

Labour's Plan for BRIC Scholarships



Labour

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LABOUR'S PLAN FOR A BRIC SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME

The past decade has seen emerging countries make an indelible mark on the global economic landscape. The BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India and China), in particular, encompass more than a quarter of the world's land mass and 40% of its population. Within the past decade, the BRICs have contributed more than a third of world GDP growth. Since 2000, the BRICs have grown from comprising one sixth of the global economy to currently comprising almost a quarter, in terms of Purchasing Power Parity (PPP), and analysts, such as Goldman Sachs and McKinsey, expect these trends to become even more pronounced in the next decade. Indeed, the BRICs, as an aggregate economy, are predicted to overtake the US by 2018 and will account for a third of the global economy (in PPP terms) by 2020 and almost half of all GDP growth. China alone has 1.3 billion consumers currently and is forecast by McKinsey to become the third-largest consumer market in the world by 2025. By 2025, the population of the BRICs with incomes above \$15,000 is forecast to increase by 200 million people, which is equal to the combined populations of Germany, France and the UK. In light of this, the BRIC nations currently offer some of the most exciting investment opportunities in the world. However, according to figures from the Central Statistics Office, from January 2008 to Oct 2010, the share of Irish trade with the BRICs constituted less than 4% of our overall external trade. Yet, in terms of potential growth and income, the BRICs represent an unmatched opportunity and a key strategic focal point for Ireland.

Labour is committed to developing links with the BRICs and with other emerging markets. One of the ways that Labour envisages developing these links is through the establishment of an academic scholarship, funded by the Irish government, which would promote study at Irish Universities or Institutes of Technology and be aimed specifically at students from the BRIC countries. Other countries, such as the US, the UK and France have a long history of attracting international students on prestige scholarships, such as the Fulbright scholarship, the Rhodes scholarship and the Churchill scholarship. Ireland has introduced the Mitchell Scholarship for students from the US. Such scholarships have allowed the host countries to reap countless benefits, in terms of building up political, economic, social and cultural links with the countries, whose students are being offered scholarships.

Labour believes that the establishment of a prestige scholarship linked with the Irish third-level system would develop new links with the emerging economies and, in particular, develop relationships between Ireland and the best and brightest in those countries – the people who in the next generation will form the governments, the business communities, the academic communities of those countries.

Labour proposes that:

- There would be 30 BRIC scholarships available per year.
- The scholarships would allow successful candidates entry to study programmes lasting between one and two years.
- The scholarships would be focused on individuals, who have achieved an undergraduate degree in their home countries.
- The scholarships would be for studies at Masters, MBA or Doctoral level, or, in some circumstances, a second BA.
- BRIC scholarships would be available across all disciplines.
- The scholarships would be awarded not solely on academic achievement, but also to students, who have shown leadership skills or have proved that they have excelled in sport, the arts, business or politics. We are aiming to attract to our shores people who will assume leadership positions in their countries in the future, in order for them to build up a relationship with Ireland.
- Local selection committees would be responsible for the selection of successful candidates for the scholarships. The selection committees would be based in the students' countries and would be composed of representatives of the Irish embassy in those countries, Irish businesspeople and luminaries living in those countries, people from that country with a relationship with Ireland and, ultimately, former BRIC scholars.
- Candidates for the scholarship would be required to have an adequate command of English.
- Labour proposes deep-seated reform to the current visa process which seeks to eliminate barriers to entry to Ireland for the BRIC countries and speed up the current process.
- Successful candidates will be selected without regard to marital status, race, ethnic origin, colour, religion, sexual orientation, social background, or disability.
- Successful candidates would receive a modest stipend, have their fees paid, and will receive some expenses, such as air fare, relocation costs, etc.

The Scholarship will be administered by the Department of Foreign Affairs. Including administration costs, we anticipate the annual cost of the BRIC Scholarship programme to be approximately €1.5 million annually.

EXAMPLES OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS

Rhodes Scholarship

The Rhodes Scholarships are postgraduate awards supporting wide transformative opportunities for exceptional individuals and aims to contribute to international understanding. The scholarship is more accurately viewed as an investment in a person of remarkable promise than support for a particular course of study.

