

## Rhodes Scholarship Information Session for 2020 Applicants – Transcript

Karlee Davis 0:02

Okay, good afternoon everyone. We will get started now. So as you know, this is an information session for the Rhodes Scholarship for 2021. And we're lucky enough to be joined by Professor Stan Hearn today who is the State Secretary for Queensland Rhodes Scholarship. I'll pass it over to him now.

Dr Stan Hearn 0:21

Thanks very much Karlee. I'm going to try and share my screen now so that I can talk my way through a couple of slides.

So Can everyone see see see my slides and my desktop sharing properly?

Karlee you can you just give me a

Karlee Davis 0:59

yes I can hear you and we can see the slides. Thank you.

Dr Stan Hearn 1:02

Okay, awesome. Thanks very much. All right. My name is Stan Hearn, I'm professor of Econometrics in the QUT Business School. So I guess before I get going with talking through the slides, I should acknowledge the Turrbal and Yugara people. The first nation owners of the land on which QUT stands and pay respects to their elders laws and customs and acknowledge that the lands where community stands have always been places of learning and scholarship. So, I was a Rhodes Scholar in 1983, which is so long ago now that I can't even remember it. But it was amazing. The scholarships are the the oldest and the most prestigious scholarships in the world. What I'm going to talk about today is just give you a brief background in terms of the key context, which is really important going forward for anyone that wants to put in an application. And I'll talk briefly about eligibility. Please note that the rules for eligibility have changed this year (2020). So if you've been looking at past variations of these slides, then take note that some of the eligibility criteria have changed. And there are so few of us I guess that maybe most of this most of the most interesting part of this could be a question and answer session when I've gone through the slides. Okay, so in terms of contacts, there are two important contacts, namely myself and the state administrator who's Sonya Betros, you can get hold of Sonya through the rhodesqueensland@qut.edu.au email addresss. And you can also access the QUT at Rhodes scholarships websites. So those are two really good resources that you should that you should consult. And I'll give you a couple of other websites to look at in the last slide. Alternatively, you can email me directly just using my QUT email address which is s.hearn@qut.edu.au

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Okay, so as I said the Scholarships are the oldest and most prestigious scholarships in the world. They were established in 1903. And the great thing about them is that if you are elected you become a member of the worldwide family. Nine Australian scholars each year one from each state and then three, three that are known as Australia at large scholarships. The way in which that works is that we elect the Queensland Rhodes Scholar first. And if there are any runner ups in that selection process that we think are close enough, we send them to the Australia at large selection panel. And you'd also join a community of nearly 8000 Rhodes Scholars worldwide. And that community is becoming incredibly active at the moment and trying to become involved in good causes all over the world. This year's Rhodes Scholar will be starting hopefully in September is Nick Salmon, who is pictured here. So Nick is an engineer from UQ (University of Queensland). And he'll be going to Oxford to do a doctorate in ways trying to find ways of producing ammonia in a green way. QUT just recently, has had quite a lot of success in terms of Rhodes Scholars since 1998. We've had eight and we had a really good run between 2011 and 2016. But just recently we've dropped off a little bit. So I hope that some of you that are here today will think about applying and getting back getting us back on trend. We had pictured here we have Brody Foy and Harriet Horsfall who the 2015 and 2016 Queensland Rhode Scholars. Okay, so here is the most important thing, this is the slide about eligibility.

