Term

University Undergraduates	641
<b>Total Sample Size</b>	<b>641</b>

## High Interest Towards Scholarships Across All Student Groups

Generally, there is a strong interest towards scholarships shown across all student groups despite knowledge that an application does not guarantee the receipt of the scholarship.

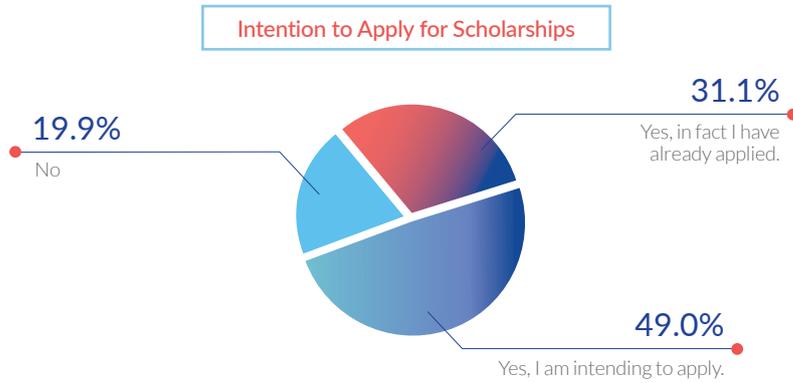
### TOP GCE 'A' Level and International Baccalaureate (IB) graduates



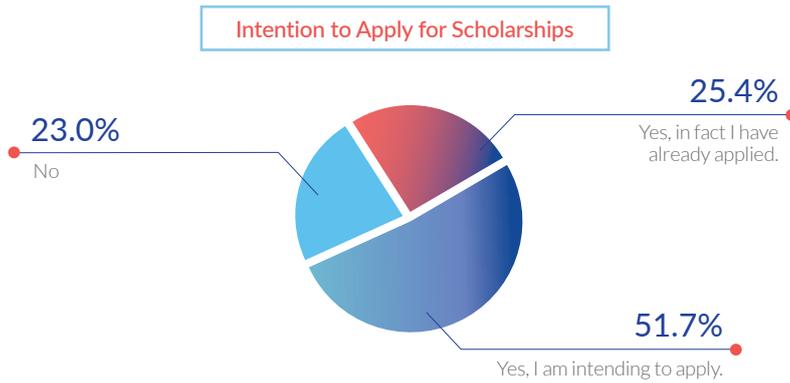
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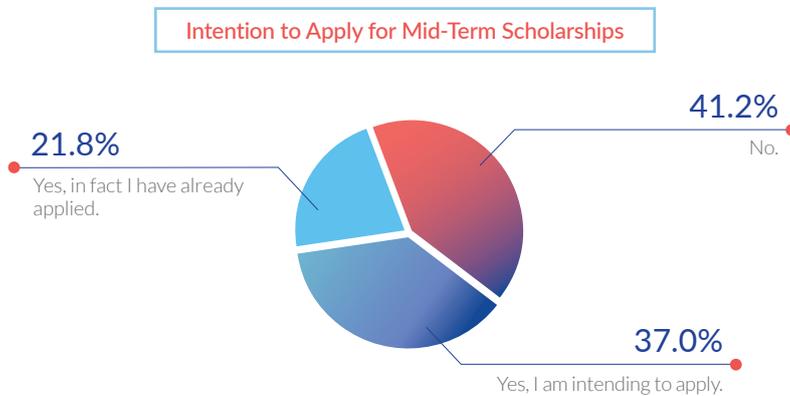
GCE 'A' Level and International Baccalaureate (IB) graduates



Polytechnic students



University Undergraduates



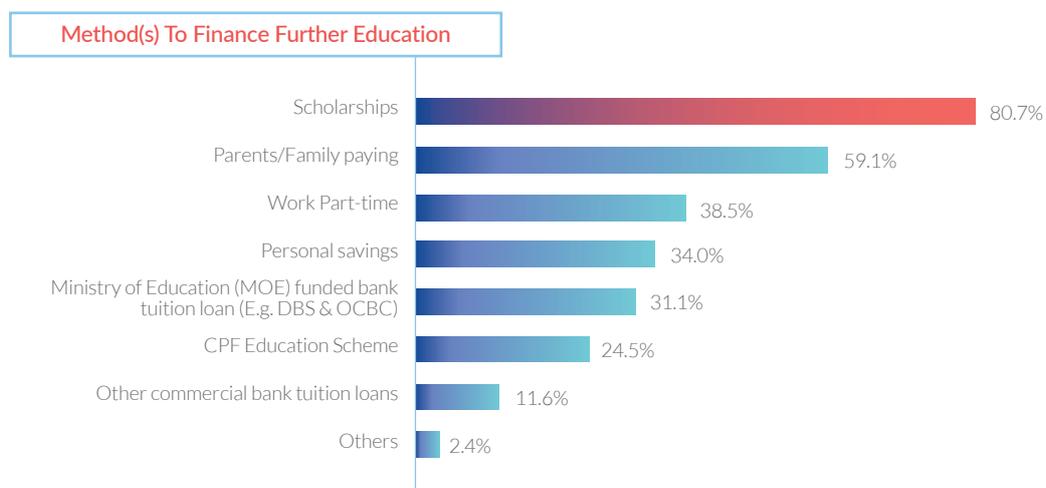
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## Scholarships the Preferred Mode to Finance Further Education Among JC / IB / Polytechnic Students

The strong interest in scholarships is substantiated by it being chosen as the top preferred education financing method across the student category groups.

