

Scholars Guide for Applicants – China

Disclaimer: This guide is **NOT** an official communication from the Rhodes Trust. It was prepared by current and alumni/alumnae China Rhodes Scholars with the hope that all applicants have equal access to adequate guidance for preparing for the Rhodes Scholarship for China. This guide also refers to Scholar Guides of Saudi Arabia, India, Malaysia, and Jamaica constituencies. Please take this guide with a grain of salt, as it reflects personal experiences and insights rather than official directives.

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GENERAL ADVICE

- **Take a chance on yourself and just apply if you meet the basic eligibility criteria.** Many scholars enter the application process highly doubtful of getting through, only to be pleasantly surprised later on.
- **Embrace the process of discovery that comes with applying.** The process of applying for the scholarship itself can be extremely rewarding, as it teaches you a great deal about yourself, your values, and your past experiences, and it provides you with the opportunity to hone important skills, such as writing, requesting letters of recommendation, and presenting yourself and your experiences effectively.
- **Be gentle with yourself.** Applying for a competitive scholarship can be a daunting and anxiety-inducing process. It is pretty normal to feel self-doubt or inadequacy during the application process, but remember that *your worth is not defined by the outcome of your*

application and that everyone has both strengths and weaknesses. A common self-invalidating misconception is that a Rhodes Scholar has everything figured out. This is untrue—it is more important to recognise your starting point, the road you have taken, and the experiences that have shaped you and your aspirations. Focus on what you do have—not what you don’t—and focus on the next steps you have control over—the next word, the next document, the next person to talk to.

- **Reach out to a mentor or anyone who is invested in your growth.** You will find it encouraging to speak to a mentor about your intent to apply for the scholarship. A mentor could be a lecturer, a supervisor, a coach, or anyone who is genuinely invested in your growth. They can provide you with insights, resources, and connections that may not be readily available to you. When you vocalise your motivations, they may also provide a third-person perspective on aspects of your experiences that you should include or omit from your application. Ultimately, seek out support and remember that you do not have to go through this daunting journey alone.
- **Read the “[Information for Candidates](#)” document very carefully:** These are the official guidelines from the Rhodes Trust. Make sure you understand all the listed requirements and the documents you need to submit.
- **Give yourself ample time to prepare a “good enough” application.** There are four main sets of documents to submit—a personal statement (*an opportunity to share one or two compelling personal reflections or experiences*), an academic statement (*an opportunity to share about the course(s) you are interested in studying and how it relates to your current and future ambitions/vision*), recommendation letters (*an opportunity for others to validate and share specific aspects of you from their perspectives*), and a CV (*a short list of achievements to add more colour*). There's a lot to do, so make sure you start early, plan ahead, and break the work into small, manageable tasks over a good period.
- **Think about how different application components can complement each other to form a coherent story.** You will be submitting academic transcripts, a resume, recommendation letters, an academic statement, and a personal statement when applying for the Rhodes Scholarship. Think of each of these components as ingredients for a good, larger story, which will demonstrate to the Selection Committee how you holistically meet the outlined criteria for the scholarship. Prepare these independent components by imagining them as interconnected to one another. Each component would contribute to a compelling, coherent story about who you are, where you have been, and what you stand for. What story would you like to tell? How would you like to tell it? What story does each component tell? If your resume or recommendation letter (sometimes one can guess what they would say) talks about a particular experience, you might not want to repeat it again in your personal statement if it doesn't add value to the reader. If you do, you ought to elaborate and deepen that information so that it adds value. Remember,

there is a word count limit for the statements and a limited time to engage with interviewers, so use the space wisely.

- **Write the application with the interview in mind:** As you draft, remember that anything you write may become an interview question. Do not include a claim, experience, book, policy issue, academic interest, or future plan that you cannot discuss under follow-up. Before submitting, go through each part of your application and ask: “If a selector asked me about this for three minutes, would I have something real to say?”
- **Proofread and ensure linguistic and grammatical accuracy:** It would be a shame for the assessors to be distracted from your main message by grammatical errors. To minimise these errors, you could use online tools such as Grammarly (not an official endorsement!) and AI, or enlist a friend's help (but remember that the work must remain yours).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

If you still have questions on topics such as what course is covered, the required GPA, et cetera, after reading the Information for Candidates and the other guidance documents listed on the page dedicated to [your constituency](#) (country or region you are applying from), we suggest you keenly read the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) section of the Rhodes Trust website. If you have further or specific questions that aren't addressed in this section, do not hesitate to send an email to scholarship.queries@rhodeshouse.ox.ac.uk, or please contact Ms Alice Wang, the National Secretary for China, at china.secretary@rhodestrust.com.

