

GUIDE FOR THE STANFORD APPLICANT Now That You've Decided to Apply

This document is the first of four that are important in the application process for the **Rhodes, Marshall, Mitchell** and **Gates**. These documents are meant to be read in order. 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
- Now That You've Decided To Apply
- Researching Your Options
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- Essays
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THE PRE-APPLICATION

The pre-application is a simple online form available on the ORC 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.

Complete a Stanford Rhodes/Marshall/Mitchell Pre-Application Intent to Apply form here:

http://web.stanford.edu/dept/icenter/orc/forms/Rhodes_Marshall_Intent_Mentor_2015.fb

While there is a campus process for the Rhodes, Marshall and Mitchell Scholarships, there is no campus process for the Gates Cambridge Scholarship. Our office can still provide guidance on how to apply for the Gates.

Complete a Gates Cambridge Pre-Application form here:

<https://web.stanford.edu/dept/icenter/orc/forms/UKScholarshipPre-App.fb>

NOW THAT YOU'VE DECIDED TO APPLY

This guide is designed to assist you in a long, often complicated, application process. Please note: This guide is written assuming that you have read the introductory information on the scholarships, consulted with advisors, and decided to apply for one or more of these awards. If you have not, please do so.

We cannot overemphasize that you should start your application as far in advance of the deadline as possible. Although we have known a few candidates who have been successful in the competition for these awards after only a limited period of preparation, these students are the exception. Preparing a competitive application takes a great deal of time and effort.

Applicants have also told us that the time spent thinking and writing about their future plans—whether, in the end, they were awarded a scholarship or not—was well worth the effort. If you plan to apply to graduate schools or interview with prospective employers, the application process for these awards can provide you with experience on writing application statements and interviewing. (Some students have claimed that no employment interview could possibly be as challenging as a Rhodes regional interview!) Most importantly, when you write these essays, you will have to consider and then reconsider your future plans and goals. In this way, applying for these can help you to further define both your academic and career goals.

An application will consist of essays, references, transcripts, an activities list, and interviews; all of these aspects are important. The application process can be a tiring, confusing experience. If you're ever at a loss, don't hesitate to ask for assistance or advice from ORC advisors. Most applicants have a concern about one area of their application, but we find this to be quite normal. Our advice is to discuss this concern with us but in the context of what strengths you possess. No one expects you to be fully formed yet—you are developing and the awards are to enable you to continue this development.

Many students work with us during the summer. For some awards, we encourage you to submit drafts of essays for critique and request advice and information.

However, due to the change in the Rhodes guidelines as of January 2014 and Mitchell guidelines as of March 2014, *if any student or alumni is applying for the Rhodes Scholarship or Mitchell Scholarship, our office, the Stanford University Overseas Resource Center cannot review or comment on, in any way, the written proposal. We may not be able to review draft statements for other UK awards if the student is applying for the Rhodes or Mitchell.*

Applicants should be aware that they should not share any versions of their Rhodes personal statement essay or Mitchell personal statement essay with anyone else for feedback or comments. (See section below on Rhodes Scholarship Essay attestation on page 6.)*

We can no longer provide feedback on your Rhodes or Mitchell written materials, but we are glad to help in other ways.

Advice on your application from the ORC staff is NOT a guarantee of campus endorsement. The intent of the advice from ORC staff is to help applicants prepare the best application possible. The campus panel will make the decision whether or not it will receive a campus endorsement.

RESEARCHING YOUR OPTIONS

The awards discussed here are for academic work, at the graduate level. ALWAYS keep in mind that these awards are for academics, no matter what your perception of these scholarships might be. You must be ready to study in the UK and be prepared for, and enthusiastic about, your proposed academic work.

Candidates often ask us, “just how much information do I need to have on the proposed course of study and the institution?” Our answer is, “you can never have too much information but you can have too little.” You need to know why a program of study makes sense to you, how the program is structured (by coursework, research or both), and which faculty members you would like to work with (especially true if you wish to earn a research degree) and what do you know generally about the university where you wish to study.

We can illustrate the latter by a student's experience. A student was being interviewed for one of the awards and

was asked what else about his college of choice appealed to him. He mentioned that the college library had a rare copy of a book by one of his favorite authors and it would be an honor to see and touch this book. One of the panel members replied that he was, in fact, the librarian at that college and was in charge of the particular book and would be delighted to show it. Did the student win the award? What do you think?