### Overall GCE 'A' Level / International Baccalaureate (IB) students / graduates and polytechnic students



## Opportunity for Mid-Term Scholarship to Attract University Undergraduates Despite Low Usage

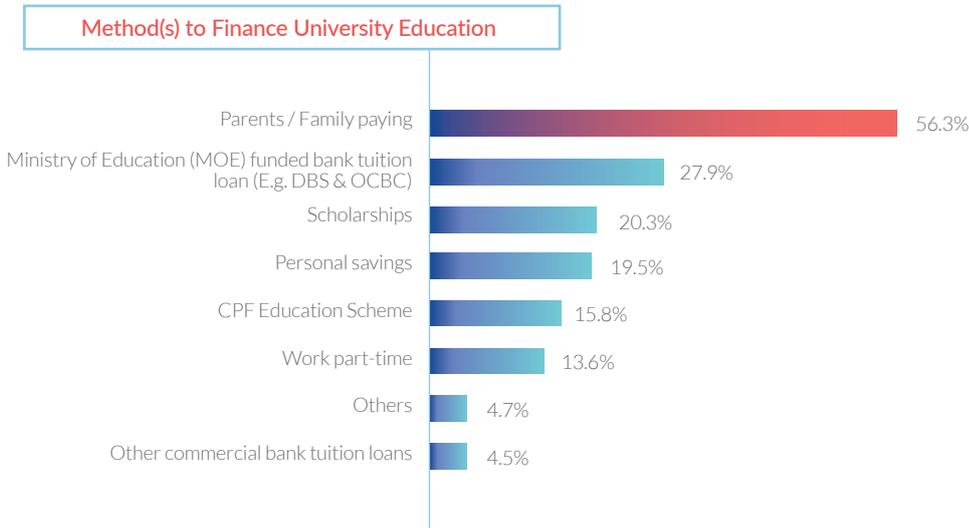
The limited spots awarded for scholarships meant that few are able to actually finance their university education via scholarships. This is evident with only a relatively small percentage (20.3%) of students using scholarships to finance their university education. Despite that, scholarship is still the third most adopted method to finance university education amongst the university undergraduates, illustrating its fair popularity.

This represents huge potential for Mid-Term scholarship to be presented as a second opportunity for students to apply and finance their education, attracting more prime applicants.

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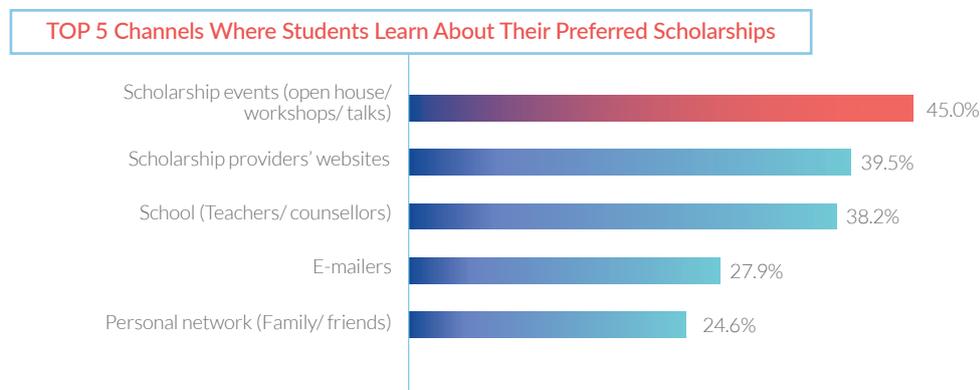
### University Undergraduates



### The Most Prominent Learning Channel About Scholarships Among Students

It is important for scholarship providers to know the preferred learning platform for students towards scholarships in order to instill presence and gain the greatest awareness among them. Scholarship events such as open house / Workshops / Talks were cited as the to-go platform to learn about scholarships among most GCE 'A' Level / International Baccalaureate / Polytechnic students and graduates (45%); whilst E-mailers were the most preferred channel among most university undergraduates (43.5%). This suggests that these channels generate the most awareness of scholarship offerings amongst the respective student groups.

### Overall GCE 'A' Level / International Baccalaureate (IB) students / graduates and polytechnic students



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## University Undergraduates

### TOP 5 Channels Where Students Learn About Their Preferred Scholarships



## Top 10 Overall Scholarship Provider Rankings 2017

2016 RANK	2017 RANK	SCHOLARSHIP PROVIDER RANKINGS	RANK MOVEMENT
1	1	Public Service Commission	-
2	2	National University of Singapore	-
3	3	Nanyang Technological University	-
6	4	Changi Airport Group	2 ▲
4	5	MOH Holdings Pte Ltd	-1 ▼
5	6	Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR)	-1 ▼
8	7	Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore	1 ▲
7	8	Singapore Airlines Ltd	-1 ▼
11	9	Health Promotion Board	2 ▲
10	10	GIC Private Limited	-

Prominent scholarship providers such as the Public Service Commission, the National University of Singapore and Nanyang Technology remains as favorites among the students, consolidating their top three position from previous year.

Notably, Changi Airport Group rose significantly in terms of their popularity by leapfrogging two places to cement their position as fourth most preferred scholarship provider. This could be attributed to a favorable perception towards potential post scholarship employment at the airport in light of upcoming developments such as Project Jewel and Terminal 4.

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### University Undergraduates

RANK	MID-TERM SCHOLARSHIP PROVIDER RANKINGS
1	Building and Construction Authority
2	Singapore - Industry Scholarship (SgIS)
3	Changi Airport Group
4	Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR)
5	Housing & Development Board
6	Central Provident Fund Board
7	JTC Corporation
8	Land Transport Authority
9	Health Promotion Board
10	Oversea-Chinese Banking Corporation Limited (OCBC)

With half of the top 10 mid-term scholarship providers being a governmental organization, it suggests a higher preference among university undergraduates for governmental organization as scholarship providers. This could be attributed to their desire to gain employment in a governmental organization upon graduation as it represents job stability and security amidst an uncertain employment landscape.

