

Role Specification

Warden of Rhodes House



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About the Rhodes Trust



The Rhodes Trust, based at Rhodes House in Oxford, is an educational charity which runs the world's preeminent post-graduate scholarship.

Established in 1903, the Rhodes Scholarship brings outstanding young people from all over the world, and in all fields of study, to the University of Oxford. Scholars are selected on the basis of outstanding intellect, character, leadership, and commitment to service through a distinctive place-based selection process involving 61 committees on 5 continents. Over 8,000 Rhodes Scholars have gone on to serve at the forefront of government, education, the arts, NGOs, business, research and other sectors. They include Nobel Laureates, heads of state, prominent advocates for social justice, and researchers who have advanced the frontiers of science and medicine.

The Trust has grown rapidly in recent years, adding over a dozen new Rhodes Scholarships around the world, enhancing the Scholar experience, and developing new initiatives for alumni engagement and programming.

Following a £38M renovation and expansion completed in 2023, Rhodes House, a Grade 2* heritage building with magnificent gardens, now includes a state-of-the-art conference centre, 30 bedrooms, gathering spaces for Scholars and Fellows, as well as office space for staff.

The Trust is governed by a 19-member Board of Trustees composed of distinguished leaders from around the world and across the University of Oxford. Our work is guided by the 125th-anniversary strategic plan supported through a £200m comprehensive campaign, which is at its midpoint.



Vision: We are the world's most respected scholarship, empowering generations of Rhodes Scholars to Fight the World's Fight.

Mission: We build a better world through our scholarship programme that develops and connects compassionate, innovative, and public-spirited people committed to solving humanity's challenges.

Theory of Change: We believe the world needs outstanding leaders who combine academic and intellectual excellence with leadership skills, resilience and tenacity who are able to drive discovery, solve problems, and bridge disciplines and cultures.

We therefore:

- Help people of talent from all walks of life realise their potential to build a better world;
- Identify and support scholars in the rich academic environment of Oxford to provide them with more skills and capacity to take on major global challenges.
- Expose scholars to the full range of intellectual challenges and political thought to better prepare them to lead
- Encourage collaboration to solve big problems
- Amplify impact through lifelong fellowships of mutual support, inspiration and collaboration.



The Trust is looking to appoint an exceptional individual to succeed Dr Elizabeth Kiss, who stepped down after 6 years in the role. During her time as Warden, Elizabeth strengthened the Trust's oversight of Rhodes Scholarship selection and enhanced our support for Scholars in Residence. The Trust has undergone substantial growth in its finances, operations, and staffing. The core endowment has nearly quadrupled to £400m, along with £80m in a separately held fund to support the Atlantic Institute and a £30m, 30-year bond which supported the recently completed renovation of Rhodes House.



The Warden is responsible for the development and delivery of strategy for the Trust, and they will be answerable to the Chair and Trustees for the good management of the Trust's affairs. In addition, the Warden oversees and fosters the Rhodes community in Oxford and seeks actively to manage and enhance the leadership development programs for resident Rhodes Scholars. They must, therefore, be alert to the changing academic, financial, and administrative arrangements in Oxford, the contribution to be made from a wide range of constituencies including current and former Scholars, and the financial and cultural health of Rhodes House and the Trust overall. The Warden is responsible to ensure good working relationships with our primary stakeholder, Oxford University.

The Warden's role is to lead the Rhodes Trust, support the selection of Rhodes Scholars and their experiences as Scholars in Residence, encourage alumni participation, and build a high performing and cohesive staff at Rhodes House. This requires a focus, in partnership with the Trustees, on ensuring that the Rhodes Scholarships have the resources to remain the world's leading university scholarship and produce leaders across the globe in perpetuity.

Global Expansion and Pre-eminence of the Scholarships:

Reach £140 m fundraising goal to ensure the Trust has the financial ability to support the world's best scholarship program and to work toward scholarship expansion in Africa, China and India.

Lifelong Fellowship:

Promote connection, collaboration and impact amongst the Rhodes community through Rhodes Lifelong Fellowship (e.g., programs, initiatives, and events, including delivery of the Women's 50th Anniversary (2027) and Rhodes Scholarship 125th Anniversary (2028)).

Expanded Convening Programs at Rhodes House:

This includes extending them to the broad Rhodes Scholar community, mid-career Atlantic Fellows, and other audiences.

Rhodes House Limited:

Build reputation as a world-class convening venue and achieve Rhodes House Limited revenue targets.

