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Transcript of Lecture [ISF 7]:

SECURING MANDELA RHODES SCHOLARSHIP: AN INSIGHTFUL DISCUSSION

Friday, 9th April, 2020. 7:15 pm WAT

Lecturer:

Scholar Ochuko Oghenechovwen Mary

Moderator:

Scholar Ridwan

Transmission Crew:

ISF > Scholars Justin, Hussein, AbdulMutolib, Oluwatobi, Paulotimi, Rasheed.

ASF > Scholars Hydrospecs, Paulotimi.

ISFM > Scholar Hussein

Foremost Research Groups > Scholar Hydrospecs.

Twitter > Scholar Lukgaf.

Telegram > Scholar Etubi (Telegram Chat Link)

Brief Profile of the Guest Lecturer

Mary Oghenechovwen studied human anatomy and cell biology at Delta State University, Nigeria for an undergraduate degree. Much later, her concern for civil engagements and social issues led her to further study for Project Management in Global Health at the University of Washington's E-learning Faculty.

During her undergraduate thesis research, she worked on gender-based anthropometric comparisons which influenced my decision to delve into forensics, to enable her push for full focus on gendered-based violence. She is currently pursuing a Masters in Forensics at the University of Capetown as a Mandela Rhodes Foundation scholar (class of 2020). She sees forensics not just as a career path, but as a means to teach vulnerable groups to be constantly proactive and emotionally intelligent.

In 2017, she taught life sciences to female undergraduates at the School of Health Technology in Northern Nigeria. This made her determined to succeed in research and development roles, as well as encourage young girls to study STEM subjects. She has subsequently accrued three years of experience mentoring girls and providing comprehensive education at community levels in rural and peri-urban settings.

Mary is a volunteer and donor with Total Girls and The Gladies Africa, reaching out to under-served girls through active programmes. She is driven by her commitment to invest in young people and one day hopes to witness a society with the highest level of social empowerment. She loves to play scrabble and enjoys engaging folks with the game. Her favourite book is Americanah by Chimamandah Ngozi Adichie.

Lecture Agenda

1. Overview of Mandela Rhodes Scholarship
2. How to approach the essay questions.
3. Application documents
4. Admissions
5. Benefits
6. Prompts
7. Question

OVERVIEW OF MANDELA RHODES SCHOLARSHIP

Basically, the MRF runs on 4 core themes.

- Leadership,
- Education
- Entrepreneurship
- Reconciliation (this will be referred to all through the lecture).

The scholarship award funds postgraduates programmes (Masters and honours only) and recruit only Africans.

With this scholarship, you can choose any discipline and school of your choice as long as its in South Africa. However, be guided. Always think of applicability of your course choice especially towards social and global issues.

Apart from the financial empowerment/obligation, the MRF also runs series of mandatory Leadership trainings and workshop with very notable guest lecturers, part of which you get to take on a little bit of community projects.

Lastly, the award only sponsors Africans.

As far as I know, there's a little bias based on quota for every class. So they do try to keep a balance across the different regions and countries in Africa.

Now let's look at the application docs required.

- 3 recommendation/recommenders
- A personal statement
- An essay.
- Your documents, transcripts, cv and certificates.

When filling the documents, its okay to put in your current cell phone numbers and that of your guardians. Just put in your country code. +234

For address, you can browse up the university/campus residence of whatever school you are looking at. These things are just for the now.

ESSAY

1. For your own good, think outside of the box. Don't be lazy, stand out. I'm saying this because I've been privileged to review essays, and it's surprising how people write on only the same polarising issue.

I would refrain from listing them so as not to shoot ourselves in the legs.

However, think!

Nigeria is rich in history, in diversity, in culture, in religion, in perceptions, in talents, in food. Think of politics, think of representations and different bias. Think hard, do your research and stand out!

If you most go common, do so in a unique way!

2. Put your self in the picture of whatever issue. How have you viewed this? what do you think? how have you or your groups been affected?

Don't just go online and copy and paste. Personalise what ever issue.

3. Get your facts right.

4. Make it interesting and possibly use a story format.

5. In the most simple way, a polarising issue (which is a main focus in the essay to be written) is whatever that is causing a divide and leads to unfair treatments, stereotyping, deprivation of basic rights and so on.

ADMISSION APPLICATIONS

1. Browse, send mails (don't be scared, they respond), ask questions. Know what you are getting into

2. Know the difference between an honours and a masters. Dont make a mistake. People have come in for honours after doing a five year bsc course in Nigeria because of ignorance.

3. Be proactive. No admissions, no scholarship!

4. Getting admission in the UK is much easier than South Africa. So start now.

5. Do your research on which schools you need to pay for Application fees, which ones require SAQA

6. Research on SAQA (an evaluation and verification body for foreign qualifications in South Africa) if you dont know about it.

It will help in decision making.

CALCULATIONS

Calculate correctly. Its percentages.

E.g, how many percent of 5.0 is 4.0 or 3.8 e.t.c

For high school/WAEC, use the subject keys and aggregate.

Simply go online and ask how to grade your waec performance in percentage.

