

THE RHODES SCHOLARSHIP FOR UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Covering the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories including Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam and Northern Mariana Islands.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

This document is a guide to the application and selection process for the Rhodes Scholarship. Please read this carefully to make sure that you are applying to the right constituency and meet all of the eligibility criteria. You will also find important information about how to apply and what you will need to submit an application.

This information is for candidates applying to the 2026 Rhodes Scholarship through the United States of America constituency, for entry in October 2026 to the University of Oxford, in the United Kingdom.

Key Dates

Applications Open: 00:01 Eastern Time, Tuesday 01 July 2025

Applications Close: 23:59 Eastern Time, Wednesday 01 October 2025

Reference Deadline: 23:59 Eastern Time, Wednesday 01 October 2025

Am I applying to the right constituency/region?

- **What is a Rhodes constituency?** A constituency is a country, a group of countries, and/or territories, regions or states, grouped together for the purposes of administering scholarships.
- If you only have a connection to one [Rhodes constituency](#) and you meet the eligibility criteria below, you can apply to the Rhodes Scholarship for that constituency following the process outlined in this document.
- If you have connections to more than one Rhodes constituency and meet the eligibility criteria for more than one constituency, you should apply to the one that you have the greatest connection to. Once you have chosen your constituency you should read the Information for Candidates and then apply as usual.
- If you have strong and demonstrable connections to **two or more** Rhodes Constituencies but do not meet all of the eligibility criteria for any of them, you *may* be eligible to apply for **inter-jurisdictional consideration**. Please visit the '[Applying for Inter-Jurisdictional Consideration](#)' page for more details about this as you will need to follow a slightly different process. Please note that while some eligibility criteria are waived for inter-jurisdictional candidates, this does not include the age or academic achievement criteria.
- If you cannot see your country or region listed in the [list of Rhodes constituencies](#) and you are not eligible to apply for inter-jurisdictional consideration, you may be able to apply for a Global Scholarship. Please visit our [website](#) to check if you meet the Global eligibility criteria.

Choosing which District to apply to

There are 32 scholarships available for the United States of America constituency. States and U.S. territories are grouped into sixteen districts for the purpose of selection and each District Committee can select two candidates as Rhodes Scholars. The names of Scholarship winners are announced at the close of the District interviews. No alternates are selected.

Applicants apply as a representative of one of the fifty states, the District of Columbia, or one of the U.S. territories. You should apply in a state or territory based on the following criteria:

- The state or territory in which you will have received at least two years of college training and a bachelor's degree before 1 October in the year of admission
- The state or territory in which you were legally resident on 15 April in the year of application. Applicants should be aware that selection committees are instructed to verify legal residence.
- If you do not meet the above criteria, the U.S. National Secretary advises that U.S. citizens living abroad may apply in the state with which they feel the closest connection. This could be the last state of residence, the state where they lived the longest, their birthplace, a state closely connected to their parent(s), or one where close relatives reside. If you have ties to multiple states, you should consult the National Secretary, who will make the final determination. Once your state of eligibility is confirmed, the strength of your connection to that state will not be considered in the selection process.

Simultaneous application to more than one District Committee in the United States, or to more than one Rhodes constituency, will disqualify an applicant.

Eligibility Criteria

- **Nationality/citizenship:** You must be a citizen of the United States OR you must have been admitted to the United States as a lawful permanent resident, and must have maintained, and be expected to maintain, such legal status.

If you have been granted deferred action under the government's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program AND your status is currently active, then you are also eligible to apply if you meet all other criteria below. It should be noted that the Rhodes Trust makes no representations and does not offer any support regarding (a) the DACA applicant's ability to travel to the U.K., and (b) the DACA applicant's ability to return to the U.S. or to travel to another country upon conclusion of the scholarship; DACA applicants must assume this responsibility themselves. DACA applicants, like all others, must apply for the U.S. Scholarship or the Global Scholarship, but not to both. Where there are risks of legal uncertainty, the applicant must make a determination.