So you need to be an Australian citizen or permanent resident, there's a residence missing there. So this is new. Previously, you had to be an Australian citizen, but now you can be an citizen or a permanent resident. And you must have completed at least two years of schooling at an Australian Secondary school. So those are the major place eligibility criteria. And so the road scholarship prides itself on being related to a specific place in Australia and Queensland. And you need to be therefore an Australian citizen or permanent resident and had gone to school for two years at secondary school in Australia. This is new. The second second eligibility criterion is also new in the sense that we've relaxed the requirements that you do an honors degree as an eligibility criterion. So you need now to have completed an Australian bachelor's degree with or without honors, or an Australian master's degree or international equivalent by the 30th of June 2021. To be eligible. I'll come back to the the width or without on this thing on the next slide. In terms of age, the standard criterion is that you need to be older than 18 and you need to be young Then 26 when you take up your when you take up your scholarship, but we've added another rider to that record recognizing that a lot of people actually don't have a traditional path anymore into into the degree and may have an interrupted first degree. We now allow us a net now allow you to apply if you have not passed your 27th birthday and if your first undergraduate degree was awarded on or after the first of July 2019 and the star that we see there is just to clarify that when you receive your degree is a matter for you of university policy. So the university will actually confirm exactly when you receive your degree and if there is any ambiguity as to whether you meet the criteria or not. Then we would seek a ruling from the National Secretary and that would be the way in which that is dealt with. The other thing that you need to be aware of is that you can apply for a Rhodes Scholarship but you can only apply twice. So and you need to apply in the same jurisdiction. So if you believe that you're eligible for the Queensland Rhodes Scholarship, you can apply twice, but you need to apply in Queensland. If you applied in Queensland the first time, the second time has to be in the same jurisdiction. Okay, so there are quite a few changes there to the to the eligibility criteria aimed at mainly trying to just loosen the eligibility criteria slightly, both in terms of permanent residency and in terms of age, recognizing that many people don't have a smooth path to their first degree. Okay, so what are the selection criteria and this is where I'm going to come back to the with or without honors thing. So the most important criterion is academic excellence. And an indicative expectation is a GPA of 6.75 out of seven, or a weighted average mark of at least 80%. Most importantly, Oxford is getting very,

very difficult to get into and so you need to check that your results actually meet the entry requirements for your proposed course. So I just been actually exchanging emails with someone from another university who was interested in applying and found that they did not in fact, have an honors degree. So although that did not disqualify them from applying, turned out the course that they wanted to do in Oxford required that they have a honors degree. And so they really had to readjust their thinking in terms of the course that they'd want to do at Oxford because Oxford stated quite clearly in the entry requirements that they required a four year honors degree. So whilst the honors is no longer an eligibility criterion, you do need to make sure that your academic your academic credentials satisfied the entry requirements for Oxford. And also, you need to take into account the fact that although even if you are elected as a Rhodes Scholar, the scholarship is not confirmed until you have been accepted by an Oxford college.

Okay, what sets Rhodes aside from any of the other scholarships, though, is that it's not just academic excellence, which the selection committee is looking for. The scholarship was established in terms of the will of Sessile Rhodes and he was particularly interested in trying to select people who had energy, energy to use their talents to the full, and also a devotion to duty and the moral force of character in terms of demonstrated leadership. So all of these selection criteria I examine very carefully by the selection committee, and something that I need to stress with you is that it needs to be a sustained devotion to duty or sustained commitment to extracurricular activities. We're very concerned about people just engaging in CV padding by putting something in which they've relatively recently adopted merely to satisfy one or two of these criteria. So it has to be a genuine service to the community, commitment to an extracurricular activity. And the pursuit of excellence is really what the Rhodes is about. Okay, so as you can imagine, we're all, we're all a little bit in a tizzy about the COVID-19 situation and how the application is going to run this year. Applications are all online and submitted through the website whose URL you can see there. And you see that this is going to happen in July and September. And the shortlisting and election normally happens in October. The one thing which may be different this year, and that is we might have to do the selection process digitally, through something like a zoom meeting like this or perhaps some other platform. Rhodes House has told us that they are very keen to ensure that if at any one of the constituencies that elect Rhodes Scholars use a digital platform to do the election, then for fairness, everybody should do it. So although countries are at different stages of the COVID cycle, and Australia in particular seems now to be coming to a situation where we relaxing restrictions, it may very well be that this is not the case in other Rhodes constituencies. And so it might be that we have to run things digitally this year. But obviously, this will become clearer as we move through the the election cycle. In terms of your application, there are two important parts a CV of no more than three A4 pages in length and personal statement, like the personal statement is really important. And you should speak with your own distinctive voice.

