# Central Okanagan Bursary and Scholarship Society

https://cobss.sd23.bc.ca/

2026-2027

# CENTRAL OKANAGAN BURSARY AND SCHOLARSHIP SOCIETY

- Unique to the Central Okanagan
- One application allows students to apply to hundreds of awards
- There are 2 types of awards:
  1. **No criteria awards** which are open to all students
  2. **Specific criteria awards** which have been established by donors

# CENTRAL OKANAGAN BURSARY AND SCHOLARSHIP SOCIETY

## Stats from last year:




★583 total awards

★Total value of awards:
$603, 811

★633 Student Applications

# HAVE SOMEONE WHO WANTS TO DONATE?

- Contact COBSS (cobss@sd23.bc.ca) to create their own award with any criteria they choose
- Contact COBSS to donate any amount
- Drop off bottles at Columbia Bottle Depot drop-off → use COBSS phone number (250) 870-5185

# ELIGIBILITY

1. Be a Canadian citizen, permanent resident or refugee living within the boundaries of Central Okanagan Public Schools.
2. Must be applying/have applied and plan to **attend <u>FULL TIME</u>** at an **accredited** post-secondary institution **in September of graduation year.**
3. Obtain a minimum of 60% average in all grade 11 and 12 courses.
4. Registered in a minimum of six (6) courses during grade 12 year, and will complete a minimum of six (6) courses by June 30th not including the grade 12 Capstone Careers course. *(these 6 can include online, dual credit, & external courses)*
5. Have potential to graduate for the first time this June.
6. Attending one of the member schools of COBSS as their home school during graduation year.

# SELECTION PROCESS

- Applications are submitted online.
- Applications are strictly confidential.
- Applications are read only by school counsellors, donors and members of the COBSS selection committee consisting of representatives from each of the member schools.



- School counsellors are not part of the selection process.

# SELECTION IS BASED ON THE FOLLOWING THREE AREAS:

1. **FINANCIAL NEED**
   based on line 15000 of tax return and any special circumstances

2. **ACADEMIC ABILITY**
   the average of student's Grade 11 and Grade 12 marks

3. **ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP**
   such as involvement in school and community

# TYPES OF AWARDS

**BURSARY:**

primarily based on financial need

**SCHOLARSHIP:**

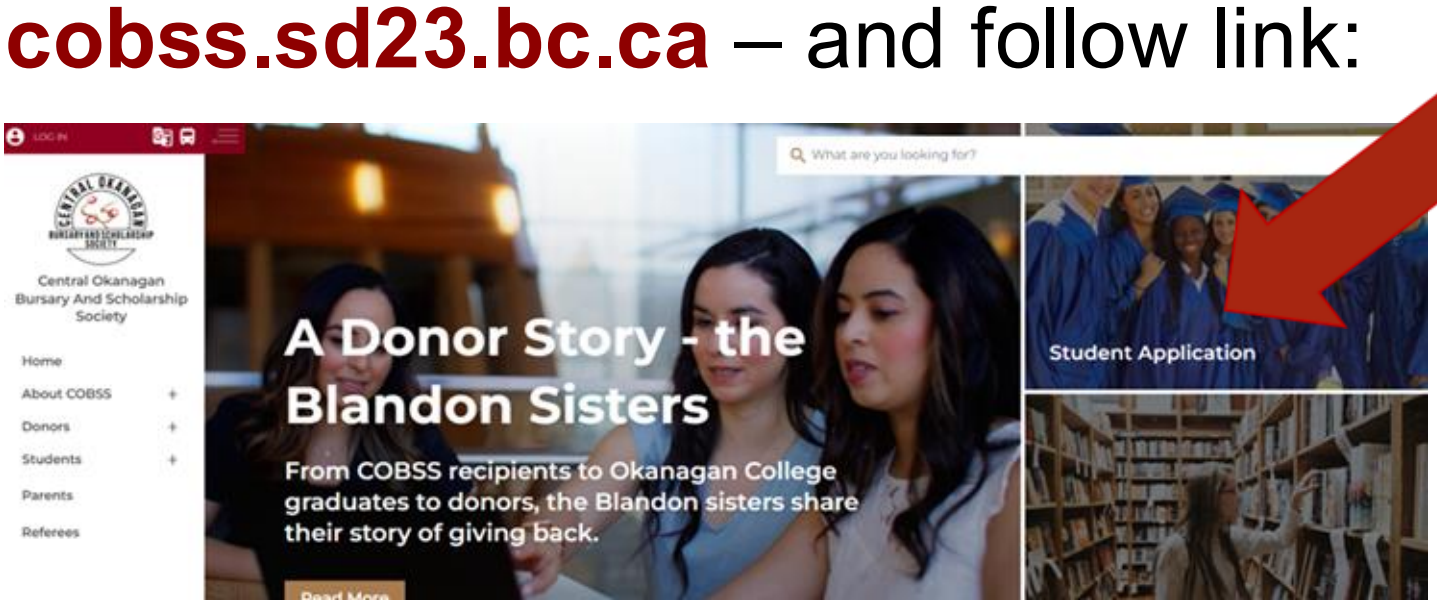
based on excellence; excellence can be in a variety of areas - academic, fine arts, applied skills, sports, community involvement, etc.

**AWARD:**

based on donor discretion

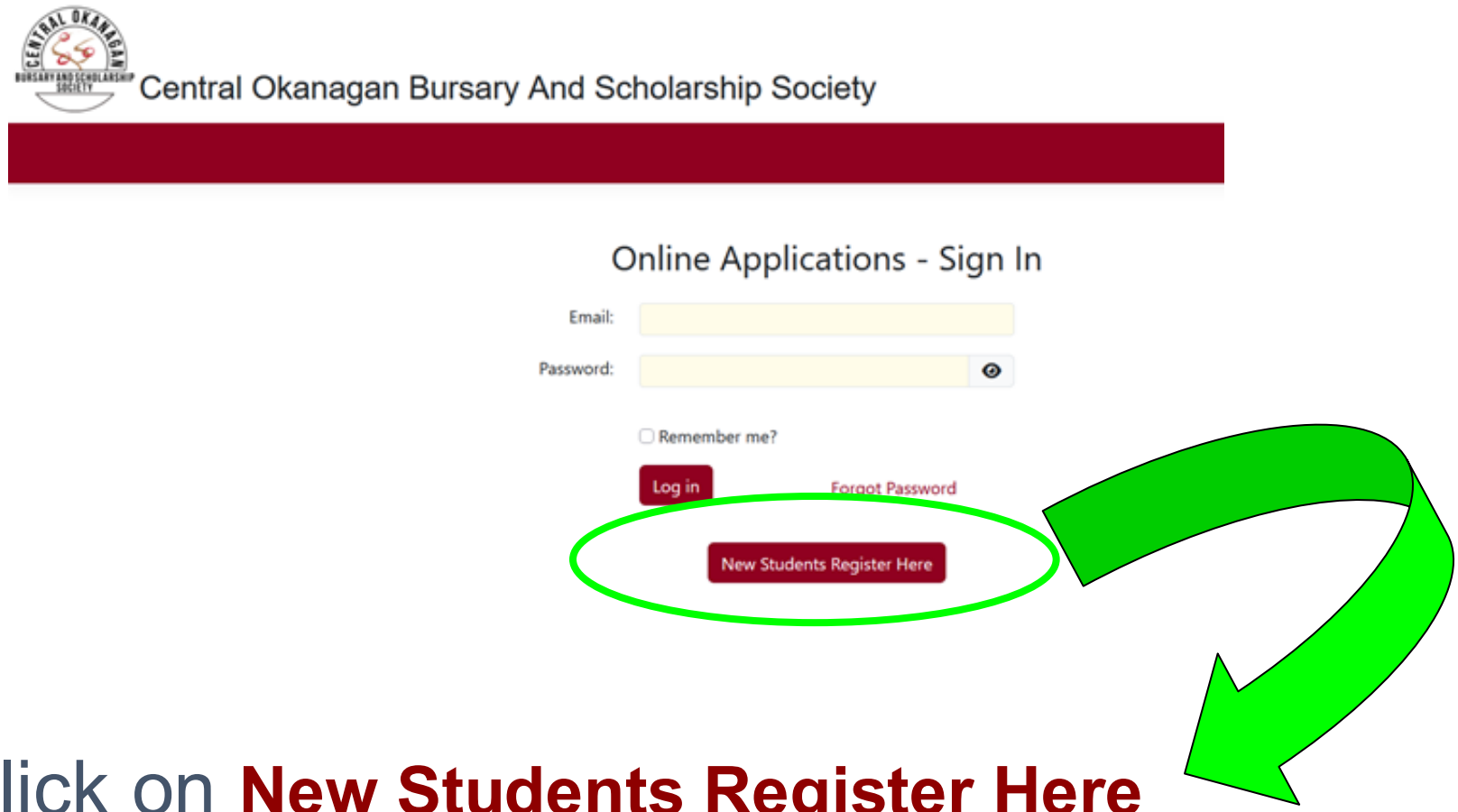
# ONLINE APPLICATION

- The online application is available at: **cobss.sd23.bc.ca** – and follow link:



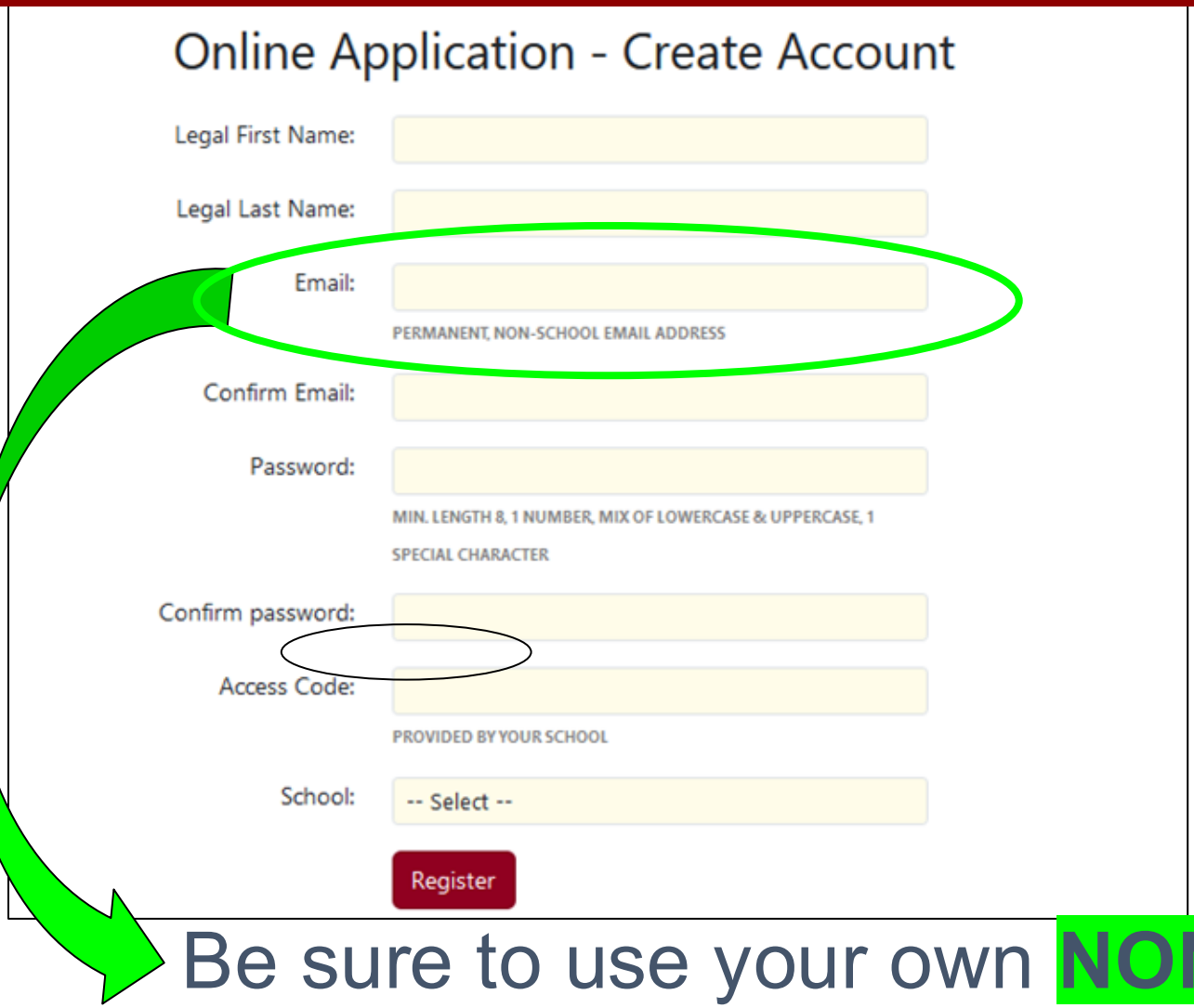

- If you are having difficulties, please see your school counsellor.
- The on-line application opens on **Nov. 24th**.

# ONLINE APPLICATION



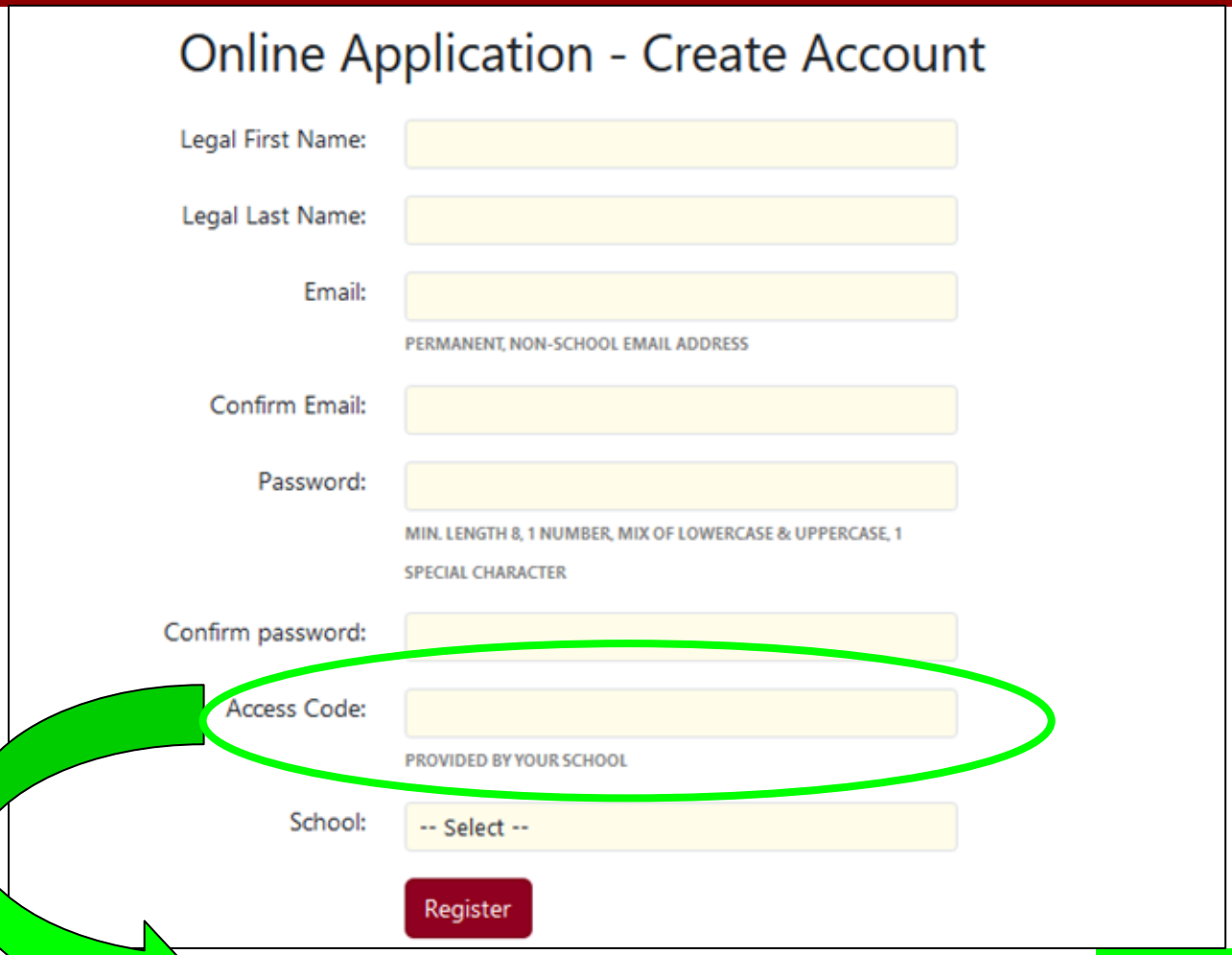

Click on **New Students Register Here**

# ONLINE APPLICATION




Be sure to use your own **NON SCHOOL email address**

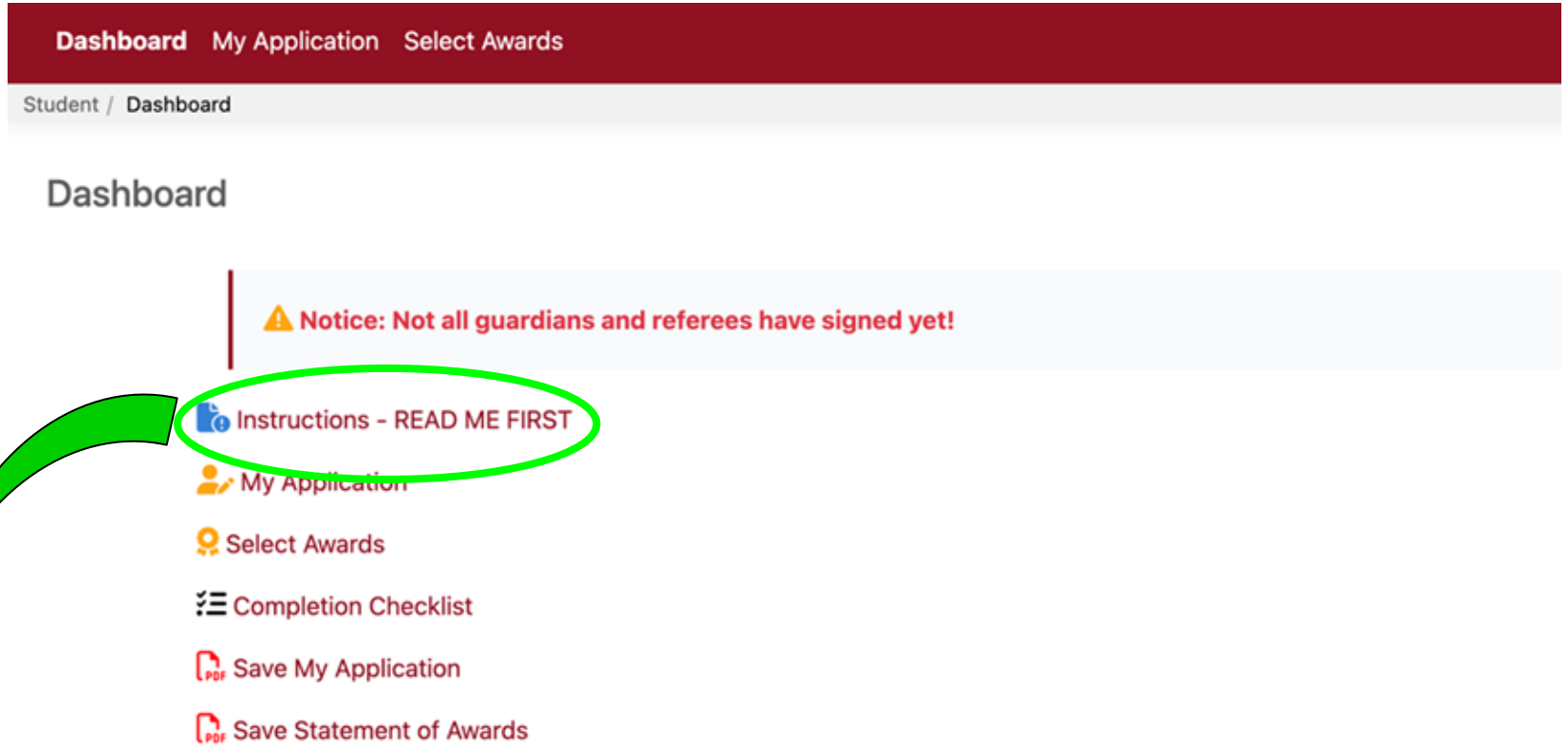
# ON-LINE APPLICATION




School Access Code = **INSERT**

(lower case letters only)

# INSTRUCTIONS




Click on **Instructions and follow carefully**.

