

THE RHODES SCHOLARSHIPS 2021 FOR THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
INSTITUTIONAL ENDORSEMENTS
DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION IS 7 OCTOBER 2020 (11:59 PM, Eastern Time)

GUIDANCE FOR INSTITUTIONAL ENDORSEMENTS:

The criteria which Mr. Rhodes set forth in his Will still guide Committees of Selection in their assessment of applicants. The Will contains four standards by which prospective Rhodes Scholars should be judged:

- (1) literary and scholastic attainments;
- (2) energy to use one's talents to the full;
- (3) truth, courage, devotion to duty, sympathy for and protection of the weak, kindness, unselfishness and fellowship;
- (4) moral force of character and instincts to lead, and to take an interest in one's fellow beings.

Proven intellectual and academic quality of a high standard is the first quality required of applicants. The intellectual standard sought is very high. It is unlikely that an applicant will be successful unless he or she is sufficiently able academically to be admitted to one of America's most selective graduate schools. This year a lower limit of GPA 3.7 / 4.0 has been introduced.

Beyond academic distinction, however, applicants will also be required to show integrity of character, interest in and respect for their fellow beings, the ability to lead, and the energy to use their talents to the full. Applicants should be able to demonstrate the vigor which will enable Rhodes Scholars to make an effective contribution to the world around them. Mr. Rhodes clearly expected such a contribution when he expressed the hope that Rhodes Scholars would come to "esteem the performance of public duties as [their] highest aim." From this statement one may infer that he expected his Scholars to play an influential part in the betterment of society, wherever their careers might take them. It does not necessarily presuppose a career in the public sector. Mr. Rhodes desired that his Scholars be capable of leadership in any field.

Much of the distinctiveness of the Rhodes Scholarship arises from this comprehensive set of criteria. Intellectual excellence is obviously required, but not in isolation from other qualities. Mr. Rhodes sought Scholars who were more than "mere bookworms;" he wanted their intellectual talents to be combined with concern for others. Thus the Selection Committees assign the highest importance to this blend of character with intellect.

The Committees of Selection for the Rhodes Scholarships will have available for study a copy of the applicant's academic transcript, a statement of the applicant's academic and other interests and reasons for wishing to study at Oxford, and a statement of extracurricular activities and interests.

Institutional officials, including the President, Dean, or other official responsible for graduate fellowships, may endorse an applicant. An undergraduate institution may endorse an applicant by stating that he or she has satisfactorily completed two years of full-time study and received a bachelor's degree, or will have in the year following the Rhodes Scholarship application. It is preferred that applicants in their first year of graduate study receive an endorsement from the undergraduate institution from which they received their degree; for those in their second or later year of graduate study, the preference is for the endorsement to come from the graduate institution.

As part of the endorsement process, Colleges and universities are also invited, but not required, to organize committees competent to comment on the relative merits of applicants for the Rhodes Scholarship. The criteria used by Committees of Selection are explained above. Institutions are encouraged to submit a letter of evaluation to the Secretary of the relevant Committee of Selection. This evaluation will be used by Selection Committees, and, in the event of the applicant's selection for a Rhodes Scholarship, will be forwarded to the authorities in Oxford for consideration of the Rhodes Scholar-elect's admission to an academic program and to a college of the University of Oxford.

In 2014, the Rhodes Trust strengthened the attestation associated with the personal statement, both for applicants and institutions. All institutional endorsements must include something explicitly to this effect:

"I am knowledgeable regarding the institutional practices of [name of institution] in connection with applications for the Rhodes Scholarship. To the best of my knowledge and belief, [name of institution] has provided no editorial review of the applicant's [or applicant's name] personal statement."

We understand that this requirement has caused concerns in some fellowship advisory offices. The reason for the requirement is simple. We concluded that, in many cases, personal statements have become highly edited and formulaic productions that do not accurately reflect the applicant's actual writing style, personal story, or educational objectives. Fundamentally, they are no longer the work of the applicant. Our selection committees and Trustees asked us to restore the original intent of the personal statement requirement. The focus of the change is solely on the personal statement, not other elements of fellowship advising. We ask simply that applicants be the sole writers and sole editors of their personal statements, from draft to final form, and that the statements be unedited by institutional representatives, advisors, professors, or anyone else.

An automated email from the application system will be generated once an applicant has registered his or her endorser. Instructions on how to submit the letter of endorsement will also be provided. We ask that all endorsements be submitted online, but for those unable to make use of the online process, mailing addresses for Rhodes District Secretaries may be found on the USA Information for Candidates document: www.rhodeshouse.ox.ac.uk/apply.

Endorsements must be received by 11:59 PM Eastern Time, 7 October 2020.