

JMU Hillcrest Scholarship Advice for Consultants

Courtesy of University Writing Center Alumnus and Hillcrest Applicant Kate Peppiatt

Purpose: Hillcrest Scholarships provide funds to support transformative, off-campus summer experiences for Honors students. Hillcrest scholars are selected based on their proposed project, their ability to connect the proposed experience to future goals, their leadership experience and community engagement, their ability to make a significant contribution to society in the future, and the transformative potential of the proposed Hillcrest project.

Although this scholarship involves eight different parts, there are probably three parts that we could see most often in UWC: abstract, proposal, and personal statement.

Abstract: This is an element of the cover letter. Like all abstracts, it is a preview and synthesis of the information presented in the rest of the application. It must be less than 150 words. Based on the feedback I have gotten from advisers, it should mostly focus on information presented in the proposal and serve as abstract of the project itself.

Proposal: The proposal is two pages maximum and focuses on the proposed project details. There are a ton of helpful guiding questions on the Hillcrest Website: <https://www.jmu.edu/honors/scholarships/hillcrest/apply.shtml>. These questions can help you determine what information to include in the proposal. This is how I came up with the headers and sections in my proposal. The main insight I have about this section is **be specific**. Consultants should stress the importance of having individuals outside the student's field understand the importance of their project. The student should highlight all the logistical aspects of the project (timeline, location, etc.).

Personal Statement: The personal statement is more general; it is an overview of an important aspect of your life and personality. The website states, "You can share your personal history, family background, influences, opportunities, skills, experiences, and goals. Do not repeat information from your project proposal unless absolutely necessary." As you know, in my personal statement I struggled to ensure that my values and goals were expressed cohesively throughout. Like all personal statements, this should show the student is unique and demonstrate their personality.

Guidance: The hardest part for me when I began my drafts was understanding what elements should go in the proposal versus the personal statement. There is a place for qualifications in the proposal; this should include your project-related experience. Personal statements do not need to explicitly mention the project. Therefore, it is different from other types of personal statements where you directly tie in specifics of what you are applying for. You can build a case about who you are as a person and applicant instead.

Consultants should recommend that their clients meet often with their adviser(s) who work closely with this scholarship and know what makes applicants successful.