Field of Interest and Appropriate Institutions

Applicants for the **Rhodes, Marshall** and **Gates** must determine where and what to study in the United Kingdom. Begin with researching the types of courses offered in your field of interest at various universities. Ultimately, you want to find a program of study that not only makes sense you but which you are passionate about. The best place to start is:

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

The British Council Guide to Study in the UK: <http://usa.britishcouncil.org/education/uk-universities>

For **Marshall** applicants, it is important to survey all viable programs at universities throughout the UK. You should have detailed knowledge of programs and courses offered at particular institutions. You should also be able to discuss the reasons that you want to attend a particular institution and follow a particular course of study. If you apply for the Marshall, do not select Oxford, Cambridge, or London simply because they are the most renowned universities in the United Kingdom. Other British universities may have stronger programs in your particular field, so look carefully at what each school has to offer.

Rhodes applicants should be able to articulate the reasons why they wish to study a specific field and for a particular degree at Oxford and exhibit detailed knowledge of what Oxford could offer in that field.

Gates applicants should be able to persuade the Trust that their qualifications and aspirations accord with what Cambridge has to offer in its postgraduate program. It is important that candidates can make a convincing argument for doing a particular postgraduate degree at Cambridge. Therefore, researching the degree is important.

Mitchell applicants should do the same for the Irish University system. The best place to start is the Mitchell Website: <http://www.us-irelandalliance.org/>

In addition to our extensive collection of British and Irish university catalogs, the ORC Library maintains a number of helpful publications:

- *The Lucky Few and the Worthy Many: Scholarship Competitions and the Worlds Future Leaders*
- *Beyond Winning: National Scholarship Competitions and the Student Experience*
- *Writing Personal Statements and Scholarship Application Essays: A Student Handbook*
- *Oxford Today Cambridge Alumni Magazine, Times Higher Education, etc. (periodicals, journals)*

A careful examination of these materials and websites will provide a wealth of information for applicants considering various degrees and disciplines. Do note, though, that it is very difficult for us (and most people at Stanford) to be up to date which the relative strength of various programs at British/Irish institutions.

Course of Study/Degree

When you determine which field you will pursue, you must select a course of study/degree (M.Phil, M.Sc., D.Phil, etc.) for which you are academically prepared.

Rhodes applicants have the option to choose a second bachelor's degree in the field in which they majored at Stanford, however, most Rhodes Scholars study for advanced degrees and this is what we would recommend. Marshall applicants have the option to apply for a one year program, though we do not recommend this option unless there is a compelling argument that a particular one year program would work best for you. Mitchell applicants should look to pursue higher degrees in their own or related fields.

Do note that it is not necessary for your proposals to be an extension of your honors thesis. It is necessary, however, to propose a course of study for which you are academically prepared. You, therefore, need to consider carefully your choice of study, why it is important to pursue this choice, and why the scholarship committee should consider funding such a proposal.

We do recommend that if your goal is to study for a doctorate prior to searching for an academic career in the U.S. we recommend that you discuss this option with faculty advisors. While many Rhodes and Marshall Scholars do complete doctorates in the U.K. some faculty will counsel you to obtain your doctorate in the U.S., if you intend to be an academic. We recommend you take seriously your advisor's advice.

Academic and Career Goals

Be aware of how your proposed study relates to your future goals and aspirations, both personal and academic. Examine the way in which your proposed course of study will enhance your plans to pursue a particular subject or degree.

Scholarship committees like to give their awards to candidates most likely to put their proposed studies to use in their future careers. Therefore, it is essential that you have thought through how you see your proposed studies connecting to the course of your life. In other words, what you have accomplished so far, what you are doing now, what you wish to do with the award, and what you will do later must follow a logical trajectory.

Should I apply for the Rhodes and Marshall and Gates?

We encourage students who are physically active, show an interest and invest their time in public service (or other activity), and contribute in some way to university and community life to apply for the Rhodes. There is a myth associated with the Rhodes that only varsity athletes need apply. The fact is that Rhodes applicants are expected to have active minds and bodies, but it is not necessary to be an athlete. It is also not required that you be involved in student government. What *is* important is that you are involved with issues in which you believe. Although each Rhodes district committee might have its own preferences, there is no "official" list of activities that defines a Rhodes Scholar.

