

**Full Scholarship for You
To Become a Professional Guide**
By COAGS Staff

Do you have a dream of hunting, fishing, or riding horses for a living?

Does the sound of having a full scholarship to learn to become a professional guide sound good?

Well, the opportunity is now for you if you have what it takes. Like anything worthwhile, it is not easy to get and keep. But, compared to getting and keeping a traditional educational scholarship, the road to becoming a professional guide may be a smoother path.

Take, for example, the "star athlete" who gets a full scholarship to attend a college or university. Think about all the work, time, and money he or she sacrificed to earn the scholarship. It took many years of hard practice, working out, and training to develop the athletic skills to the level necessary to get the scholarship. Attending sports camps, buying the best equipment such as shoes and uniforms, and traveling to many cities to compete cost tens of thousands of dollars. And, the athlete must have maintained good grades in high school to be accepted in the college or university.

Once the athlete gets the scholarship he or she must spend the next 4-5 years working and training even harder to keep it. Much more time is required to be dedicated to the sport and make the team. The school classes are much more demanding than high school and passing grades are required or you "flunk out".

The "Grade A" student who earns a academic scholarship spends many days and nights studying while others are playing and just getting by. Once they are in college the work load doubles and the pressure to excel is great. They also must perform at a high level for 4-5 years to keep the scholarship.

If the "athlete" or "Grade A" student is successful, completes college, and gets their degree they will be more qualified to get a job. Still, in most cases they will start out at the bottom and have to spend years learning, getting experience, and working their way up the corporate ladder.

If you want a full scholarship to establish your career as a professional guide, this is what you must do:

- 1. You must graduate from high school or a complete a GED.**
- 2. You must enroll and be accepted into a quality guide school such as the Colorado Outdoor Adventure Guide School.** Make sure the guide school is a state approved and licensed vocational school). The amount of time and money you will spend in the guide school will usually be only four weeks and \$5,000-\$6,000.
- 3. You must graduate from the guide school.**

4. You must put forth the effort to get your first guide or assistant guide job. Upon graduation most schools will provide you with many outfitters and guest ranches for you to contact about employment. Not all guide jobs are full time employment, especially for a rookie, so you may need to get a second guide job in another location where the seasons are longer or during a different time of the year. Many COAGS graduates work in the Rocky Mountain state during the summer and fall, and then have guiding jobs in the southern or southeastern states where the guiding seasons last through the winter and spring. It is very reasonable to expect to have a guiding job or jobs for 10-11 months of the year if you work hard to find employment.

5. You must stay with it and not quit. There are no free rides and it does take some time. If you have what it takes to persevere and work hard as a guide for 4-5 years, you listen and learn from the successful experienced guides and outfitters, and you get better each year, then good career opportunities will probably come your way.

Once you get your first guide job, you now have earned a scholarship. You are usually provided free lodging, free meals, and the opportunity to work and learn with an experienced professional guide. And, unlike the "athlete" or "Grade A" student on full scholarship, you are being paid while you learn. You are learning and developing your outdoor, people, leadership, and guiding skills. Each year you are gaining more experience and becoming a better guide and more valuable to your employer.

You never know who the next client you will meet and guide. Many are successful business owners. Over the years as a guide your contacts and new friends will become your gold mine. Many times a business or career opportunity you never dreamed of will come to you from a former client.

The bottom line is this: The opportunity to have a career as a professional guide is better than ever before. The industry has a huge demand for good quality guides.

If you really love and have a passion to work in the great outdoors then there is a "Full Scholarship" waiting for you. It is up to you to prove you have what it takes. Go for it!