## Top 10 Scholarship Providers Preferred Among the Different Student Groups

### Top GCE 'A' Level and IB Diploma Graduates

2016 RANK	2017 RANK	SCHOLARSHIP PROVIDER RANKINGS	RANK MOVEMENT
2	1	National University of Singapore	1 ▲
4	2	Public Service Commission	2 ▲
2	3	Nanyang Technological University	-1 ▼
5	4	Changi Airport Group	1 ▲
6	5	Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR)	1 ▲

### GCE 'A' Level & IB Diploma students and graduates

2016 RANK	2017 RANK	SCHOLARSHIP PROVIDER RANKINGS	RANK MOVEMENT
2	1	National University of Singapore	1 ▲
1	2	Public Service Commission	-1 ▼
3	3	Nanyang Technological University	-
5	4	Changi Airport Group	1 ▲
5	5	MOH Holdings Pte Ltd	-

### Polytechnic Students

2016 RANK	2017 RANK	SCHOLARSHIP PROVIDER RANKINGS	RANK MOVEMENT
2	1	Public Service Commission	1 ▲
4	2	National University of Singapore	2 ▲
1	3	Nanyang Technological University	-2 ▼
NA	4	Infocomm Media Development Authority of Singapore (IMDA)*	-
2	5	MOH Holdings Pte Ltd	-3 ▼

\*New Inclusion

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### University Undergraduates

RANK	MID-TERM SCHOLARSHIP PROVIDER RANKINGS
1	Building and Construction Authority
2	Singapore - Industry Scholarship (SgIS)
3	Changi Airport Group
4	Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR)
5	Housing & Development Board

**Among the top GCE 'A' Level and IB Diploma graduates**, with the exception of Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A\*STAR), the remaining four scholarship providers remained the favorite providers to the students as in 2016.

**Among the GCE 'A' Level & IB Diploma students and graduates**, the five featured scholarship providers remained the favorite providers to the students as in 2016 with the National University of Singapore notably taking over Public Service Commission as the 1st place scholarship provider.

**Among the polytechnic students**, the National University of Singapore raised up a notable 2 positions to become the provider with the most improvement in terms of preference among the top 5 scholarship providers.

**Among the university undergraduates**, Building and Construction Authority was voted as their most preferred External Mid-Term Scholarship provider. With three of the top 5 providers being a governmental organization, it suggests a higher preference among university undergraduates for governmental organization as scholarship providers.

### Banking & Financial Services The Most Preferred Industry of Work for Students

Banking & Financial Services industry is the most popular industry of work amongst students by featuring in the top 3 industry of work across all student categories.

#### 2017 TOP 3 PREFERRED WORK INDUSTRY

Top GCE 'A' Level and IB Diploma Graduates	GCE 'A' Level & IB Diploma Students and Graduates	Polytechnic Student	University Undergraduate
BANKING & FINANCIAL SERVICES	GOVERNMENT / PUBLIC SERVICE	HEALTHCARE	ENGINEERING
HEALTHCARE	HEALTHCARE	BANKING & FINANCIAL SERVICES	GOVERNMENT / PUBLIC SERVICE
GOVERNMENT / PUBLIC SERVICE	BANKING & FINANCIAL SERVICES	AIRLINE / TRAVEL	BANKING & FINANCIAL SERVICES

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## Main Scholarships Findings Of Different Student Categories

The variance within the sample population in terms of the different student categories meant that preference variations are inevitable. It is therefore important to study the different student category groups independently in order to developed a better and credible understanding towards them- top GCE 'A' Level and IB Diploma graduates, GCE 'A' Level & IB Diploma students and graduates and Polytechnic students.

### Top GCE 'A' Level and IB Diploma graduates

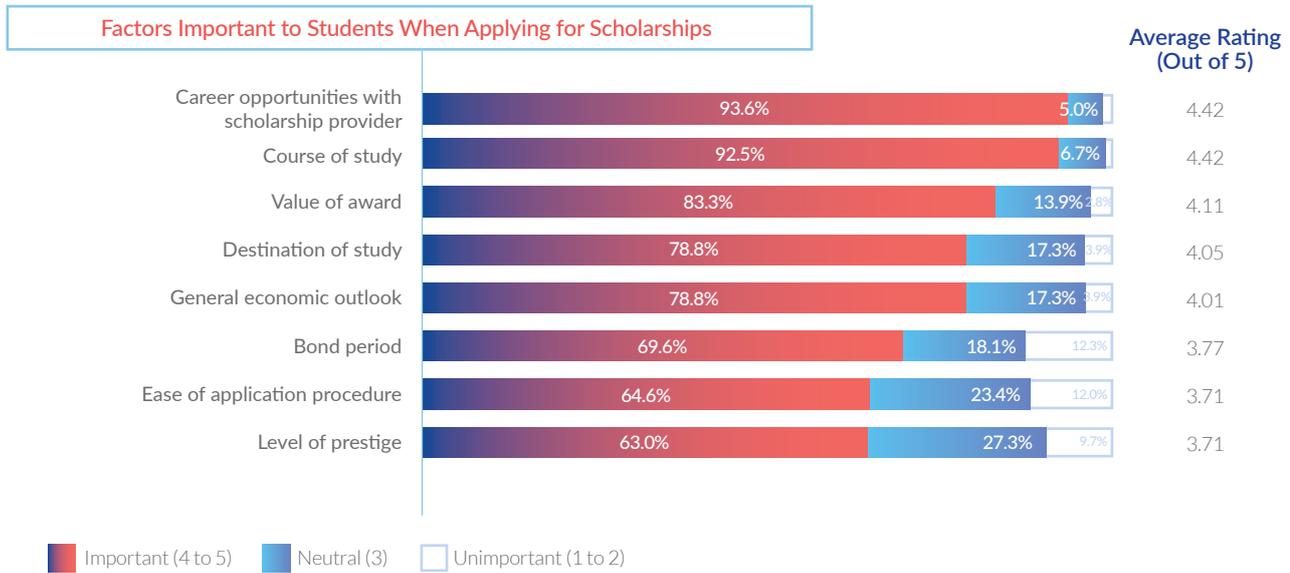
#### Scholarship Preferences

The contractual bond period of scholarships was seen as the top barrier that impedes scholarship application amongst top GCE 'A' Level and IB Diploma graduates. 36% of the students cited the desire not to be bonded as their reason for not applying for a scholarship, making it the top motivation for them not to apply for a scholarship.