If you have any questions, please see your school counsellor.

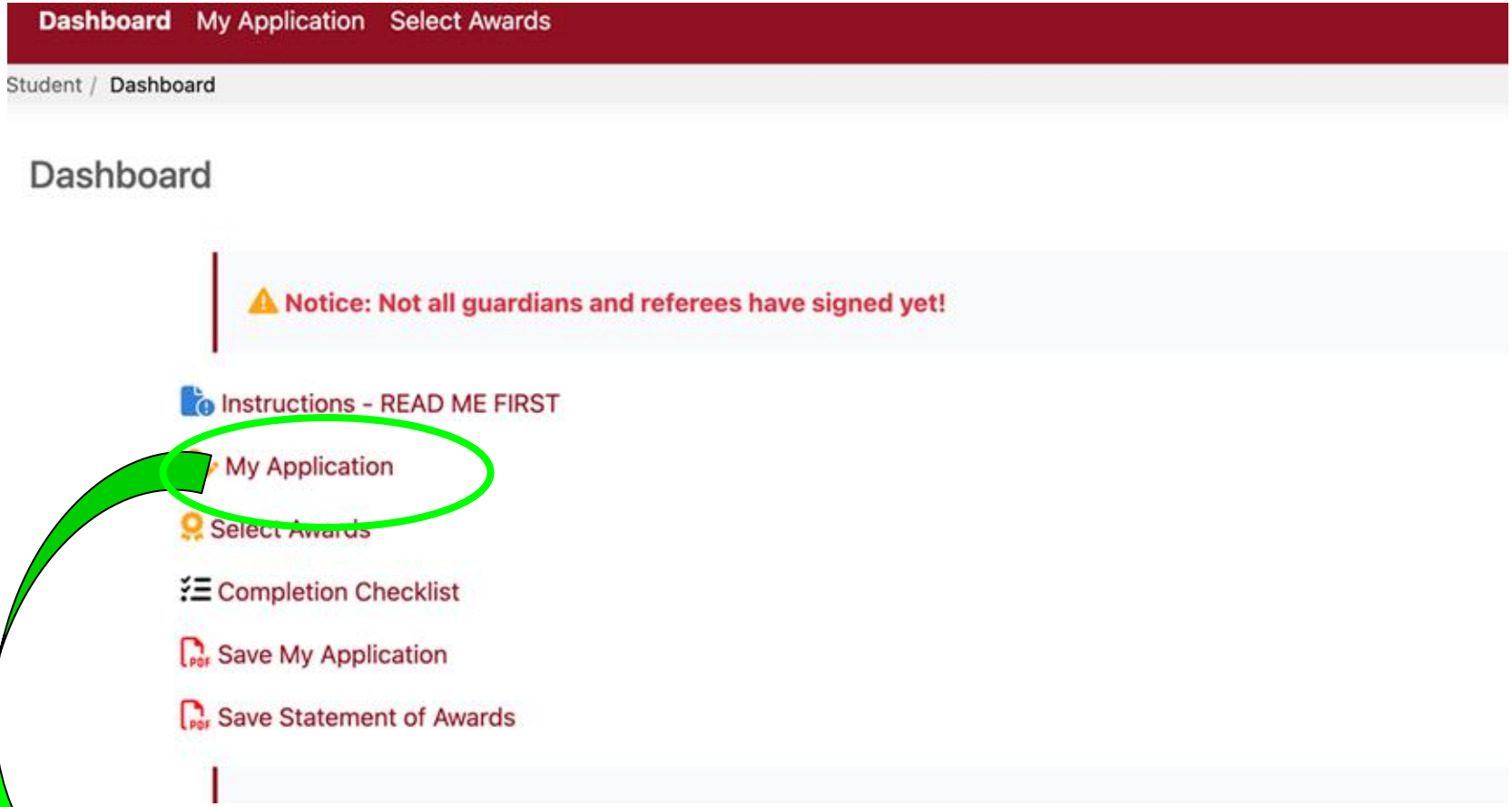
# ONLINE APPLICATION

There are **two main components** to the COBSS application package:

1. **My Application** section
   (largest part of application)

2. **Select Awards** section

# ONLINE APPLICATION

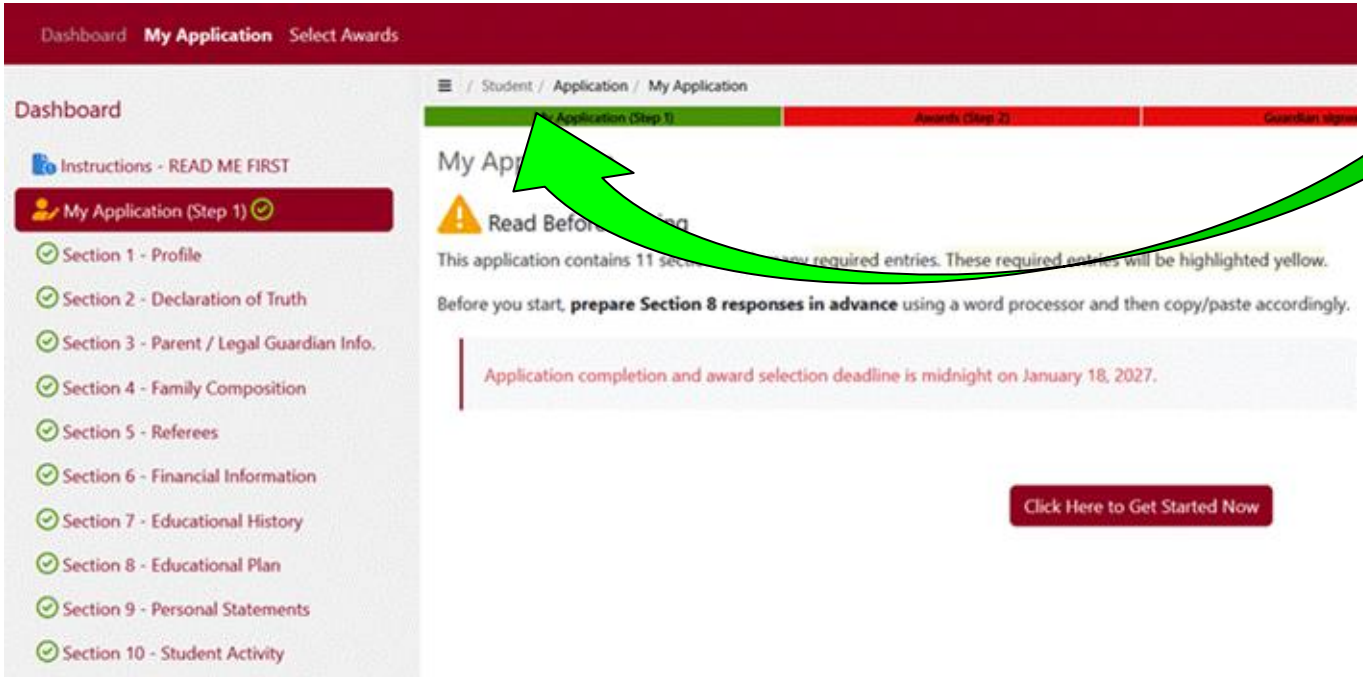



Click on **My Application** to begin the application process.

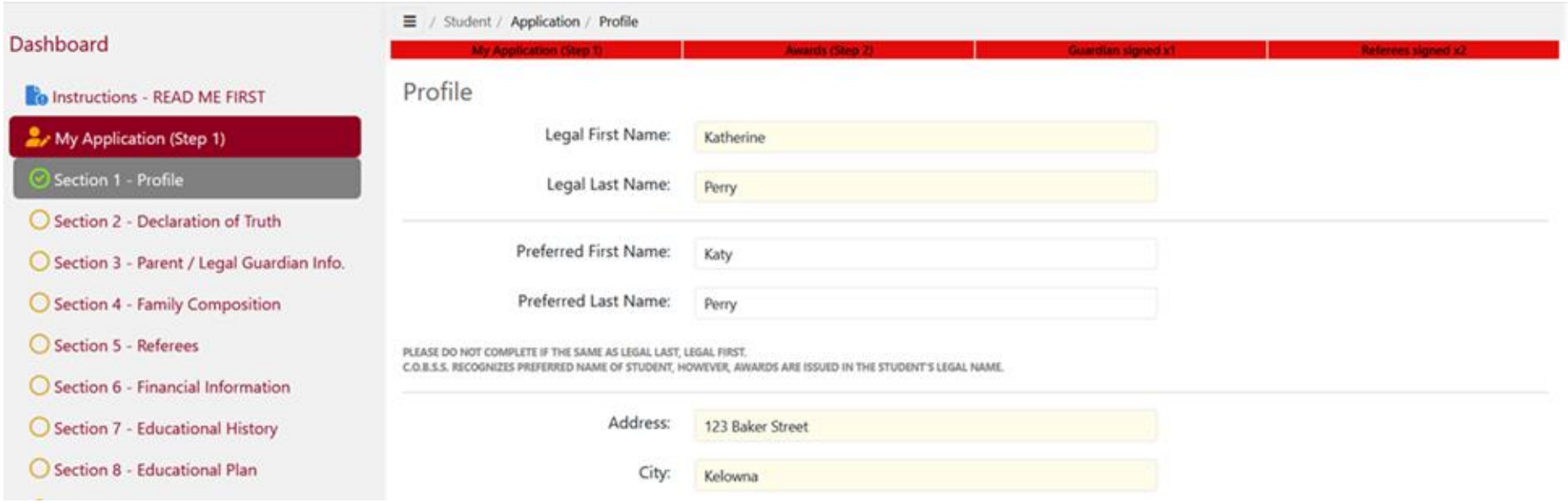
# MY APPLICATION

There are **ten sections and the Application Completion step** to be completed.