Compared to the Rhodes, Marshall candidates are held to similar standards, with perhaps more emphasis on intellectual interests. We encourage students who have research experience, have written (or plan to write) an honors thesis, and have any academic publication or presentation experience to apply for the Marshall.

Various selection committees will each look for different qualities in their successful candidates. The difference in selection criteria explains why some excellent and well-prepared Stanford students will be interviewed for one scholarship, but will not be interviewed for another. This will even hold true for students applying for the Rhodes and the Marshall for the same study plan at Oxford. It is rare for more than five Stanford students to receive interviews for both the Marshall and the Rhodes in the same year. And it is even rarer for a student to be offered both awards in the same year. This uncertainty principle of scholarships is what leads us to encourage students NOT to focus on one award but to consider as many as possible.

AN IDEAL CANDIDATE

Marshall

“In appointing Marshall scholars the selectors will look for distinction of intellect and character as evidenced both by their scholastic attainments and by their other activities and achievements. Preference will be given to candidates who combine high academic ability with the capacity to play an active part in the life of the United Kingdom university to which they go, and to those who display a potential to make a significant contribution to their society.” Here is the criteria the Marshall is looking for:

<http://www.marshallscholarship.org/applications/criteria>

Rhodes

In making appointments, the Committees of Selection will have regard to the qualities laid down by Cecil Rhodes... “literary and scholastic attainments; truthfulness, courage, devotion to duty, sympathy for and protection of the weak, kindness, unselfishness, and fellowship; exhibition of moral force of character and of instincts to lead and to take an interest in one’s contemporaries; physical vigor, as shown by fondness for and success in sports.” “Selection committees are charged to seek excellence in qualities of mind and in qualities of person which, in combination, offer the promise of effective service to the world in the decades ahead. The Rhodes Scholarships, in short, are investments in individuals rather than in project proposals. Accordingly, applications are sought from talented students without restriction as to their field of academic specialization or career plans, although the proposed course of study must be available at Oxford, and the applicant’s undergraduate program must provide a sufficient basis for study in the proposed field.”

Mitchell

The Mitchell Scholarship, named to honor the former U.S. Senator’s pivotal contribution to the Northern Ireland peace process, is designed to introduce and connect generations of future American leaders to the island of Ireland, while recognizing and fostering scholarship and academic excellence, leadership, and a commitment to community and public service.

Gates

There is no one template for a Gates Cambridge Scholar as they all bring different something unique to the program. The Gates Trust is looking for four key criteria: 1) Academic excellence, 2) Leadership potential, 3) a commitment to improving the lives of others, 4) a good academic fit with Cambridge.

<https://www.gatescambridge.org/apply/ideal-candidate>

As you can see, these are quite impressive characteristics and they can certainly seem daunting when you first consider applying. We do not know many people who would outright describe themselves as Gates, Marshall, Rhodes, or Mitchell scholars as defined above, yet every year Stanford students are awarded some of these scholarships. Each year, these scholarships are awarded to real people from different disciplines and with varied interests (e.g., not all Rhodes Scholars are athletes!) and passions.

ABOUT THE ESSAYS

When you write your essays, think carefully about the approach you should take to each scholarship. They are not identical awards. Because the criteria for each scholarship is somewhat different, you should not submit identical essays for the two.

Marshall Scholarship Essays

“We encourage applicants whose records and references reflect a great intellectual and academic depth in a particular discipline and who have an active role in university and community life to apply for the Marshall. The essay[s] you write for the Marshall should demonstrate this depth and emphasize the connections you make between your intellectual life and your other activities. More specifically, the Marshall application asks for [three] essays—the first, a personal statement, the second being an extended discussion of your academic interests and proposed choice of study in the U.K., and the third being a discussion on the U.S.-U.K relationship illustrating the candidates’ ambassadorial potential.”

Rhodes Scholarship Essay*

Applicants should stress their ability in a variety of disciplines and their interest in a variety of pursuits. The Rhodes Trust looks for students who demonstrate a great breadth of knowledge and leadership ability. In writing the Rhodes Essay, keep in mind the four characteristics Cecil Rhodes set forth (listed online and in “An Ideal Candidate” section).

