

SHOULD I APPLY?

This document is the first of four that are important in the application process for the **Rhodes, Marshall, and Mitchell**. The four documents are:

1. **Should I Apply?**
2. Guide for the Stanford Applicant
3. The Process of Applying
4. Preparing for the Interviews

Contents:

- The Pre-Application
- Beginning Steps in the Application Process:
 - I. Gathering information
 - II. Making an informed decision
 - III. Getting started on your application

THE PRE-APPLICATION

The pre-application is a simple online form available on the website. You should submit a pre-application as soon as you start thinking about applying. Filling out a pre-application is not a commitment to apply, but this will automatically sign you up for the mailing list so that you can begin receiving updates and advice on the awards. Should you decide you are not going to apply, just let us know.

STEPS IN THE APPLICATION PROCESS

I. Gathering Information

Attend an information session: We hold open information sessions for all interested students throughout Winter and Spring Quarters. At these sessions, we cover all the “ins and outs” (e.g., resources, deadlines, procedures, endorsement, etc.) of preparing and applying for the Rhodes, Marshall, or Mitchell Scholarships. We also host follow-up meetings on various aspects of the applications.

Make an individual appointment with John Pearson or Diane Murk: This will be your opportunity to ask more in-depth questions regarding any of the scholarships for study and research in the U.K. or Ireland. This should help you make an informed decision as to whether or not you should apply for these scholarships.

Begin to familiarize yourself with the British and Irish university system and your specific study options. We recommend that you browse the university prospectuses in the ORC library and also check out useful websites such as:

The British Council Guide to Study in the UK: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/usa-education-graduate-degree.htm>

The Guardian’s University Guide: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/universityguide>

As a side note, candidates for awards to the U.K. should also consider applying for a Luce Scholarship—a one year internship program in selected Asian countries for students with NO (or very little) prior experience in Asian studies. The age limit for the Luce is 30 so it is possible to apply after you have studied in the U.K./Ireland.

II. Making An Informed Decision

Now that you have gathered all the appropriate information, researched the possibilities of study and research in Britain, and consulted with advisors, YOU have a decision to make as to whether or not to apply. A good starting point might be to ask yourself the following questions:

Will I be on campus during the spring or summer to prepare my application?

If you will not be here during spring or summer, you must seriously take into account the steps you will need to take before you leave campus at the end of Winter or Spring Quarter. Please be aware that many former applicants have found it difficult to consult with advisors, professors, and potential recommenders long distance. You will need to take care of as many details as possible (e.g., prospective program research, contacting recommenders) before you leave campus. If you are interested in applying and will be away from campus during the spring and summer, please contact the ORC for individual advising.

Will I be on campus during the fall for campus interviews and deadlines?

Former applicants who were away from campus during the fall have had difficulties putting together competitive applications. Keep in mind that no matter how much work is done during the spring and summer, there are countless last minute details to complete around the time of the campus deadline and interviews. If you will be away from campus during the fall quarter, PLEASE make sure you understand the following guidelines:

If you will not be on campus for an interview you will still need to submit the same materials, including all necessary copies. You are responsible for making sure your application, references and transcript arrive at the Overseas Resource Center by the campus deadline.

Please make sure you are in efficient contact with your references. It is not possible for us to track down missing references in time for the campus level interviews.

If you are re-applying we CANNOT use materials from previous applications. You will need to submit a completely new application, including references.

Each year some applicants cannot make it back to campus for an interview. While we understand this, we strongly encourage you to attend a campus interview. Our endorsement letters are more difficult to write without a campus interview. Please note: you MUST attend a final interview if invited.

Do I find it difficult to meet deadlines or complete applications on time?

During the scholarship process, there will be numerous deadlines that need to be met—e.g. campus deadlines and national deadlines—where no exceptions will be made. Applications which look rushed, unpolished, and are incomplete will be a waste of time for you, your recommenders, and the selection committees.

Do I have the time and energy to commit to this process?

Participating in these scholarship competitions demands considerable time and energy. Most people who have participated in the process through its final stages have compared it to five units of coursework, spread out over three quarters. For those applicants who plan ahead, the process won't be quite as daunting! Spring Quarter will be spent researching study options and meeting with advisors and potential recommenders. Over the summer, you will work on writing and fine-tuning your essays. During the month of September and early October, you will turn in your application and prepare for campus and national interviews.

It has been our experience that candidates who try to add applying for these awards on top of all their other commitments (without prioritizing and cutting back) end up producing weaker applications. The time commitment during spring and summer can be manageable, but during the month of September and early October, you will be required to give a lot of time and energy, concentrated in a smaller time period, to the application process.

