

Mitchell Scholarship

www.us-irelandalliance.org

Deadline: national deadline: October 6, 2008; campus deadline: September 22, 2008

Fields of Study

Open. One year of graduate study in Ireland or Northern Ireland.

Description

The George Mitchell Scholars are eligible to attend institutions of higher learning in Ireland, including the seven universities in the Republic of Ireland and the two universities in Northern Ireland, for one academic year of graduate study. The Scholarship committee will seek places at the universities on the successful applicants' behalf. Election to a Mitchell Scholarship is formally confirmed by the Mitchell Scholarship selection committee after the Scholar-elect has been accepted by the university. Scholars are required to be full-time students for the duration of their academic year of study. The program also sponsors many activities for scholars including meetings with leaders, internships and social events during the fellowship year.

Criteria for Selection

Mitchell Scholars must have a demonstrated record of academic excellence and intellectual distinction, an outstanding record of leadership, and a sustained commitment to service and community.

The Mitchell selectors weigh equally academic achievement, leadership, and community service. The standards for academic achievement and leadership are high, and the criteria for selection are in practice similar to those used to select scholars in the Rhodes and Marshall competitions. For community service, the Mitchell program is looking for someone who has made an impact by taking an activist role. Fewer activities may be better than a long list of episodic activity. The program seeks Scholars who embody the deep commitment to public service and community, integrity, leadership, justice and fairness in the model of George Mitchell. The program recommends that potential applicants study the profiles of current and past Scholars on their website to learn more about the qualities they seek in a Scholarship recipient.

Candidates for the Mitchell Scholarship also need to demonstrate a very good reason for undertaking their proposed one-year master's degree in Ireland. The Mitchell Scholarship urges candidates to indicate at least three Irish universities at which they would be willing to study. Only two Mitchell Scholars may be placed at each Irish university, and not everyone may study at Trinity College, Dublin, the most popular choice. It is helpful to indicate multiple preferences, up to five different programs and universities. They encourage contact with academic departments or potential mentors at Irish universities.

Applicants for the Mitchell Scholarships must be U.S. citizens, aged between 18-30 on October 1 in the year of application. They must also have academic standing sufficient to assure completion of a Bachelor's degree before they begin study under the Mitchell Scholarship. No allowance is made for the expenses of a married applicant's spouse.

There are no restrictions on the academic discipline or field of study. A common misperception is that this is scholarship for Irish studies or for Irish-Americans; these are *not* factors in the selection of Mitchell Scholars.

Application Procedure

Application requires institutional nomination and the organizers of the Mitchell Scholarship prefer that institutions be selective. WPI will normally nominate one candidate for this award. The online application typically includes these materials:

- Application coversheet (address, educational information, list of proposed programs in Ireland);
- A list of awards, leadership activities, community service, and other extracurricular activities in college;
- A 1000 word statement describing the student's academic and other interests and the specific area of proposed study and reason for interest in study at institutions in Ireland or Northern Ireland;
- Five letters of recommendation, three of which must be from persons with whom the candidate has done academic work;
- A transcript from all colleges attended and proof of US citizenship.

Most application materials must be submitted online through the application system linked from the Mitchell website. Only citizenship documentation and transcripts must be mailed together. The electronic application must be complete, including letters of recommendation, by the WPI Institutional deadline of September 22. Each year a few applications are ineligible and not reviewed because they were missing one letter of recommendation.

In the online form, applicants seeking institutional endorsement from WPI should indicate Prof. Peter Hansen, phansen@wpi.edu, as the fellowship advisor and the source for the Institutional Endorsement. Please contact Prof. Hansen directly as soon as possible if you are interested in applying. Note that as soon as you put the names of recommenders into the online system, they will receive an automated a message requesting their letter. Be sure to discuss with potential recommenders their willingness to write letters before you fill out that part of the online application.

The selection process takes place in a unitary national competition in several stages. The Mitchell Scholarship office does an initial review of more than 200 applications to whittle to 70 the number which are read by a national screening committee. These applications are ranked and 30 candidates are invited to semi-finalist interviews. This pool is reduced to 20 finalists from throughout the United States for one set of interviews

which are held in Washington, DC. Announcements of approximately 12 awards are made in December.

Additional Information

The Mitchell Scholarship strongly encourage looking at their website for answers to frequently asked questions, the profiles of current and past Scholars, as well as online reflections on highlight unique features of the Mitchell experience. Web profiles of Mitchell Scholars provide the best answer to the question, what are they looking for?

Because the Mitchell program has only 20 national finalists for 12 awards, they expect that a finalist will be committed to accept a Scholarship if offered. The Mitchell Scholarship is only for one year and those who prefer a multi-year academic scholarship should apply for other fellowship programs. Applicants must be prepared to declare their priority interest in the Mitchell Scholarship if invited to be a finalist. In other words, if invited to a Mitchell interview that conflicts with an interview scheduled for another scholarship, applicants must choose one or the other.

For more information: <http://www.us-irelandalliance.org/scholarships.html>

See the resources on Study in the British Isles to find a degree program in Ireland in your area of interest: <http://www.wpi.edu/Academics/FS/britainstudy.html>

Universities in Ireland and Northern Ireland:

- Trinity College Dublin
- University College Cork
- University College Dublin
- NUI Galway
- University College Maynooth
- University of Limerick
- Dublin City University
- Queen's University Belfast
- The University of Ulster

The Mitchell Scholarship recommends that candidates look at the programs proposed by previous scholars, and has identified the following as superior programs: Peace and Conflict Studies at Ulster, Interactive Entertainment Technology at Trinity College Dublin, Biomedical Engineering or European Integration at Limerick, Biotechnology or History/Politics with a focus on migration at Cork, Journalism at Dublin City University, Human Rights at NUI Galway, Music or Politics or Irish studies at Queen's Belfast, Medieval studies or Musicology at Maynooth. The range of options is wider than this set of examples.