In contrast, those who are keen on applying for a scholarship placed considerably lesser consideration towards the bond period with an average rating of 3.77 out of 5. Instead, they rated career opportunities with the scholarship provider as the most important factor (average rating of 4.42 out of 5) when they apply for scholarships.

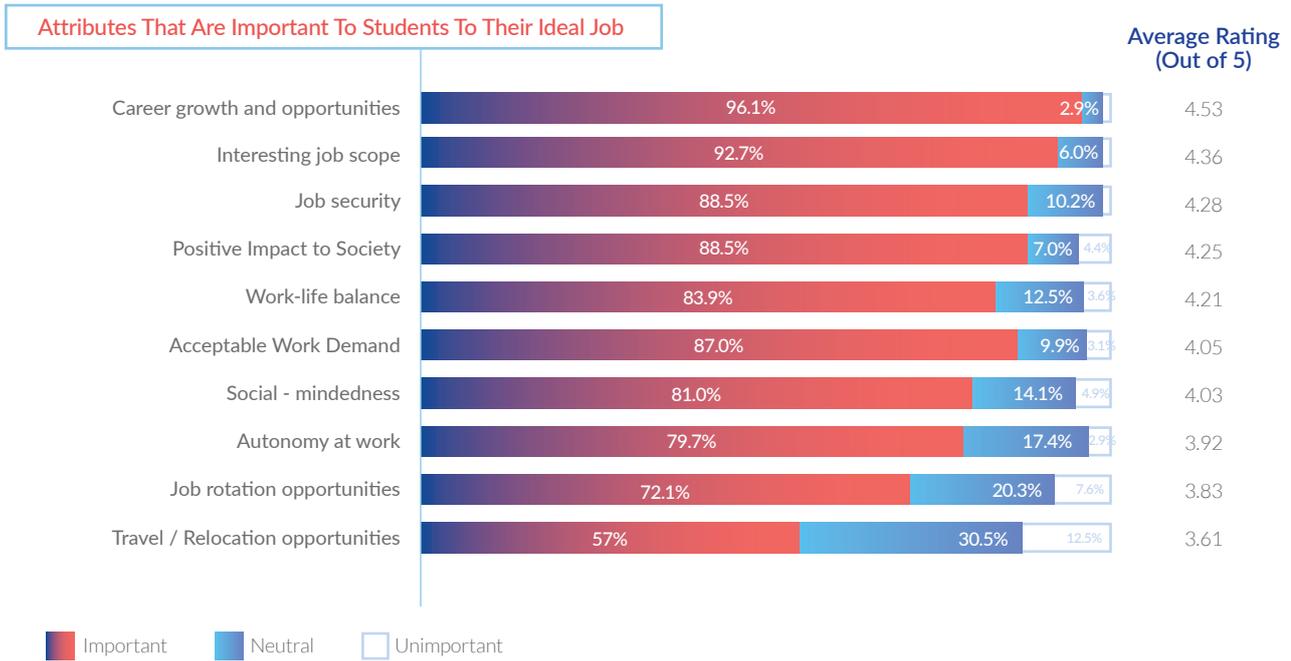
This suggests that these scholarship seekers are more concern with the career opportunities they can benefit from being a scholar within the organization instead of the prospect of being tied down to the organization for a period of time.



### Career Preferences

Top 'A' Level and IB Diploma graduates rated career growth and opportunities as the most important attribute to their ideal job with an average importance rating of 4.53 out of 5. This suggests a keen desire amongst these students to gain advancement opportunities and avoid stagnation within their career. Therefore, to encourage scholars to serve their bonds, a well and purposeful career programme which highlights advancement opportunities would serve to enhance their motivation and sense of attachment.

Other key attributes to an ideal job are cited as interesting job scope (4.36 out of 5), job security (4.28 out of 5), positive impact to society (4.25 out of 5) and work-life balance (4.21 out of 5).



Aside from non-monetary attribute, majority of the top GCE 'A' Level and IB Diploma graduates expected a starting salary of S\$3,001 to S\$3,500.



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## GCE 'A' Level & IB Diploma students and graduates

