

Australia Webinar Q&A 15 May 2024

– indicative guidance only – any doubts,
please consult with the Secretariat.

1. Are online degrees eligible through this scholarship? Are online degrees included- e.g. diploma of creative writing?
No, sorry.
2. Are each criterion equally weighted?
Yes, although the academic performance criterion is a threshold one - i.e., you must be academically very strong to make the shortlist.
3. Looking at the website, I notice a requirement is that applicants must “have completed at least two years of schooling at an Australian secondary school”. I’m currently completing a Master’s of Digital Humanities at ANU but never attended a secondary school (I was homeschooled and did the equivalent there). Would this be an issue?
No, but best to contact your State Secretary to check on formalities.
4. Does your first degree need to be completed on a full-time basis?
No - so long as you have completed the degree.

When to apply – age/degree completion

1. If I finish my undergraduate degree in June 2025, can I apply for this round? Thank you!
Yes
2. I will finish my masters at the end of next year. Should I wait until next year to apply?
Depends how strong your undergraduate degree result was. Keep an eye on the age criterion.
3. Can I submit my application before receiving marks for Honours results or is it recommended to wait until the following year?
Wait if you still meet the eligibility requirements (age is the key consideration).

4. Is it advisable to complete your honours degree before applying, to be able to supply the selection committee with your final WAM / any academic merits?
As discussed previously – yes (age criterion allowing).
 5. On the website, eligibility criteria states “for older candidates who completed their first undergraduate degree later than usual” (applying under the age of 27). Does this include taking a gap year?
Could do - there’s no restriction on what you did along the way.
 6. Given the eligibility criteria of completing a bachelor/undergraduate prior to receiving the scholarship, would you advise waiting until next year to apply for the scholarship if I only graduate in 2026?
Yes (if you still have time against the age criterion)
 7. If you are completing your honours in November 2024, can you apply this year? Or wait until 2025?
It depends. If you are very clearly on track for a first, and have referees who can confidently confirm that track, then you could apply this year. If you are up against the age criterion then this would definitely be the way to go.
 8. For the under 27 age criteria, next year, will the first undergrad degree need to have been completed on or after 1 July 2024?
Yes, next year it will be 1 July 24
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Academics

1. What would be considered outstanding academic results within university?
85%+ average, usually
2. If a student completes their degree without Honours and with a grade average under 80, but they still meet the requirements of their desired Oxford degree - can they still be eligible?
Yes, you’re eligible - but you’d need to be realistic about competitiveness.
3. I am a rural student who obtained very poor marks in the HSC, went on to obtain a GPA of 5.0 / 7.0 and am soon to graduate with first class honours (science) with a 7.0 GPA. As I have not had a history of continuous academic achievement are my prospects hindered?
Sounds like you’re on an upward trajectory! If you can show an upward trajectory, and explain why your trajectory has taken that path, then you will not be disadvantaged.

4. If I have two degrees and only have an 80 WAM on one degree, can I be a scholar for just that one degree?

You can make the case that the higher marks speak better to your potential!

5. To clarify the threshold nature of the academic criteria, do we just need to achieve the first-class honours to fulfill this threshold, or do we need a relatively greater WAM / GP compared to other applicants to strengthen our application?

I think we've covered this in other responses. The Committee is considering a pool of applicants with excellent academic credentials. Once you're in that pool, the Committee will be looking at achievement against all criteria.

6. How strict are the academic requirements? if you received close to 80% WAM but not quite there, is it still worth applying?

Some flexibility - but you need to be academically strong!

7. Is a Weighted Average Mark of 80% or greater a core requirement, or is a student with 75% for example still eligible?

Pls see other responses to similar questions.

8. Is Honours required if your university/course offers it? What if doing an Honours will push you over 25 (finished degree later than usual)?

As discussed, - Honours or equivalent if you can, but without if you're running out of years!

9. What if you never did honors, and you are now working but want to apply for a masters at oxford?

You'd need to make a strong case for your academic excellence and be realistic about competitiveness. Pls check Oxford entry requirements.

10. Are non-grade academic achievements (i.e. university debating, student journalism, extra-curricular leadership) considered in the academic performance criterion?

They would usually speak to the non-academic criteria.

Courses at Oxford

1. Does one seek supervisors for a DPhil before applying?

Yes, best to do that.