When a section is completed, the check mark will turn **green** **AND** the status bar at the top will turn **green**.



# MY APPLICATION




Fill in the application form carefully and as accurately as possible **<u>after reading all of the instructions.</u>**



Students should **SAVE & CONTINUE** as you go and may go back & edit as often as you wish until the site closes at **11:59 pm on Jan. 18th.**

# MY APPLICATION

- Parent/Guardian digital signature is required. It is **CRUCIAL that you enter the correct email address for your parent/guardian.**
- As soon as you press save, an email will be sent to your guardian for a digital signature. Although we do require contact information for all parent/guardians, **we only require ONE digital parent/guardian signature**.
- Parents/Guardians Digital Signature Instructions are on the COBSS website.
- **Be sure to check your application to confirm parent/guardian digital signature is completed prior to the application close date.**

# MY APPLICATION

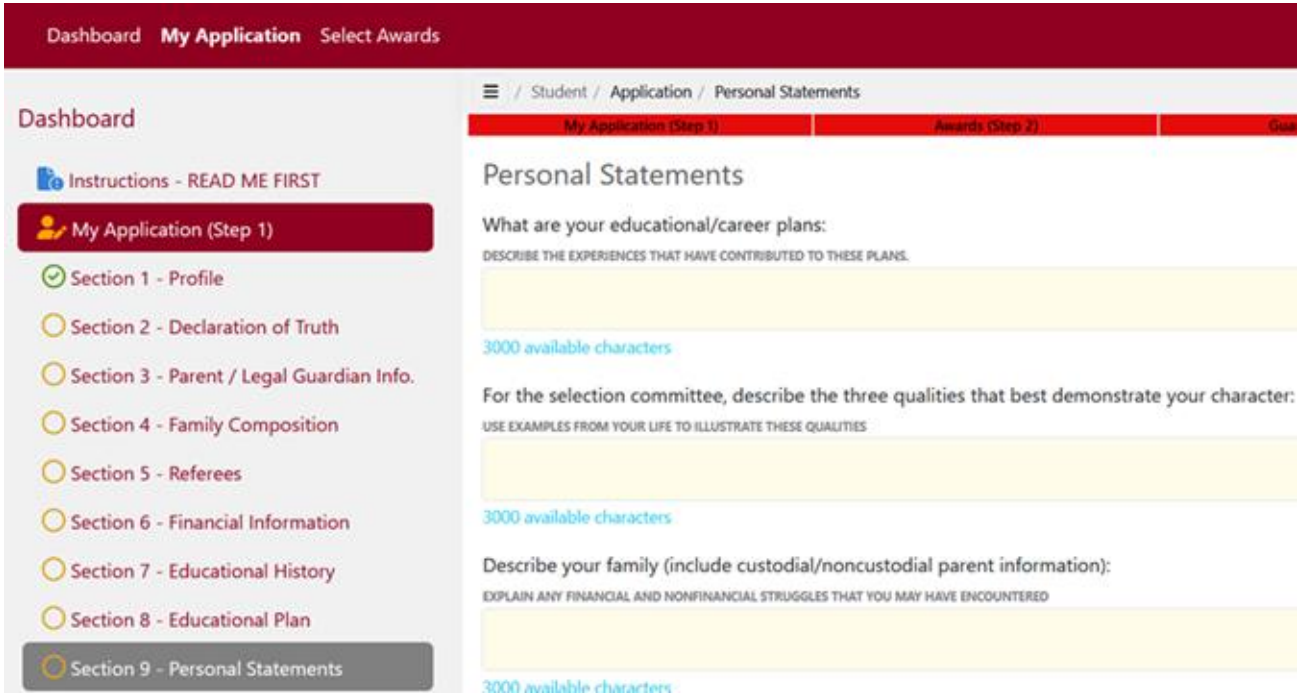
- Use the drop-down menus where given
- Complete paragraph answers in the space provided.
- Be aware that the secure site will time out. (after 480 mins)
  ** *Remember to click "Save & Continue" before moving on*

**TIP:** Compose paragraphs in a Google Doc, and then cut and paste into COBSS application.

- Space is limited so write concisely as there is a maximum number of characters available.
- Please check spelling, grammar and punctuation.

# MY APPLICATION

One **critical** component of the application is the paragraph answers under **Student Personal Statements**. There are 3 questions you will need to answer in this section.



# MY APPLICATION

- This is where your personality shows through and helps the committee with its decision.
- BE **CREATIVE**, **HONEST** and **CONCISE** and remember to proofread your answers.
- With your words, you are trying to create a vision in the donor's mind of who you are, what your goals and dreams are and why you deserve to be selected for the award.

# MY APPLICATION

## QUESTION 1:

What are your educational/career plans? Describe the experiences that have contributed to these plans.

**TIPS:**

- Try to be original and creative.
- Do not start with “My name is____ and I am in grade 12 at ____.”

# MY APPLICATION

## QUESTION 2:

For the selection committee, describe the three qualities that best demonstrate your character.  Use examples from your life to illustrate these qualities.

**TIPS:**

- Try to get across who you are and what you are about in words.
- You want to stand out in the sea of applications.

# MY APPLICATION

## QUESTION 3:

Describe your family (include custodial and non-custodial parent information). Explain any financial and non-financial struggles that you may have encountered.

**TIPS:**

- Remember that financial need is one of the areas that selection is based on for COBSS awards.
- This is a snapshot of your current family and financial situation.

# MY APPLICATION

Another important part of the application is **Your Activity Details.**

Students will include their activities from grades 10, 11 & 12 in the following **three** areas:

1. **Community & School Based Involvement & Achievements**
2. **Volunteer Experience**
3. **Paid Work Experience**

# MY APPLICATION

Under each activity heading, list **(up to)** **3 of the MOST SIGNIFICANT** activities in which you have been involved.

For each activity, provide:

1. Organization
2. Your activities/responsibilities/duties
3. Dates (mm/yyyy-mm/yyyy)
4. Estimated total activity hours (per week)
5. Total overall hours

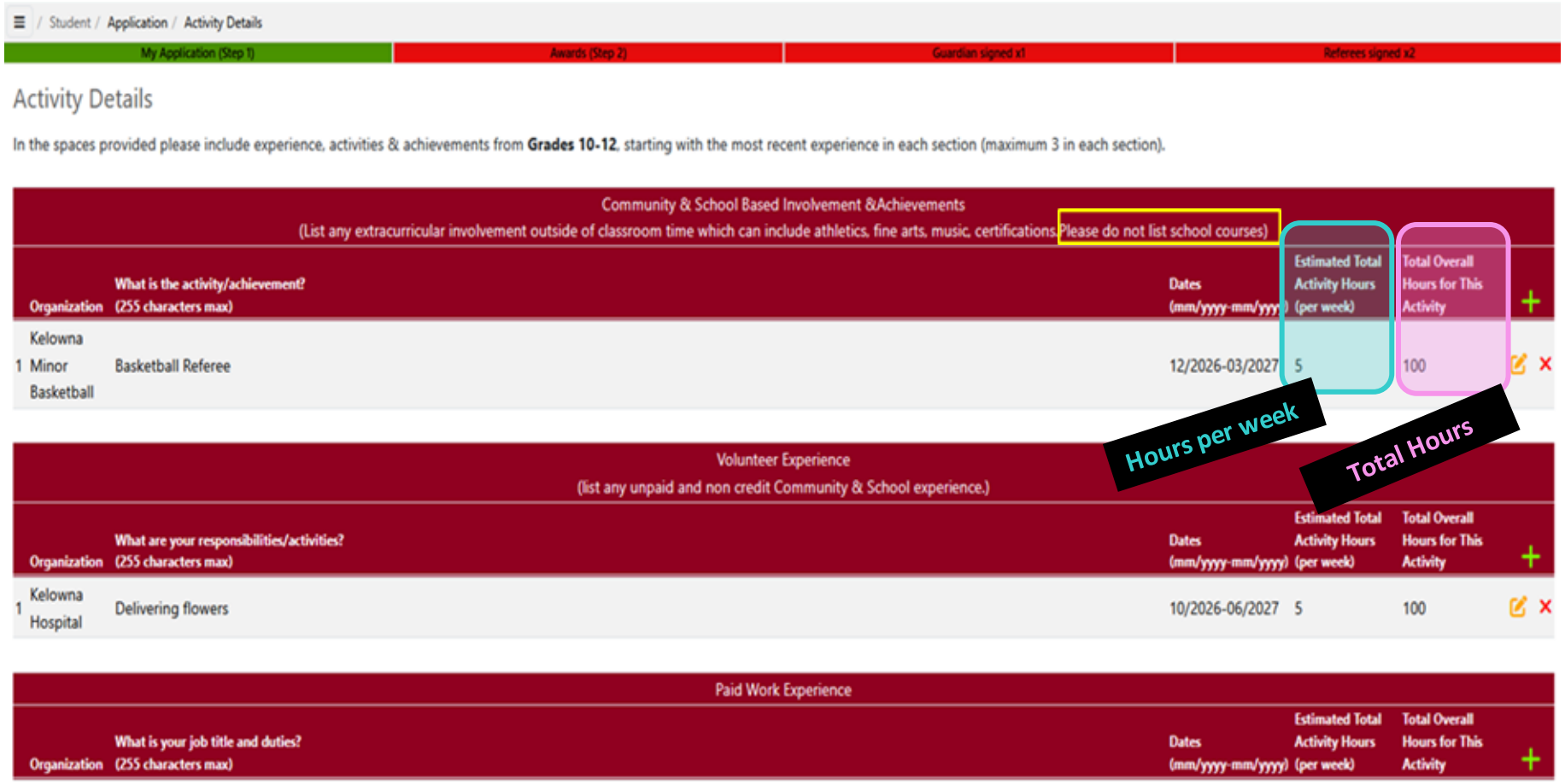
**TIP:**

- Remember to include anticipated hours until the end of June.

