



## September 2025 Intake

### Preparation

In your preparation and before submitting your online application, please review the following key documents and links:

- The Rhodes House website (<https://www.rhodeshouse.ox.ac.uk>).
- It is important that you read the **Information Document** (attached) carefully, especially the section relating to **Eligibility** (citizenship/residency, age and academic).
- Please review the **Conditions of tenure** – <https://www.rhodeshouse.ox.ac.uk/files/conditions-of-tenure/> to ensure that you know what courses you may apply for.
- **Graduate courses** available at Oxford University – to find the required grade for a course, click on the relevant course listed on the link below and select “Entry Requirements”:

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/courses-a-z-listing>

- For a guide to **international grade requirements**, and comparisons between local grading systems and the UK equivalent please consult: [International qualifications | University of Oxford](#). The countries for which specific advice is available are listed in alphabetical order.
- FAQs: <https://www.rhodeshouse.ox.ac.uk/scholarships/faqs/>
- Useful videos are to be found on the website [here](#).

Interested candidates are also encouraged to follow the Rhodes Trust social media links for updates:

- Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/RhodesTrust>
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/rhodestrust> (@RhodesTrust\_SA)
- YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/RhodesTrust>

### Selection Criteria

The Rhodes is unlike other postgraduate scholarships. The focus is not just on **academic excellence**, which is a gating criterion, but includes a wider, holistic range of selection criteria too, viz.:

- Energy to use one's talents to the full;
- Truth, courage, and devotion to duty;
- Sympathy for and protection of the weak; kindness, unselfishness and fellowship;
- Moral force of character;
- Instincts to lead and to take an interest in one's fellow human beings.

### Tips for completing the application process

#### Be prepared and start the application process soonest:

A lot of information needs to be uploaded, so do not leave your application to the 11<sup>th</sup> hour – start sourcing and scanning the documents you will need (e.g. copy of your birth certificate, copy of your final Matric/NSC results), contact potential referees now, do your research into post-graduate courses offered at Oxford Uni in your discipline/s and start working on your CV (using the template and selection criteria as a guideline of what to include in your two-page CV).

#### Start working on the academic and personal statements well ahead of time:

Brad and Lee gave you some very sound advice this afternoon on drafting the **Personal and Academic Statements**. This is probably the most important and hardest section of the application form and will require time, introspection and thought.

In the session we stressed the importance of the **Academic Statement** and the **Personal Statement**.

- For the former, you will need to do some “homework” and research into the proposed course of study you wish to pursue at Oxford and why you wish to register for that particular degree. Always have a “back-up” plan and a second option, should you not be accepted for your first choice
- When drafting your Personal Statement, applicants need to dig deep and to self-reflect on who they are, what shaped them, and what they hope to achieve in the future for themselves and the broader community.

Some Rhodes Scholars suggest that applicants consider keeping a journal in which they write down key points they wish to include/ highlight in their personal statement.

**There is no template:** The Personal Statement varies from candidate to candidate. You could google a few examples on line, but from what I have seen the selectors look for authenticity, honesty, and want to glimpse who you really are in your personal statement.

**Remember to respond to the prompts for the Personal Statement.**

### **Be yourself, be authentic, be honest and be open**

There is no “cookie cutter” for being a Rhodes Scholar.

Historian Philip Ziegler writes: *“the search for the ideal (Rhodes) Scholar is as pointless as it is misguided. It is the glory of the Rhodes Scholarships that their holders excel in an infinite variety of talents and pursuits.”* (Philip Ziegler (2008), Legacy: Cecil Rhodes, The Rhodes Trust and Rhodes Scholarship, page 334)

Successful applicants come from a range of SA universities and disciplines; all walks of life and cultures; an array of schools and socio-economic circumstances; and all are quite “unique”. Rhodes Scholars are diverse, multi-faceted, and each one contributes in his/her own bespoke way to making this world a better place for all. The characteristics they share are their academic excellence, a strong desire to make a difference and impact on the world, the courage to lead, and a proven commitment to the broader community.

Julia Hampton (Rhodes Scholar, Class of 2019), summed up the Rhodes Scholarships perfectly when she wrote:

*“Being given the opportunity to come to Oxford on a Rhodes Scholarship to pursue my MPhil in Development Studies has been formative. I feel that the contours of my academic, professional, social and personal life have been stretched and moulded in ways I could not have anticipated. Apart from the enriching sanctuary and dynamic, fiery community that Rhodes House has become for me in my time here so far, my sociable and creative St Antony’s college community and my engaged class and department, have made this experience a highlight of my life so far. For one thing, as a result of these myriad influences, I feel that the sense of possibility of the contribution I can make in South Africa, and my sense of the kind of life I want to lead more generally, has evolved since being here. I encourage anyone, and everyone, to apply. **There are no rules, norms or prescriptions for being a Rhodes Scholar other than a feisty spirit, critical mind and open heart.**”*

### **Choose your Referees wisely**

- Start talking to potential referees **now**.
- Seek people who know you well rather than high profile referees who do not know you.
- You require **three Academic referees** (note: your school principal or high school teacher do not qualify as academic referees); and **one Character referee** (a pastor, employer, family friend, a school principal or high school teacher who knows you well would all make suitable character referees).

- Referees are generally busy people so approach them early. Make a phone call or arrange an appointment to meet with your potential referees, either in person or via Zoom, soonest; provide them with the Rhodes [guidelines for referees](#) and a copy of your CV; share which course you want to apply for; and stress the deadline for submission.
- It is the responsibility of applicants to follow up with their referees to ensure that they submit their confidential letters online, **on or before 15 August 2023**.

***Tip:** On 01 August send your referee an Outlook meeting request, as a reminder to submit the letter of reference on 14 August (before the deadline on the 15th).*

### Deadlines are non-negotiable

- Applications are completed online only (no hard copies will be accepted); and the deadline for applications is **23:59 on 01 August 2024**.
- Referees will need to upload their confidential letters online by no later than **15 August 2024**.

### Tips

- From 01 June, you can start working on your application. Start filling in the personal information section, uploading documents required, completing the questionnaire etc. Save this information and add to the online form, as and when more information becomes available.
- Don't be afraid to reach out to other Rhodes Scholars, academics at your university or the designated Rhodes Ambassador at your university, or the National Secretariat for assistance. We are there to help and really do want to see you succeed!
- Given that we are heading into winter and that load-shedding is likely to be implemented, please remember to save your application updates regularly and please do not leave your submission until the last minute. I really cannot assist you if you miss the deadline due to a power failure or similar.

### Useful Links

- [An A-Z list of the graduate courses at Oxford University](#)
- [An introduction to the types of graduate degrees offered by Oxford University](#)
- [The Rhodes House Website](#)
- [Our Application Overview with videos to guide you through the application process](#)
- [Courses covered by the Rhodes Scholarship \(Conditions of Tenure document\)](#)
- [Privacy Policy and Data protection statement](#)
- [List of the Rhodes constituencies](#)
- [The University of Oxford's English language proficiency guidance](#)
- [University of Oxford Graduate Admissions](#)