Engagement with the University of Oxford:

Maintain and enhance the close relationship that the Rhodes Trust and the University have always enjoyed and develop a multi-year strategy for University engagement and partnership, including the work of our partners.

Forward Strategy Development:

Work with the Trustees to continue the forward strategic momentum of the Trust.

Execution of this strategic agenda will require a strong working relationship with the Chair, other Trustees, Scholars, Staff, and other members of the global Rhodes community, as well as leaders of the University of Oxford and the Colleges.

As well as overseeing the day-to-day management of the Trust's affairs in consultation with National Secretaries and the Trust's staff, the specific responsibilities associated with the role are as follows:

Scholar selection:

- Supervise all matters relating to the Scholar selection across all constituencies, including the evolution of the Scholar selection approach from 2025 onward (e.g., of Scholar selection criteria, interview day approach, Selection Committee composition / guidance).
- Work with National Secretaries to ensure continued robustness of the selection criteria and processes, as well as the effective execution of the annual selection cycle.
- Participate directly in one or more selection panel(s) each year and ensure participation in different geographies over time.
- Oversight of Scholar Elect admissions to the University and the Colleges
- Oversee the appointment and succession planning of National Secretaries and coordinate their work.

Scholar experience:

- Provide high-quality academic guidance and pastoral care on a regular and ad-hoc basis for Scholars Elect and Scholars at Oxford, to facilitate a holistic, positive experience for Scholars (i.e., integration with Colleges, Departments, and Rhodes).
- Support positive experiences for Scholars in Residence.
- Provide guidance to Scholars Elect and Scholars in Residence on academic course and college selection, as needed.
- Formally meet with all Scholars regularly to review their performance and development.
- Work with the Deputy Warden, the Director of Programming and members of the Oxford community to facilitate Scholar programs and enhance the Scholar experience whilst at Oxford.
- Act as primary senior Trust contact for Scholars and others for any matters of concern regarding Scholars.





Operations of the Trust:

- Directly manage the Senior Management team of the Trust and the Head of the Warden's Office. This includes setting of individual priorities and KPIs, completion of the annual review process and day-to-day management, and hiring distinctive talent, as needed, to establish an effective, evolved operating model for Rhodes House.
- Provide oversight and optimization of the Trust support team at Rhodes House
- Foster effective communication within the organisation, ensuring staff and volunteers are aware of the Trust's vision, objectives, and plans.
- Work with staff to build a warm collegiate culture of collaboration, trust and performance within Rhodes House
- Maintain and enhance the international brand of the Rhodes Trust and of the Rhodes Scholarship.
- Represent the Trust in important strategic relationships, including those with the University of Oxford, the National Secretaries, and, on occasion, with the British and other governments.
- Act as lead spokesperson for the media, policy makers and other relevant influencers on all aspects of policy and operations.
- Provide oversight and optimization of the Trust support team at Rhodes House
- Provide supervision of Rhodes Trust partnerships

Financial Strength:

