

RETAIL COUNCIL OF CANADA



Scholarships

## 2026 Application Guidelines

Thank you for your interest in the Retail Education Scholarship Program.

Please read these guidelines carefully—everything you need to submit a complete application is here.

Questions? Email [hkhan@retailcouncil.org](mailto:hkhan@retailcouncil.org).

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### Key Dates (2026)

- **Applications open:** Week of **January 12, 2026**
- **Deadline:** **March 30, 2026** (11:59 PM) – late submissions are not accepted
- **Decisions announced:** around **May 2026**

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### Who Is Eligible?

Applicants must meet **all** of the following:

- **Education:** Enrolled (full-time or part-time) at a Canadian college or university for **Fall 2026** in a **retail-related** program (e.g., retail, business, fashion, marketing, analytics, supply chain, IT/cybersecurity for retail, etc.).
- **Industry connection:** Currently working (part-time or full-time) **in the retail industry or** meaningfully pursuing a retail career pathway.

Note: If you are **not** attending school in **Fall 2026**, your application will **not** be considered.

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### What You Need to Apply (Checklist)

Upload the following to the online application portal:

**1. Online Application & Release Form**

Complete the 2026 form on the portal: [https://retailcouncilcanada-apply.smapply.io/prog/2026\\_retail\\_education\\_scholarship\\_application/](https://retailcouncilcanada-apply.smapply.io/prog/2026_retail_education_scholarship_application/)

**2. Transcripts**

- **Official or unofficial** transcript(s) covering your **two most recent semesters** (secondary or post-secondary).
- If your latest term is in progress, include the most recent completed term.

**3. Proof of Enrolment (Fall 2026) – one of:**

- Offer/acceptance (or conditional acceptance) letter
- Proof of tuition payment
- Letter from the Office of the Registrar

**4. Employer Reference Letter (max 200 words)**

From your **current supervisor/employer** and including:

- Your commitment to the retail industry
- How you have distinguished yourself on the job
- Why you are a strong candidate for this scholarship
- Supervisor's name, title, company, and contact info

Upload as PDF or Word. Company letterhead is preferred.

**5. Essay (800–1,000 words, PDF or Word)**

**Topic:** AI and Customer Experience

**Prompt:** *Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming how customers discover, shop, and interact with brands. How should retailers use AI to improve the customer experience and strengthen customer relationships?*

- Submit original work in your own words.
- If you reference sources, cite them briefly at the end.

**6. “Make Retail Your Career” Presentation (2–3 minutes)**

Create a short presentation/video that covers:

- Introduce yourself (name & current retail role)

- Employer: where you work and why
- Your retail experience: what you've learned in the past year
- Your post-secondary program (September 2026) and why you chose it
- Your retail career path: why you're one of the people retail needs—frontline leadership, store ops, data/analytics, e-commerce, supply chain, cybersecurity, etc.
- Make it fun and engaging!

### **Presentation Requirements**

- Length: **2–3 minutes**
- Orientation: **landscape (16:9)**
- Formats: **.pptx, .mp4, .mov, .avi** (must play on Mac **and** PC)
- Content: combine slides/video/text/images/animation if you wish
- Audio: minimize background noise; speak clearly and with energy
- Rights: **use only licensed or original images/music; cite all sources**

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### **How to Apply (Portal Steps) - 2026 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION - Retail Council of Canada**

1. **Create an account** in the Retail Council of Canada application portal.
2. Click **Apply** to start your 2026 application.
3. **Complete** the Application & Release Form.
4. **Upload** your Essay (PDF/Word).
5. **Upload** your Presentation (see requirements above).
6. **Upload** your Employer Reference Letter.
7. **Upload** your Proof of Enrolment (Fall 2026).
8. **Upload** your Transcripts.
  - ✓ The portal will show receipt status in the **Transcripts** section.
  - ✓ All documents must be uploaded **by March 30, 2026**.

### Applicants Under 18 (Parent/Guardian Consent)

Applicants under 18 must have a parent/legal guardian digitally sign the consent and release in the application.

#### To link a Parent/Guardian account:

1. The applicant creates their own portal account and starts the application.
2. In the application, click **Add Team Member** (right side).
3. Enter the parent/guardian's name and email; they'll receive an email to access and sign.

Information is used only for the **2026** Retail Education Scholarship Program.

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### How Applications Are Reviewed

- A panel of Canadian retail leaders reviews all complete applications.
- Reviewers represent a cross-section of roles and disciplines.
- Evaluation focuses on:
  - ✓ Eligibility and completeness
  - ✓ Quality and originality of the Essay and Presentation
  - ✓ Evidence of retail commitment, impact, and career potential
  - ✓ Strength of the Employer Reference

**Timeline:** Reviews take 4–6 weeks; decisions by **May 2026**.

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### Tips for a Strong Application

- **Start early.** Transcripts and letters take time.
- **Follow the criteria.** Address each part directly.
- **Be specific.** Use real examples, data, and outcomes.
- **Be original.** Write in your voice; avoid plagiarism.
- **Polish.** Get feedback and revise for clarity and flow.

- **Tech check.** Ensure files open and play on Mac and PC; use landscape video.

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## Contact

Questions or accessibility needs? Email [hkhan@retailcouncil.org](mailto:hkhan@retailcouncil.org)

Best of luck with your application!