2. I'm interested in applying for an MPhil outside my undergraduate area. Admissions has informed me that it'd be unusual, but not impossible, for someone with my background to be admitted. How might you suggest addressing this in my study plan?
Good to discuss that with a Secretariat member - ok?
3. How do we confirm if our course/ degree is eligible? I am a Medical Imaging student where no further opportunities to study a Masters for the degree is available. Upon graduation I will have a Bachelor of Medical Imaging. Is this eligible?
Any Australian degree is eligible, but you're limited in what you can do at Oxford by what Oxford offers.
4. How much should our second course be justified in our academic statement of intent?
Enough to be credible and support your case; but you can change it (and even your first choice) if you're elected.
5. Any recommendations for what course to consider at Oxford? What if there are no options related to my undergraduate (Occupational Therapy)?
Ultimately you must decide if there's a course you want to do at Oxford – if not, a better option is another scholarship to a different university. In your case, perhaps some of the health degrees? Or something unrelated to your first degree ...
6. Are there any limitations, guidelines, or restrictions as to what courses a Rhodes scholar can study within their 2-3 years at Oxford?
Very few - there's a guideline document link in the slides.
7. Is the scholarship for max 1 year? Or however long the course selected is? (I.e. Is part time an option covered by the scholarship?)
Minimum 2 years, maximum 3; full-time only
8. Is the Doctor of Medicine eligible through the Rhodes scholarship?
Yes, definitely, plenty of scholars have done MDs across all the constituencies.
9. Grace and Nanak mentioned doing 'deep' masters, does this mean doing multiple masters programs to fill out the minimum 2 year requirement?
Doing two 1-year masters is not uncommon, as you do need to hold the scholarship for two years.
10. If approaching two 1-year Masters, would the applications for both programs be done simultaneously?
No - you would need to mention both in your application, but you only apply for the first one to begin.

11. I'm interested in undertaking an MPhil in a field outside my undergraduate degree. I've reached out to admissions, and they've informed me that it would be unusual, but not impossible, for someone with my background to be accepted. Would you suggest putting this degree down in my study plan, and if so, how should I address this?

If you're eligible for admission to it, make the case about why you want to do it. No barrier from a Rhodes perspective.

12. Are we expected to have spoke to people at Oxford, or who have completed the course?

Not necessarily - it depends on what you plan to do. But for a DPhil, yes, to prospective supervisors.

13. If accepted for the Rhodes Scholarship are recipients required to meet certain criteria such as certain academic marks throughout their time at Oxford etc?

The Rhodes Trust will expect you to pass unless there are exceptional circumstances. But there's no expectation of a particular level of performance.

Constituencies

1. For candidates who attended university in the ACT, is it preferable to apply through the state you completed high school in, or apply as an Australia at large scholar through the ACT?

Both options are available to you. As discussed, chat with Territories Secretary, and your State Secretary.

2. If I am attending university interstate, should I apply to my home state or to where I went to university?

If you are eligible in two different constituencies, then you should apply in the place to which you feel most connected. There are usually candidates applying in their home state although they are studying elsewhere.

3. I'm an international student. Currently pursuing Master in Public Health (Advanced) at ANU. I wish to pursue PhD after my masters. Am I eligible to apply?

Yes, if you satisfy the eligibility criteria. As an international student, you would need to apply in your home country, if it's a Rhodes constituency, or for a Global Scholarship. See <https://www.rhodeshouse.ox.ac.uk/scholarships/constituency-information/>

Referees

1. There was no one else in my course, meaning my referees may not be able to rank me. Will this be a disadvantage?

No, so long as your referees can place you in the broader context of academic achievement.

2. I am struggling to think of two *personal referees*, mostly owing to the lengthiness involved (1-2 A4 pages). For example, I remotely volunteered for a crisis support service, and so while I served our community, I had very limited contact with my team leader. Given this, I cannot imagine their written reference would approach anything near 1-2 pages. This same story holds true for other referees I have considered who are not personal friends, relatives, or peers. (1) Is this kind of issue common? (2) Are there any suggestions for working around this? I thought maybe my struggle here is itself indictive of a lack of suitability for the scholarship, but I am not totally sure if that's a fair assessment.

As mentioned in some other answers, the choice of referees is usually quite individual-specific; and such dilemmas are not uncommon. It's a good topic to discuss (early) with an Advisor or State Secretary. Other personal referees you might think of are high school teachers, mentors or coaches in sport or other activities, staff you've interacted with at university or in employment.

3. Can my academic referee be my professor who supervises my research assistance work? They know me very well academically but haven't taught or assessed me formally.

Normally, that would be ok - check with your State/ Territories Secretary.