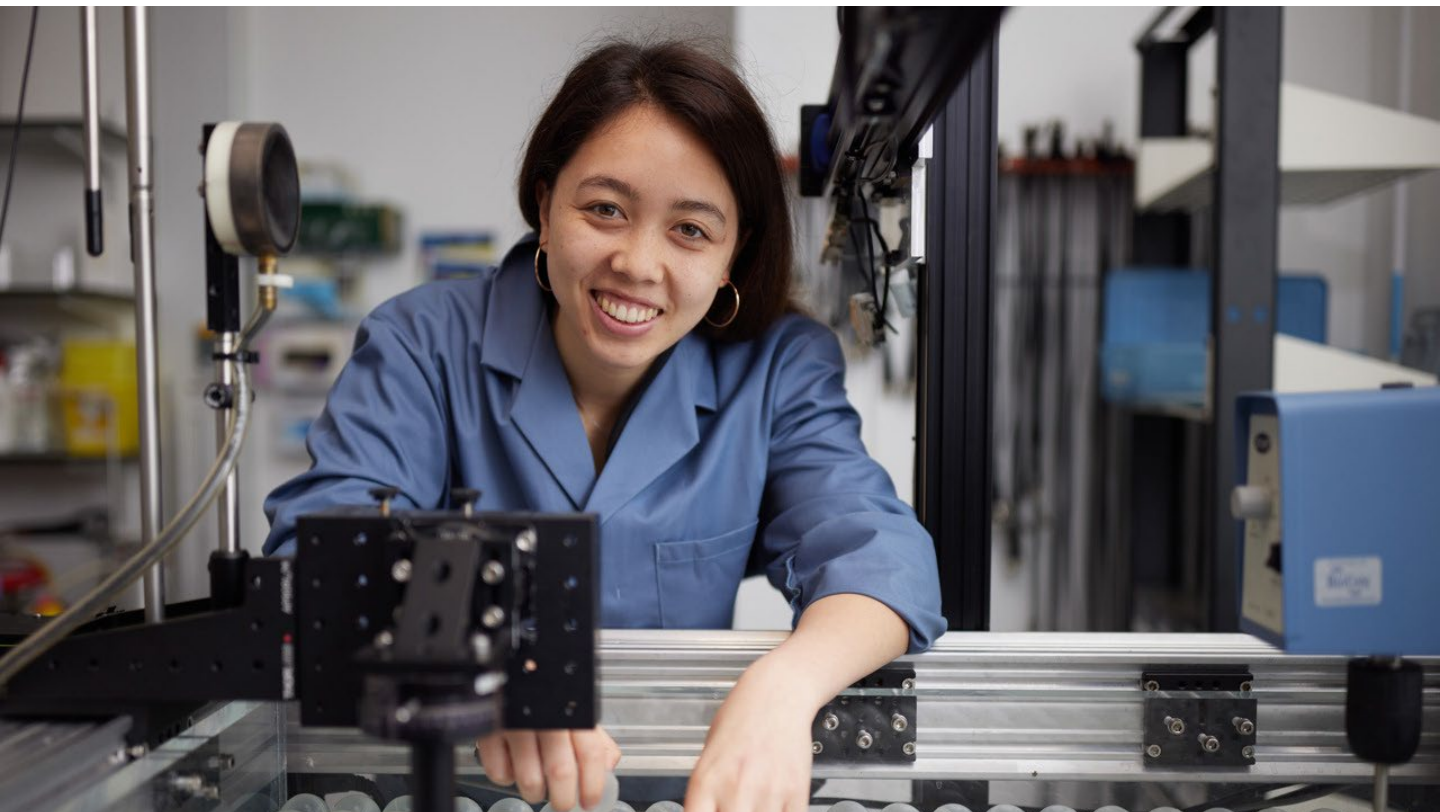
- Lead the fundraising programme, including through development of an initial review of the Trust's philanthropic fundraising approach and strategic objectives. This will involve establishing effective connections with potential donors, as well as with the alumni and other supporters. The fundraising will ensure the long-term sustainability of the Trust and enhance its ability to deliver its mission.
- Work actively to cultivate relationships with potential donors around the world.
- Regularly attend alumni and fundraising events.
- Protect the financial strength of the Rhodes Trust, including management of the Trust's endowment and deficit.
- Work with the Finance Director and the Deputy Warden CFO/COO in developing the annual budget for the Trust (to be approved by Trustees) and ensure the financial health of the Trust.
- Engage with University of Oxford to ensure negotiation of acceptable terms and conditions for Scholar fees and other expenses.
- Ensure compliance with the Trust obligations as defined in governing documents, charity law and other legal requirements.
- Ensure charity policies are reviewed by the Board as scheduled and recommendations for change are compliant with statutory requirements and reflect best practice.

Alumni engagement:

- Manage and enhance Alumni Relations, including through lifelong fellowship and impact programs and initiatives to promote global community for Rhodes Scholars.
- Develop quality interpersonal relationships with Rhodes alumni, including through alumni associations.

Strategy and leadership:

- Assist the Chair and the Trustees in developing and maintaining the vision and strategy for the Rhodes Trust, in agreeing on appropriate strategies and leading their execution, and in ensuring priorities are clearly communicated and resources are applied appropriately.
- Act as Director for Rhodes House Limited and expected to serve on the board of Rhodes Trust LLC (US).
- Work with members of Trustee committees (i.e., Academic, Campaign, Scholarships, Development, Finance and Investment, Partnerships, Governance, Remuneration, Scholarship and Audit and Risk Committees) to deliver against committee objectives.
- Foster continued partnership between Mandela Rhodes Foundation and Rhodes Trust.





Chair: The Warden will work closely with the Chair to lead the development of strategy for the Trust and the management of all Trust affairs.

Trustees: The Warden will participate in Trustee meetings in their role as Secretary to the Trustees (executive session being the exception) and will be expected to build a strong working relationship with all Trustees, particularly the Chair of the Trustees and the chairs of Trust's committees (i.e., Academic, Campaign, Scholarships, Remuneration, Development, Finance and Investment, Governance, and Audit and Risk).