- **Age:** You must meet either of the below criteria:
 - i. You must be aged 18-23 on 1st October 2025 (i.e. you must have been born after 1 October 2001 and before 2 October 2007).OR (for older candidates who completed their first undergraduate degree later than usual)
 - ii. You must be under the age of 27 on 1st October 2025 (i.e. have been born after 1 October 1998) AND you must also have completed your first undergraduate degree on or after 1 October 2024*.

* A university's policy determines the date of completion of academic requirement for a degree and this may be different from when a degree is considered awarded by the university or the

date of a graduation ceremony. In ambiguous cases, the decision of the National Secretary is final.

- **Academic achievement:** You must have completed an undergraduate degree (usually a Bachelor's) by July 2026, and you must have an academic background and grade that - at a minimum - meets or exceeds the specific entry requirements of [your chosen course at the University of Oxford](#)

Candidates will have a higher chance of successful admission to Oxford if they have:

- A GPA of 3.70/4.0 or higher (with no rounding)

Special GPA exception requests (for candidates with a GPA below 3.70) must be submitted by a university president or another high-ranking administrator designated by the president justifying the exception, and addressing ONLY the questions of scholarly aptitude in the student's chosen area of study and competitiveness for Oxford graduate admissions. A university should initiate an exception request for candidates who are academically extraordinary and sufficiently compelling to Oxford admissions officers. All such requests must include a copy of the candidate's transcript and resume and must be directed to American Secretary Ramona Doyle at admin@rhodesscholar.org. Requests should be received no later than 15 September in the year of application to allow a decision to be made in time for the application to be submitted by the October deadline date.

- Please contact the National Secretary if you require further advice about academic requirements of the Scholarship.
- **English language proficiency:** If English is not your first language, you must check that you meet [Oxford University's English language requirements at the higher level](#) in preparation for your application to Oxford. You do not have to provide evidence of language proficiency as part of your Rhodes application.

LINKS AND TIPS

To make sure you are as prepared as possible to start your application, we advise you to read the resources on the Rhodes Trust and Oxford University Graduate Admissions webpages thoroughly.

Useful Links:

- [An A-Z list of the graduate courses at Oxford University](#)
- [An introduction to the types of graduate degrees offered by Oxford University](#)
- [The Rhodes House Website](#)
- [Our Application Overview with videos to guide you through the application process](#)
- [Courses covered by the Rhodes Scholarship \(Conditions of Tenure document\)](#)
- [Privacy Policy and Data protection statement](#)
- [The University of Oxford's English language proficiency guidance](#)
- [University of Oxford Graduate Admissions](#)

How to Apply

To apply for the Rhodes Scholarship, you must complete and submit our online application form before 23:59 Eastern Time, 01 October 2025.

There is no application fee for submission of the Rhodes Scholarship application form; however you must submit your application online, before the deadline, and we can't accept any other form of application.

You should apply for the Rhodes Scholarship **before** applying for your proposed course at the University of Oxford. Candidates selected for the Rhodes Scholarship are then required to apply for their chosen course via the University of Oxford's graduate application form with support from the team at Rhodes House.

If unsuccessful in your first application to the Rhodes Scholarships, you may subsequently re-apply only once more (and this must be in the same constituency), subject to meeting the eligibility criteria. An application submitted by the deadline will be considered one submission for the purposes of this policy. Candidates may only withdraw their application following the deadline in exceptional circumstances, such as medical emergencies, war or conflict. Withdrawals must be formally approved by the National Secretary and the Rhodes Trust.

You will be asked to declare that your application is wholly accurate and a fair representation of your achievements. You should anticipate that details will be checked for embellishments and inaccuracies. If we suspect any submitted references, transcripts, identity documents or English Language test results are not genuine, or if we suspect material misrepresentation of your qualifications, experiences or achievements, the National Secretariat will investigate. This may include contacting you or third parties for further evidence. If we conclude that you have breached the terms of the applicant declaration, your application may be withdrawn, or, where appropriate, an offer of a scholarship may be rescinded.

