RHODES SCHOLARSHIP

ZIMBABWE

THE RHODES SCHOLARSHIP FOR ZIMBABWE: 2024

- A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE RHODES TRUST AND THE NICKY OPPENHEIMER FOUNDATION

GUIDANCE FOR REFEREES

References must be written in English and must be uploaded by **23:59 Central Africa Time, 31 August 2023.**

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.

- **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.

For further details, see: www.rhodeshouse.ox.ac.uk/scholarships/the-rhodes-scholarship/

Writing Your Letter of Recommendation

We would be grateful if you would provide a frank and confidential letter regarding the applicant's qualifications and suitability for the Rhodes Scholarship. You should consider the below points when writing your letter:

- 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 of 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. 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.**
- **References must be written in English and your comments should not exceed two A4 or letter size pages (minimum 10 point type).**

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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:

a) 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%?
b) 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?
c) On what basis are you making the assessment - personal assessment/official class rank?

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, kindliness, 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 instructions on submitting your letter of recommendation. The email will include 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.

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