### Scholarship Preferences

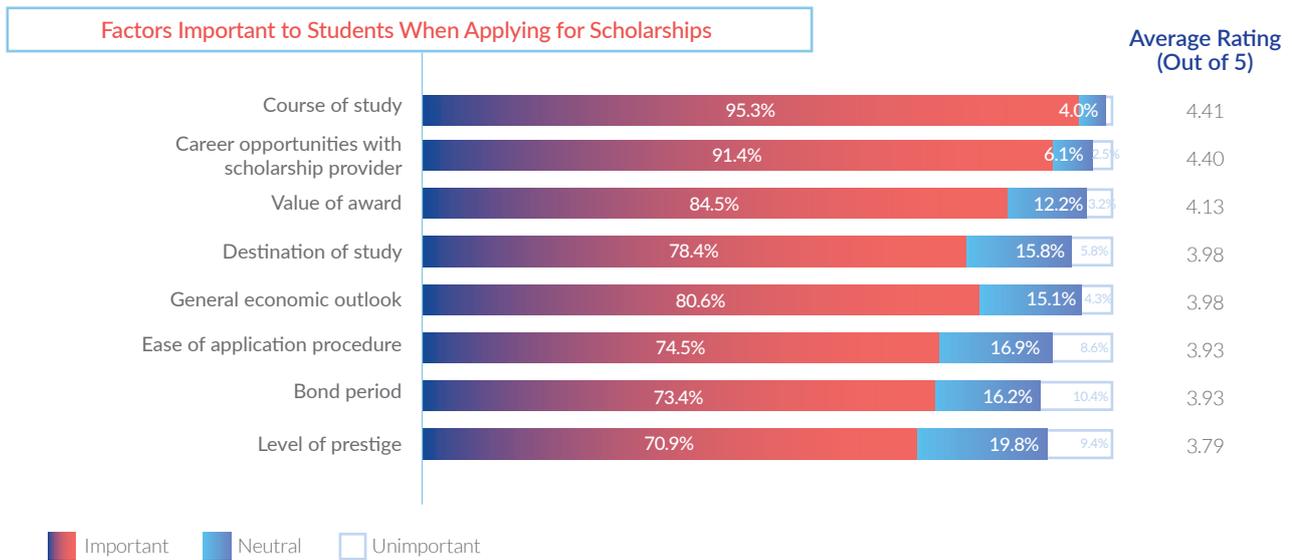
The failure to meet the academic requirement (76.8%) and the fear of not being able to keep up with the required grades (37.7%) was cited by GCE 'A' Level & IB Diploma students and graduates as the top 2 reasons for not applying for a scholarship. This high emphasis placed on academic grades as a barrier to scholarship application is in stark contrast with the result of the top GCE 'A' Level and IB Diploma graduates where the contractual requirement of the bond was cited as the strongest barrier.

This could be attributed to the predominant social norm of scholarship candidates who have shown academic excellence being placed in better stead in their scholarship application. Scholarship providers should make awareness to potential applicants that their scholarship criteria are not limited solely on academic grades but also external criteria such as leadership skills and co-curricular activities involvement to appeal to this group of students.



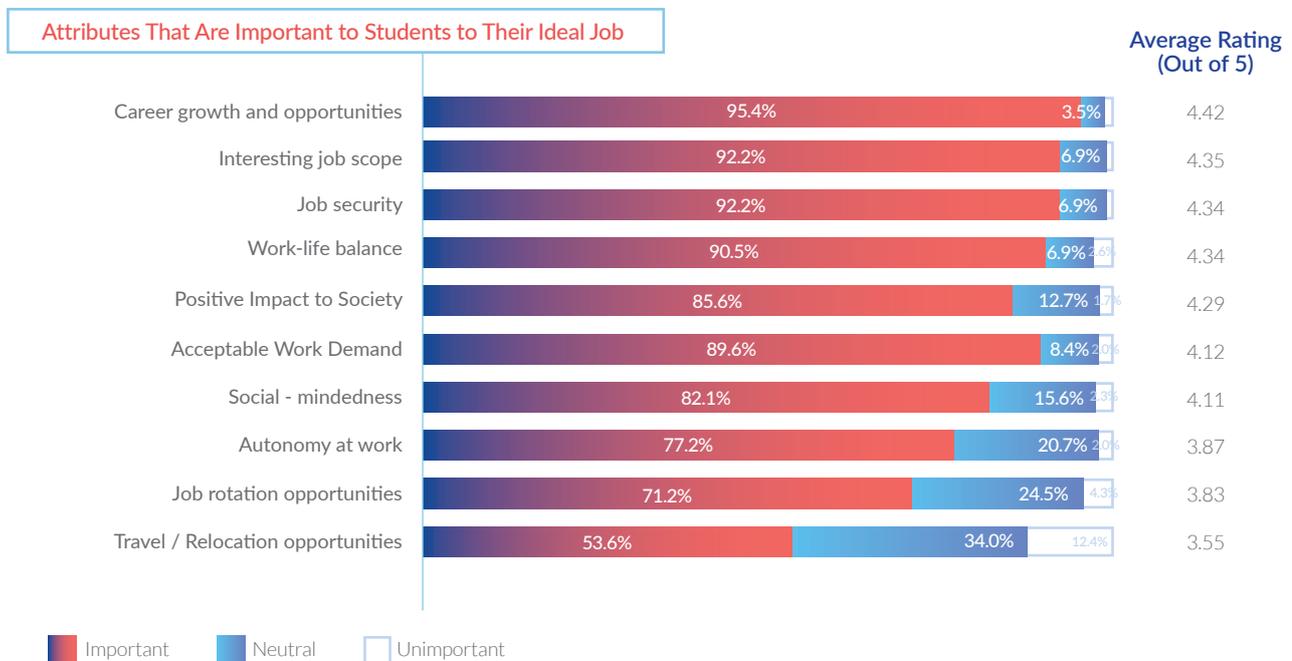
Course of study was cited as the most important concern (average rating of 4.41 out of 5) to GCE 'A' Level & IB Diploma students and graduates when they apply for scholarship. This suggests an intention to select the scholarship offerings most relevant to their course of study instead of the pursuit of any scholarship opportunities available.

Other key considerations were the career opportunities with the scholarship provider which followed closely behind (4.40 out of 5), the value of the award (4.13 out of 5), destination of study (3.98 out of 5) and the general economic outlook (3.98 out of 5).



### Career Preferences

Career growth and opportunities are rated as the most important attribute to their ideal job amongst GCE 'A' Level & IB Diploma students and graduates (average rating of 4.42 out of 5). This illustrates their motivation to gain advancement opportunities and avoid stagnation within their career.