The Rhodes Scholarship application asks candidates to provide a short Personal Statement (1,000 word limit) describing their academic and other interests. This statement should describe the specific area of proposed study and reasons for wishing to study at Oxford, and it must conclude with the following statement, followed by their personal signature:

“I attest that this essay is my own work and is wholly truthful. Neither it nor any earlier draft has been edited by anyone other than me, nor has anyone else reviewed it to provide me with suggestions to improve it. I understand that any such editing or review would disqualify my application.”

No application will be considered if the applicant does not make such a certification. And, as now, this attestation will not count in the essay word limit.

Overseas Resource Center – Bechtel International Center - Stanford University Policy (effective January 2014)

If any student or alumni is applying for the Rhodes Scholarship, our office cannot review or comment on, in any way, the written proposal. We may not be able to review draft statements for other UK awards if the student is applying for the Rhodes.

Applicants should be aware that they should not share any versions of their Rhodes personal statement essay with anyone else for feedback or comments.

Mitchell Scholarship Essay

“The personal essay is extremely important. Members of the Selection Committee examine the essay for clues to the character, commitment, and interests of each candidate. This is the only opportunity for the applicant to convey a sense of his/her passions, personality, and intellectual drive. In addition, a well-written essay should provide the Committee with valuable insight into the applicant’s motivation and rationale for the proposed graduate study program that is not otherwise communicated in the rest of the application materials.”

Gates Cambridge Scholarship Essay

“The Personal Statement is used by the Gates Cambridge Shortlisting Committees to distinguish between candidates who have been highly ranked by departments on academic grounds. It helps the Committees identify those candidates who, as well as being academically outstanding, possess a capacity for leadership and commitment to improving the lives of others.”

WRITING THE ESSAYS

Writing these essays can be a frustrating, interesting, and revealing experience. Your final essays should produce a picture of you as a person, a student, a potential scholarship winner, and (looking into the future) as a former scholarship recipient. Needless to say, this is difficult to do well in a few pages, and it would be impossible and inappropriate to give you instructions titled “How to Write a Thoughtful and Introspective Essay.” It is not impossible, however, to provide some advice on elements, which—combined with your research, thoughts, and personality—may produce a compelling scholarship essay.

Each essay should make a statement about your academic life and plans, as well as your personal goals and beliefs. This statement, regardless of how you combine the following components, should grab the interest of the reader (whether at the Stanford level or later on in the competition) and make him or her want to meet you for an interview.

One of our valued campus panel members has this to say about approaching these essays:

“First and foremost, the personal statement is a narrative written by a human being (which doesn’t mean weird fonts, nor does it get submitted in the no-margin style imposed by some computers in attachment mode). It wouldn’t hurt to look up the word essay in the dictionary—linked with effort, ‘to try.’ It is, therefore, a narrative, written by a human being containing a ‘strong personal core,’ creating an energy that pulls the reader through its entire word length. This is very different from a list, or for that matter a C.V. It will allude to, and elaborate on, the forces, which have shaped you. That said, the essay also must give clear evidence of a mind at work, and a passionately engaged intellect.”

General Advice:

- Read the essay prompt (or topic) very carefully.
- Maintain some sort of theme or connecting concept throughout—create an outline first.
- Present your ideas in a way that encourages the questions you can best answer.
- Don’t use slang, abbreviations, or casual tones.
- Address how your qualifications fit with the purpose of the scholarship and how the award fits in with your goals.
- Don’t give too much detail on an issue. Many former applicants have referred to this method as drawing the readers in, sparking their interest and encouraging them to ask for more details in an interview. If you can use your hooks well, you will not only keep the readers interested, but you will be able to lead the interviewers to the questions you are most qualified to address.
- Perhaps address an issue or cause about which you feel strongly or has helped make you who you are, or an achievement or contribution that you feel tells the reader something significant about you.
- Be mindful about how much space you give to various aspects of your life; often really important aspects of your life are not given enough space in the essay.
- Be prepared to edit, revise, listen, change and re-write. In the end, however, it is your essay and yours alone so you need to be comfortable with what it says about you.

