Overview of the MMR Campus Application Short Answers & Motivation Statement

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MMR Website: https://ccrf.uchicago.edu/national-fellowships/2021-marshall-mitchell-and-rhodes-campus-endorsement-process
Overview Session Outline

- Review of the short answers and Motivation Statement (MS)
  - General Overview
  - Audiences
  - Style & Tone
  - Prompts
  - Effective structures

- Initial Steps: where and how to begin
- Writing Process Overview
- Campus Process Next Steps
- Questions
What’s your primary job?
Short Essays – General Overview

• Provide you with the opportunity to address specific topics relevant to the fellowship program and its mission.
  • Communication of a **strong, compelling, specific** case for you: as a future leader, as ambitious for others, for your commitment to academic excellence, and for the academic program(s) you have selected, as well as how they fit into your future vocational vision

• Format:
  • **Word count varies** (all are very short; requires concision)
  • No bibliographies, publications, citations, etc. 1-inch margins
  • Times New Roman, 12-point font
Short essays & MS – Audiences

- **UChicago Campus Nomination Process** - May 2021
- **MMR National Deadlines** - Late Sept. - October 2021
- **Invitations to interview** - November 2021
- **Scholar Selection** - November - early December 2021
- **Graduate program begins** - (October 2022)

**Appointed Faculty Nomination Committee:** across all disciplines
- Nomination interview: 5/29-6/3
Short essays & MS – Audiences

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**National Readers (also your interviewers):** former MMR scholars, academics, professionals across all fields/disciplines, public officials, members of the area embassies or consulates
Short essays & MS – Audiences

UChicago Campus Nomination Process - May 2021

MMR National Deadlines
Late Sept. - October 2021

Invitations to interview
November 2021

Scholar Selection
November – early December 2021

Graduate program begins
(October 2022)

Institutional readers: members of the departments and admissions boards to which you have applied at your chosen university.
Short essays & MS – Audiences

- Readers likely will not be specialists in your field
- Readers will not be specialists in your chosen graduate degree program
- Readers will be reviewing many (many) applications from equally exceptional candidates
- Readers will have intimate knowledge of and commitments to the scholarship program’s mission
- Readers will be both US citizens and citizens of the UK and/or Ireland
Short essays & MS – Audiences ➔ Style & Tone

- Essays should be well-written, organized, straightforward, specific, concise, and grammatically correct
- Readers likely will not be specialists in your field
  - Avoid discipline-specific jargon
  - Explain complex ideas in a thoughtful, clear, specific and precise manner
  - SHOW NOT TELL
- Readers will be reviewing many applications
  - *Your reader will not read your essays or MS twice.* Do not make them search for information elsewhere in the statement or your application.
  - *Make it as easy as possible for your reader to understand (and get excited about) about what you are writing in these responses*
- Reader will expect cultural awareness
  - Demonstrate your place-specific knowledge and cultural sensitivity (why the UK/IRE?)
  - Demonstrate your sincere interest in and motivation for attending graduate school in the host country
- Reviewers will be both US citizens and British or Irish citizens
  - Avoid loaded or biased language
  - Demonstrate through your written material your ability to serve as a cultural ambassador
  - Demonstrate a sophistication of thought about why you need to be in the UK/IRE
Short answers & supporting documents

- Biographical Data
- Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- Short Essays:
  - Leadership
  - Problem of Society
  - Ambassadorial Potential*
- Post-Scholarship Plan
- Vocational Statement
- Letters of recommendation
- Transcripts
- Institutional Letter*

MOTIVATION STATEMENT
Short Answers and MS must address:

- Biographical Data
- Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- Short Essays:
  - Leadership
  - Service
  - Ambassadorial Potential*
- Post-Scholarship Plan
- Vocational Statement
- Letters of recommendation
- Transcripts
- Institutional Letter*
- Motivation statement

Marshall, Mitchell, Rhodes mission
Short essays (8)

• Describe specific example of leadership (350)
  • What changed because you were involved; how did you take something from A-Z?

• Describe recent, particularly satisfying public service activity (broadly defined; 350)
  • Broad definition of public service – how have you served others?

• Describe the problem or needs of society you wish to address following graduate study (350)
  • What are you going to change for the better? What are you going to end?

• List the 3 most significant courses you’ve taken in preparation for graduate study (150 words)
Short essays (8)

• Describe top-choice graduate program in the UK/IRE (250 words)
  • Be specific; discuss faculty you wish to study with, what type of research you will undertake, and why you need to be at the institution/in the host-country. If you could swap out “Oxford” for “Stanford”, you aren’t being specific enough.

• What do you hope to do and what position/role do you hope to have immediately after scholarship? (150)

• What do you hope to do and what position/role do you hope to have 7-10 years later? (250)
  • In order to address the problem or needs of society you have identified, what role might you aim for in order to make the greatest change?

• Additional information (250)
Motivation Statement – General Overview

• Details “so what”, why, then/and the who/how of what you aim to accomplish as a Marshall, Mitchell, or Rhodes Scholar in relation to your ambitions for the world.
  • Communication of a strong, compelling, specific case for why you (vis-à-vis your experience) and why what you care about matters

• Format:
  • 750 words
  • No bibliographies, publications, citations, etc. 1-inch margins
  • Times New Roman, 12-point font
  • Include a header with the following information:
    • Full name
    • Name of fellowship program (or “2021 MMR Campus Application”)
Motivation Statement: Prompt

• **Marshall:** This should be a short statement in which candidates should describe their intellectual development and other interests and pursuits.