And where although you could you can seek advice from a network advisor Rhodes network advisor in very broad terms, the personal statement must be your own work. okay and you should address things like how you, where you come from, where you think you're going, what you how the Oxford course that you choose is going to fit with how you see your future. Five referees is quite a big ask three academic and two other. One thing I should stress is that you should know your referees but they shouldn't be close family. A lot of people make the mistake of going for very eminent people to act as referees, but the eminent people don't know the applicant at all. And you can see that in there in the referee. So make sure that you choose your referees very, very carefully. And also make sure that you don't choose any more than five referees. Five is what what you're allowed. What does

the scholarship entail? Well, it's incredibly generous. Scholarship covers all university and college fees. And it also gives you a personal stipend which used to be great in days in the pre COVID days because you could use the personal and you're encouraged to use the personal stipend to travel, and travel in Europe is relatively easy and cheap. And so as a Rhodes Scholar, you're in incredibly privileged position to spend some of your holidays traveling in Europe. I'm not sure how that will that will play out in the next couple of years but believe me, the stipend is is very, very generous. But also make you also get different private health insurance and airfares to and from Oxford note that you can't defer the scholarship and you can't hold the scholarship with any other scholarship. And one other thing which I need to emphasize is that while you are at Oxford You'll be required to engage with other scholars through the Rhodes service and leadership program at the center of this kind of community is Rhodes House, which is right in the center of Oxford. And the current warden is very, very keen on getting scholars together and in and getting them to experience the whole community of scholars through the Rhodes house through the medium of Rhodes house. Okay, some simple frequently asked questions, which maybe I can give you some answers to. So, if you did say, if you're studying abroad at an American college, are you eligible? Yes, you are so long as you are an Australian citizen, and so long as you did two years of schooling in high school in Australia. Can someone be eligible for the scholarship if they're 26 birthdays in the same year? They would commence at Oxford. Yes, they can, so long as they're not 26 by the first of October, in the year in which you take up your scholarship. Grades, well, grades are very important. So you need to think very carefully about your grades and also about whether or not you satisfied the Oxford entry criteria. In terms of studying overseas, well, this is a this is an interesting one at the moment. Generally, you would have to attend the interview, if you were studying overseas, at your own expense. The date would be in October, but as I said, this year, everything's up in the air because of the potential for having to do the whole process digitally. So this question is probably not as relevant now as it was last year. And the last question, no, you can't list more than five referees. It's five and five, only. You should think very carefully about the referees. The referees are a really important part of the application and a bit of time spent thinking about who to ask is time well spent. Okay, so some other websites that I promised you the Queensland road scholarship page is run by QUT and administered by Sonia Betros, and you can find it there.

The Rhodes scholarships in Australia. They have a page which is part of the Rhodes House page. So if you go to [Rhodeshouse.ox.ac.uk](http://Rhodeshouse.ox.ac.uk), you'll find a lot of information there and there's information for candidates under the Australia tab there. And then of course, there is the application for the Rhodes Scholarships, which must be through the website. And then finally, if you need any information before that, feel free to contact the Rhodes, Queensland email, and we'll get back to you as soon as we can. Okay, well, I think that's about all the only formal presentation which part of the presentation which I have for you today. So perhaps if I can stop sharing my screen, then we could take some questions if anyone's interested.

Karlee Davis 19:30

Feel free to either unmute your mic or pop a question in the chat and we can read it out for you.

Question 1 19:43

Hi, Stan, if I could just ask a question about the scholarships. Sure. So, you said that you can't have scholarships with the Rhode Scholarship, but does that include college specific scholarships?