# MY APPLICATION

## Ex. of Community & School Based Involvement & Achievement:

(use the green + button to add details to each section)



# MY APPLICATION

After completing **Your Activity Details**:

- Choose one activity or achievement you have listed that you are most proud of
- Explain what you have learned from it

**TIPS:**

- You have 1000 characters to answer this question.
- Remember that award selection is based on active citizenship so this is a good place to expand on your involvement and include reflective learning.

# MY APPLICATION

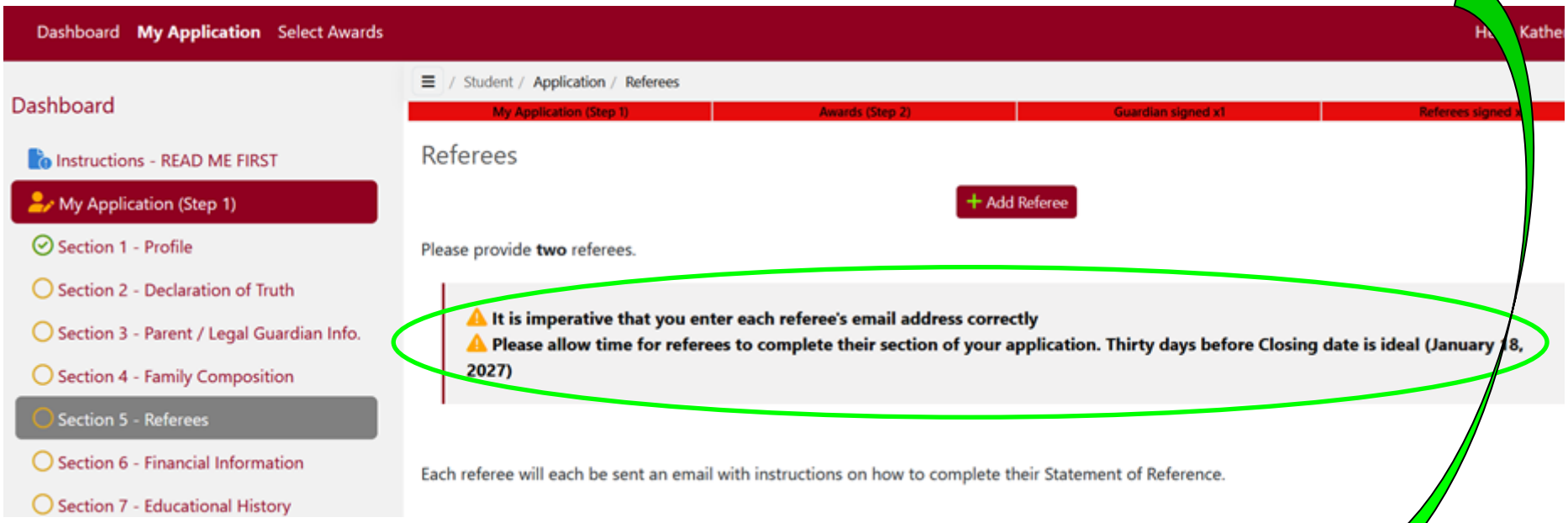



In all 4 of the written components of your COBSS application *(3 personal statement responses & the activity learning response)*, your goal is to showcase **YOUR AUTHENTIC STUDENT VOICE**.

As such, AI tools (Chat GPT, Claude, Gemini, Copilot, etc.) should NOT be used. **You may disadvantage your application if AI is suspected in your responses.**

# STATEMENT OF REFERENCE

- Consider community people, employers, and teachers as potential referees. (One teacher & one community member is recommended)
- Counsellors CANNOT be your reference (conflict of interest)
- Choose referees carefully and **contact them in advance for permission**.




**teachers = firstname.lastname@sd23.bc.ca**

# STATEMENT OF REFERENCE

It is **CRUCIAL** that you enter the **CORRECT EMAIL ADDRESS**!

An email is sent from noreply@sd23.bc.ca to the referee as soon as you click save, so have your references check spam / junk / quarantined messages to find the email.

Referee instructions and a Sample Reference are available on the COBSS website.

**Be sure to check your application to confirm two reference digital signatures are completed prior to the close date**. Once a referee starts the process, you will be unable to make a reference change.

**IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE YOUR APPLICATION IS COMPLETE WITH ALL DIGITAL SIGNATURES!**

# MY APPLICATION

**Your COMPLETED application includes 4 digital signatures:**

- ☑ **Student Signature** *Required to confirm eligibility & accuracy*
- ☑ **Parent Signature** *Required to confirm financial information*
- ☑ **Referee #1**
- ☑ **Referee #2**

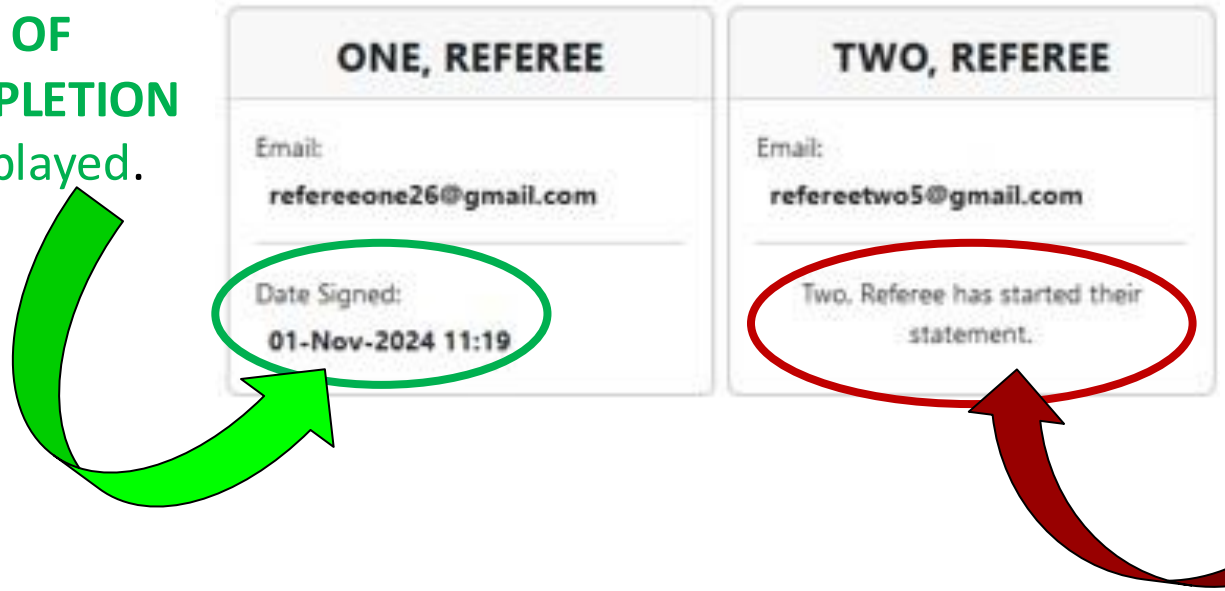
**Without all 4, your application is INCOMPLETE and will not be considered.**

# MY APPLICATION

## HAVE YOUR REFEREES SIGNED?

→ Go to **My Application, Section 5** (Referees)

If complete, a **DATE OF COMPLETION** is displayed.




If **no DATE COMPLETION** → follow up with your people to ensure they complete their part.

**KEEP CHECKING YOUR DASHBOARD to VERIFY COMPLETION!!**

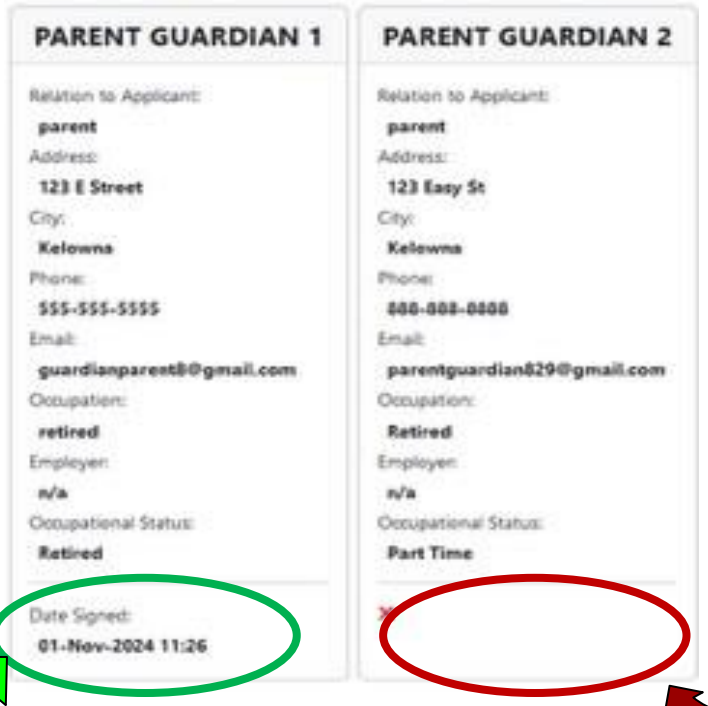
# MY APPLICATION

## HAVE YOUR PARENT(S) SIGNED?

→ Go to **My Application, Section 3** (Parent/Guardian Signature)

****Only 1 signature needed**

If complete, a **DATE OF COMPLETION** is displayed.




If **no DATE COMPLETION** → parent has **not** signed.
(*but no problem here as only 1 parent signature required*).