4. Can my academic referee be a professor who is now retired?

Yes

5. Can a professor who I work with as a research assistant be a character referee? They know me largely in an academic setting, but as a work colleague more so than a student.

Yes, but best to discuss balance of referees with advisor or secretariat

6. Do all academic referees need to have formally taught you? or can they be academics who worked with me on research work?

The main thing is to have someone who can speak to the quality of your academic work, whether this is through RA work or their teaching you.

7. Having been heavily involved with volunteering at church in the recent years, would it be appropriate to use my biological dad as a referee who also happens to be the pastor of the church?

This would usually be considered a conflict of interest. I would ask someone else senior in the church community.

Disability

1. I have a disability; will this be a barrier for me in applying or being a Rhodes Scholar? Is there any information about accessibility that can be found online?

No barrier! There are some great videos on the Rhodes Trust YouTube channel from Scholars with disabilities. You're encouraged to contact the Secretariat confidentially. In the application process, you're invited to confidentially advise any disability-related needs or issues that should be considered in the selection process.

Resumes

1. When writing the CV, should we provide a few lines of explanation for what we did in different roles? Or just a list (like an academic CV)?

Good to tailor your cv for the scholarship application. So that explanation can be helpful.

2. Should we include our high school grades in our CV?

Not for individual courses, but the overall result - yes

Interviews

1. If we don't have an opinion on something it would be okay to answer by saying something like...hmmm, I don't have an opinion on this, but this is what I would need to know to develop one...?

That would be a reasonable strategy! The Committee is interested to learn about how you think, including for topics/ questions that may not be familiar to you.

2. Where are the interviews held for those successful? Is it in person vs online, in the state you are located in?

In the State capital, or Canberra for Territories/ AAL. In person.

3. Can we take a while to think before answering a question?
Yes, as with any interview, taking a short pause to think can be quite effective - better than jumping in and babbling.
4. Just to clarify, it's beneficial to prepare for recent current affairs issues leading up to the interview, not just your specific area of expertise?
Yes. Rhodes scholars are expected to be engaged with the world. The point is not to be a current affairs expert but to have thoughtful opinions on public debates.
5. What are the panel interested in during the interviews? Do we need to know about world events? Is it mostly focused on us and our future plans?
As discussed in response to other questions. The Committee is looking for candidates who don't live in a bubble, but recognises everyone has different interests. The committee is most interested in you, how you see your place in the world, and you plans in that context.
6. How do round one and two interviews differ?
Different questions. Only Vic and NSW have 2 rounds, usually.
7. Around what date are successful applicants told they have received the scholarship and need to start applying to Oxford?
Usually, the successful applicant is told very quickly after the interview (same day or next day) and are then supported to apply to Oxford over the following period.
8. If we are studying or want to study a pure science such as maths or physics, how do we answer the following question: "From your place in the world, how will you use your energy and talents to address humanity's pressing challenges?"
That's worth a discussion with an Advisor. My own response would be to think about how your work in that discipline would contribute to those pressing challenges. A recent Oscar-award winning movie comes to mind ...

Contacts

1. There is no university advisor listed on the website for my university. Should I contact an advisor from another university in my city?
<https://www.rhodeshouse.ox.ac.uk/pages/rhodes-australia-team/>; if you're having trouble locating or contacting, please contact the State/ Territories Secretary.

2. Where can I find a list of contacts to further discuss my application? I am located in NSW.

<https://www.rhodeshouse.ox.ac.uk/pages/rhodes-australia-team/>

FYI

1. As a general estimate, usually how many Rhodes Scholar Australia applicants are there?
Around 200
2. Are Rhodes Scholarship statistics available to prospective applicants? (i.e. how many students apply per year in Australia, how many applicants per state, etc.)
No, other than the approximate total national application number, above.
3. If any of the previous Rhodes scholars are able to stay any longer: how did you organise housing?
Offline question for one of the recent Scholars - often by house sharing with others. plenty of options!
4. Do we need to be involved in a sport in order to get a scholarship?
No - energy can be demonstrated in a whole range of ways. The Committee is looking for achievement in arenas of life beyond academic work; as well as academic excellence.
5. In regard to using one's talents to the full, can I focus this part of my application on an activity that I excelled at to a world-class level, but which I have since stopped as a result of changing interests? (I engaged in this activity from age 13 to 19, and so I stopped 5 years ago). Or does the committee mostly want to see a talent(s) engaged in concurrently with the undergraduate degree?
Yes. The Committee is interested in your 'whole of life' activity and activities. They would be interested in, as well as your achievements then, why you moved on and what other interests you have now.

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