Other questions that scholars receive frequently:

- **Can I see your personal statement?** The response to the request will vary from scholar to scholar. If they say no, it is less about gatekeeping and more about the fact that the personal statement is personal. As outlined in the [Information for Candidates](#) document, your personal statement should be 100% your own work. It is a piece of writing that represents your most authentic self, so focus on expressing your unique voice rather than trying to replicate what others have done.
- **How do I stand out?** Be AUTHENTIC, and as honest as possible throughout the process.
- **I did not graduate from one of the top universities in my Constituency. Can I still apply?** Students from all universities are encouraged to apply. The most important thing is that you are meeting the eligibility criteria for your constituency (this includes the entry requirements for [your chosen course of study at the University of Oxford](#)).

- **Do applicants need to be well-rounded in various fields?** The selection committee considers the applicant's background and personal achievements across [four main selection criteria](#). They look for evidence of effort and accomplishments within the applicant's environment. We hope applicants will not be discouraged from applying due to a perceived lack of skills or qualities in certain areas.
- **Does the Rhodes Scholarship tend to favour disciplines that are more traditionally associated with leadership, such as economics, politics, management or government? / Do you have a strong preference for applicants studying liberal arts and social sciences?** No, we do not have any favoured disciplines. Scholars come from all backgrounds, including STEM, the humanities, the arts, and the social sciences. You can find their profiles [here](#). Leadership can take many forms, from sustained commitment to a problem or community to advancing research or helping others grow. More important than your field of study is how you use your talents and character to engage with the world around you. If you are a STEM applicant, we value your ability to dive deeply into the technical rigour of your field while also zooming out to connect your work to its broader societal implications. That impact may take the form of applying technologies you have developed to solve real-world problems, advancing the fundamental scientific knowledge that makes such technologies possible, or expanding access and opportunity for specific communities. Ultimately, what matters most is not your discipline, but the problem you care about and the purpose that drives your work.
- **Are women or men (or applicants of other gender/ethnic profiles) at an advantage in the selection process?** The Rhodes Scholarship selection process is designed to identify and select outstanding individuals based on their individual merits and achievements, without giving undue advantage to any specific group. The goal is to ensure a fair and equitable evaluation for all candidates, regardless of gender, gender identity, marital status, sexual orientation, race, ethnic origin, colour, religion, social background, caste, disability, or field of study.
- **Do applicants need to be skilled in an artistic pursuit or a sport in order to apply for the Rhodes Scholarship?** Applicants are not expected to be skilled in a particular sport or artistic pursuit. The Rhodes criteria refer more broadly to the energy to develop and use one's talents fully, which may be demonstrated in many different ways. For some applicants, this may be reflected in sports, music, or the arts; for others, it may be reflected in research, community engagement, teaching, entrepreneurship, or other pursuits. More important is whether you have meaningfully committed yourself to activities or communities that genuinely matter to you.

For more resources on applications and life at Oxford and in the Rhodes community, please check the 罗德奖学金 Official WeChat account and the Rednote official account.

REFERENCE LETTERS

The Application requires three 'Academic' References and one 'Character' Reference. Academic 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. The character referee should write about your character and involvement in extra-curricular, service, or leadership activities. Please make sure that you ask their permission before listing them as referees.

On Referees - Who?

- **Build relationships early.** If you proactively cultivate relationships with supervisors, lecturers, and mentors in your academic journey or internship experiences, it will be smoother and more natural for you to ask for their support in recommendation letters. You are not encouraged to approach them solely to obtain references - the emphasis should be on learning from your interactions and their insights. In addition, long-term relationships help them better understand your character and goals and write detailed and convincing recommendation letters for you. In the event that you have already completed your course and are not sure the lecturer(s) can recall you precisely, it is encouraged to reach out to them and remind them of who you are, if they are available for a meet-up, etc.
- **Your referee should be someone who knows you well and has a high regard for you.** For example, if it is an academic referee, they should know more about you than simply the grade you received in their class. You can ask yourself before contacting them: can they speak to your strengths and weaknesses, your readiness for further study, or your leadership skills? How do they think you are prepared for your chosen course of study at one of the most competitive graduate environments in the world?
- **Your referee should ideally be a leading expert in their field; however, their rank is less important than the quality of their recommendation.** A letter from a pioneer in your field is not beneficial if it is brief and impersonal, indicating that the author does not know you well. Conversely, a strong and detailed letter from a less senior professor who knows you well is more convincing and reliable.
- **Your referees should complement each other.** Ideally, they should know you from different contexts and be able to comment on different aspects of your personality and abilities.
- **Choose a referee you trust to submit the letter on time.** Ensure that you check in and remind them if the submission date is approaching - it is ultimately your responsibility to ensure that your application is complete.