Other key attributes of an ideal job are interesting job scope (4.35 out of 5), Job security (4.34 out of 5), Work-life balance (4.34 out of 5) and a positive impact to society (4.29 out of 5).

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In terms of non-monetary attribute, consistent with the result for the top GCE 'A' Level and IB Diploma graduates, the GCE 'A' Level & IB Diploma students and graduates expect a starting salary of S\$3001 to S\$3500.



## Polytechnic students

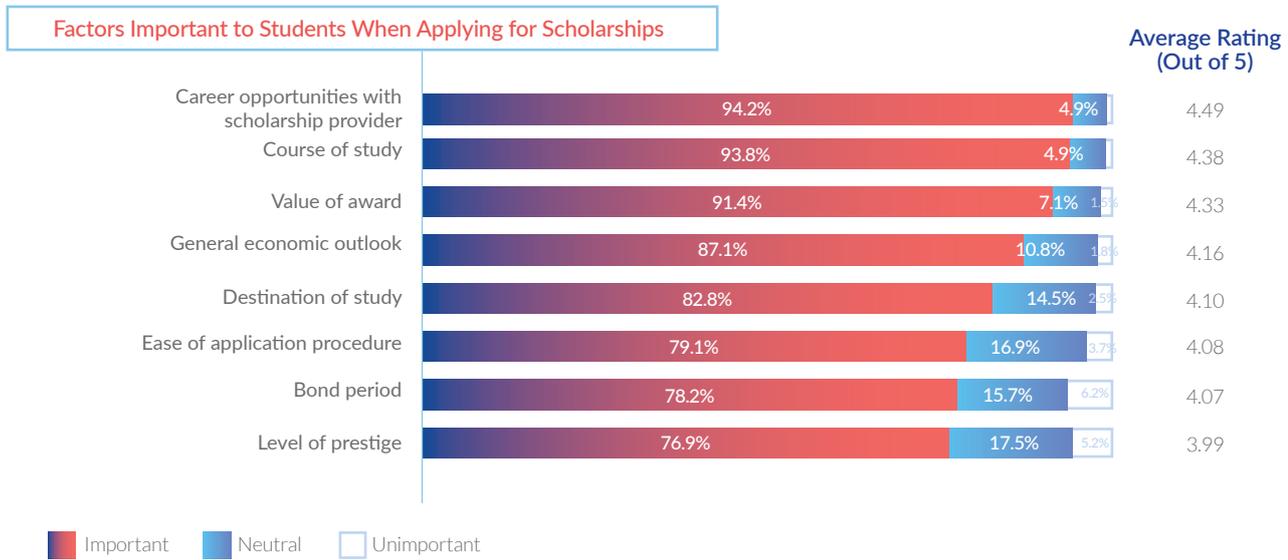
### Scholarship Preferences

Similar with the GCE 'A' Level & IB Diploma students and graduates, polytechnic students cited the failure to meet the academic requirement (59.8%) as well as the fear of not being able to keep up with the required grades (47.4%) as the reason why they are not keen to apply for a scholarship.

This could be attributed to the predominant social norm of scholarship candidates who have shown academic excellence being placed in better stead in their scholarship application. Scholarship providers should make awareness to potential applicants that their scholarship criteria are not limited solely on academic grades but also external criteria such as leadership skills and co-curricular activities involvement to appeal to this group of students.



Career opportunities with scholarship providers was cited by the polytechnic students as the most important factor (an average rating of 4.49 out of 5) when they apply for scholarships. Highlighting and marketing exciting career opportunities as a scholar within the organization could serve to attract application from this group of students.

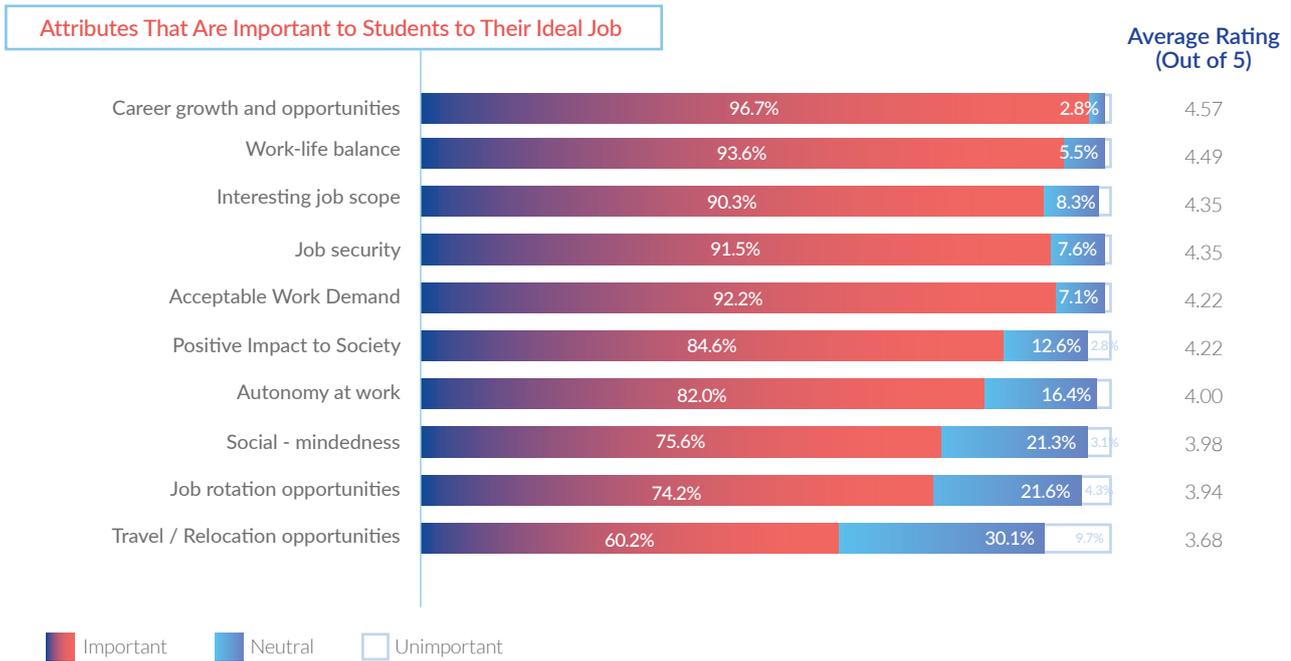


Other key considerations include the course of study (4.38 out of 5), value of award (4.33 out of 5), general economic outlook (4.16 out of 5) and destination of study (4.10 out of 5).

