General Guide

What the Weidenfeld-Hoffmann Scholarship is actually funding, the eligibility rules, and how the Scholarships Statement and Leadership Programme fit together.

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FEES + LIVING GRANT	AREAS ASSESSED	ESSAY QUESTIONS	TO READ & DOWNLOAD

01 SECTION 1

What the Weidenfeld-Hoffmann Scholarship is actually funding

The Oxford-Weidenfeld and Hoffmann Scholarships and Leadership Programme is a fully-funded scholarship for a one-year taught master's at the University of Oxford, paired with a compulsory leadership programme. It was established in 2015 and is funded jointly: the University of Oxford contributes 40 per cent and the Weidenfeld-Hoffmann Trust, including its partner Fondation Hoffmann, contributes 60 per cent.

The award covers **100 per cent of your course fees** and a living-cost grant of **at least £21,805** for 2026-27, for the full duration of your fee liability. Alongside the academic year, scholars complete around **200 hours** of the Leadership Programme: ethical leadership discussions, an enterprise or business challenge, communication training, and a cohort of scholars who stay in touch long after Oxford.

Two restrictions follow directly from what this scholarship is actually for:

- **One-year, full-time, taught master's courses only.** The scholarship does not fund a DPhil, part-time study, or a second master's taken purely for its own sake.
- **The Leadership Programme is compulsory, not optional.** Scholars must arrive at Oxford before the start of the academic year in September, attend an intensive introduction before term starts, and remain in Oxford through July after Trinity Term, when most other students have already left. If you cannot manage an intensive programme running alongside your degree, this is not the right scholarship for you.

What this means for your application: WHT is not simply funding a good student. It is choosing people who can carry a demanding leadership programme alongside a Master's, and who have somewhere specific to take both when they go home.

02 SECTION 2

Who it is for, and the eligibility checks that end an application first

Run through these before you write a word. All are assessed from your Oxford graduate application form, your Weidenfeld-Hoffmann Scholarships Statement and, if you are shortlisted, your interview.

- **A new, full-time graduate course.** You must be applying to start a new course at Oxford. Students already at Oxford are not eligible unless they are already Weidenfeld-Hoffmann Scholars, and the scholarship is not open to candidates who hold a deferred offer to start in 2027-28.
- **Ordinarily resident in an eligible country.** Your country of ordinary residence, not only your nationality, is assessed from the "Nationality and ordinary residence" section of the Oxford graduate application form.
- **An eligible course.** Check the published list of eligible courses and countries before you apply. Not every Oxford master's is covered.
- **Intending to return home.** You must intend to return to your country of ordinary residence once your course is completed, and be able to show a real connection between your subject of study and your longer-term career objectives there.
- **Unable to otherwise afford Oxford.** The scholarship exists for outstanding graduates and professionals, mainly from developing and emerging economies, who could not otherwise fund Oxford study themselves.

No age limit. The Trust is explicit that there is no upper age limit, though most scholars have five or more years of professional experience by the time they apply. Prior employment is not a formal requirement, but your application needs to show the same thing a five-year career shows: that you have already started doing the work this scholarship is meant to accelerate.

03 SECTION 3

The four things the panel actually assesses

WHT names four areas it evaluates. Treat all four as essential, since the weighting between them is not published.

AREA	WHAT THE PANEL IS CHECKING	WHERE IT MOSTLY LIVES
Motivation and purpose	A genuine commitment to change at home, documented existing impact, and a course that is clearly linked to your career goals, not just a credential	Q1, Q4, Q5, your course choice
Leadership potential	Initiative, commitment, responsibility, originality, creativity and risk-taking, evidenced through specific examples, not adjectives	Q2, your professional and voluntary experience
Commitment to the Programme	Whether you can realistically arrive early, stay late, and manage an intensive leadership programme alongside a demanding degree	Implicit throughout; made explicit at interview
Eligible country and course	Ordinary residence, an eligible course, and an offer of admission secured by the relevant December or January deadline	Your graduate application form

Notice what this means in practice: an impressive CV with no clear route home scores worse than a modest one with a named, specific plan. WHT's own guidance is blunt about this. It wants people who "intend to take new skills acquired at Oxford to benefit their countries or regions," not people who merely hope that studying somewhere prestigious will work out well for them personally.

04 SECTION 4

What the Weidenfeld-Hoffmann Scholarships Statement actually asks

You complete this Statement once and upload it as a PDF with every graduate course application you submit (if you apply to more than one course). CHECK the live form before you finalise, since the Trust can update it between cycles.

SECTION	WHAT IT ASKS FOR
Personal data	Name and date of birth
Course choice	The name and duration of your chosen graduate course at Oxford
Education history	Every university attended, with dates, degree and grade
Professional experience	Your two most significant recent jobs or internships, each with main responsibilities and achievements
Voluntary work	Your two most significant volunteering roles, each with main responsibilities and achievements
Other scholarships	Every other scholarship, Oxford and non-Oxford, you have applied for (not ones you are automatically considered for)
Five essay questions	Each answered in no more than 200 words. See Guides 2 to 6 in this series, one per question.
How you heard about the scholarship	A tick-box: Oxford website, word of mouth, a former scholar, the WHT website, or other

> **Convert it to PDF before you upload it.** The Statement is distributed as a Word document. The Trust's own notes to applicants ask you to check you have converted it to PDF before uploading it alongside your main Oxford application. An unconverted .docx upload is the kind of mistake that costs nothing to avoid and everything to discover after the deadline.

