

The Shaun Johnson Memorial Scholarships

Background

The central purpose of The Mandela Rhodes Foundation is to build exceptional leadership capacity in Africa. The Mandela Rhodes programmes aim to **develop leadership and vocational capacity** across African society, to help the continent **achieve success and prosperity and full equal participation in the global world**.

Beyond the flagship Scholarships Programme, the MRF sees potential in partnering with like-minded organisations to further enhance its purpose and impact. In 2016, the Foundation partnered with the Leverhulme Trust to create a new Doctoral Scholarship offering. This opportunity is **only available to Alumni of the MRF**, making it a very compelling supplementary offering to the Mandela Rhodes experience. The Shaun Johnson Memorial Scholarships were known as the Leverhulme Mandela Rhodes Doctoral Scholarships until March 2020, when they were renamed in honour of Shaun Johnson, the MRF's Founding Executive Director, after he passed away unexpectedly.

The aim of the Shaun Johnson Memorial Scholarships (SJMS) is to **increase the impact and effectiveness of Mandela Rhodes Alumni** who wish to pursue PhD studies outside the African continent, by connecting them to financial support for doctoral study in the United Kingdom. We believe that this partnership is aligned with our vision to increase leadership and vocational capacity.

The Shaun Johnson Memorial Scholarships increases **vocational capacity by:**

1. Supporting Alumni to further specialise in their chosen disciplines through doctoral study.
2. Enabling Alumni to access some of the best supervisors and research facilities in those disciplines, which may not necessarily be available in their home countries.

The Shaun Johnson Memorial Scholarships increase **leadership capacity by:**

- Supporting Alumni who have clearly identified and articulated the next phase of their leadership journey and feel that doctoral studies will support that intent.
- Increasing Alumni access **to international networks** of academic and vocational influence via strategic positioning at UK universities.

Selection criteria

The Mandela Rhodes Foundation acknowledges and supports the Leverhulme Trust's approach to grant giving, which is to use established criteria as a baseline, and from there select on the basis of congruence with the Trust's values and aims. The primary baseline criteria for PHD research proposals are: **originality, importance, significance, and merit**.

The secondary criteria for the Shaun Johnson Memorial Scholarship are designed to meet the aims of the MRF outlined above. Applicants should motivate for the scholarship on the basis of the following criteria:

1. **Their research.** The research proposal should have a demonstrable potential social impact, that will contribute to the betterment of Africa. The research should meet the criteria of originality, importance, significance and merit.
2. **Their research institution of choice.** The applicant should motivate for why it is necessary for this research to be conducted at a UK institution of their choice, making specific mention of potential supervisor/s they have identified, or research units they intend to join. The applicant should be able to articulate how this positioning will advance them in their career, beyond the completion of the doctoral thesis.
3. **Their leadership capacity and potential.** The applicant should demonstrate how the MRF values have been threaded through their journey since their time in residence to the present moment, through their academic and non-academic pursuits. They should be able to motivate for why they believe the Shaun Johnson Memorial Scholarship for doctoral study in the UK is an essential next part of their leadership journey.

Eligibility criteria

- Candidates must be Mandela Rhodes Scholars
- Candidates must be beginning a new PhD – the SJMS does not provide support for PhDs which have already been begun

How to apply

Applications will open on the **17th of March and run until the 20th of April 2021**. Mandela Rhodes Alumni who wish to apply to be recommended for the Shaun Johnson Memorial Scholarship can download an application form [via MandelaRhodesConnect](#). Forms will be made available on the 16th of March. **Applications will close at 12 noon, SAST, on the 20th of April. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.**

The application process

- All application forms are to be submitted directly to Gigi Edross-Jeppie, [via email](#).
- Referees must be asked to send reference letters directly to Gigi by the 12noon deadline on the 20th of April. If your references have not been received, your application will not be considered.
- Candidates will be contacted by the 30th of April and informed on whether or not they have been shortlisted for interviews.
- Panel interviews will take place **virtually** in the week of the 10th of May.
- Candidates will be informed whether their application for the SJMS has been successful by the end of May.

FAQs:

Is the funding comprehensive?

Yes, the Shaun Johnson Memorial Scholarship covers your tuition and provides a stipend for your living costs.

Is there support for my partner and family to accompany me?

No. The Scholarship provides an individual stipend. Your family's travel, accommodation, and visa will be your responsibility.

Does MRF administer the Scholarship?

No, once you have been recommended to the Leverhulme Trust, they will administer the scholarship.

Will there be support for me with the UK Visa process?

You will need to manage your own application process for your UK University, and the accompanying Tier 4 visa process. Your university will have to provide a Confirmation of Acceptance letter, and the Leverhulme Trust will provide a confirmation letter of your funding.

If you have further queries regarding the Shaun Johnson Memorial Scholarship, please contact Communications and Alumni Manager Abigail McDougall (abi@mrf.org.za).

For reference: the Leverhulme Trust's approach to grant-making.

The Trust seeks to fund outstanding scholarship, while maintaining a distinctive role within the research funding landscape

In assessing applications for funding, we use the **following established** criteria to prioritise work of outstanding scholarship:

- Originality – the research achieves more than the incremental development of a single discipline
- Importance – the work will enable further research or enquiry
- Significance – the proposed research has relevance outside a single field, and is able to excite those working in other disciplines
- Merit – the quality of the research design and methodology, and the suitability of the researchers and institution for the realisation of the proposed research objectives

Secondary criteria

A second set of criteria reflect the particular values of the Leverhulme Trust, and express the Trust Board's aspiration that our funding maintains a distinctive role within the research funding landscape. We particularly welcome applications that:

- reflect an individual's personal vision, aspiration, or intellectual curiosity
- take appropriate risks in setting and pursuing research objectives
- enable a refreshing departure from established patterns of working – either for the individual, or for the discipline
- transcend disciplinary boundaries