- **Be prepared to pivot.** This is one part of the application that is largely beyond your control. As the deadline nears, providing your referees with an early checkpoint or reminder (ideally well before the closing date) could be helpful, as they may juggle other responsibilities. This also provides sufficient and appropriate time to approach new potential referees should unforeseen difficulties arise.

References – How/When?

- **Reach out to your referees as early as possible.** Professors are often overwhelmed with requests for recommendation letters during the application season, which typically runs from early September to late December. Therefore, it is appropriate to discuss your application goals with your referees during the summer holiday or early in the new semester. Even if they decline to write a recommendation letter, you still have ample time to approach alternative options.
- **We recommend meeting with your potential referee** in person (or online) six to eight weeks (ideally more) before the deadline to let them know of your intention to apply for Rhodes and gauge whether they are inclined to support your application. Ideally, they would be excited for you!
- If you feel they would be a good referee, **follow up by email to** request their letter. Be direct and clear (e.g., “Would you be willing to write a reference letter on my behalf?”).
- **Provide your referees with all the information they would need to write the letter.** This information might include:
 - Formal [guide for referees](#) by the Rhodes Trust. It can also be found and downloaded on [your constituency information page](#) or on the [referee information page](#).
 - An annotated CV so that they are aware of the activities you were involved in during your undergraduate studies. Do not be overly humble! For more details, see the CV section below.
 - Your transcript.
 - Papers you had written in their class.
 - Clear instructions on how the reference letter needs to be submitted.
- **Do not ghostwrite or edit the letter for your referee.** First, the selection committee is experienced enough to discern whether a letter is genuinely written. Ghostwriting might inadvertently let your voice seep through rather than your referee’s, which could come across as awkward. Second, incorporating multiple distinct voices in your application can be advantageous, as it contributes to a more comprehensive and nuanced portrayal of your qualifications and character. Most importantly, authoring a reference letter on behalf of someone else is fundamentally dishonest and ethically irresponsible.

CV/RESUME

Please follow the guidance provided in the Information for Candidates for your constituency. Your Curriculum Vitae must detail the various items as per the guidance provided on the application website.

- **Keep it short and concise.** Chinese applicants are required to upload their CV as a document. The document should ideally be only one page long, or at most two. Applicants may wish to refer to the CV template available on the Rhodes Application page for guidance: <https://www.rhodeshouse.ox.ac.uk/media2/glifdhld/pdf-cv-template-new.pdf>
- **Use clear and simple headers for readability.** If unsure, make sure you cover the following areas:
 - Professional/research experience
 - Volunteering, community involvement, and leadership experience
 - Publications and presentations
 - Awards, prizes, and scholarships
 - Skills, hobbies, and extra-curricular activities
- **Tailor your resume.** Customise your resume to emphasise experiences and qualities that align with the Rhodes Scholarship criteria.
- **Use bullet points.** Try to keep each bullet line to one or two sentences. Remember that the more you include in the CV/Resume, the more you risk diluting your key messages.
- **Employ action verbs.** Action verbs make sentences more tangible (e.g., *Designed, Administered, Revised, Composed, Persuaded*).
- **Describe your responsibilities and impact concretely.** Accurately describe your role(s) without exaggeration or downplaying your efforts. You could consider using the popular STAR (Situation, Task, Action, and Result) method: You would describe a situation at your community, workplace, or university (Situation), the challenges you faced (Task), the steps you took to address the issue (Action), and the results of your action (Results). Use quantitative metrics to show impact where appropriate.
Example: *Raised X amount of money in 24 hours (Result) to fund life-saving surgeries for refugee victims injured by the earthquake (Task/Situation) through a well-crafted campaign with social media influencers (Action).*
- **Do not shy away from speaking confidently about your achievements.** List your extracurricular activities. Do not hesitate to detail these activities: How long, at which level, any leadership role

held, or prize(s)/award(s) won, etc. Your extracurricular activities demonstrate your ability to use your talents to the fullest, a key selection criterion for the scholarship.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