• **Rhodes:** The statement should describe the applicant's academic and other interests, and describe the specific areas of proposed study and the reasons for wishing to study at Oxford. Selection committees will place special emphasis on the personal statement and it may be forwarded to Oxford colleges to which Rhodes Scholars-elect apply for admission.

• **Mitchell:** The personal statement or essay is your opportunity to share your personality, passion, and drive with the selection committee that cannot be communicated elsewhere in the application materials.
Motivation Statement: ???
But what is it really?

• It is the heart of your application
• It must do the “heavy lifting”
• It introduces the reader to your motivations
• It makes the case for your candidacy
• It convinces the reader to care about what you care about (by answering “so, what?”)

• It explains “why now” (for you and the world)
• It leaves the reader wanting to know more (and invite you to an interview)
• It provides a sense of the “person” behind the accomplishments
• It is urgent and futurist
• It is authentic
Motivation Statement: ???

What it is not

• An op-ed
• A journal entry
• Your entire life story
• A narrative CV
• An abstract of the rest of your application
• A list of accolades or about famous people you know
• A philosophical assessment of who you think you “are”
• Based on examples written by others
• About others’ experience (including your parents)
Motivation Statement: ???

What it should not be

• Abstract
• Exclusively academic in tone
• About your “passions” or what you “love”
• Chronological
• Non-specific
• Political

• Unrelated/inconsistent with other materials
• Overly personal (your interview is based on your statement)
• Full of florid language
• Written 24-hrs in advance
Motivation Statement:

the four “A”s

• Articulate

• Active (in tone)

• Aspirational

• Authentic*
Motivation Statement: ???

What it should do

• Set the tone/context for your application
• Give a clear sense of what you want to do in the world and why your reader should a) care and b) believe that it is work worth doing (urgency)
• Give a clear sense of what drives you, what has shaped your values/visions for the proposed work you hope to do in the world
• Be a compelling, cohesive narrative
• Be honest and authentic; do not pad, assert false modesty, or try to guess what the reader wants
• Begin with a “hook” and then provide a signpost for where the rest of the essay will go (local/global)
• Be a pleasure to read (and easy)

For R, Mitch: include a brief statement about proposed academic program

Leave the reader “breathless”
Motivation Statement: Structure

• The opening statement (the who/cares)
  • The “hook” – something memorable but relevant about you
  • What do you propose to do?
  • Why does the “what” matter?
  • Likely the shortest, tightest, and most lucid paragraph of the entire statement

• The evidence (the what)
  • A series of paragraphs that provide the experiential based evidence for the case you are building
  • Uses 2-4 specific examples/activities to illustrate the case.
  • Examples should correspond to the mission of the program: Academic Excellence; Service – ambition for others; Leadership Potential
  • Also showcases how you are prepared for success

• The proposition (the why, why now, why this)
  • How the above builds toward why the graduate program, how it supports you in preparing to become a change agent
  • Why now?
  • Why this?
  • Why the UK or Ireland?
  • Why this helps you become the visionary you aim to be?

• The closing statement (the what next)
  • Take it home!
  • Why them?
  • Reminds the reader of your vision, agency, and make include a reminder of your purpose statement and what this opportunity will allow you to do
Writing Process Overview

1. First Draft
   - MS Overview and Writing Workshops
   - Brainstorming Worksheet
   - MS Text Blocks
   - Rough Draft
   - Revision

2. Second Draft
   - Revision
   - Advisor Feedback
   - Revision
   - Trusted Mentor/Naive Reader Feedback

3. Third Draft
   - Submitted for the Nomination Interview
   - Campus Committee Feedback
   - Revision

4. Fourth Draft
   - Advisor Feedback
   - Revision

5. Fifth Draft
   - Advisor Feedback
   - Revision
   - Start preparing Rhodes, Mitchell drafts

6. Sixth Draft
   - Submitted for 2nd Campus Committee discussion (CCRF team only)
   - Revision
   - Advisor feedback as needed

7. Final Draft(s)
   - Revision
   - Submit to the National Committees

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
Writing Process Overview

(1) Attend one SPR quarter writing workshop:
   • March 31 or April 1

(2) Short answer and MS drafts are DUE 72 hours before your scheduled 1:1 advising meeting with Dr. Fazio; submit by email:
   • Individual advising appointments will open in April
Next Steps

• **Reflect** upon your developing sense of purpose, value of the proposed programs, why the UK/Ireland, and the experiences and motivations that are pushing you toward changing the world.

• **Identify a graduate programs and faculty scholars that are a good fit (and unique from what you might do in the US)**

• Interrogate your significant co- and extra-curricular activities
  • Evidence of ambition for others: service
  • Potential for leadership
  • Case for the UK/IRE and programs

• Revisit the programs’ mission statement and read about alumni

• Invite **feedback from trusted mentors as you consider various programs**

• Identify a trust pair of readers (one can be a mentor; another should be a ”naïve reader”)

➢ You will receive an **MS Brainstorming Worksheet via Canvas**
Reminders

• MMR Canvas site will open by mid-March for all cohort members

• MMR Campus application portal will open the first week of spring quarter. Your complete application (final drafts, letters, etc., will be uploaded to the portal – not via Canvas). You will receive a notification when that portal is open.

• **PLEASE NOTE all draft deadlines (online).** You will receive an email in early April inviting you to set up your first advising appointment.

• Final campus nomination deadline: May 17, 2021
Questions

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