Marshall

The Marshall Scholarship requires 3 to 4 essays:

1. A 1,000 word personal statement: This essay should emphasize your academic and intellectual development up to this point
2. A 500 word proposed program of study: This essay should focus on your first and second choice program of study. Your research on British universities and the reasons for your final choices should form a major part of this essay. **(Remember: If you put Oxford, Cambridge or LSE as your first choice you cannot put either of the others as your second choice).** You will need to articulate clearly why you have chosen a particular university. You will also need to convince a committee that your proposed program of study is practical and that you are prepared to undertake it.
3. A 500 word essay titled “Why the U.K.” was revised in 2013: The new prompt is as follows: **“Candidates should describe what the USA-UK special relationship” means. They should also describe how they might strengthen ties between the USA and the UK in their field of study and through their extra-curricular activities, whilst in the UK and upon their return to the US.”** The Marshall Commission feels this question better matches their criteria and they hope it will make it easier for their Committees to judge ambassadorial potential.
4. A post-tenure plan essay (more details coming soon...)

Through these essays, this is your chance to express your enthusiasm for studying and living in the U.K. and how you will benefit from that experience. If your academic interest has a parallel in the U.K. (e.g. environmental policies, Middle East Issues) you can explain how living in the U.K. will allow you to understand British opinion outside of the classroom/library. Perhaps you could discuss a hobby that could be continued or furthered in the U.K.

The Marshall Commission is interested in applicants who understand the historical relationship between the U.S.A. and the U.K. and the role the Marshall Scholarship plays in this relationship. Read all you can on the origins of the Marshall Scholarship before writing these essays.

The Marshall essays should describe your personal growth in conjunction with your academic growth. This does not mean that you should shy away from discussing non-academic issues, but you should look to integrate such issues with statements about your academic and intellectual life and your academic goals. Make explicit and coherent connections between what you think, study, believe, and do.

Rhodes

Your Rhodes essay should incorporate some of the information you have gleaned from your undergraduate coursework and research and discuss your academic development. This short Personal Statement/Essay should describe your academic and other interests. This statement should also describe the specific area of proposed study and your reasons for wishing to study at Oxford. It is important to know what exactly you wish to study at Oxford and why it is important for you. How does it link what you are doing now to what you hope to do in the future?

Additionally, the Rhodes essay should provide a distinct picture of you as a person of character. Perhaps it should discuss an issue of great importance to you, or an issue, which troubles you or restores you. This does not mean that your essay should not make mention of the Rhodes and the way it will alter and contribute to your academic development, but the essay should, nevertheless, make some kind of statement about you as an individual. The Rhodes is intended for young women and men who are going to become leaders and “fight the world’s fight.” Your essay should make readers interested in discussing your beliefs and interests with you.

The Rhodes essay must conclude with the following statement: **“I attest that this essay is my own work and is wholly truthful. Neither it nor any earlier draft has been edited by anyone other than me, nor has anyone else reviewed it to provide me with suggestions to improve it. I understand that any such editing or review would disqualify my application.”**

No application will be considered if the applicant does not make such a certification. And, as now, this attestation will not count in the essay word limit. This personal essay must not exceed 1,000 words in length and should be written in as simple and direct a manner as possible. It should be set in a typeface no smaller than 10 points. Selection committees will place special emphasis on this personal essay (statement) and it may be forwarded to Oxford colleges to which Rhodes scholars-elect apply for admission.

Mitchell

Like the Rhodes, the Mitchell requires a 1,000 word personal statement. This essay should demonstrate academic excellence, leadership, and commitment to community and service. In this essay applicants share their personality, passion and drive. Applicants are required to certify that this is their original work. In their personal statement essay, Mitchell applicants should address why the candidate wants to be a Mitchell Scholar and why studying in Ireland or Northern Ireland make sense for his or her goals. All applicants are asked to check a box (equivalent to an e-signature) in the online application at the conclusion of the essay that attests to the following statement:

"I attest that this essay is my own work and is wholly truthful. Neither it nor any earlier draft has been edited by anyone other than me, nor has anyone else reviewed it to provide me with suggestions to improve it. I understand that any such editing or review would disqualify my application."

Gates

Gates applicants are asked to describe (500 word limit) how their interests and achievements, both academic and extra-curricular, demonstrate a capacity for leadership and a commitment to improving the lives of others. They are also asked why they think there is a good fit between their professional aspiration and the graduate program at Cambridge for which they are applying.