The Personal Statement is one of the most important materials in the application process. It is an opportunity for you to tell your story in your own voice and show the selectors who you are. Therefore, you are expected to present an appealing and thoughtful story in the statement with coherent answers to the following prompts:

- 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. Drawing on your past experience of community engagement, how do you hope to contribute to and learn from communities at Oxford?*
- 3. From your place in the world, how will you use your energy and talents to address humanity's pressing challenges?*

"Start by thinking about the issue(s) or topic(s) that you care deeply about. They may reflect problems and challenges that you have seen, or areas of opportunity and progress that excite you. What experiences have you had in your life that make you care about a particular issue? How have your past experiences shaped you into being the person you are today? How are you going to take those experiences, and where do you want to go with them?" - Rhodes National Secretary for China

- **First and foremost, make sure you have read the "Personal Statement" section of the Information for Candidates of the constituency you are applying for. It contains useful guidance and details the 3 prompts as well as what is expected of you.**
- **Start your drafts as early as possible and keep revising and polishing them.** This will help avoid redundancy and imprecision. Many applicants find it challenging to organise answers to the three questions on the first attempt. The key is to explore the various dimensions of your answers and the underlying logic that connects the prompt's three aspects: individual, community, and world. Talking to friends and people you trust can help you reflect and improve.
- **Begin however you can, but don't be discouraged if you don't immediately come up with ideas/answers.** Let the process take its time, write your ideas out, and see where they can take you. Don't be afraid to delete or discard drafts!
- **Read stories of current scholars and alumni.** This will give you a better sense of the connection between individuals and the Rhodes community, allowing you to reflect on your experiences and consider how you can contribute to the Rhodes community and broader contexts. They will inspire you, but please be assured that you do not need to be like them to receive a Rhodes

scholarship. Every scholar is different and unique. We recognise and value excellence in many forms, with a thoughtful understanding of the diverse backgrounds of Chinese students.

- **Break down the general and abstract questions into small, detailed, manageable sub-questions.** For example, you can divide “*From your place in the world, how will you use your energy and talents to address humanity's pressing challenges?*” into three parts:
 - Context and perspective: How does your cultural background influence your view of humanity’s challenges? What specific experiences in your life shape your understanding of the pressing challenges and potential solutions?
 - Geographical perspective: How do the needs of humanity vary across different regions of the world? What are the most pressing issues in my local community or country?
 - Global challenges: What are people's fundamental needs, and how are these needs currently being met or unmet in various parts of the world? Challenges include health and well-being, education, economic stability, environmental concerns, social and political issues, and technological and scientific advancement.
- **Write down some of your most formative experiences** at work, school, or at home, as well as your favourite hobbies, and then further ask yourself:
 - Why do these experiences or activities matter so much to you?
 - What have you learned from these experiences?
 - How do they link up with the values of the Scholarship?
 - What do you intend to do in Oxford and beyond?
- **For engineering and science applicants, know that there is no one way to lead or have an impact.** Engineering and science students are often concerned about making a case for the positive impact of their research. Unlike social science or medical students, who may work on topics naturally connected to a public good, engineering and science students often work in niche areas to solve specific problems. We understand this challenge. However, scientific and technical work can be deeply public-facing when it is guided by human questions: What might be a meaningful application of this technology? Who might benefit from, and who might be excluded from, this technology? What social, ethical, or policy problems does this research help address? Engineering and science students could better motivate their devotion to their research problems by trying to draw a practical connection between their research and its real-world applications that change people’s lives. Successful STEM applicants are often those who can show not only that they are capable scientists or engineers, but that they are thoughtful or intentional about the human consequences of the knowledge and tools they create. After all, engineering and science are as important to making our world better, if not more so. The world today needs scientists who have a deep understanding of the humanities and who develop human-centred technology.