### Career Preferences

Career Growth and Opportunities are rated as the most important attribute of their ideal job (an average rating of 4.57 out of 5). Highlighting and developing a well-thought career programme that provides career growth and opportunities to the scholars could be key to enhancing their motivation and sense of fulfillment in serving their scholarship bonds that ultimately leads to retention of their employment.

Other key attributes sought after in their ideal job are work-life balance (4.49 out of 5), interesting job scope (4.35 out of 5), job security (4.35 out of 5), acceptable work demand (4.22 out of 5).



Aside from non-monetary attributes, polytechnic students expect a starting salary of S\$3001 to S\$3500 which is consistent across all student categories.



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## University Undergraduates (Year 1 & 2)

### Scholarship Preferences

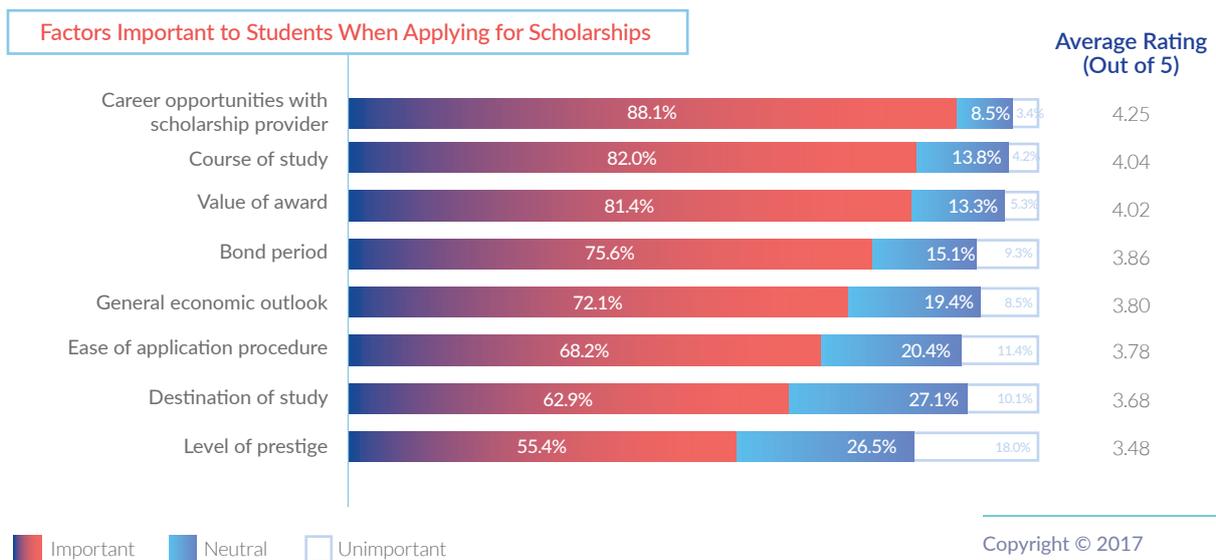
Similar with the GCE 'A' Level / IB Diploma students & graduates and polytechnic students, university undergraduates cited the failure to meet the academic requirement (53.1%) as well as the fear of not being able to keep up with the required grades (46.9%) as the reason why they are not keen to apply for a scholarship.

This could be an acknowledgement among students that academic excellence is critical for scholarship application where candidates who have shown academic excellence are being placed in better stead in their scholarship application. Scholarship providers should make awareness to potential applicants that their scholarship criteria are not limited solely on academic grades but also external criteria such as leadership skills and co-curricular activities involvement to appeal to this group of students.



Career opportunities with the scholarship providers was rated as the most important consideration (average rating of 4.25 out of 5) by university undergraduates when they apply for Mid-Term scholarship with a high 88.1% of them rating it as an important factor.

This suggests that ensuring a post scholarship career program that encompasses career development and enhancement opportunities could have a massive influence on the students' decision to apply for the scholarship.