The Rhodes application form requires you to provide:

- Your details, such as contact information
- Evidence that you meet the eligibility criteria
- Your education history including your university transcripts
- The course(s) you would like to study at the University of Oxford
- A CV
- An Academic Statement
- A Personal Statement
- A total of at least five, but not more than eight, referees

You can find more details about these requirements and the documents you will need below.

Please also note – before starting an online Rhodes Scholarship application you should be aware of the [Rhodes Trust data protection policy for applications](#).

Key Documents:

You will need to upload copies of the following documents. Please note that all documents must be submitted in English. If your official documents, such as your birth certificate, passport or transcript are not in English you must also upload English translations. Please note that you may be asked to provide the original documents at a later date.

- Your passport or birth certificate or other government issued identification for proof of age and nationality.
- For lawful permanent residents who are not yet citizens, you must upload evidence to prove that you are a lawful permanent resident. A lawful permanent resident should submit their current and unexpired Form I-551, Permanent Resident Card, also known as a "green card," with an initial date of lawful permanent residence (indicated by the notation Resident Since:_____).

- For candidates who meet the DACA eligibility criteria above, you must upload documentation to prove your active DACA status. DACA residents should include a current I-797 letter confirming your DACA status along with a valid Employment Authorization Card.
- An official transcript from the college or university at which you are studying, or have studied, showing grades achieved (to date).
- An endorsement of your application from your college / university - note that this is distinct from the required references, which are explained in further detail below.
- A full curriculum vitae (CV) which should include specific details about academic qualifications, publications, prizes, scholarships, positions of leadership, employment positions, involvement in student, voluntary, community or political activities and any cultural, musical or sporting accomplishments. If you have an ORCID ID, you may wish to include this. Please do not include a photograph in your CV. **Your CV should not exceed two letter size pages in length with a minimum 10 pt font.**
- A head-and-shoulders colour photograph (jpg format). Please note your photo will **not** be available to the selection committee until after final shortlisting decisions have been made. If you are selected, this photograph will be used on the [Rhodes Scholar biographies webpage](#) unless or until you provide another version.
- Please do not upload documents, certificates, testimonials or links/URLs other than those required.

Support with your application and generative AI: important guidance

You should carefully read our [guidance on the types of assistance you may receive](#) when putting together your personal and academic statements for the scholarship, before completing your application.

Personal Statement:

You will need to provide a **personal statement** of no more than 1000 words and it cannot be edited* by others.

*Editing includes revising, correcting, modifying, adding, or removing text.

The personal statement is your chance to tell your story in your own voice: *Who are you?*

Your transcript(s), academic statement of study, CV, and reference letters provide substantive details of your commitments and accomplishments, while the personal statement offers an opportunity to share an authentic representation of yourself. Although you may seek guidance from mentors and advisors, your personal statement will be more genuine when written from your own perspective.

Prompts:

In your personal statement of up to 1000 words, we ask you to address each of the following prompts by weaving them into the narrative of your statement (the word allocation across the three is up to you):

1. *Which Rhodes Scholar quality do you display most strongly, and how are different contexts and people helping you to develop the other qualities?*
2. *What would you like to learn from and contribute to the Rhodes community in Oxford?*
3. *From your place in the world, how will you use your energy and talents to address humanity's pressing challenges?*

Every statement is individual; there is no single, "right" model. For over 120 years personal statements have been diverse and ever-changing. Selectors are looking for an original portrait of you as a candidate for the Rhodes Scholarship.

Guidance:

The Rhodes selection criteria are powerful and have remained largely unchanged over the past 100 years, having been drawn directly from the founder's Will:


ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

specific academic requirements can be found under 'Eligibility Criteria' above.