**KEEP CHECKING YOUR DASHBOARD to VERIFY COMPLETION!!**

# MY APPLICATION




**It is**
**YOUR RESPONSIBILITY**
**to ensure your application is complete with ALL 4 digital signatures!**

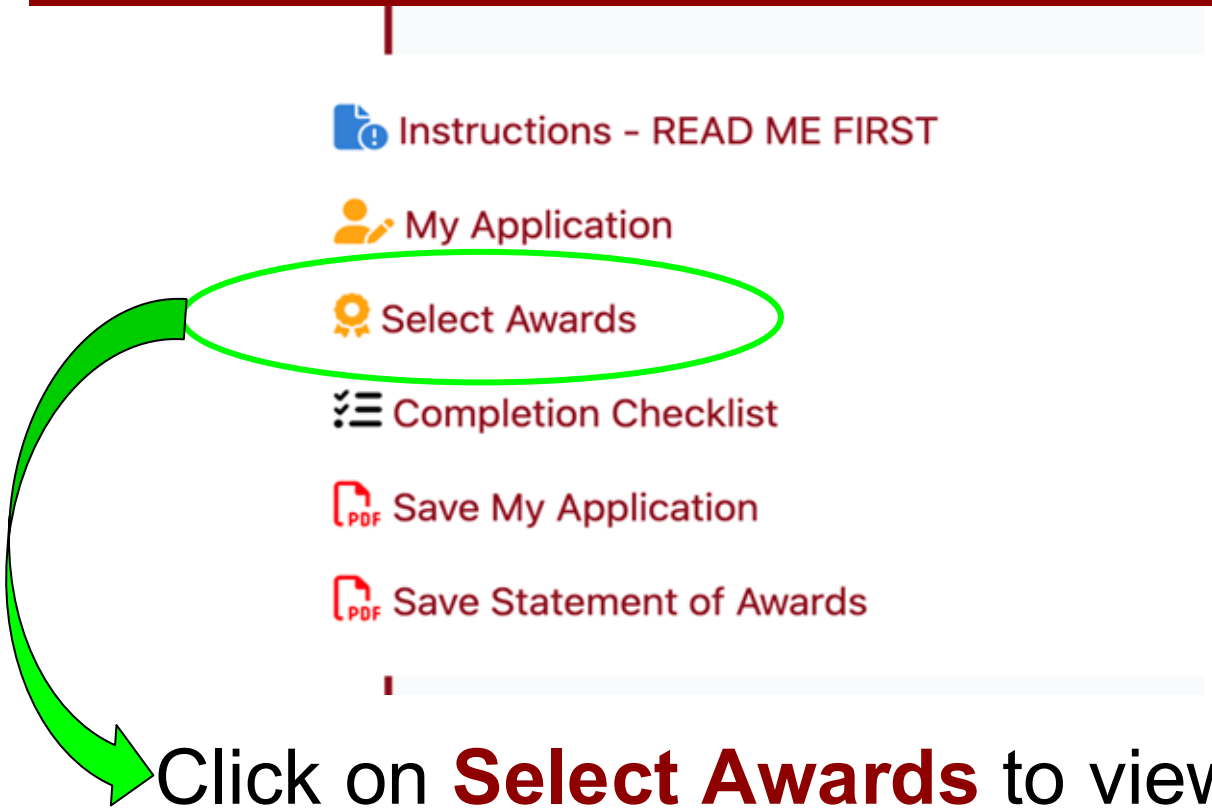
**Keep checking your application until you have verified all 4 digital signatures!!**

# MY APPLICATION

If you wish to print a copy for your own records, choose **Save My Application & print it.**



# SELECT AWARDS



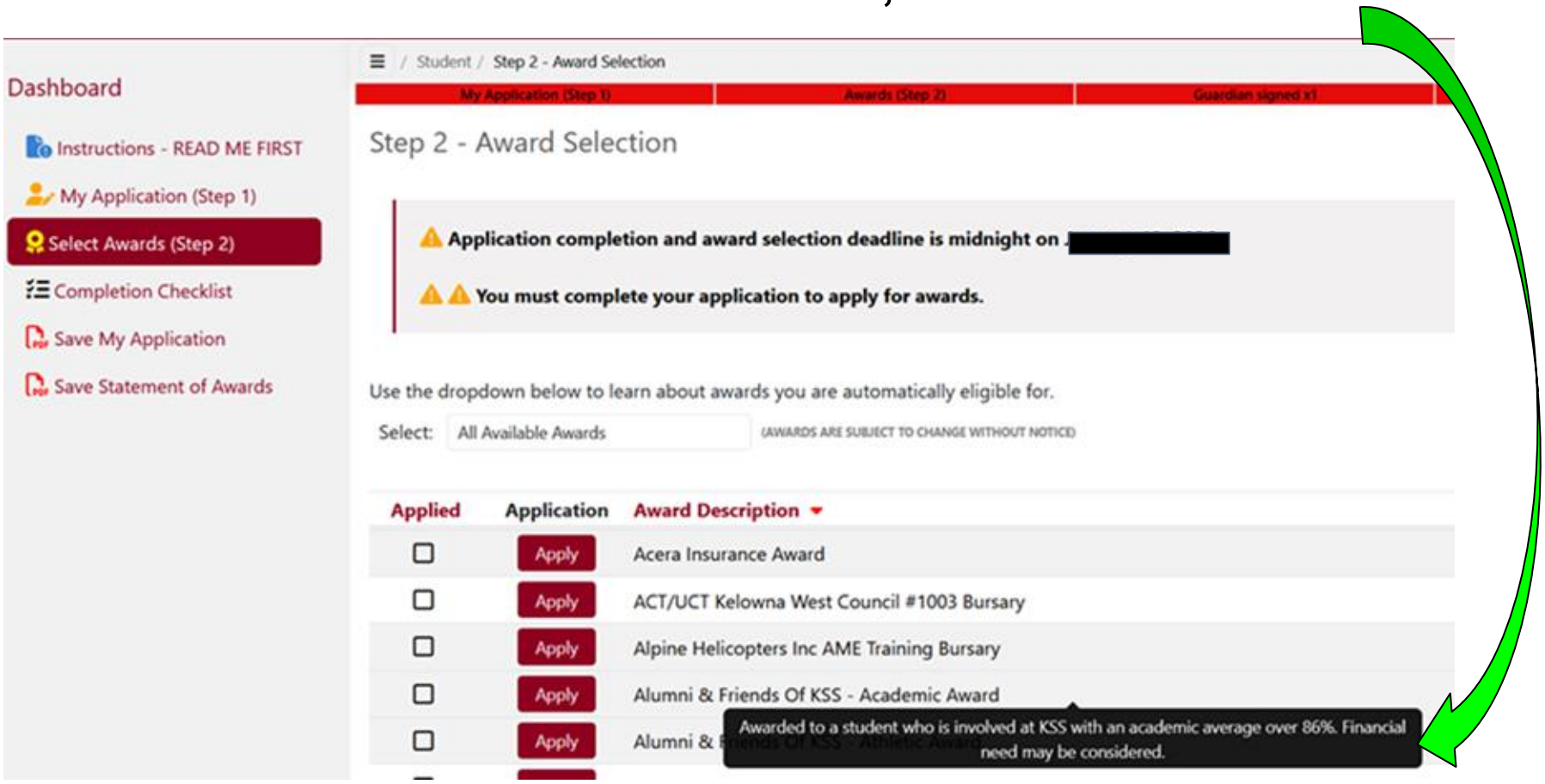

This step is MANDATORY to complete.

Click on **Select Awards** to view all awards available to your school.

*Please note that awards are subject to change.

# SELECT AWARDS

To view criteria for each award, hover over the title.



# SELECT AWARDS

## READ THE AWARD CRITERIA VERY CAREFULLY!

**NOTE:** For gaming awards, you **MUST** attend a provincially authorized post-secondary institution in the province of British Columbia, as recognized by the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills & Training, or equivalent in BC. If you later choose to go out of province, the award will be revoked.

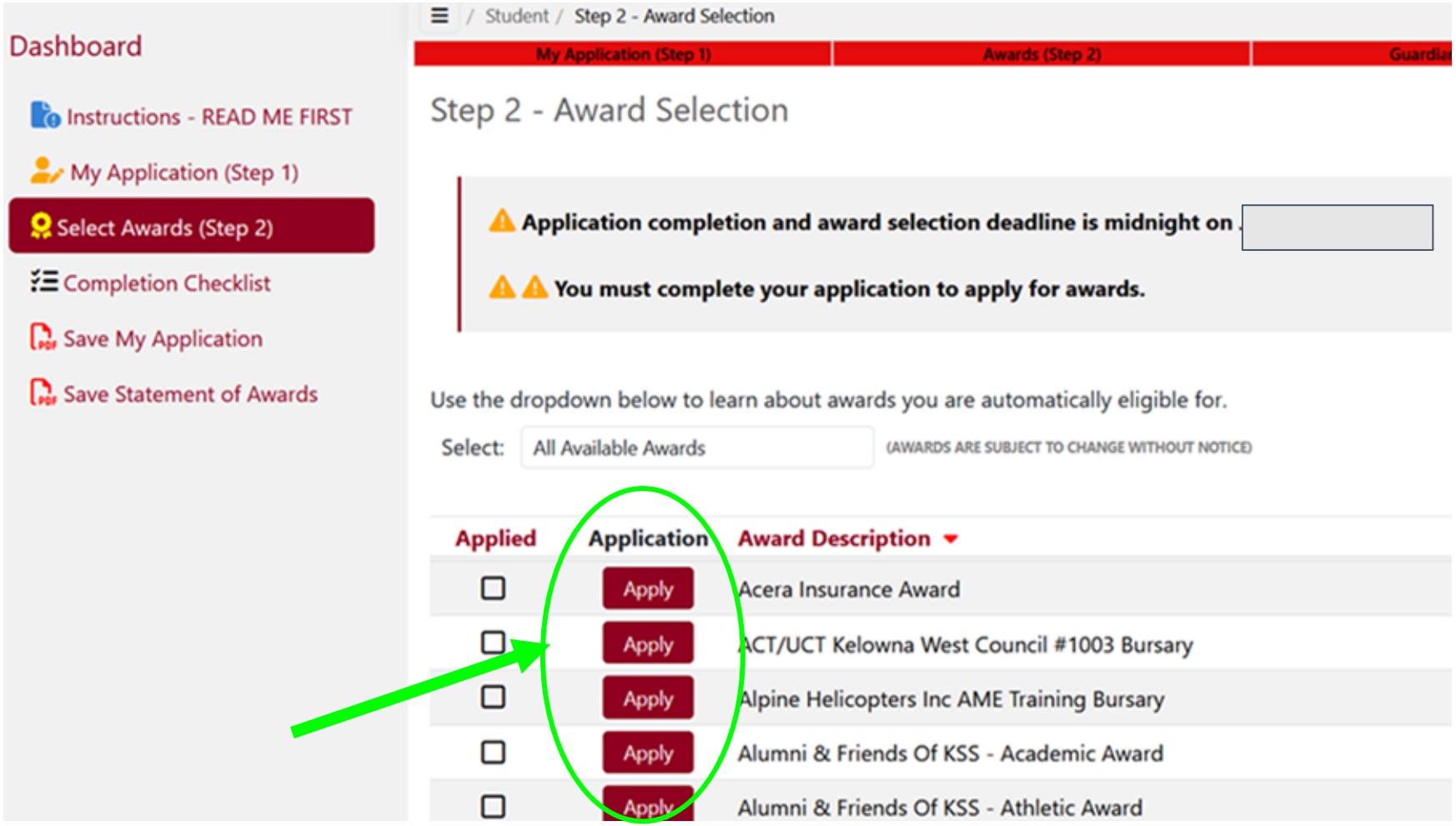
**Note:** There are very few gaming awards. You will see the criteria when you hover over the award.