Dr Stan Hern 20:00

Ah, yes, I can't recall any. I can't recall any instances in which the college is offered scholarships to Rhodes Scholars. So some of the colleges have what they call exhibitions and other scholarships, which are small grants to members of the college, but I don't recall that any of those were held, were given to Rhodes scholarships. I'm not sure about the situation. Psychologists do have traveled grants and things like that, where if you want to go and study aspects of, you know, the archeology of Machu Picchu and you apply it to the college for a small travel grant. I'm not sure that doesn't count as being an actual scholarship, but if it were an exhibition, a formal college exhibition or scholarship to contribute to your fees or living expenses, no, that wouldn't, that would count as being a scholarship and that wouldn't be allowed. Okay, thank you so much.

Karlee Davis 21:19

We have a question in the chat. I'll just read it out for everyone. I may be going off on a tangent here, but I'm, I'm an international student, and I'm only eligible for the global scholarships. Are there any major differences between that application process and this one?

Dr Stan Hern 21:36

Uh, no, I don't I don't believe so. I believe that the global the global scholarships processes is very similar. But I can check up on that and if you want to send me an email, I can confirm that for you, you know, in a private email exchange.

Karlee Davis 21:54

Okay, next question. If I applied for a scholarship in Queensland was unsuccessful And I did another degree in another state or country and then wanted to apply again, would I still be able to apply as a Queensland applicant?

Dr Stan Hern 22:09

Yes. Essentially, if you qualify for a scholarship in more than one jurisdiction, you basically need to think about which of these jurisdictions you feel most attached to and then make that application in that jurisdiction having made that decision, then you would continue to apply in that jurisdiction next time.

Karlee Davis 22:35

Are the four main criteria points that you assess viewed equally or is academic excellence weighted higher than the others, IE (example) devotion to duty demonstrated leadership?

Dr Stan Hern 22:47

I think once it gets to, once it gets to the shortlisting process, and the actual election then all of these things are taken into account equally.

Obviously

You know academic excellence is and the belief that you could actually gain entrance to Oxford is a cutoff point. So no matter how good all those other points are if your academic criteria are not good, not good enough, that the committee believes that you will be accepted into Oxford then obviously you're not going to be shortlisted. So it's a kind of once you once you pass the hurdle, then all four criteria are addressed equally.

Karlee Davis 23:34

Max says Hi, Stan, I'm studying an Economics Law dual degree at QUT and the Oxford PPE (Philosophy, Politics and Economics) greatly interests me, with the overlap between economics in both degrees I mean, this would not be looked upon favorably

Dr Stan Hearn 23:49

um, look, I think Economics at QUT in the Business Faculty. Traditionally, Economics is a social science. So the actual economics, which you do at QUT is a very, very small subset of what economics is as a discipline. And you see, if you looked at the Oxford, PPE (Philosophy, Politics and Economics), you'd see that the breadth of Economics in PPE is absolutely huge. So there would be very little overlap between economics that you would be able to do at Oxford and the economics, which you did at QUT. And I think the point is not whether there is any overlap or not, I think the real point you have to answer is where does the PPE fit with where you see yourself going next. So doing a second BA is allowable in terms of scholarship. So what you really need to think about is not whether you can do the second BA you can and you can apply. What you need to think of is what are you going to use the Second BA for how is it going to contribute to you as an individual and how is that going to give you a leg up in what you're pursuing?

Karlee Davis 25:18

Okay, were there any other questions?

Dr Stan Hearn 25:31

So if you don't want to, if you if you would like to email your questions and have an email exchange with me, you could either send the email to the Rhodes Scholarship one at QUT or to my own private email which is just s.hearn@qut.edu.au. And I'll be happy to chat to you about any of the concerns that you have.

Karlee Davis 25:59

Okay, Thank you so much for your time today, Stan, and thank you for the information,

Dr Stan Hearn 26:05

no problems. I really hope to see the number of applicants from QUT this year.

Karlee Davis 26:13

And thank you everyone for coming.