ENERGY TO USE YOUR TALENTS TO THE FULL

as demonstrated by success in areas such as sports, music, debate, dance, theatre, and artistic pursuits, including where teamwork is involved.


TRUTH, COURAGE, DEVOTION TO DUTY,

sympathy for and protection of the weak, kindness, unselfishness and fellowship.


MORAL FORCE OF CHARACTER

and instincts to lead, and to take an interest in your fellow human beings.

In your personal statement we are asking you to reflect on your experiences, influences and intentions through the lens of the Rhodes Scholar qualities outlined in the three criteria: "*Energy to use one's talents to the full*"; "*Truth, courage, devotion to duty, sympathy for and protection of the weak, kindness, unselfishness and fellowship*"; "*Moral force of character and instincts to lead, and to take an interest in one's fellow human beings*". (Note that the fourth selection criterion of "*Literary and scholastic attainments (academic excellence)*" are evidenced in your transcript, academic statement of study and academic reference letters.)

The three prompts are set within the Rhodes leadership development framework that informs the [Scholar Programme](#) at Rhodes House in Oxford. They ask you to consider your candidacy for and the opportunity of the Scholarship within three interrelated spheres in your own voice: 'self, others, and world':

1st "self": *Which Rhodes Scholar quality do you display most strongly, and how are different contexts and people helping you to develop the other qualities?* – engage us on which of the Rhodes selection criteria you best exemplify. We do not expect you to be the 'finished product'; we want to hear how you intend to evolve.

2nd "others": *What would you like to learn from and contribute to the Rhodes community in Oxford?* – share with us what you want to learn from and contribute to the Rhodes community, and how you hope to grow as a person and support the growth of others while at Oxford.

3rd "world": *From your place in the world, how will you use your energies and talents to address humanity's pressing challenges?* – make this personal, not generic. We anticipate your particular reflections on what is missing in society and the world today. Considering the complexities of the challenges that we are facing as humanity, we are seeking in Rhodes Scholars people who aspire to and will take action. Tell us what you imagine might be your way of making a contribution.

You can find further guidance on the personal statement on the '[Application Overview](#)' page of our website.

Choosing your course:

The Rhodes Scholarships cover at least two years of study at the University of Oxford and in the application form, you will need to choose a course, or a combination of courses that covers this period.

You should use the University of Oxford's website to find out about the different course options, their content and their entry requirements; a good starting point is the [A-Z list of graduate courses](#). Make sure that you research your planned course(s) thoroughly. You should be aware that once you are at the University of Oxford it is very difficult to change courses, and that this has significant visa implications. **It is therefore important to give serious thought to your desired course of study at Oxford now.**

The Rhodes Scholarship covers most full-time graduate courses. However, you should check our [Conditions of Tenure](#) to find out more about the course combinations we cover, any exceptions and information about additional discretionary funding if your chosen course is longer than two years, that is if you wish to apply for a DPhil (PhD).

You should also propose a second alternative course of study. Admission to Oxford is extremely competitive and we ask all Scholars-elect to make a primary and a secondary (back-up) application.

Second BA:

In addition to the graduate courses listed on Oxford's website, you can also choose to apply to study for a second undergraduate degree over two years. This is known as a Second BA with Senior Status. Senior Status is the only basis on which a Rhodes Scholar can study for a second undergraduate degree. You can read Oxford's page about [second undergraduate degrees](#) for more information. In Oxford the degree of Master of Arts may be conferred to BAs and BFAs seven years after matriculation.

For most courses, you apply to Oxford University separately after the selection process for the Rhodes Scholarship is complete, however if you intend to study for a Second BA the process is slightly different. There is a very short window in which to apply for a Second BA, should you be selected for the Rhodes Scholarship. Rhodes applicants apply using a tailored form, which you will normally be expected to return to the Registrar by 12 noon GMT on the first Friday in December. Candidates who are firm in their choice of a second BA may wish to maximise their admission chances by applying directly via [UCAS](#). If you miss both the UCAS and the Rhodes deadline for the second BA application, your chances of admission are limited. Any Scholar Elect applying for a Second BA will be expected to submit at least one application for a graduate degree.