Do I know what I want to study in the U.K/Ireland and why? Am I prepared to research my options?

A vital part of any application is the enthusiasm for, and understanding of, a period of study in the U.K/Ireland. Our advice is to forget the prestige of these awards and focus on the academic opportunities that the awards make possible. A strong academic reason for studying in the U.K/Ireland should be the foundation for all applications.

Is my GPA competitive enough?

All the awards to the U.K./Ireland are academically competitive. We cannot stress this enough. An excellent GPA is a requirement; we recommend a 3.8 or higher. If your GPA is less than 3.7, or if in a particular quarter(s) your grades lowered your average, you should have a reasonable explanation (i.e., family or personal trauma) for this. If you are concerned about your grades, please consult with the ORC advisors.

Have I been involved in extracurricular activities outside of the academic area?

All awards look for significant contributions outside academics. Your extracurricular involvement and achievements can be in any area (i.e., volunteer activities, student organizations, work, sports), but they should be substantive. Depth of involvement is more important than breadth of activities.

Do I know enough faculty members or advisors well enough to ask for the number of references required? (4 for Marshall, 5-8 for Rhodes, 5 for Mitchell)

Students who are successful in these competitions receive very detailed references from faculty, supervisors, advisors, etc—references that provide the selection committee with an in-depth evaluation of a student based on a close and often long-term relationship. References from faculty who have taught you in one large class often do not convey the kind of information a selection committee needs. It is important that all applicants for these awards understand the need for very strong references. (Also, Rhodes applicants should aim for 8 references.)

For the Marshall, the minimum GPA to apply is 3.7, and consequently every applicant is strong in the academics. The distinguishing criteria appear to be the personal statements and letters of recommendation.

Do I take advice well

The Rhodes and Marshall competitions involve many people giving you advice, much of it based on their own experiences. Advice may be minimal and specific. It might take the form of a suggestion that you re-write your entire essay. It might involve a very tough campus interview and follow-up advice. It is our experience that very few winners are successful without listening to, and benefiting from, advice.

Am I someone who is able to move from the “micro” of my college work to the “macro” of world events by drawing comparisons?

In the past, a number of very qualified applicants have had difficult interviews because they have not been able to relate the specifics of their academic and personal interests to more national or worldly considerations. For example, if you are a student who is somehow involved in medical research, can you discuss the need for a national health care system?

Do I defend and articulate my views well?

We have never noticed any trends for “right” or “wrong” opinions in these scholarships. We have, however, seen many examples where committees have strongly questioned applicants on their views. All awards, we feel, are looking, to some degree or other, for students who do believe in something and have thought through these beliefs. Your aim is not to please a committee, but to gain its respect.

Can I see similarities between myself and previous winners?

Consult the binder of successful essays and activities lists in the ORC Scholarship Library. These materials will give you a good idea of what the past Stanford winners are like, what they were involved in, what they studied at Stanford, and what they studied (or are studying) in the U.K. As you look through the application materials, don't compare yourself in terms of having the same interests, but in having the same commitment to interests.

Profiles of recent winners found at:

Rhodes: <http://www.rhodesscholar.org/news-and-announcements/american-rhodes-scholars-for-2012/>

Marshall: <http://www.marshallscholarship.org/scholars/profiles/>

Mitchell: <http://www.us-irelandalliance.org/content/209/en/Meet%20the%20Mitchell%20Scholars.html>

Recent Stanford Winners: <http://icenter.stanford.edu/orc/winners.html>

If you have asked yourself the above questions, you are now ready to make your final decision as to whether or not you will apply. If you are ready to begin the application process, read on.

III. Next Steps: Getting Started on Your Application

Attend the Scholarship Workshops: If you have filled out a pre-application you will receive a schedule of spring quarter workshops.

Read “Guide for the Stanford Applicant” Stanford applicants should refer to this document for instructions and helpful advice (on essays, activities lists, and references) when preparing their campus and national applications for the Rhodes, Marshall, and Mitchell Scholarships.

Read “The Process of Applying” This document will cover the campus process and will explain what has to be submitted for the campus and national deadlines.

We are available throughout spring and summer to meet with you, review your application, critique your essays, and, whenever possible, direct you to faculty, staff and students (many of whom are former scholars of the awards) around campus who will be able to serve in an advising capacity.

Feedback on Essays from ORC Staff

Advisors at the Overseas Resource Center will be available to critique essays throughout the summer and early fall. Students may submit essays for review by mail, e-mail, or in person. The turn-around time for review is usually 3-5 working days.

We are available to assist you during the application process throughout the spring, summer, and early fall. If you have specific questions at any point during the application process, please do not hesitate to contact:

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