- **Connect your past to your future. Be introspective** and speak to the parts of your life that most touch/confuse you. Keep asking yourself “why” questions. Demonstrate how your past experiences have prepared you for future challenges and how the Rhodes Scholarship will serve as a bridge to your aspirations. Show a logical progression from your past to your envisioned future. Don't stick to what you might think selectors want to hear.
- **Reflect on your motivations.** Think deeply about why you are applying for the Rhodes Scholarship. What drives you to pursue this opportunity? How does it align with your long-term goals? Being clear about your motivations will help you convey genuine passion and commitment.
- **Bear in mind the responsibility and commitment to facilitating a better world.** The third question urges you to narrow your ambitious goals to the specific contexts you are in and to contemplate how you can leverage your abilities and skills to address a particular societal need.
- **Identify your strongest qualities and strengths that align with the Rhodes Scholar characteristics:** academic excellence, leadership, energy to use talents fully, and moral force of character. You can review how the Trust itself and Scholar alumni interpret the Rhodes criteria and connect the essential qualities with your own experiences.
- **Acknowledge areas where you are still growing.** The Rhodes Trust never expects scholars to be “perfect” because it aims to provide a platform for outstanding youth to explore themselves and the world. To convince the committee, you can highlight how different environments (e.g., academic, community service, internships) and people (e.g., mentors, peers) are helping you develop other relatively weaker qualities and how you are growing through these experiences.
- **Think carefully about when to “show” and when to “tell” your experiences.** It is sometimes more effective to write 'I raised X amount of money for the underserved communities through a charity event of Y number of participants' instead of simply *telling* the audience 'I care about social issues'. Numerical evidence isn't the only way of showing, though. The use of quotes, anecdotes, vivid descriptive language, and strong verbs is an effective way of bringing your experiences to life. But don't overdo it.
- The reader should be able to easily grasp **the “self, others, and the world”** responses after reading the statement. Check if your final statement brings together these key elements and answers all the prompts. One way to evaluate the quality of your final statement is by checking if it successfully connects:
 - Your motives/inspirations;
 - Your learnings from activities;
 - Your goals and achievements;
 - The values of the scholarship.

- **Write a coherent piece.** In the end, it is a single piece of writing, so make sure the statement is compelling and coherent as a whole, not a collection of disconnected paragraphs.
- **Do a “could anyone else have written this?” test:** After you finish a draft, go through it sentence by sentence and highlight anything that could plausibly appear in anyone else’s statements. Statements like “I learned the importance of leadership,” “I want to make a difference” offer great sentiments, but they are often too general. Offer specific thoughts to let the reader understand how you see the world.
- **Be authentic.**
 - **While using GenAI (e.g., ChatGPT) is not prohibited,** please keep in mind that the output provided by such tools is generic. It is unable to capture nuances or create a personal narrative. Using such tools to write your essay will not allow you to stand apart from other applicants. The reviewers want to know more about you as a person. They want to understand your aspirations and what drives you. No GenAI tool can capture all the things that make you unique. Make sure you read [the Rhodes Trust guidance on the use of AI carefully](#).
 - **Answer the questions as truthfully and as authentically** as possible, without thinking of what would entertain the reviewer/assessor: you don’t know about this at all.
- **Be reader-centric.** Be kind and sensitive to your readers by making sure your final statement is:
 - Readable
 - Comprehensible
 - Concise

You can ask your mentors and friends to proofread the statement to check: Is the document easy to read? Does it flow well from head to tail? Is there any spelling/grammar error? Is your statement within the word limit? Does it use bombastic or obscure language for the sake of trying to sound smart—i.e., could you simplify your sentences? Does every sentence say something different and useful?
- **Make it your goal to try rather than to succeed.** Finishing the application in and of itself could be a great motivational force.

ACADEMIC STATEMENT

The academic statement examines your motivation for further studies at Oxford, your understanding of the courses that interest you, and how the Rhodes Scholarship relates to your future academic or professional development. This is not a research proposal or a formal academic statement, so you do not

need to specify your research question or intended supervisor in great detail. Here are some suggestions for this part:

- **Carry out in-depth research about the [Oxford course\(s\)](#) you wish to take.** Review the entry requirements, curriculum & syllabus, faculty profile, projects, placement, etc., of the course(s) you are interested in. You can also reach out to current students to learn more about the department's learning culture.
- **Be concise and provide short, concrete points/examples/evidence.** You have approximately 20 sentences to convince the selection committee on paper that you will be able to gain admission to and thrive within your chosen Oxford Department. This is an exercise to convey how your academic interest fits into an area of study at Oxford and connect this to your past and future in very few words.
- **Link the proposed Oxford course(s) to your previous studies/experiences.** Demonstrate how your past studies have prepared you to excel in your proposed Oxford course(s). What acquired skills would prove advantageous? What related classes have you taken? What has motivated you to explore further? You could describe any relevant work/ experience/internships/attachments.
- **Prove Oxford is necessary.** Beyond explaining why a course interests you, consider reflecting on what questions, experiences, or intellectual gaps have motivated you to pursue further study. How might Oxford's academic environment, resources, or approach help you grow in new ways? Strong academic statements often convey not only enthusiasm for Oxford but also a thoughtful understanding of why this stage of study matters for your intellectual and personal development.
- **Delve deep into your experiences rather than merely repeating basic CV information.** The selectors in the committee are more curious about how you navigate your interests and how you leverage your research in a broader context.
- **Emphasise interdisciplinary connections (if applicable).** Discuss how your chosen course connects with other disciplines or fields. This can demonstrate your broad intellectual curiosity and ability to make connections across different areas of study.
- **Discuss the impact.** Consider how your studies at Oxford will enable you to make a broader impact. This could be in terms of advancing knowledge in your field, addressing societal issues, or contributing to solving local/global challenges. Some fields of study may not seem to have obvious impacts. You may refer to prominent figures in your field for inspiration.
- **Mention professors.** Discuss Oxford professors whose work you admire or with whom you would like to collaborate, and explain your reasons.

THE SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT EVENT & INTERVIEWS

If you've made it to this stage, congratulations!

The Rhodes Scholarship selection process in China consists of two pre-selection interviews and a final interview. As your pre-selectors are Scholar alumni/alumnae from around the world, the pre-selection interviews are usually held online. Before the final interview, the selection committee will invite the finalists to attend a social event where the committee members and candidates get to know each other at a formal dinner. Here are some tips for interviews and social events:

Preparation for the social event & interviews:

- **Be mindful of the dress code.** Whether for online interviews or in-person events, it is always important to dress professionally and present a positive, professional image. This doesn't mean you need to purchase expensive clothing; simply ensure your attire is neat and appropriate. If you are unsure about the dress code, do not hesitate to ask the National Secretary and prepare accordingly.
- **Research the background information of your pre-selectors before the interviews.** This will help you understand their experiences, identify common topics, and prepare questions that they may be particularly interested in. Additionally, an interview is a valuable opportunity for you to learn from your interviewers' career paths and gain insights from their experiences. Take advantage of this opportunity and engage with them in a relaxed, sincere manner.
- **Practice for your interviews with people at your disposal (e.g., friends, professors, et cetera) or however you prefer.** This can help you articulate and frame your answers to commonly asked questions concisely, clearly, and effectively. It would also help you present the best version of yourself to the panellists and identify key themes from your past experiences to highlight during the interview. This can help you think through your answers out loud in a safe environment and receive feedback on how it sounds. Remember, your answers should be concise, easy to understand, thoughtful, and free from jargon.
- **Know the material you have submitted VERY well and be prepared to answer questions about any of the application's components.** Think of any gaps in your CV, a low grade you received, or a pivot in direction (e.g., you completed a degree in computer science and now want to pursue biology, and sketch out an explanation for those.) No need to memorise answers, but it would be helpful to think of the main points you would like to mention. The pre-selection interviews are centered on your personal statement and other materials, so we strongly suggest you ask

yourself “why” and “how” questions, which will help refresh your memory of your statements and prepare you for questions about your motivation.

- **Stay informed about current affairs in your constituency and around the world.** Make efforts to keep yourself up to date with news in your constituency through various news platforms. We suggest subscribing to the daily international newsletter if you haven't already. And don't just consume information passively; make sure you have a well-formed opinion on the issue you're reading about. Don't be overly worried, too. If you are an engineering or science student, the vast majority of questions will be related to your field. Interviewers will ask questions that a general audience may be interested in your area. Be prepared to discuss the social implications of your research. The key is to be a curious and concerned person who cares about related topics beyond your specific area of study.
- **Practice expressing what matters to you.** Some people prefer writing in a journal or recording voice notes. Additionally, engaging in casual conversations with mentors, family, and friends can be beneficial.
- **Prepare answers to some generic questions,** such as the ones below (**please note that these aren't guaranteed interview questions**):
 - Tell me about yourself
 - Why Rhodes Scholarship?
 - How is your story connected to the characters Rhodes is looking for?
 - How have you demonstrated leadership?
 - What are your strengths?
 - What are your weaknesses?
 - Why do you want to study at Oxford?
 - What are your plans for the future?
- **Do not overprepare to the point where you sound too rehearsed.** The interview is supposed to be a conversation that flows organically, so you don't want to end up just reciting memorised answers.