Whilst we advise you to research & consider your choices thoroughly, we understand it is hard to be completely confident about your choice of course and the choices you make in the Rhodes application form are not binding. In some cases, the course can be altered from that proposed, once selected for the Scholarship.

DPhil or MSc by research candidates: a number of Oxford departments recommend that applicants make contact with potential research supervisor(s) before submitting an application to Oxford. Advice on contacting potential supervisors in advance of your application is course-specific and you should follow the guidance found on the individual [course pages](#), most often on the How to Apply tab.

Taught Master's candidates: please note that Oxford faculty members do not normally correspond with applicants, unless explicitly stated on the course page.

Academic Statement of Study:

You will need to write an academic statement of no more than 350 words and it cannot be edited* by others.

*Editing includes revising, correcting, modifying, adding, or removing text.

One of the reasons we ask for an academic statement is that entry to the University of Oxford is becoming ever more competitive and, should you win a Rhodes Scholarship, you will have to submit your application to Oxford within a very short timeframe. Researching and writing this statement will help you prepare for that. Rhodes selectors will use the statement to assess whether you will thrive academically in one of the most competitive graduate environments in the world. The academic statement of study should, in a factual and concise manner:

- i. Tell us your reasons for wishing to study at the University of Oxford, what your chosen course(s) of study is (are), and how this fits into your academic trajectory. Furthermore, you may wish to explain how you hope to be stretched academically at the University of Oxford, and any academic support you imagine might be helpful.
- ii. Demonstrate that you are able to, at a minimum meet or exceed the specific entry and other academic requirements of the course(s) you have chosen. Tell us how you are prepared for the course(s) academically and otherwise.
- iii. If you wish to undertake a DPhil, provide a brief outline of your proposed research area, how it contributes to your future career plans, and list both the Department in which you propose to undertake your research and one or more researchers with whom you would like to work in Oxford.

It is a good idea to discuss your proposed course of study and your academic statement with your academic mentors and/or professors or lecturers in the subject area, and, if possible, with someone who has knowledge of U.K. universities.

References

You will need to provide a list of **at least five, but not more than eight**, people (your referees) who are willing to submit references on your behalf. Please make sure that you ask their permission before listing them as referees.

- **Academic Referees:** At least four of your referees should be academics who have formally taught and graded you in your undergraduate (or, if relevant, postgraduate) studies and who can comment in detail on your academic ability and how well they think you would fare at Oxford. In addition to uploading a reference, your academic referees will be asked a small number of additional questions, including a request to provide an estimated class ranking. Note – for successful Rhodes Scholarship applicants, these references can later be used to form part of the application to study at the University of Oxford, so it is important that you and your referees bear this in mind.
- **Character Referees:** You will also need at least one character referee, who should write about your character and involvement in extra-curricular, service or leadership activities. These referees should be able to comment critically on whether you fulfil the extra-curricular, non-academic requirements of the Scholarship and who can speak in detail to your character.
- You should forward the [Guidance for Referees](#) to your referees. This includes key instructions for your referees on what they will need to write about in their letter.
- Once your referees have agreed to provide a reference for you, you will need to register their names and email addresses in the application form. They will then receive an automatically-generated email request for a reference. This email will include a link to our reference form where they will also be asked to provide their contact details for verification purposes and be able to upload or type in their letter of reference **which will remain confidential**. Please note that your referees may be contacted for further information.
- You should ensure that you register your referees within the application form early, to allow them sufficient time to provide a detailed reference letter. **It is your responsibility to ensure that referees submit their references online before 23:59 Eastern Time, 01 October 2025.**

Please note that if your college / university endorsement plus at least five references are not uploaded by the submission deadline date, then your application will be considered incomplete. Any surplus references arriving after the deadline may or may not be considered alongside your application. You can track the progress of their references within the application form.