The five essay questions can change between cycles

Former scholars are a genuinely useful source of advice, but be cautious about relying on the exact questions they describe from their own year. WHT has, in past cycles, revised some of the supplementary questions, so a question a scholar tells you they answered may not be the one on your form. Treat accounts from previous applicants as a guide to the craft, tone and what the panel is listening for, and always draft against the exact wording on the current Statement, not a remembered or secondhand version of it.

05 SECTION 5

Mistakes that end an application before the essays are read

Applying to an ineligible course or country. Not every Oxford master's is on the eligible list, and eligibility is assessed by ordinary residence, not only passport nationality. Check both against the published list before you invest time.

Missing the real deadline. Only applicants whose course application is considered against the relevant December or January deadline are eligible for scholarship consideration. If your application is held over to be assessed against a later March deadline, or placed on a waiting list, you are not eligible for the scholarship that cycle, even if you are eventually admitted. Apply early, not at the last moment your course page allows.

Forgetting the Statement, or submitting it as a Word file. The scholarship is not applied for separately. You select the Weidenfeld-Hoffmann Scholarships and Leadership Programme in the Scholarships section of Oxford's own graduate application form, then upload the completed Statement, as a PDF, with your course application. An application for admission with no Statement attached is not an application for this scholarship.

A deferred offer. This scholarship is not open to candidates holding a deferred offer to start in 2027-28. If you deferred, you are applying for a different cycle's scholarship, not this one.

No route home. The single most common weak application is a strong CV with a vague or absent account of why this specific course, and what happens afterwards, in the applicant's own country or region. Every one of the five essay questions gives you a chance to make that link explicit. Use all five.

Treating the five questions as a personal statement rehash. Your Oxford application, your CV-style entries on the Statement, and your five essay answers all exist in the same document stack. The panel has already seen your qualifications and employment history by the time they read your essays. Repeating that material instead of adding to it wastes the 200 words you have been given.

The copy-paste name. If you are drafting several scholarship applications at once, proofread specifically for the name of a different scholarship left over from a template or a previous draft. It happens more often than applicants expect, and it is one of the few mistakes that tells a panel you were not really writing to them.

None of the five questions asks "who are you," so make room for it anyway

Look at your five answers together before you submit. None of them directly invites you to explain your background or how you arrived at the work you do, which means it is easy to

answer all five correctly and still leave the panel with no sense of who they are reading about. Use the opening of at least one answer, wherever it fits most naturally, to give a sentence or two of context: where you come from, or the moment that set you on this path, before you answer the question itself. The five answers are read together, not in isolation, so this only has to happen once across the whole Statement, not in every answer.

Write what you actually think, not what you guess the panel wants

At 200 words, a guessed answer and an honest one often look similar on the surface, but a panel that reads hundreds of these can tell the difference between a position you hold and a position you assembled because you thought it was the expected one. Answer from your own view, even where it is less polished, rather than reverse-engineering what you imagine a scholarship panel wants to hear.

Lead with the thing you think is a weakness, not a rehearsed version of yourself

It is tempting to present a flawless, pre-packaged account of your achievements across all five answers. A panel assembling a genuinely varied cohort is not looking for the same polished shape forty times over. The detail you are tempted to leave out because it feels like a weakness, an unconventional path, a gap, a lack of formal credentials, is often the thing that makes your account distinct. State it plainly rather than working around it.

Draft long, cut hard, and expect more than one sitting

200 words is short enough that a first attempt is rarely the version you submit. Write past the limit first, then cut in rounds rather than trying to write the final version immediately. Treat each of the five answers this way, over more than one sitting if you can, since the cuts you would make on a second read are rarely visible on the first.

06 SECTION 6

The timeline

WHEN	WHAT HAPPENS
September	Applications open for the next entry year

WHEN	WHAT HAPPENS
December to January	Course application deadline, which varies by course. Check your specific course page.
By the course deadline	Weidenfeld-Hoffmann Scholarships Statement uploaded with your course application, as a PDF
Around April	Shortlisted candidates interviewed, likely online
End of May	Decisions made. If you have not heard by then, assume the application was unsuccessful; the Trust does not contact unsuccessful applicants individually or give feedback
September/October	Compulsory introduction to the Leadership Programme, shortly before the academic year starts

Two mechanics worth knowing before you plan around them. First, successful candidates are transferred to one of the scholarship's partner colleges, which contribute part of the funding, so your college preference on the application may not be your final college. Second, by applying for this scholarship you also consent to being considered for partnership awards the Trust runs with the Oxford Pakistan Programme and with Chevening; if you want to be considered for a Chevening-Weidenfeld-Hoffmann award specifically, you must also apply through the Chevening website and list Oxford as your first-preference university.