*Click here to see what institutions are accepted for these awards: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/post-secondary-education/find-a-program-or-institution/find-an-institution*

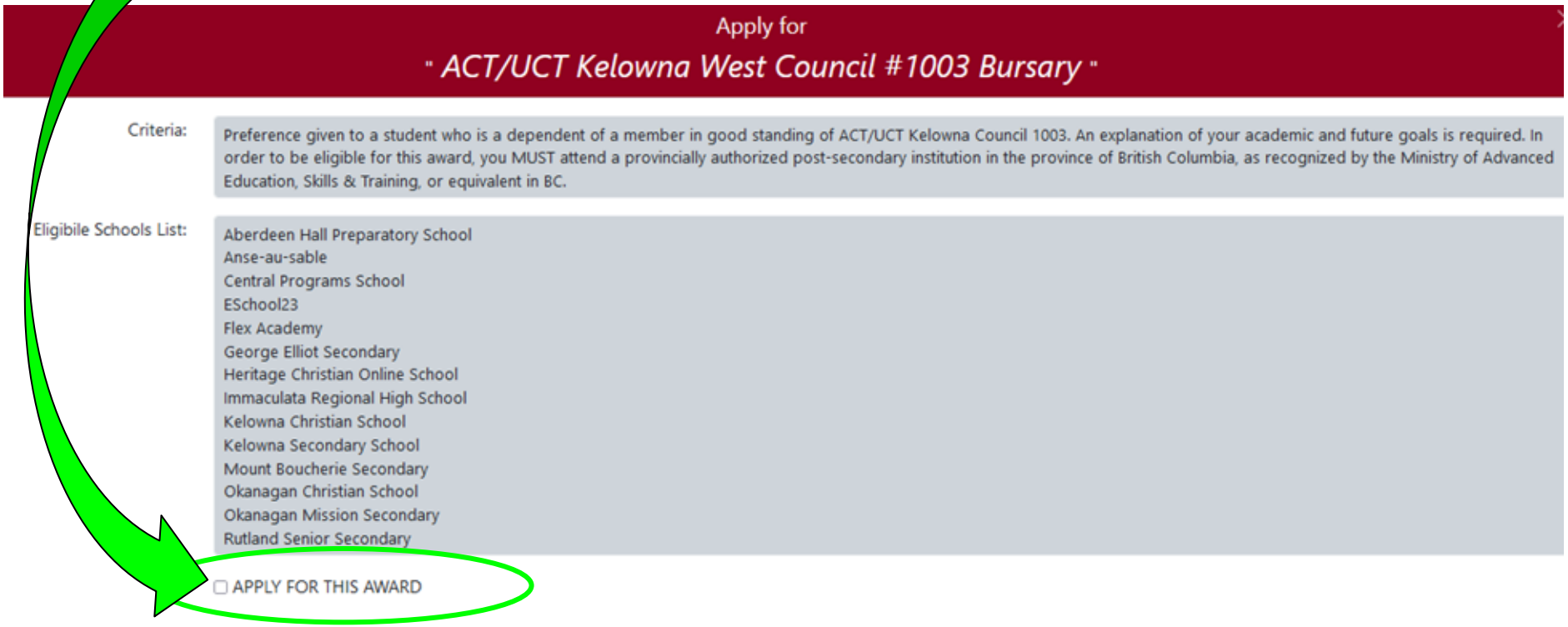
# SELECT AWARDS

Click on **APPLY** if eligible for award.



# SELECT AWARDS

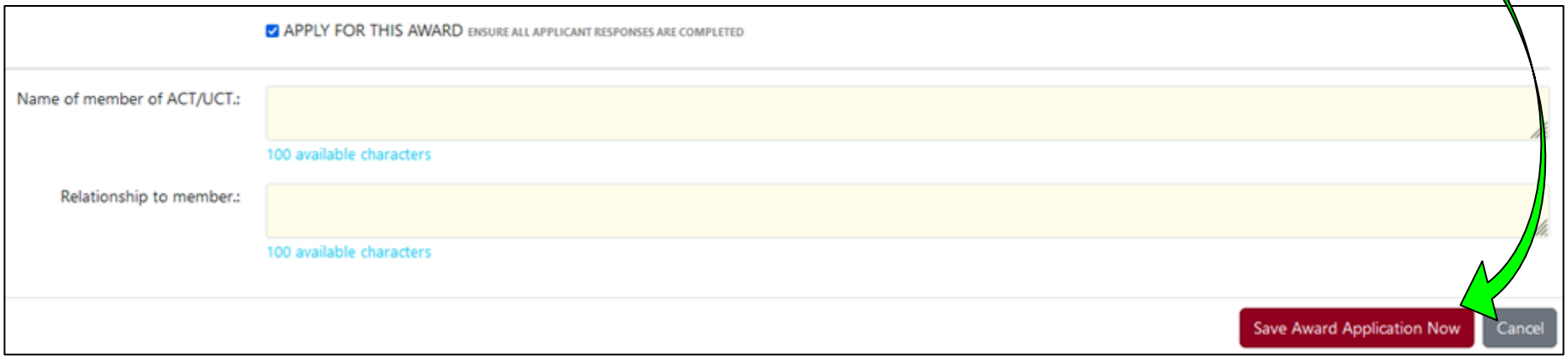
Click on **APPLY FOR THIS AWARD**



# SELECT AWARDS

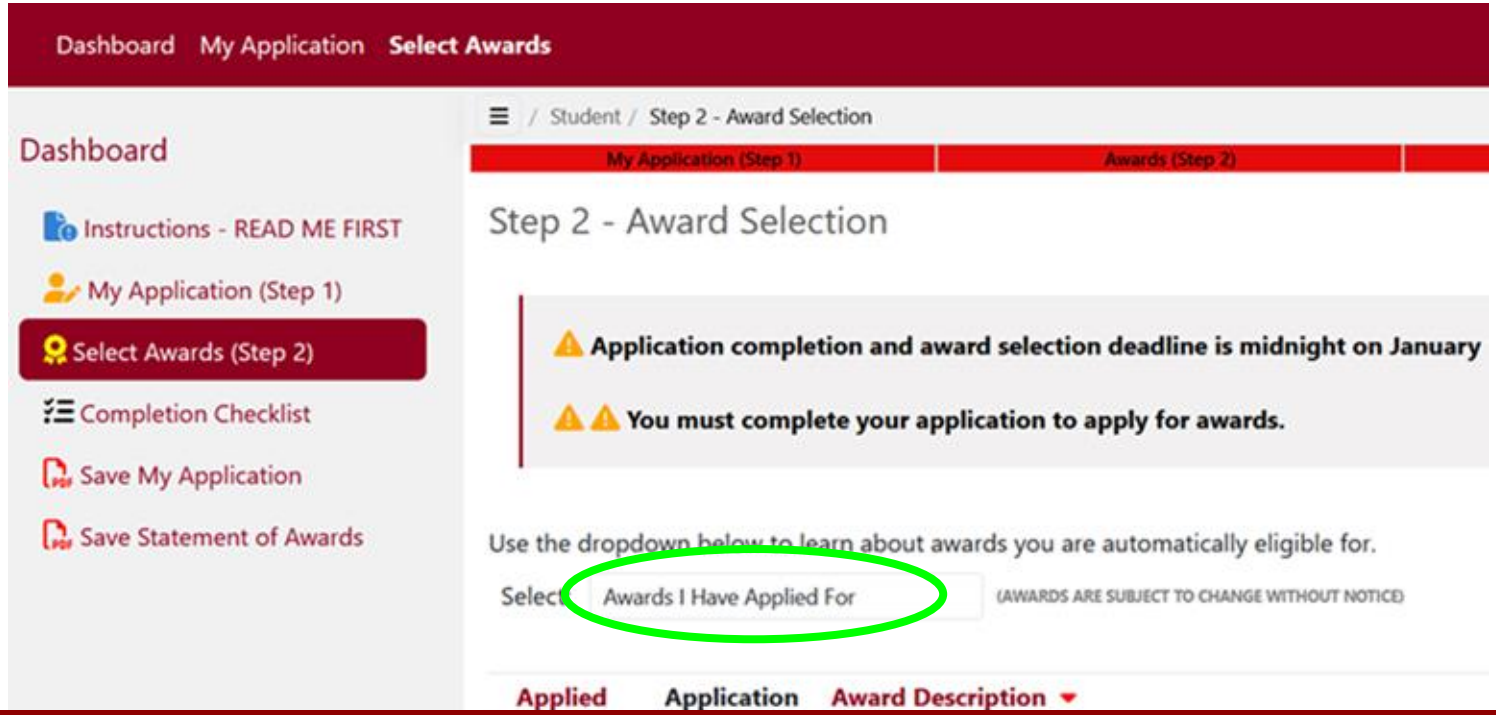
**If prompted**, fill in **Applicant Responses** to explain eligibility and additional information requested by the donor.

A **Save Award Application Now** button is at the bottom of each screen to **save** information.