- Remember, a good referee is someone who knows you well, rather than a well-known person who only knows you superficially. Please note that Rhodes Scholarship referees should not normally be personal friends, peers or relatives, or have any other conflict of interest. If a referee fits into one of these categories, they should make the connection clear within the reference.
- You should choose reliable people who are likely to respond to your request for a detailed reference, as their letters will be crucial to your application. If you do not have the minimum number of required references, your application may not be considered by the Selection Committee.

Selection Process and timeline

Once the application deadline has passed, all submitted applications will be considered as part of our selection process. This varies slightly according to which constituency you are applying in but below are the key stages:

Applications are checked for eligibility and completeness



Longlist is compiled



November: Final interview and social engagement event

Interviews will be held simultaneously in the 16 respective U.S. District Meeting City locations on 14 and 15 November 2025.

Candidates selected as finalists must be available to attend both the final interview and social engagement event in person, as no accommodations can be made on date and time, or mode, of these events. No candidate will be selected without an interview. PLEASE NOTE: All candidates invited to interview are expected to cover their own expenses.

By November 2025: All applicants will be notified with a decision regarding whether or not they will be offered an interview. Winners for the U.S. Rhodes Scholarships are immediately announced in each district, after the conclusion of their respective interviews. We regret that we are unable to provide feedback to applicants who are unsuccessful in their applications.

Selection Conditions

- Selection for the Rhodes Scholarship is made without regard to financial means.
- Selection for the Rhodes Scholarship is made without regard to marital status, race, ethnic origin, colour, gender, religion, sexual orientation, social background, disability, caste or other irrelevant distinction. The provision of such information in the 'Equity and Inclusion' section of the application form is optional, but helps us to ensure that our selection processes are fair and that our outreach efforts are effective. The information you provide will not form part of your application and is only shared with those involved in selection in an anonymized format after

scholarships have been awarded. If you disclose a disability and/or request additional support at interview stage, your answers for this section may be shared with the National Secretary, who may contact you to discuss and confirm your requested arrangements for support or suitable alternatives during the selection process. Any requests made will not affect shortlisting, or the progress of your application, in any way. If your application is successful and you become a Rhodes Scholar, this information may be shared with our student support team, who will help support you during your time at Oxford.

- Applications submitted for the Rhodes Scholarship in 2025 are for entry to the University of Oxford in October 2026; the scholarship cannot be brought forward or deferred to a later academic year.
- No selection will be made if a sufficiently qualified candidate cannot be found.
- The decision of the Selection Committee is final.
- The Rhodes Scholarship is confirmed only upon successful admission to the University of Oxford.
- The Rhodes Trust may contact you some time after the submission deadline to ask for feedback on the application process and any interactions you have had with the Rhodes Trust staff and volunteers.
- An offer of another scholarship does not preclude you from being considered for a Rhodes Scholarship, but you cannot hold another substantial scholarship in conjunction with a Rhodes Scholarship. You must advise the District Secretary if you have been offered another scholarship.

Post-Selection

If you are selected for the Rhodes Scholarship you will need to apply to the University of Oxford very soon after selection and the team at Rhodes House will be on hand to support you with the application process. We advise you to prepare as much as possible in advance for your application to Oxford. Rhodes House has access to your entire Rhodes Scholarship application, and your references may be re-used, if appropriate, to support your application to the University of Oxford.

Full details will be given to you upon selection, however candidates who intend to apply for courses in the Medical Sciences, or research degrees in Computer Science and/or Engineering should note that the graduate application **deadline now usually falls in the first few days of December**. You are advised to check the course page of your preferred course(s) carefully and to note the deadline well in advance.

Need to get in touch?

