

**THE RHODES SCHOLARSHIP 2018 FOR WEST AFRICA**

(Including: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, the island of Saint Helena, Senegal, Sierra Leone, São Tomé and Príncipe and Togo)

**GUIDANCE FOR REFEREES**

Thank you for your willingness to serve as a referee for one of the applicants for the Rhodes Scholarship. The following notes are intended to serve as a guide as you write your reference.

The Rhodes Scholarships are administered by the Rhodes Trust. The Rhodes Selection Committees are looking for outstanding young women and men who are motivated to engage with the global challenges facing humankind, to 'esteem the performance of public duties as their highest aim', and to promote international understanding and peace. In short, the Committee seeks young people of **outstanding intellect, character, leadership, and commitment to service**, who demonstrate a strong propensity to emerge as 'leaders for the world's future', wherever their careers might take them, and in any field. For further details, see: <http://www.rhodeshouse.ox.ac.uk/>

The Rhodes Selection Committee will be grateful, therefore, if you would supply a frank and confidential statement regarding the candidate's qualifications. Your prompt response to the auto-generated email request will be of great assistance to the candidate and to the Selection Committee.

The Selection Committee will have available for consideration a copy of the candidate's university academic transcript, curriculum vitae, and personal statement of academic interests, other pursuits, extracurricular activities and reasons for wishing to study at Oxford. Observations which would enhance the Committee's understanding of these records will be especially welcomed. **Your comments should not exceed two A4 pages.**

Proven intellectual and academic quality of a very high standard is the first quality required of candidates. However, and just as important, they will also be required to demonstrate integrity of character, interest in and respect for their fellow human beings, the ability to lead, the energy to use their talents to the full and the desire to make an effective contribution to the world around them as described above.

A Rhodes Scholar will undertake postgraduate study at Oxford, a taught or research degree, or a second undergraduate degree with senior status. Subject to fulfilling the entry criteria for their chosen course, Rhodes Scholars may pursue any full-time postgraduate course offered by the University of Oxford, whether or not in their field of expertise. In all cases, entry to Oxford is very competitive indeed.

Whether you have been asked to provide an academic reference, or a character/extra-curricular reference, it is not expected that you will be able to speak from first-hand knowledge of all the candidate's qualifications.

**Academic referees:** If you are primarily acquainted with the candidate through a teacher/student relationship, it is expected that your appraisal will concentrate first and primarily on academic quality and potential, although your assessment of other qualities will be welcomed by the Committee. Academic referees should note that, in the case of a successful applicant, your letter will be used by Oxford departments and colleges for determining the Rhodes Scholar-elect's academic case for admission to postgraduate study. Consequently, a detailed assessment of the candidate's academic qualifications will be particularly helpful. Since the University of Oxford requires the following information from referees writing in support of graduate applicants, it would help the successful candidate if you can comment on:

a) the applicant's relative academic standing in comparison with other students on the same course at the same institution – eg top 1%, 5%, 10%, 25%, 50%? b) In comparison with how many students in the applicant's year group on their programme of study, ie with how many students are you comparing the applicant? c) on what basis are you making the assessment - personal assessment/official class rank?

**Character referees:** If, on the other hand, you are better acquainted with the candidate through non-academic interests, it is expected that you will concentrate on assessment of character and non-academic qualities, in the knowledge that the Committee is looking for scholars who show promise of outstanding achievement in later life.

Please do not hesitate to speak of the candidate's limitations as well as strong points. Committees tend naturally to be dubious of appraisals that imply a given individual has no limitations. Your reply will, of course, be treated as strictly confidential to the Selection Committee (and to the necessary Oxford authorities in the case of the successful candidate).

All letters of recommendation for applicants should be addressed to the *Rhodes Scholarship Selection Committee*. The Selection Committee asks that your letter of recommendation be on headed paper, signed, and uploaded in pdf format. You will receive an auto-generated email requesting the reference, which will contain instructions for completing and submitting your letter. All letters of reference are expected to be received via the Embark online system.

*Please note that candidates are asked **not** to list personal friends, contemporaries or relatives as referees.*

References **must be received by 23:59, GMT, 14 October 2017.**