Scholars in Residence: The Warden will serve as the senior point of contact for all Scholars in Residence on academic and pastoral issues. It is expected that they will meet with all Scholars regularly, as well as when specific needs arise. They will regularly host talks and other informal events for Scholars in Residence consistent with the vibrant, active place that Rhodes House has now become.

National Secretaries: The Warden will work closely with National Secretaries to monitor and maintain the selection process, as well as manage any reputational or other risks that may arise in any participant geography. They will recommend to the Trustees candidates for the position of National Secretary on an as needed basis.

Rhodes Staff: The Warden will regularly engage with staff and related staff council groups and committees.

Rhodes community-at-large: The Warden will act as a key enabler and mobiliser of the Rhodes community-at-large. This includes 4500 alumni, major donors, non-Scholar participants on selection panels, former staff and members of the University community.

The University community-at-large: The Warden will be required to interact with senior members of both faculties and colleges on behalf of Scholars in Residence to resolve academic and personal issues. In addition, they will be required to engage with senior University representatives and heads of colleges and to represent the Trust at regular University events.

Partner organisations: The Warden will interact regularly with leaders and staff of partner institutions, such as the Atlantic Institute and Schmidt Sciences Fellows.

Other: The Warden will regularly engage with donors, potential donors, and other interested or related parties.

Measures and Targets



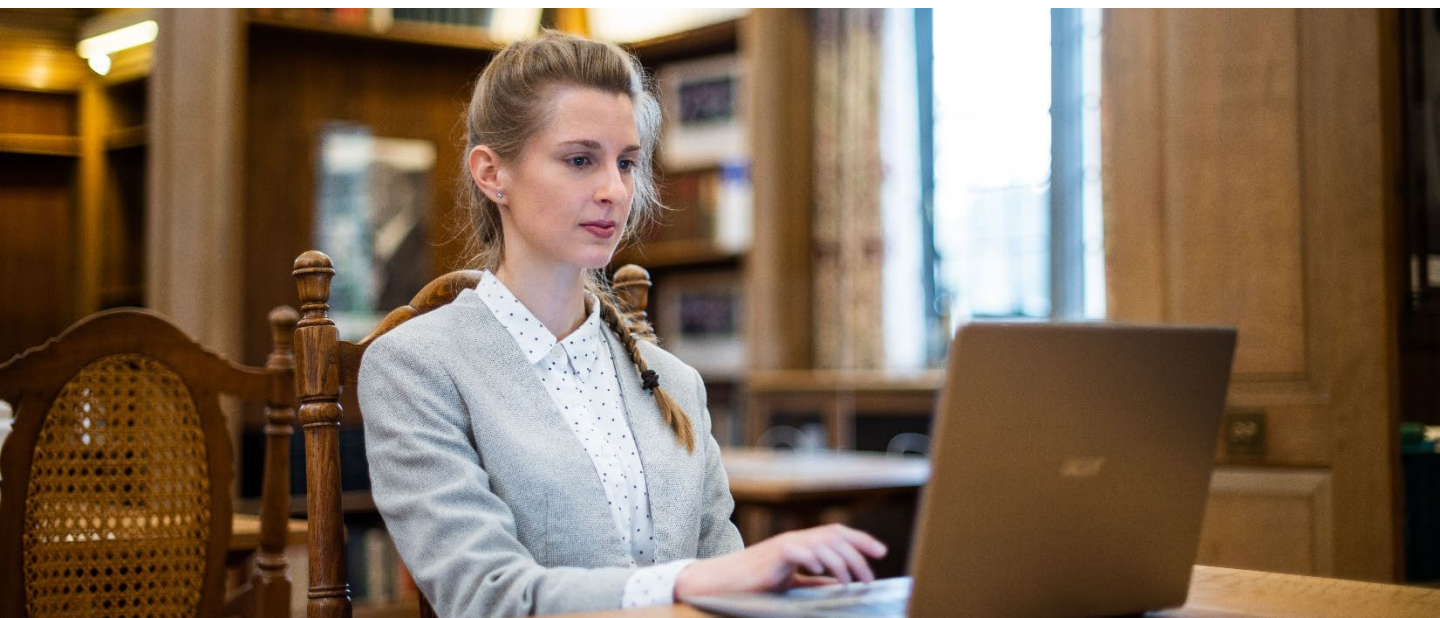
- Number of quality applicants across constituencies
- Scholars in Residence course marks and successful thesis completion (as determined by the University)
- Scholar satisfaction (as per annual Scholar Experience survey)
- Staff satisfaction (as per annual staff feedback process)
- Strong working relationship with the Chair and the Trustees (as assessed by Chair, Trustees, and the Warden)
- Meeting or exceeding fundraising targets, including securing the £140 m goal
- Ensuring the Trust retains a strong financial position with sufficient financial resources to manage market downturns and new financial challenges.
- Operation of the Scholarship within the parameters of the annual budget (as approved by the Trustees)
- Maintenance of the Rhodes brand, including continuation of the extremely high quality of Scholars and applicants
- Delivering against the goals laid out in the strategic plan