National Secretary:

Ramona L. Doyle

Email: american.secretary@rhodesscholar.org

The Rhodes Trust

1660 International Drive, Suite 600

McLean, VA 22102

Office of the American National Secretary

Email: admin@rhodesscholar.org

District Secretaries:

District 1 (Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Vermont): JULIE LEVISON

District 2 (Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey): JACOB WEISBERG

District 3 (New York-South [including the counties of Sullivan, Ulster, and Dutchess and those counties to the South, including Long Island]): MARIA SACHIKO CECIRE

District 4 (New York-North [including the counties of Delaware, Greene, and Columbia and those counties to the North], Pennsylvania): AARON MERTZ

District 5 (Delaware, Maryland/DC): SARAH STEWART JOHNSON

District 6 (Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina): CAROLYN SEEPERSAD

District 7 (Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands): RICHARD CHAPMAN

District 8 (Oklahoma, Texas): JUAN SEPULVEDA

District 9 (Indiana, Kentucky, Virginia): R. DARRYL BANKS

District 10 (Illinois, Ohio): ABHILASH MISHRA

District 11 (Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, West Virginia): TRINA SHANKS

District 12 (Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Tennessee): RUTH ANNE FRENCH

District 13 (Colorado, Louisiana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming): OLIVIA RISSLAND

District 14 (Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington): BETH EBEL

District 15 (Arizona, California-North [including the counties of Monterey, Kings, Tulare, and Inyo and those counties to the North], Hawaii, Nevada): MARY MURPHY

District 16 (American Samoa, California-South [including the counties of San Luis Obispo, Kern, and San Bernadino and those counties to the South], Guam, and Northern Mariana Islands): BETHANY L. EHLMANN

For further information about the Rhodes Scholarship, see

www.rhodeshouse.ox.ac.uk/scholarships/the-rhodes-scholarship/

The Rhodes Trust reserves the right to vary these conditions at any time without notice.

THE RHODES SCHOLARSHIP FOR UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: 2026

Covering the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories including Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam and Northern Mariana Islands.

GUIDANCE FOR REFEREES

References must be written in English and must be uploaded before 23:59 Eastern Time, 01 October 2025.

Thank you for your willingness to serve as a referee for an applicant for the Rhodes Scholarship. References form a crucial part of the selection process, and your reference could make the difference to an applicant's success. The following notes are intended to serve as a guide as you write your reference.

Background Information

The [Rhodes Scholarship programme](#) is the oldest (established 1903), and perhaps the most prestigious, international scholarship in the world. Administered by the Rhodes Trust in Oxford, the programme offers over 100 fully-funded Scholarships each year for postgraduate study at the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom - one of the world's leading universities. Rhodes Scholarships are for young leaders of outstanding intellect and character who are motivated to engage with global challenges and are committed to the service of others. They show promise of becoming value-driven, principled leaders for the world's future, wherever their careers might take them, and in any field. The [selection criteria for the scholarship](#) are as follows:

- **Academic excellence:** the University of Oxford is one of the most competitive graduate environments in the world and applicants must meet or exceed the entry requirements of their chosen course. (Candidates will have a greater chance of successful admission if they have a First Class Honours or GPA of 3.70/4.00 or higher, or equivalent).
- **Energy to use their talents to the full** (as demonstrated by success in areas such as sports, music, debate, dance, theatre, and artistic pursuits, including where teamwork is involved).
- **The Virtues:** truth, courage, devotion to duty, sympathy for and protection of the weak, kindliness, unselfishness and fellowship.
- **Moral force of character and instincts to lead**, and to take an interest in their fellow human beings.

Writing Your Letter of Recommendation

- The Selection Committee will have a copy of the applicant's university academic transcript, curriculum vitae, and their academic and personal statements. We would welcome any observations you have which would enhance the Committee's understanding of these documents.
- A brief introduction to yourself would be helpful, including any connections that you have with the Rhodes Trust, Rhodes Scholars and the University of Oxford (such connections are certainly not necessary).
- Where you are able, you should comment on how the applicant demonstrates the four selection criteria outlined above. While proven academic excellence is the first quality listed, the other criteria are equally important.
- It is not expected that you will be able to speak from first-hand knowledge of all of the applicant's qualifications.
- Please speak of the applicant's limitations as well as strong points. We do not expect applicants to be the 'finished product' and we are interested to learn how they intend to evolve. Committees tend naturally to be dubious of hyperbole and appraisals that imply a given individual has no limitations. Your reply will, of course, be treated as strictly confidential by the Selection Committee.