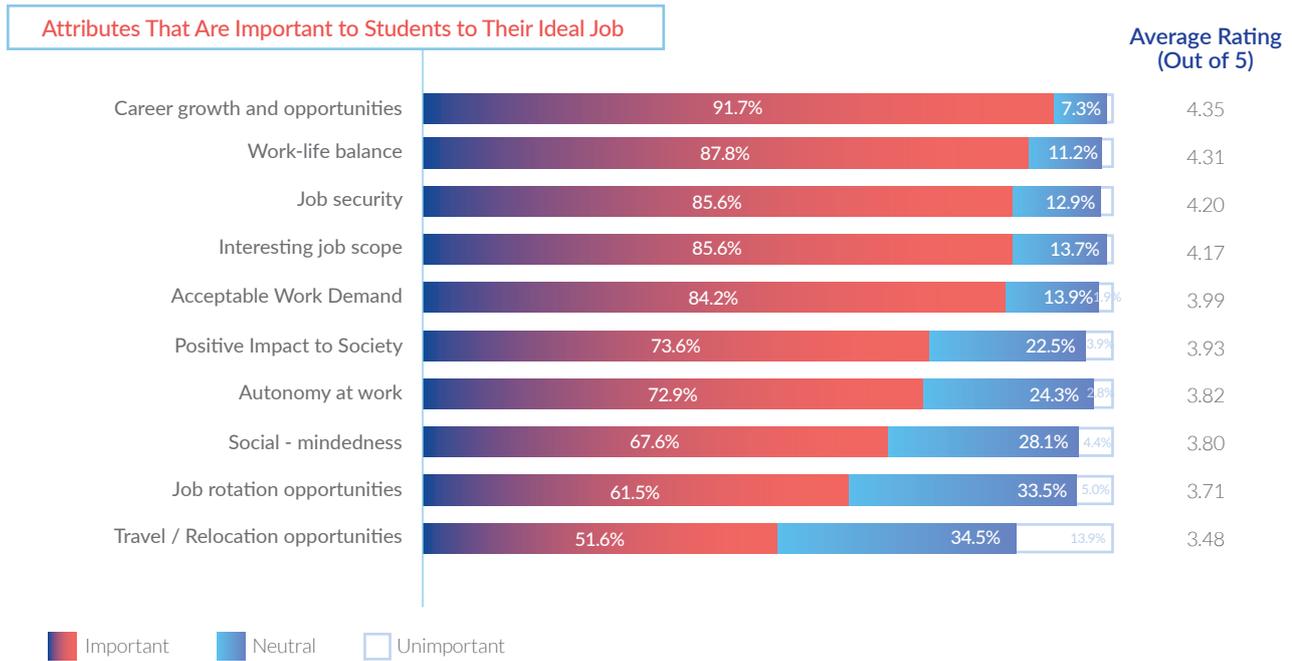


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**Career Preferences**

University undergraduates rated career growth and opportunities as the most important attribute in their ideal job (average rating of 4.35 out of 5) with a high 91.7% citing it as an important attribute. This suggests an emphasis placed by students on career advancement in their jobs and a keen desire to avoid stagnation in their career.



Aside from non-monetary attributes, university undergraduates expect a starting salary of S\$3001 to S\$3500 which is consistent across all student categories.



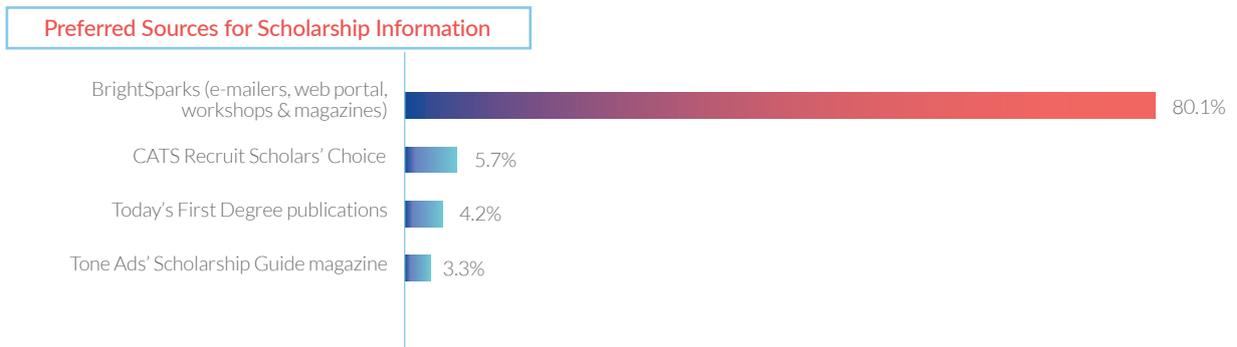
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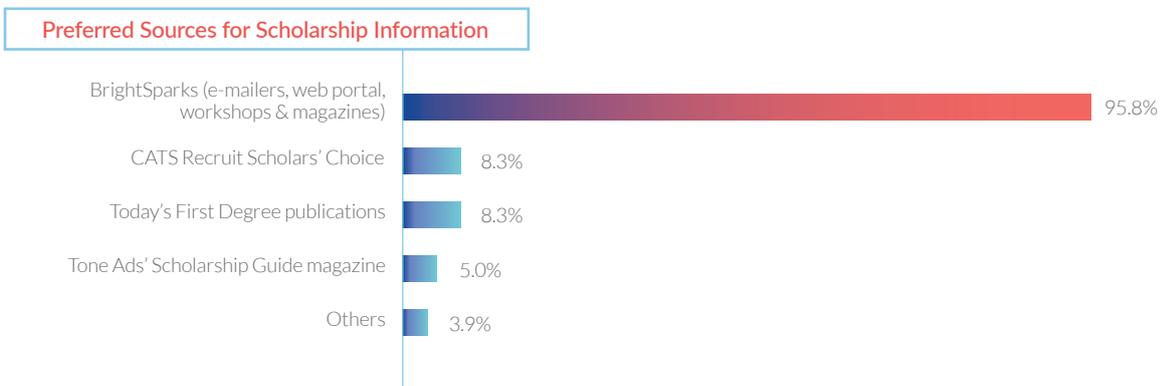
## BrightSparks Remains the most preferred platform for scholarship information

For ten consecutive years, BrightSparks was chosen as the most preferred source for scholarship information across the different student category groups. This offers testament to the strong faith students across all categories have on BrightSparks when it comes to their scholarship matters.

### Overall GCE 'A' Level / International Baccalaureate (IB) students / graduates and polytechnic students



### University Undergraduates



# ABOUT BRIGHTSPARKS

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BrightSparks, owned by CareerBuilder Singapore, is Singapore's most preferred Scholarship and Higher Education portal. It seeks to offer Junior College (JC), Polytechnic and Undergraduate students a wealth of comprehensive information on the latest scholarships and higher education choices.

## Survey Contact

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