Generative AI and support with your application: Guidance for Applicants

The Rhodes Trust encourages you to reach out to mentors and friends to discuss your application. Whilst they may give general feedback, they must not write or edit your personal statement or academic statement.

Your personal and academic statements must be truthful and authentic narratives: it will serve you best if you speak in your own voice, allowing Rhodes selectors to gain a fuller picture of who you are.

As part of the application form you will be asked to tell us what assistance you have had in writing these statements. This could, for example, take the form of guidance from mentors, family, friends or other advisors, or the selective use of generative AI (GenAI) tools (ChatGPT, Gemini, Grammarly, etc) or other tools to help you synthesise your thoughts, check spelling and grammar, or shorten your essay to keep it within the required word limits. Be aware, however, that the use of GenAI tools like ChatGPT may mean that you do not own the data after submission.

Just as seeking appropriate advice and mentorship in preparing your application will not count against you in any way, disclosing this assistance will not disadvantage you in the application process – we ask you to be transparent and truthful in telling us how you have prepared yourself for this Scholarship opportunity.

 For each of the personal and academic statements in your application you will be asked to attest to the following:

By ticking this box I attest that my [personal statement / academic statement] is my own work and is a wholly accurate and fair representation of [my story / my academic trajectory]. I understand that any material misrepresentation would disqualify my application and, where appropriate, result in the rescinding of a scholarship.

You will also be asked to tell us which of the following has assisted you in preparing your statement(s):

- Faculty advisors
- Fellowship/scholarship advisors
- Friends and family
- Current Rhodes Scholars or alumni
- GenAI tools such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Grammarly etc.
    - If you used GenAI, tell us which tool was used, and how you asked it to help

- I did not receive any help
- Other (please specify)

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can I use GenAI in writing my personal and/or academic statement?

A: The Rhodes Scholarship requires that your personal and academic statements are truthful and original narratives. It will serve you best if you speak in your own voice, allowing Rhodes selectors to gain an authentic picture of who you are. It will not help your application if you use GenAI to tell your story, as the output will be generic and will not allow selectors to gain an understanding of you as an individual.

However, GenAI is a tool, and could be useful in preparing some aspects of your application. Some acceptable uses of GenAI in helping you to write your personal or academic statement might include:

- Reducing your original narrative from e.g. 2,000 to 1,000 words
- Checking the spelling or grammar
- Writing a summary of your narrative, to help you synthesise your thoughts

Q: What are the risks of using GenAI in preparing my academic and/or personal statement?

A: If you use a generative AI tool to prepare your statement, you risk losing the rights, exclusivity and confidentiality of your inputs – in effect it could become the property of the AI provider. Each Large Language Model (LLM) has its own terms and conditions, and you should read these before using it to understand the implications of putting your own original or confidential information into that model.

The output from the GenAI tool may also raise issues – for example, it may infringe third party Intellectual Property (IP) or it could be incorrect (hallucination etc.).

Q: Can I use GenAI in helping me prepare for my Rhodes interview?

A: Yes, GenAI can be used in preparation for your Rhodes interview, for example in generating questions you might be asked, similar to preparing for a job interview. We recommend that you also discuss this with your mentors (family, friends, academic advisors or supervisors, or your character reference providers etc.) However, note that you must not use any Gen AI tools during any video or in-person interview.