During the social event & the finalist interview:

- **Have fun and be curious.** One amazing thing about being a finalist is that you'll be surrounded by other incredible candidates as well, with whom you interact during the pre-interview dinner. Be curious about their journey, talk to them, and ask them questions. There's a lot you can learn from others! You might make some really good friends.
- **Relax and avoid comparison** – It's human nature to compare yourself with fellow finalists, and

you might feel pressured to outshine everyone. Remember, each of you is unique and outstanding enough to have reached this stage. Focus on enjoying the event and getting to know the other attendees.

- **Use the social engagement event to get to know the selection committee** – the social engagement event presents a great opportunity to meet the committee in a relaxed setting before the interview and get to know them a bit. It is a good icebreaker and a great way to make you feel more comfortable during the interview. This is also a good chance to get some tips on the application process from them and insights on the Rhodes Scholarship and/or Oxford-related questions you may have.
- **Be genuine.** The selection committee wants to know who you are and what you think, not what you think they want to hear.
- **Think of your interviewers as people.** It is common to feel intimidated by the selection panel, especially since it often comprises prominent people from your constituency, but one good mind trick is to think of each and every one of them as ordinary people. Be respectful, but try your best to converse with them as you would with your university peers when sharing ideas, thoughts, and perspectives. Don't be afraid to ask the panellists questions, whether you're seeking clarification or challenging a point of view.
- **Be flexible.** The panellists are there to pick your brain, know more about you beyond your application material, and assess your fit for the scholarship. Hence, you may be presented with an alternative perspective or asked to defend yours. If this happens, please know that the panellists genuinely want to understand your thought process, rather than appearing challenging or confrontational.
- **Be thoughtful and confident in your convictions.** During the interview, panellists may challenge your ideas or invite you to consider alternative perspectives. This is a normal part of the conversation and an opportunity for them to better understand how you think. It is important to remain respectful, open-minded, and reflective, while also feeling comfortable thoughtfully explaining perspectives that matter to you. Sometimes, a strong response is less about arriving at the “right” answer and more about engaging sincerely with complexity and communicating your reasoning clearly.
- **Make your focus not on having a “winning interview” but on having a meaningful one.** That's an experience no one can take away, and having this mindset will help bring out your most genuine self.
- **In the interview, do not hesitate to take time to think of your answers.** Of course, do not take ages to reply, but it is perfectly fine to pause for a few seconds and structure your answer.

- **Give concise and structured answers; do not ramble.** One helpful way to do this is to *take a second to think before answering*, then answer the question directly and explicitly before elaborating or providing an example. You could also have others time you during mock interviews to make sure you're not rambling. Your answers should be as concise as possible, as this is only a 30-minute interview, and every panellist will want to ask you a question. If giving long answers, you end up with fewer questions, while you want the panel to get to know you to the greatest extent possible.
- **Stay relaxed and confident.** While interviews can be nerve-wracking, try to stay calm and confident. Remember that the selectors want to get to know the real you, not a rehearsed version.
- **Once you are done answering, stop talking!** When we are nervous, we tend to ramble on and lose the point we are making. Make sure you answer the question and then stop to give the selection committee time to process what you said and ask follow-up questions if needed.
- **If you don't know the answer to something, say so.** Do not make things up on the spot, because chances are you will give a confusing answer that may prompt many more follow-up questions. By honestly saying you don't know, the committee will probably move on to another topic, which would give you the chance to highlight how amazing you are.
- **Reflect on your true values.** Ensure that your answers and interactions reflect your core values and principles. Authenticity in your responses will have a greater impact.
- **Be comfortable with your strengths and weaknesses.** Embrace your strengths and acknowledge areas where you are still growing. Showing self-awareness is a valuable trait.
- **Celebrate your achievement thus far.** Treat yourself to a lovely meal with friends or family after the interview to celebrate your wonderful journey to this point. Regardless of the outcome, you deserve to mark the occasion!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. Scholars and Alumni contact
2. Resources on the Rhodes Trust website
3. CVs/Resumes
4. Graduate Degrees at Oxford
5. Other Scholarships at Oxford

1. Scholars and Alumni contact

We acknowledge that direct connections with scholars and scholar alumni can help applicants prepare their applications, so we warmly welcome applicants to reach out and discuss your goals. However, **we strongly recommend reviewing the [official website](#) and the [Scholar Guide](#) first**, as they address many frequently asked questions. While connections with previous scholars will not directly influence the selection process, engaging in friendly, productive, and sincere conversations with the Scholar community will help applicants navigate their journey to the Rhodes Scholarship.