Rhodes Scholarship reference letters are intended to remain confidential and should not be shared directly with applicants. While institutions may review letters as part of their internal nomination or endorsement processes, it is important to preserve the integrity of the references. Letters should not be edited or curated by others prior to being uploaded to the application portal. References must be written in English and your comments should not exceed two A4 or letter size pages (minimum 10-point type). If letters are submitted which are longer than this, only the first two pages will be considered by the Selection Committee in the interests of fairness to all candidates.

Applicants for the Rhodes Scholarships are asked to seek both character and academic references. The reference form will clarify which type of reference you have been asked to submit.

Academic referees:

If you are primarily acquainted with the candidate through a teacher/student relationship, it is expected that your reference will concentrate primarily on academic quality and potential, although your assessment of other qualities will be welcomed. A Rhodes Scholar will undertake postgraduate study at Oxford, a taught or research degree, or a second undergraduate degree with senior status (over two years). In all cases, entry to Oxford is very competitive and so please consider whether the applicant is prepared for their chosen course of study at one of the most competitive graduate environments in the world.

Academic referees should note that, in the case of a successful applicant, your letter will be used by Oxford departments and colleges for determining the applicant's academic case for admission to postgraduate study. Consequently, a detailed assessment of the candidate's academic qualifications and suitability to undertake Master's / doctoral level study at Oxford will be very important. You are specifically asked to comment on:

- The applicant's relative academic standing in comparison with other students on the same course at the same institution – e.g. top 1%, 3%, 5%, 10%, 25%?
- How many students are in the applicant's year group on their programme of study, i.e., with how many students are you comparing the applicant?
- On what basis are you making the assessment – personal assessment/official class rank?

It can also be useful for Oxford application purposes for academic referees to comment on candidates' motivation, their ability to work in a group environment, and, for those considering research degrees, their aptitude for sustained individual and self-motivated investigation.

Character referees:

If you are better acquainted with the applicant through non-academic interests, it is expected that you will concentrate on assessment of character and non-academic qualities, in the knowledge that the Committee is looking for scholars who show promise of outstanding achievement in later life. With reference to the selection criteria above, please pay particular attention to the following:

- energy to use their talents to the full;
- truth, courage, devotion to duty, sympathy for and protection of the weak, kindness, unselfishness and fellowship;
- moral force of character and instincts to lead

Submitting Your Letter of Recommendation

- When an applicant has registered your details in the application form, you will receive an auto-generated email, which will contain a link to the online reference form where you will be able to upload your reference letter. The form will also include questions requesting basic information about yourself and your relationship to the applicant.
- All letters of recommendation should be addressed to the Rhodes Scholarship Selection Committee.
- The Selection Committee asks **that your letter of recommendation be on headed paper, signed, and uploaded in pdf format.** If you are unable to access an official/institutional letterhead we can, on an exceptional basis, accept references on a personal letterhead that clearly states your institutional affiliation and provides official contact information including an email address and phone number.
- All letters of reference should be submitted via the online reference form. **Please ensure that you press submit once you have completed the form.**
- Once you submit the reference form, both you and the applicant will receive an automated email to confirm receipt; the applicant will not be able to see the submitted reference, which will remain confidential. Please note that during the selection process you may be contacted for further information.

Please note that Rhodes Scholarship referees should not normally be personal friends, peers or relatives, or have any other conflict of interest. If a referee fits into one of these categories, they should make the connection clear within the reference.

References must be uploaded before 23:59 Eastern Time, 01 October 2025.