Academic Component

When you discuss academic and intellectual interests in these essays, you should assume two things:

- The people reading your application know everything about your field
- The people reading your application know nothing about your field

Do not be afraid to use technical or academic terms in your writing, but do not preach or become condescending. For all of the applications, you are attempting to convey that you have gone further in your academic studies at Stanford than just fulfilling the basic requirements for a degree.

You should find ways to discuss your academic interests in the context of other things that matter to you. The committee first wants to know how you acquired that interest and why and how that interest matters to you. They will next want to know what you plan to do with that interest. In addition, you need to explain to them why they should think it is important. Connect what you do in school to your beliefs, your passions and the rest of the world. As you read drafts of your essay, be critical of ways in which you have discussed your academic and intellectual interests. Ask: “What matters to me?” “Why does it matter to me?” “Who cares?” “If they don’t care, why do they need to care?” and “Does what I care about academically have any broader social relevance that committees might pursue in interviews?”

Personal Growth and Development

Neither your Rhodes nor Marshall essay should be limited solely to academic material, but both should also include a substantial amount of material about your personal growth. Incorporate your personality into your essays! What factors or experiences influenced your personal growth? What has made you who you are? Paint a true picture of your development. Try to show your strengths and weaknesses (nothing glaring, but areas which show that you are human).

Mistakes Often Made by Applicants

- Turning the essay into an extended (or an exaggerated) version of the activities list. Applicants often ask how they should incorporate activities into their essay when they have already listed them separately on the activities list. The most effective solution is to incorporate only those activities or interests that are extremely important to you. For example, if you swam on the varsity team at Stanford, it would be logical to incorporate this into the essay as one of your major achievements, contributions, or passions. Be sure to show how these activities tie into the “big picture” of yourself.
- Exaggerating their histories and situations. Do not believe that all applicants expand on the truth and that if they do, you may as well expand too. Older, wily interviewers often uncover exaggeration during interviews. This can be embarrassing and disastrous for an applicant.
- Being overly clever in writing the essays. Interviewers have read quite literally hundreds of essays and they find overly clever essays annoying. This reaction can do nothing but harm the future of your application. It is substance, not style, that is important.
- Suggesting a future with no evidence of preparation. If you write that you wish to be a journalist but you have never been involved with any newspaper, or if you write that you are concerned about the environment but have taken no science courses, committees can soon put you on the spot in interviews or decide not to interview you. Whatever future plans you write about, you must have had some experience with the issues involved at an academic, extracurricular, or personal level.
- Do not waste words writing how great Oxford is and how thrilled you are to be applying for the Rhodes or Marshall.

ACTIVITIES LIST

- Your activities list (limited to two pages) should include such items as extracurricular activities while in college: honors, prizes, scholarships, offices held, research, publications, jobs, internships, athletic record, community service, etc. The activities list provides you the opportunity to enumerate accomplishments, which may or may not be described more fully in your essay.
- The activities list should not be a narrative; rather, it should have brief entries under various categories. It is advised that the list be by category, not chronological. Also, your activities list should not include too much high school information. Your list should be easy to read and follow, and should hold the attention of the reader.
- Don't "pad" your list of activities and accomplishments. Readers may be quite familiar with the organizations you were once involved in and awards you have won.

TRANSCRIPTS

- Submit official transcript(s) from all institutions you have attended since high school.
- Request transcripts early, as it often takes several days (or weeks!) to process and send out requests. It is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to make sure that all your transcripts are received. You will be at a DECIDED DISADVANTAGE during the campus, district, or regional evaluations without them.
- Make sure you know your transcript. Can you discuss that course which has a quirky title that you took in your first quarter? Can you explain that one bad grade? Can you answer why you have taken no science courses at all? And so on. It has been our experience that some panel members, at the campus and national levels, are very interested in transcripts.
- Check the details for each award as to where you will have to send your transcripts.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

A letter of recommendation is most useful when it includes specific comments on the strength of your application. Recommenders should be able to comment on your ability to carry out the proposed course of study and the suitability of the university chosen. If you have any questions about how to select your referees, please consult an ORC advisor.

