

Introducing The Mandela Rhodes Scholarship

The Mandela Rhodes Scholarship is much more than financial support for your studies. It is a unique opportunity for young leaders from anywhere in Africa to further their education in South Africa. While completing postgraduate study in any field of your choice, our leadership development programme will empower you to solve some of Africa's most difficult challenges. You will begin a life-changing leadership journey, and find a community of people who share your passion for the positive transformation of Africa.

The leadership development programme

Our programme is built on our founding principles of reconciliation, education, entrepreneurship, and leadership, and a belief that leadership begins with inner transformation. Our programme is delivered primarily through a series of online or in-person workshops which you will attend during your time in residence.

Financial support

The scholarship covers tuition for a one-year Honours degree or a two-year Masters degree in any field at a recognised South African institution of higher education. This includes tuition and registration fees, allowances for study materials, research, and medical aid, accommodation and meals, personal allowance and economy class travel to and from your home country to your South African university at the beginning and end of your degree.

Eligibility criteria

If you are between the ages of 19 and 29, are a citizen of any African country, and have a first degree with above average academic results (70% or upper second), you are eligible to apply for the scholarship.

Selection criteria

We look for scholars who have demonstrated the potential to embody our founding principles of reconciliation, education, entrepreneurship, and leadership. You must have already assumed leadership and made an impact on your campus or community.

Potential for growth

To benefit you must be curious about doing the personal, internal work of leadership. This means committing to developing self-awareness by engaging with difficult parts of yourself, an openness to learning from the diversity in your cohort, and a willingness to explore and embrace complexity.



“My experience as a scholar was most enriching in terms of personal development. The workshops and constant debates challenged my beliefs and provided me with new lenses to view the world, further stoking the fire in my heart to be part of the change in Africa.” – Mary Opondo (Kenya & the University of Johannesburg, 2011)

Young African,

Aspire to be a Mandela Rhodes Scholar if you dream of being a leader; a leader in whose blend of character and intellect Africa will take pride.

Aspire to this if you believe you have within you the moral force of character and instinct to lead; and understand that leadership is more than personal ambition, it is also service, requiring the will and capacity to inspire and develop fellow human beings to their own excellence;

Aspire to this if you believe that the advancement of individual and social fulfillment, human rights, dignity, the achievement of fundamental freedoms, is among the highest of callings;

Aspire to this if you believe that hard work is essential, and you esteem the performance of public duties to be among the noblest of aims.

Aspire to be a Mandela Rhodes Scholar if you understand education to be both a gift and a tool for the advancement of human development, to the benefit of all.

Aspire to this if you value and pursue scholastic attainment, but understand that intellectual excellence is not to be seen in isolation from other qualities of character; that leaders require a roundedness of personality;

Aspire to this if you believe that in receiving an exceptional education, an individual embraces a responsibility to foster such opportunities for others;

Aspire to this if you believe that your own success might also make a difference to others.

Aspire to be a Mandela Rhodes Scholar if you believe in an entrepreneurial spirit to allow Africa to take with dignity its rightful place as an equal and competitive presence in the global world.

Aspire to this if you have the vigour to pursue this aim with integrity; and the energy to use your talents to the full, as exemplified by a fondness for and success in team pursuits beyond the confines of your professional career;

Aspire to this if you believe that individual human effort, innovation and creativity will lead to the betterment of society and an effective contribution to the world;

Aspire to this if you love Africa and all of its peoples.

Aspire to be a Mandela Rhodes Scholar if you believe in reconciliation, freedom, peace and prosperity among all human beings, who should share equal citizenship and opportunities in this world.

Aspire to this if you believe in being part of creating a humane world in which all individuals and cultures enjoy equal respect; a world whose emergence will say a new order is born in which we are all each other's keepers;

Aspire to this if you value truth, courage, devotion to duty, sympathy for and protection of the weak, kindness, unselfishness and fellowship;

Aspire to be a Mandela Rhodes Scholar if you believe that the past, in all its imperfection, should be harnessed to benefit the present and the future.