# AWARDS APPLIED FOR

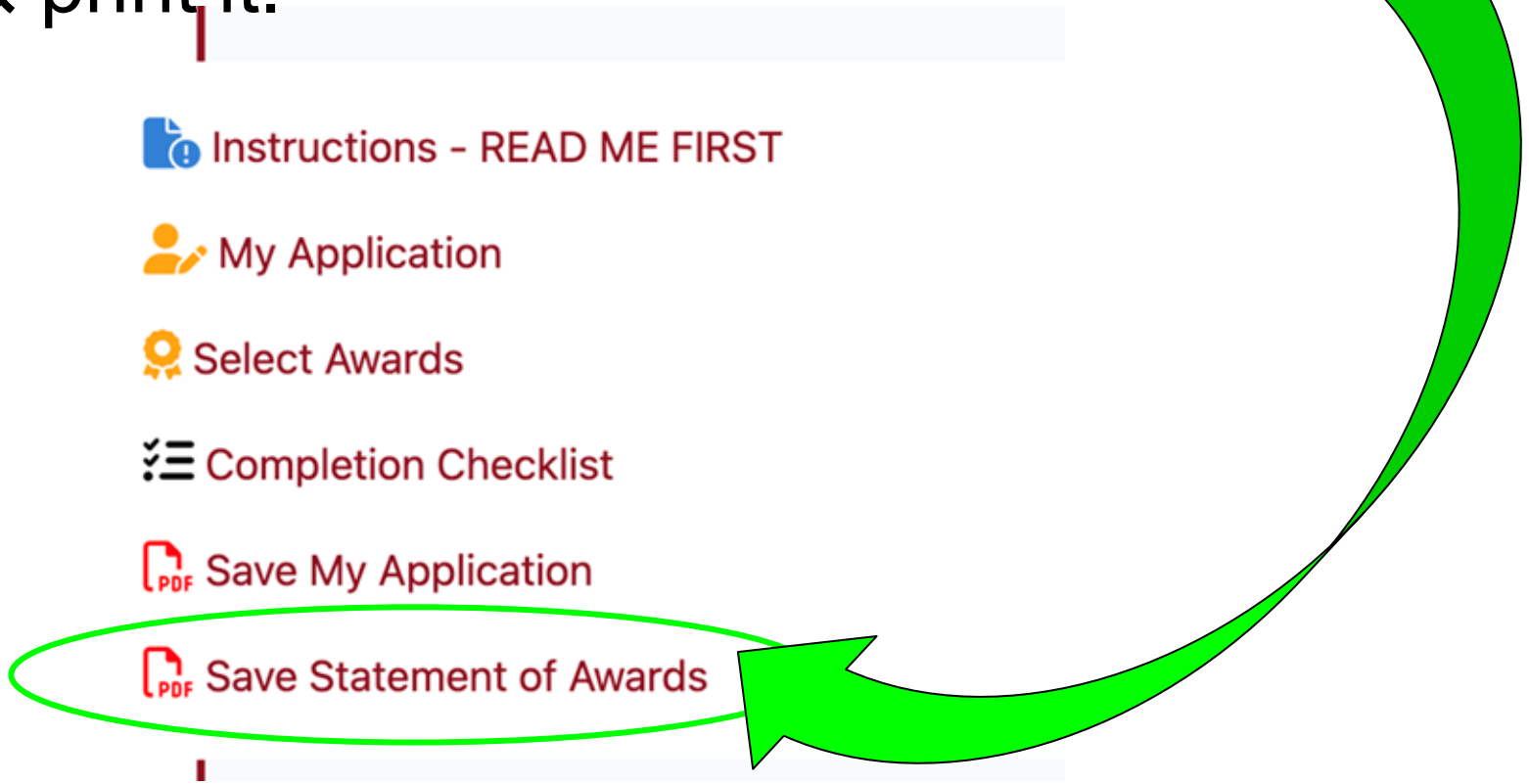
When all eligible awards are selected, use the drop down-menu to view awards applied for:




IMPORTANT: **DO NOT apply for every single award.**
Apply only to those you qualify for.

# STATEMENT OF AWARDS

If you wish to print a copy for your own records, choose **Save Statement of Awards** & print it.



# COMPLETION CHECKLIST

When you have completed Steps 1 & 2, click on **Completion Checklist** to review.




There is NO "submit" button. It is complete when every section is complete AND all digital signatures and references are complete.

# COMPLETION

Applications **must be completed on time.**
**NO EXCEPTIONS.**

**… including the 4 digital signatures:**

- ☑ **Student Signature** *Required to confirm eligibility & accuracy*
- ☑ **Parent Signature** *Required to confirm financial information*
- ☑ **Referee #1**
- ☑ **Referee #2**

**Transcript** – will be added by your school counsellor

# COMPLETION

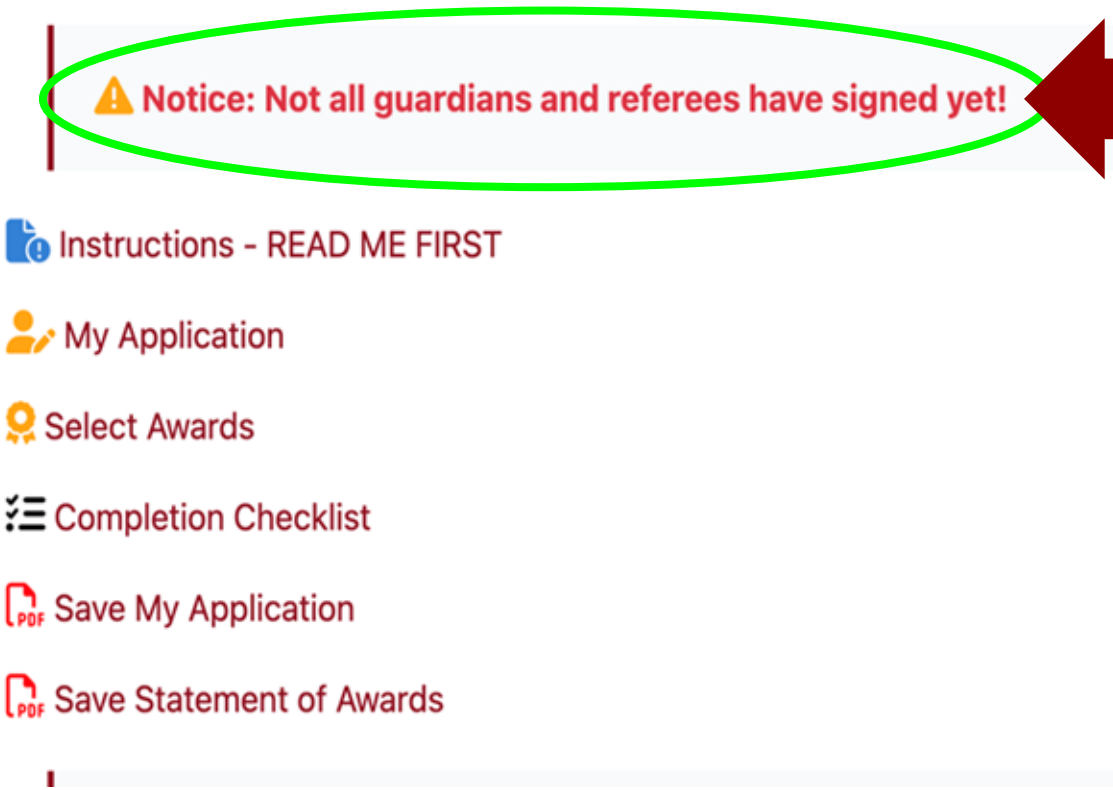
Applications **must be completed on time.**
**NO EXCEPTIONS.**

At least one week prior to the deadline, an email reminder will be sent out for any “Incomplete Applications”.

# COMPLETION

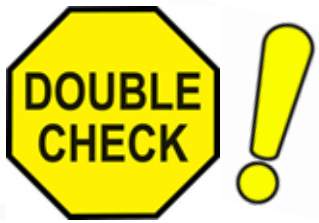
Applications **must be completed on time.**

**NO EXCEPTIONS.**




Confirm parent/guardian signature & references are complete on your application Dashboard.

Check for the **ALERT** that tells you signatures are missing!



# DUE DATE

Your COBSS online application package will be submitted automatically on:

**Mon. Jan. 18th at 11:59 pm**

Plan your time accordingly.

**You <u>CANNOT</u> make changes or print after this time.**

# PLEASE REMEMBER

If you are a COBSS award recipient, please:

**Write an immediate thank you note to your donor.**

*...and a follow up thank you note in the early fall is always a kind gesture.*

**TIP:**

- Note your awards (file, binder, phone notes, etc.) so that you can track them accurately and use them before they expire.



# FAQ's

**Question:**

When should I begin my COBSS application?

**Answer:**

It is recommended to begin the application as soon as possible. It is a lengthy process which takes a number of separate sittings to complete.  It cannot be completed in one sitting.

# FAQ's

**Question:**

When will I know if I have received a COBSS award?

**Answer:**

Awards are typically presented to individual student recipients at the school graduation ceremonies.

# FAQ's

**Question:**

Will my COBSS award expire?

**Answer:**

Yes. COBSS awards presented this year are valid until October 31st of your graduation year.

# FAQ's

**Question:**

Can I take a year off for an exchange, a gap year, missionary work, etc. and still use my COBSS award?

**Answer:**

No.

# FAQ's

## Question:

How do I know if the school I plan to attend is accredited as required for my COBSS eligibility?

## Answer:

On the COBSS website is this link to search accredited institutions.



# FAQ's

**Question:**

What do I do with a COBSS award?

**Answer:**

A Certificate of Award is issued to you when you receive the award at graduation. Included is a letter outlining how to claim your award. Please read those documents carefully & keep them in a safe place.

**TIP**: Your Student # is your **Post Secondary Student #**

# AWARD RECIPIENTS

If your circumstances change after you have received a COBSS award and you are no longer able to use the award before the October 31st deadline, **please contact COBSS at cobss@sd23.bc.ca as soon as possible.**

The award money can then be given to an alternate recipient.

# AWARD RECIPIENTS

If you have any questions regarding an award that you have received, please address all inquiries to COBSS directly at **cobss@sd23.bc.ca** and not the award donor.

# If you need help or further information, check back in the COBSS instructions.

**Your school counsellor can help if you get stuck.**

*Remember, the site closes Mon. Jan. 18th at 11:59 pm!*

# Please Remember …

Your COBSS online application package will be submitted automatically on:

**Mon. Jan. 18th at 11:59 pm**

Plan your time accordingly.



**You <u>CANNOT</u> make changes or print after this time.**