- **You cannot use CDC file references for these scholarships even at the campus level.**
- Rhodes applicants are advised to submit 8 letters of recommendation (or as close to that number as possible).
- Choose people who know you well—in and out of the classroom. Any student who is writing an honors thesis should have a letter of recommendation from their thesis advisor.
- It is important to try and get academic references from tenured or tenure-line faculty preferably but they have to know you well. Short references from "well known folks" can actually weaken your application.

Academic letters from those who taught you in high school are not recommended without discussion with an ORC advisor. Faculty must have taught you or supervised your research. Faculty who know you, without having taught you, do not make strong references.

- Letters that are not from academics should stress your leadership qualities and your volunteer and service contributions.
- Identify your recommenders and meet with them as early in the process as possible. Brief them on the overall timeline and expectations. If your recommenders are familiar with your plans and the application process, they can be more helpful to you in providing feedback and constructive criticism.
- Give them as much information about yourself as possible. The following is a list of helpful items to give to your selected recommenders:
 - “Notes to Recommenders...” document, available on the ORC webpage
 - Copy of transcript
 - Information on proposed course of study
 - Background information on scholarships
 - Properly addressed, stamped envelopes (10”x13” manila envelope suggested) along with all necessary information as to date references are due.

Other good advice for working with your recommenders:

- Clarify whether you might call on them again for subsequent letters at the more advanced stages of the competition (i.e., suggest that they keep a copy of the letter on file).
- Follow-up with recommenders. Keep them up to date with the progress of your application and double check that they have completed and submitted your recommendations.

Recommendations at the Campus Level

Three letters are required for the campus level application. These letters should be from Stanford faculty or experienced Stanford administrators. It is extremely important that these letters arrive by the campus deadline. Applicants with incomplete files are at a disadvantage during the campus level evaluation. Check in with the ORC staff periodically to make sure that your file is complete; it is your responsibility.

Recommendations at the National Level

Rhodes

If you are applying for the Rhodes Scholarship, a minimum of 5 letters (maximum of 8) are required. At least 4 of these letters should be from persons familiar with your academic work.

Marshall

Marshall applications, including the 4 references, are submitted online. You must designate 4 referees, 1 of whom is designated the “preferred referee.” This should be the person best able to attest to the suitability of your proposed course of study. It is important that at least 2 recommendations must be provided by senior academics. At least 3 of these recommenders should be in the United States.

When you submit your Marshall application, the 4 referees will receive the link and password to the Marshall webpage where they can submit the recommendations online.

It is important to note that references submitted after the National Deadline will not be considered.

If you are offered a Marshall Regional Interview, your referees will be contacted by email and asked to print and sign their recommendation letter, and send it to the appropriate Regional Center (the address will be provided in the email).

Mitchell

Mitchell Applications and the 4 required references are submitted online. Applicants register recommenders online, at which point each recommender will receive an email with a login user name and password in order to submit the recommendation online. Be sure to check the new word limit for recommendation letters and let your references know.

Gates

Gates Cambridge Scholarship applications require 3 references. As well as submitting 2 academic references for admission, applicants for Gates Cambridge Scholarships are asked to submit a Personal Reference as part of their application pack to University of Cambridge.

Final Suggestion for Recommenders

- Please stress to your recommenders that late letters are sometimes not added to your application. Applicants whose recommendation letters do not arrive at any level by the designated date stand a diminished chance of being successful. **Recommenders who do not submit letters on time may disqualify the applicant at the national level.**
- If you are going to be away from campus in the fall you will need to be in close touch with your references to make sure that they understand where to send their final letters.

LAST THOUGHTS.

- Plan ahead and manage your time well. This process won't seem so daunting or tiring if you stay on top of things.
- Details! Details! Details! Whether it's completing your application or following-up on your references, pay attention to the details! You don't want to come across as sloppy or lacking in seriousness of purpose.
- We are here to help!

We close with one last piece from our file of accumulated wisdom:

“Good luck, and have a good time. If you don't go into it wanting to have a good time, it's not worth it. The application takes a good amount of your and others' time (I'd recommend spending a lot of time on the essay) so you should make sure you want to have fun. You should also have a little blind confidence tempered with a very serious consideration of whether or not you have a chance. Chances are you've got a chance.