

Gates Cambridge Scholarship

www.gates.scholarships.cam.ac.uk

Deadline: October 15

Fields of Study

Open. One to four years of graduate study at Cambridge University.

Description

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation established the Gates Cambridge Trust through a donation to the University of Cambridge. The sole purpose of the Gates Cambridge Trust is to award scholarships to enable the brightest of the world's young leaders and scholars to undertake graduate work at Cambridge. The Gates Cambridge Scholarship covers the full cost of studying in Cambridge and maybe held for one to four years of study. The value of the scholarship depends on the level of tuition-fees for individual courses but is on the order of \$32,000 a year.

In establishing the Gates Cambridge Trust, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation hopes to create a network of future leaders from around the world who will bring new vision and commitment to effecting change and addressing global problems.

Criteria for Selection

Gates Cambridge Scholars should demonstrate a high level of academic achievement, a capacity for leadership, and a commitment to improving the lives of others.

Applicants from every country outside the United Kingdom are eligible to apply, and should normally be under 30 years old. Candidates must obtain before beginning study in Cambridge, an Honours Bachelor degree, or its equivalent, from a recognized university. High GPA and strong GRE scores are also required. Only students who have been accepted into an academic program at Cambridge are considered for selection as Gates Cambridge Scholars.

Gates Cambridge Scholars are expected to be outstanding students who have leadership potential and a commitment to serve their communities. These criteria are interpreted broadly. The Gates Cambridge Trust has noted that scholarly achievement and potential should be "coupled with a commitment to use the benefits of higher education for the common good." Applicants must also have a sound academic reason for wanting to study at Cambridge. Gates Cambridge Scholars are expected to be intellectually curious, emotionally mature, intellectually robust, and possess a willingness to take risks, to argue, to challenge, and to reflect on the wider implications of their subject.

Cambridge also has a tradition of finding quirky and unusual students who turn out to make a contribution. They are not looking necessarily for those who have done the best so far. According to the Trust, they are looking for a few "Bolshy-types" who have cut against the grain because they may be the most creative and original. This is often demonstrated in a

willingness to take risks. They do not necessarily want people with conventional polish. They do want people who will go into all walks of life. Gates Scholars are likely to gain privilege as result of taking a course of study. Thus, the selectors are looking for people who recognize that with privilege comes responsibility and a duty to the wider community.

Application Procedure

Students apply for admission to Cambridge University through the normal admissions procedures. For applicants applying from US universities, the deadline for the application is October 15. There is now one standardized form for admission to Cambridge which includes a 500 word essay and three letters of reference. All of these application materials are reviewed together in Cambridge at every stage of the application process.

Applicants from the U.S. will be expected to have excellent transcripts with high GPA scores showing evidence of sustained academic achievement in study, and a strong performance in GRE scores, together with references able to speak knowledgeably about the candidate's actual academic performance and his or her potential for scholarly growth.

Three letters of recommendation are required. Two letters for admission must be from people who have taught the student and are able to speak about academic ability. The third letter of reference should be from someone who can comment on personal qualities such as leadership potential and social commitment and who is aware of the strong competition for places at Cambridge. Since it is often difficult for people at Cambridge to interpret academic transcripts from the US, letters of recommendation that put a student's program into context are helpful. In addition, anything in a letter of recommendation to signal that a particular student is different, unusual, or has taken risks is also considered helpful.

Deadlines for Graduate Study: The application deadline in the United States is October 15. Deadlines for applicants from countries other than the United States follow a different schedule. Consult the Cambridge Graduate Study Prospectus to confirm deadlines for citizens of member states of the European Union or other parts of the world.

Each year, Cambridge receives approximately 650 applications for graduate study from applicants from the US. These applications are first evaluated and ranked by the department or program to which they have applied. These ranked lists are trimmed to approximately 180-200 candidates, which is further reduced to a shortlist of 112 finalists from the U.S. who are invited to interviews in February in Annapolis, Maryland. Shortlisted candidates invited to interviews will be contacted before the Christmas break. All of the candidates interviewed will be admitted to a graduate program at Cambridge. Within a few days after the Annapolis interviews, approximately 45 candidates are offered Gates Cambridge Scholarships. Applicants who are accepted to Cambridge but not selected as Gates Cambridge Scholars are automatically considered for a partial-cost awards from one of the other Cambridge Trusts.

Additional Information

Nearly all Gates Cambridge Scholars apply for graduate study. Application procedures for a "second B.A." are different than for graduate study, and appear unlikely to be successful unless there are exceptional reasons to propose a specific B.A. program.

Other Cambridge Trusts include the Commonwealth Trust and the Overseas Trust, which fund students from different parts of the world, as well as other Trusts for nationals of specific countries.

See also:

- Gates Cambridge website: <http://www.gates.scholarships.cam.ac.uk/>
- Cambridge Graduate Prospectus: <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/gspectus/>
- Peter Hansen, “Unofficial Notes on the Gates Cambridge Scholarship,” *NAFA Newsletter*: http://www.nafadvisors.org/newsletter_0302.htm
- Cambridge Guide (ugrad and graduate): <http://www.cam.ac.uk/cambuniv/guide/>
- Gates Cambridge Scholar website: <http://gates.gatesscholar.org/>
- Study in the British Isles: <http://www.wpi.edu/Academics/FS/britainstudy.html>