Candidates will be expected to demonstrate many, but not all, of the following attributes:

Experience

- Previous experience in higher education institutions, including with admissions or Scholar selection processes
- Experience with executive leadership at scale, including design of an effective operating model, strong management of large teams, and strategy development / execution
- Significant and sustained stature in their selected field
- Significant experience in fundraising
- Previous experience in role(s) that have required the provision of mentorship and pastoral care in an academic or similar setting with senior leaders
- Global experience in senior leadership roles and comfort working across many cultures
- Significant experience in Financial Management in complex organizations
- Understanding of branding, positioning, and strategic image development and management
- Experience with partnership negotiation and management at a senior level (i.e., high quality diplomacy skills)
- Confidence in senior relationship development and maintenance across many cultures
- Experience in complex project leadership
- Experience with alliances and/or joint ventures



Skills

- Proven capacity for strategic thinking and problem-solving, particularly in complex and challenging financial environments
- Performance-driven with strong business acumen and a track record of consistent delivery
- Proven skills in managing the successful delivery of programmes and services
- Strong public speaking skills and comfortable engaging with large audiences
- Comfortable exploring fresh ways to manage business challenges, taking calculated risks, overcoming obstacles and planning for contingencies
- Capable of driving and embedding meaningful transformation in the right way at the right pace for the organisation
- Ability to work collaboratively, building consensus within a diverse community
- Strong influencing skills, persuasive in high-profile situations
- A strong moral compass and set of values, as well as an ability to lead as an inspiring role model in the Scholar community
- Warmth, emotional intelligence, open-mindedness, diplomatic skills, a calm manner, but resilience, drive and energy
- Inclusive and effective leadership style with the capacity to carry out the role with energy and enthusiasm
- Possess an outstanding ability to communicate and collaborate effectively, fostering a sense of community and belonging among scholars, fellows and staff.
- Capable of nurturing strong relationships both within the Trust and in broader academic ecosystem and philanthropic circles.
- Passionate commitment and tenacity to the long-term vitality and success of the Rhodes Trust.

Above all, the candidate should be someone who shares our values and can lead the Trust articulating and realising its vision of the future.



Terms of Appointment



- This is a full-time role. Appointment will be for an initial term of five years, with an option to extend at the Board's discretion. It is anticipated that the new Warden will take up the post as soon as possible in Autumn 2025.
- The role will be based at Rhodes House in Oxford and will require significant overseas travel and will involve frequent evening and weekend events.
- This is a senior appointment in the organization, and remuneration will be appropriate to carry out the role in its context. The package includes accommodation, which is expected to be used in accordance with the Trust's objectives.
- The Rhodes Trust participates in a competitive DC pension scheme, offers private health insurance and 30 days' leave plus public holidays each year.



How to Apply



This appointment is being handled on behalf of the Rhodes Trust by Egon Zehnder.

To apply, please send a full CV together with a short application letter or email to:
Rhodeshouse@egonzehnder.com

The closing date for applications is 1800 BST on Friday 25 April.

If you would like a confidential conversation ahead of a decision on whether to apply, please contact isabel.higuero@egonzehnder.com



About Egon Zehnder

Egon Zehnder is the world's preeminent leadership advisory firm, inspiring leaders to navigate complex questions with human answers. We help organizations get to the heart of their leadership challenges and offer honest feedback and insights to help leaders realize their true being and purpose.

We are built on a foundation that supports partnership in the truest sense of the word and aligns our interests with the interests of our clients. Our 600 consultants across 68 offices and 36 countries are former industry and functional leaders who collaborate seamlessly across geographies, industries and functions to deliver the full power of the Firm to every client, every time.

We partner closely with public and private corporations, family-owned enterprises, and non-profit organizations and government agencies to provide executive search, leadership solutions, CEO search and succession, board advisory, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Our services include discovering leaders, developing leadership, advancing governance, shaping successions, and unlocking transformations. We partner with Mobius Executive Leadership to offer highly experiential, personalized and transformational programs for senior leaders.

We believe that together we can transform people, organizations and the world through leadership.

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