

Writing a Recommendation for the Gates Cambridge Scholarship

The first group of Gates Cambridge Scholars was selected in spring 2001. The Scholarships support study at Cambridge in any field for 1-3 years, with the possibility of extending to 4 in exceptional cases. Selection is world-wide; citizens of every country except the UK are eligible. While no number of fellowships is set aside for any country, at least 40 usually go to U.S. citizens. Criteria are similar to those of Rhodes and Marshall. There are two separate applications, one to Cambridge as an Affiliated (second Bachelor's degree) or a Postgraduate student, the other a preliminary application to the Gates Cambridge Foundation. The two applications require two different kinds of recommendation letters.

The applicant should give you a copy of all application materials, and should discuss with you his or her objectives in seeking a Gates Cambridge Scholarship. This Scholarship does not require College endorsement, however applicants are encouraged to go through the same advising and interviewing process as Rhodes, Marshall, and Mitchell applicants.

Criteria for the Scholarship:

- Exceptional achievement in academic studies
- If applying for graduate admission, strong performance in the GRE
- Evidence of potential to make a significant contribution to chosen profession
- Potential to assert leadership in addressing global problems relating to learning, technology, health and social equity (Gates Foundation's priorities).

This selection process calls for two different kinds of letters. Both should emphasize the suitability of study in the selected degree program at Cambridge for this student. If you are writing a recommendation for University admission, focus on the student's academic achievement and suitability to undertake the proposed course of study. The one required recommendation for the Gates Cambridge Trust should present the broadest possible picture of the candidate including leadership potential, social commitment, and "...*any other factors relevant to the application. Leadership potential and a commitment to help society will be as important factors as outstanding academic merit in identifying and shortlisting the best candidates.*" (from Gates Cambridge Trust materials)

Other considerations:

All materials, including letters, must be received in Cambridge by October 15. There are two separate sets of forms. *Applicants for Affiliated (second B.A.) status:* UCAS and Cambridge application. Be sure to get the correct address and forms from the applicant. Affiliated status applicants will be invited to file a Gates Supplementary Information Form after they are admitted to a College and the University. *Applicants for post-graduate status:* The application for graduate study, including recommendations, must arrive in Cambridge by October 15 even though formal deadlines for many postgraduate programs are much later. Also due on that date is the Gates Supplementary Information Form which is sent by the recommender, not the applicant. The Graduate Fellowships Office (paula.goldsmid@pomona.edu) is available to answer any questions you may have about writing this letter.

<http://www.gates.scholarships.cam.ac.uk/index.html>

These notes incorporate information from The Gates Cambridge Trust and from Joe Schall, 'Writing Recommendation Letters' (Pennsylvania State University 1997).