

SCHOLARSHIPS ON OFFER

by Huang Chenkuang



Scholarships, offered at several Beijing international schools, are one way to ease the pain of school fees. However, for the students lucky enough to win them, they can also provide motivation to keep learning and improving.

The most valuable is a full scholarship usually awarded by the school's admissions team. We spoke to two students who were successful in applying for full scholarships: Year 10 student Vladimir Dementyev and Year 9 student Francesco Babs, both studying at Yew Chung International School of Beijing (YCIS Beijing).



VLADIMIR DEMENTYEV "The school not only considers marks, but more your personal efforts for improvement."

Dementyev was born and grew up in Beijing, and joined YCIS Beijing two years ago on a full scholarship. Introducing himself as someone very into mathematics, Dementyev later surprised us with his skill at dancing. He has taken part in many competitions in and out of China, and has won over 50 awards.

Dementyev told us why he and his parents agreed on YCIS Beijing in the first place.

"When I visited YCIS at one of their open house days, I felt very at home here—welcoming environment and friendly staff. And what I really like about YCIS is the diversified courses I can choose from."

Having been informed about the scholarship program, Dementyev's mom emailed the school admission office for more details. The school replied with the application form, which, Dementyev told us, is nine pages long.

"I was travelling in Yunnan with my friends, and the schedule was tight: one week. So I set that as my priority and imposed myself to

finish the application during the night when everyone else was hanging out. And I was away from my parents, so there was not really any extra help at hand."

"The questions are not about general knowledge, but about your life; for example, 'Who is the person that has had the most influence on your life?' I find questions like this quite difficult to deal with. The very first thing to pop up in my mind was my grandfather, and I probably could have written an essay of over 10,000 words, but the application form only allows space for around 200 words. Stuff like this poses unique challenges to me. Fortunately, I succeeded getting into the second round interview."

"The interview was online since I was out of Beijing, and was with department heads and a group of teachers. It went pretty smoothly. They asked me questions like why I chose YCIS, and my hobbies, stuff like that."

"I had a final face-to-face interview with

the principal, which took about 40 minutes, and also I was asked to take an English test."

Dementyev was offered a full scholarship, but that's not the end of the story. The scholarship lasts for one year, after which the school admission team reviews the recipient's achievements and performance at the beginning of the new school year, to decide whether to renew it or not. This acts as a stimulus to Dementyev to keep improving.

Asked to give suggestions for potential YCIS Beijing scholarship applicants, Dementyev says: "The school not only considers marks, but more your personal efforts for improvement. My English level was quite laid back which has me worried. But my teachers really helped with that. Also, show the school the advantages you have compared to other candidates. If you have a special talent, let them know, because that definitely acts as the icing on the cake."



Francesco Babs "Be confident, and keep improving"

Babs is from a third culture family—his mom is Italian and dad Nigerian. He moved to Beijing with his family ten years ago and joined YCIS Beijing last year, also on a full scholarship.

When talking about his experience, Babs is frank about the advantage that his third-culture family background gave him.

"I decided to give it a shot when I learned about YCIS's scholarship offering, but I wasn't very optimistic about it to be honest, because I was worried that my academic record wouldn't stand out."

"Yet to my surprise, the application weighs quite a lot on more personal stuff like my background growing up, my hobbies, and so on. This was good because it made me realize how much positive influence I've received from my parents. The way my parents exerted themselves to get where they are today, and their support and encouragement to me to freely develop my personal interests like soccer and chess, are what affects me most."

The application form is only the first step on the long road to the scholarship. The subsequent interviews with the principals and administrators were more challenging to Babs.

"All the interview questions were very open and required real thought. I paused several times trying to figure out how to adequately express myself. I think the interview really helped me in some ways, to be prepared for other interviews in the future."

Babs sees being on a full scholarship as a double-edged sword. From his personal perspective, YCIS Beijing has a quite different system from his former school. "It encourages us to build critical thinking and self-regulation, and they appreciate a global perspective."

"The scholarship is certainly encouraging, yet adds extra pressure at the same time. It reminds you all the time that you need to work harder than your counterparts to feel deserving of it, and to guarantee yourself having it the following school year. It's a lot of pressure, but affected my learning in a very positive way. I think this is probably also one of the main reasons why our school provides scholarships—to encourage students to keep motivated and improving."

As for advice to applicants, Babs says the main thing is to be yourself.

"Be confident, don't be too modest, don't be shy and say all the things that you do. Also, be honest. Because they're going to check and ask you in the next round. The most important part they care about is our growth, what the teacher thinks you're going to do in the future."

SCHOOLS THAT OFFER SCHOLARSHIPS

Beijing City International School (BCIS)

- For Grades 9-12: Academic scholarships, and merit scholarships

Contact winnie.lai@bcis.cn or mark.sullivan@bcis.cn or 8771 7171 for more information.

Beijing World Youth Academy (BWYA)

Academic scholarships, merit scholarships, and financial aid for qualified enrolled students

Contact info@ibwya.net for enquiries.

Canadian International School of Beijing (CISB)

- Grades 6-12

For those students who stand out for all-round abilities on top of academic performance; proposed by head teacher.

- Grades 9-12: merit-based scholarships

In order to reward and motivate students performing well at school. Open to all students from Grades 9-12.

Visit www.cisbeijing.com for more details.

Daystar Academy

Daystar provides scholarships for new students from bilingual family backgrounds (with English as one of their mother tongues). Successful applicants will get a 20 to 100 percent discount on tuition fees. Family income certificate, application form and other materials needed.

Contact Daystar on admissions-ds@daystarchina.cn (Beigao Campus) and admissions-dt@daystarchina.cn (Sanlitun Campus) for more information and application forms.

Harrow Beijing

- Joseph Banks Scholarship

The scholarship is open to external candidates and will be awarded on merit following a scholarship test and interview.

Contact the admissions team at admissions@harrowbeijing.cn for more information or to apply.

Yew Chung International School of Beijing (YCIS Beijing)

- Overall Achievement Scholarships; Music Scholarships; Merit Scholarships

Contact YCIS Beijing at enquiry@bj.ycef.com to request scholarship application forms, or call 8585 1836 for more information.

*Note: For more schools that offer scholarships, please check the school profiles pages.