Social Sciences:

- **African Politics/Political Economy/Development:** Xiang Chen 陈响 (cxiang022@163.com)
- **Chinese Society, Politics and Economy/Political Theory and Philosophy:** Qin Huang 黄钦 (huangqin_thu@163.com)
- **Law/Finance/International Arbitration:** Leslie Lei 雷琦 (leslie.lei@cliffordchance.com)
- **Public Policy/International Political Economy:** Siyu Liu 刘思宇 (fixedstar0921@gmail.com)
- **Law/Politics/Intellectual History:** Bincheng Mao 毛彬丞 (bincheng.mao@exeter.ox.ac.uk)
- **Law/Political Economy/Anthropology/Global Governance:** Becca Tian 田雨昕 (becca-tian@outlook.com)
- **Anthropology/Journalism/Disability Studies:** Zhixin Wan 万祉昕 (zhixin.wan@anthro.ox.ac.uk)
- **International Relations/US-China Relations/Technology Policy/Think Tank:** Charlie Wang 王志成 (charlie.wang@yale.edu, [Charlie Wang | LinkedIn](#))
- **International Relations/Chinese Politics/Public Policy:** Duo Yi 依多 (dyi@fas.harvard.edu)
- **Politics/Economics/Environment/Energy/International Development:** Jiaxin Zhao 赵家鑫 (jackson_zhao@outlook.com)

Humanities:

- **Culture/History/Humanities/Higher Education/Hong Kong:** Lik Hang Tsui 徐力恒 (lhtsui@cityu.edu.hk, [Lik Hang \(Lincoln\) Tsui | LinkedIn](#), [Prof. TSUI Lik Hang \(徐力恒\) | City University of Hong Kong](#))
- **Humanities/History/Theology/China & Hong Kong:** Duanran Feng 冯端然 (duanran.feng@outlook.com)

STEM:

- **Environmental Engineering/Energy System:** Samson Cheng 程浩生 (samson.cheng@alumni.schwarzmanscholars.org, [LinkedIn | Hou Sang \(Samson\) Cheng](#))
- **Computer Vision/Machine Learning/Art History/Literature:** Helen He 何海蓉 (hairong.he03@gmail.com, [\(Hairong\) Helen He | LinkedIn](#))

- **Statistics/Genetics/Computer Science:** Xilin Jiang 江熹霖 (xilinjiang@hsph.harvard.edu or xj262@medschl.cam.ac.uk)
- **Biology/Computer Science:** Julia Zhao 赵储琄 (zhaocj@mit.edu)

2. Resources on the Rhodes Trust website

This may seem obvious, but there are a lot of resources to help you apply, in addition to the application guidance.

- **Application overview:** These are videos made in collaboration with Rhodes Scholars. They detail each step of the application and contain lots of useful advice: <https://www.rhodeshouse.ox.ac.uk/scholarships/application-overview/>
- **Webinars and events about the Rhodes Scholarship:** <https://www.rhodeshouse.ox.ac.uk/scholarships/events-to-learn-more/>
- **Life at Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar:** <https://www.rhodeshouse.ox.ac.uk/scholarships/life-at-oxford-as-a-rhodes-scholar/>

3. CVs/Resume:

- CV template available on the Rhodes Application page: <https://www.rhodeshouse.ox.ac.uk/media2/glifdhld/pdf-cv-template-new.pdf>
- Oxford's Career Services Guide: <https://www.careers.ox.ac.uk/cvs>
- STAR Method: <https://resumegenius.com/blog/resume-help/star-method-resume>

4. Degrees at Oxford

- **List of all graduate degrees at Oxford:** www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/courses-a-z-listing
- **If you prefer to complete a 2nd undergraduate degree:** www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/courses/undergraduate-course-search

5. Other Scholarships at Oxford

If you are not successful with the Rhodes Scholarship and would still like to attend Oxford, there are other scholarships that you can consider:

<https://www.rhodeshouse.ox.ac.uk/scholarships/other-scholarship-opportunities/>.