

Graduate study at Oxford is costly and the financial pressures on students are high. St Antony's College aims to offer scholarships for the most capable students so that it can admit graduate students from all backgrounds with outstanding academic potential.

On 6 March 2024, St Antony's Governing Body approved scholarship policies for best practice, to admit the best students and to adhere to relevant legislations.

### Scholarship restrictions

Scholarships are awarded on the basis of academic excellence and potential. The eligibility criteria (restrictions) for different scholarships vary, with some being open to the majority of new graduate students and other restricted by particular characteristics (for example by degree, subject or country of ordinary residence).

The [Equality Act 2010](#) (the Act) states that if a Higher Education Institution (HEI) proposes to have a scholarship that is confined only to individuals of one of the eight particular protected characteristics ([see here](#)), it will need to ensure that it falls within the scope of positive action.

HEIs need to comply with the public sector equality duty which requires them to have due regard to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination.
- Promote equality of opportunity between people with different protected characteristics.
- Foster good relations between people with different protected characteristics.

Direct discrimination arises when a person is subject to less favourable treatment because of a protected characteristic. There is no justification for direct discrimination for any protected characteristic other than disability.

Indirect discrimination arises where a policy, criterion or practice which appears to be neutral and is applied equally to all, puts people who share a protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage. In limited cases, indirect discrimination can be justified.

Justification is a defence that arises where the discriminatory actions can be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. The Act allows positive action in certain circumstances and sets out that an HEI does not engage in unlawful discrimination if it takes action that is a proportionate means of overcoming a disadvantage. In order to demonstrate this, the College will provide statistical evidence and undertakes an Equality Impact Assessment before agreeing to endorse a scholarship.

Where a donor is not willing to take account of the constraints from the Act and their support might put the College in contravention of it, their giving will be refused.

A consequence of applying criteria on scholarships is the number of eligible applicants: more restrictions will result in fewer applicants, less competition, and the potential of a decrease in academic quality which may compromise the College's aim of admitting the most academically able students.

To make sure that restrictions do not have an anticipated disproportionate impact on eligible applications and the competitiveness of the scholarship, it is the aim to have one limiting criteria. The College will assess whether suggested restrictions will have a disproportionate impact.

### **Full vs partial scholarships**

Scholarships that do not fully cover all the expenses of a graduate student (academic fees, living and study costs), can result in financial problems for the recipient and the need to go back to their home country without having finalized their degree.

It is the ambition of the College to offer full scholarship. If donors are not able to support a full scholarship, they will be encouraged to donate an amount that can be used to form new (spend down) scholarships in conjunction with the Clarendon Fund, UK Research and Innovation, or other partners.

### **Scholarship Committees**

The policy of the University of Oxford is that it does not involve donors in the selection process of scholars, and it informs them as appropriate on the process and outcomes. To avoid breaches of the evolving selection processes and outcomes, St Antony's follows the policy of the University of Oxford.

Members of scholarship committees at St Antony's are senior academics who judge the applications based on academic merit within the eligibility criteria of the scholarship. To avoid the danger of compromising academic freedom, breaches of privacy and data retention regulations, as well direct or indirect discrimination through unintentional bias for a certain candidate based on a protected characteristic, it will not be possible to share applications with third parties nor can applicants be interviewed by them. If a donor or sponsor wishes, it may view the research proposal for information purposes and only if the personal data are entirely removed so that no details about the applicant can be extracted.

### **Sharing testimonials**

It is reasonable to assume that donors find it important to know about how their support had an impact and how successful their money has been used. However, the College works as 'Data Controller' and if it were to pass personal information to a donor who then uses it for 'other purposes' or loses control of that data e.g. is 'hacked', it presents a risk to the College.

Testimonials by scholarship recipients can be provided anonymously, without disclosing any personal details. It is also possible to ask the scholarship recipient for consent for a public disclosure of a subset of data (name, degree, country of origin and the testimonial). The information will then be made available on the College website so that the information is in the public domain before it shared with the donor.