BENEFITS (THE ICING ON THE CAKE)

1. S.A might not be all you've dreamed of, but consider it a closer step than where you are now.
2. The scholarship is fully funded. Everything included, flight tickets, study allowances, accommodation allowances, monthly stipends, research grants, quality education, leadership training, a sound network of scholars, African leaders and affiliates.

Trust me, these are relatively generous amounts and benefits!

FOOD FOR THOUGHT/ PROMPTS

Remember this going forward, years ago there were no scholarship seminars, whatsapp groups and YouTubes giving tips here and there.

Now everyone has easy access to what would have been considered scarce knowledge

So guys if you were working hard, work harder.

The competition just got tougher, because the next guy knows most of what you think are your strong points.

Well its one thing to know, its another thing to Apply the knowledge. Its up to you.

All the very best guys

Cheer!.

Question 1

Thank you for the lecture can one travel with spouse and children?

Response

Sure. However, the MRF doesn't cover for dependents or spouse. You can only do that on your own.

Also, applicants must not be more than 30 years old.

Question 2

Thank you sir for the lecture. One of my recommenders do not have an official email. Can I use her.

Response

Send an email to the contact detail there in this regards. They should give you a go ahead.
I did same in my time and it was approved.

Question 3

Can the research grant be used for project outside the Master's study?

Is the research grant automatic when I got the scholarship?

Response

No it is not automatic. You have to apply for it. Its an easy process though.

You can use your funds for whatever you want but ideally it should be for your projects. So when applying you will have to provide the evidence and a budget to justify your application.

Question 4

Are there interviews before selection?

Response

So the screening process is in 4 stages, from the first to third, you do nothing but hope.

What happens is that your application moves from one review board to the other. Along the way, a lot of persons are dropped.

Once you get the the final stage, you are then shortlisted for an interview which is usually a physical one in Capetown (until covid happened).

Question 5

Can you give an insight into the total number of scholars selected every year and how quotas are distributed among African countries?

Response

The numbers vary. From 30 to 100.

In 2018 when Mandela was technically 100, 100 scholars were taken. This is the highest thus far.

In 2019, a little above 30 were taken.

In 2020 which was my class. 54 scholars were taken and 6 were Nigerians. 10 made it to the interviews though. Last year a little above 30 and only one Nigerian. And that's because due to Covid a lot of old scholars are still in the system since they haven't completed their degrees. But on the average I will say 35 to 50.

Question 6

Do you mean the scholarship board will fly me to Cape Town for an interview? (normally, without Covid-19). Will I be given stipend for such too?

Response

Yes. No stipends, every expense will be covered. Feeding and all. At Nelson Mandela's residence while he was president

Question 7

Can you give an insight into the total number of scholars selected every year and how quotas are distributed among African countries?

Response

The distribution is based on the applications per countries although they are really not very strict with the quota. They advise people from West Africa countries to apply as most scholars are from the East or South. At the moment there are only about 26 countries represented.

Question 8

Can I get the scholarship with a 2:1 or 2:2 grade?

Response

Yes. Might be rare but yes. I have a friend who got in with a 2.2 and now she's done and has secured another scholarship regardless. It all depends on your presentation and argument as well as other qualities you possess.

Question 9

Any preference for female applicants winning the scholarship?

Response

As with many other scholarships and also considering the times we are, I might say maybe. But don't bank on it. I can't really say. Just be good and competitive enough so you don't bank on gender.

As far as I know, the MRF will not reject a qualified Male candidate for a female that hasn't put in the effort.

Question 10

Thank you scholar for the tips. May I ask if it is necessary to find a supervisor before applying for the scholarship.

Response

Admissions are an independent process from the scholarship application. So normally with admissions, if you are going for full research you will have to find a supervisor and secure your admission.

If your are going for a combination of coursework and dissertation then its just straight to the school. Just like you will do for your regular applications.

Question 11

I am a little bit confused about essay, is it a proposal you mean or what? 2nd question is are we to apply different on the school portal and scholarship separately.

Response

Once you are making your applications you will understand better, explained the essays with the mindset that 11days to go, people should have gotten familiar. Admissions and applications for scholarship are different. But you have to start admissions now so as to meet up should you win the scholarship. Someone last year won the scholarship but did not have an admission. So they dropped him.

Question 12

I'm currently in a place where I'm unable to get recommendation letters.

How do I go about that?

Response

You just have to look for a way. Anybody can recommend you. From your school or workplace.

Question 13

I will like to know if it's a must to return to my country after the master's program?

Response

No its not.

Question 14

My Question is for the admission application is there requirement for SAQA

Response

Yes. You can get all of the information on their website.

Question 15

Pls it there Age limit?

Response

30 years and below.

APPRECIATION !

On behalf of the members and admins of the International Scholarship Forum (ISF), I will like to thank our amiable guest lecturer for your insightful presentation and kind gestures tonight. Your answers to the various questions are indeed helpful. I believe everyone that followed the session keenly will have gained a lot.

Thanks again Scholar @Ochuko Chovwen

To all MRF applicants, I wish you success ahead. Go and shine!

Till we all win

✍️ Ridwan

For: ISF Admins

End of the session