Established in the will of Cecil Rhodes in 1902, the Rhodes is the oldest and perhaps the most prestigious international graduate scholarship programme in the world. 83 Rhodes Scholars are selected each year from Australia, Bermuda, Canada, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Jamaica and Commonwealth Caribbean, Kenya, New Zealand, Pakistan, Southern Africa (including South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, and Swaziland), United States, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Intellectual excellence is required of Rhodes Scholars, but it is not enough to earn this outstanding educational opportunity. Rhodes's vision in founding the Scholarship was to develop outstanding leaders who would be motivated to "esteem the performance of public duties as their highest aim". His will outlines four criteria to be used in the election of Scholars:

- Literary and academic attainments;
- Energy to use one's talents to the full;
- Truth, courage, devotion to duty, sympathy for and protection of the weak, kindness, unselfishness and fellowship;
- Moral strength of character and instincts to lead, and to take an interest in one's fellow beings.

The Rhodes Scholarships support students who demonstrate strong propensity to emerge as "leaders for the world's future". More than 7,000 Rhodes Scholars have gone on to serve at the forefront of government, the professions, commerce, the arts, education, research and other domains. They are well known advocates for social justice, and have advanced the frontiers of science and medicine.

Selection in each Rhodes constituency is by committees, comprised of Rhodes alumni and distinguished non-Scholar members of the community. The interview is of core importance as it is here that selection committees have the opportunity to weigh up a candidate's depth of engagement, accomplishments, and aspirations. Proven intellectual and academic attainment of a high standard is the first quality required of Scholars, but they are also required to show exceptional character, leadership in extra-curricular activities, and a commitment to service in the public good. The interview will therefore be wide-ranging in nature, designed to test candidates' intellectual skills and reasoning ability, but also to reveal their core commitments and potential to make a positive contribution to society. In other words, Rhodes Scholarship selection committees seek young people of outstanding intellect, character, leadership, and commitment to service.

Selection of successful candidates is made without regard to gender, marital status, sexual orientation, race, ethnic origin, colour, religion, social background, caste, or disability. Age limits range from a minimum age limit of 18 to a maximum of 28 by 1st October of the year following election. All applicants must have achieved academic standing sufficiently advanced to assure completion of a bachelor's degree by the October following election. Academic standing must be sufficiently high to ensure admission to the University of Oxford, which has very competitive entry requirements, and to give confidence that Rhodes Scholars will perform to a high academic standard in Oxford.

Subject to limited restrictions, Rhodes Scholars may read for any full-time postgraduate degree (including the BA with senior status over two years) at the University of Oxford. The basic tenure of the Scholarship is two years, subject always, and at all times, to satisfactory academic performance and personal conduct. At the discretion of the Trustees, the Scholarship may be extended for a third year for those who take a recognized route to the DPhil. The Masters of Business Administration (MBA) and the Masters of Financial Economics (MFE) are only tenable in the second year of the Scholarship.

- A Rhodes Scholarship covers:
- All University and College fees;
- A personal stipend for living expenses;
- One economy class airfare to Oxford at the start of the scholarship and one economy flight back to the student's home country at the conclusion of the scholarship.

Concern for others is also critical, but it can be reflected in numerous ways aside from direct hands-on charitable work. One can be a great contributor to mankind without having spent hundreds of hours (or even any) while in college doing volunteer work. On the other hand, major, original, long-standing or leadership positions in charitable organisations may be a meaningful indication of future contribution, commitments and vigour.

Former Rhodes Scholars include:

Edwin Hubble: The renowned astronomer received his scholarship in 1910. Having studied science and mathematics at the University of Chicago, he used his time at Oxford to study law. Hubble then returned to the US to continue his work in astronomy, most notably discovering the existence of galaxies beyond the Milky Way.

Dean Rusk: U.S. Secretary of State from 1961 to 1969 under presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson.

Lord Howard Florey: Australian pharmacologist, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Medicine in 1945, along with Alexander Fleming and Ernst Chain for their work in discovering penicillin.

James William Fulbright: Elected to the House of Representatives in 1943, Fulbright then served in the Senate from 1945 to 1974. He subsequently established the Fulbright Programme to provide grants for students and professionals to study, teach, and conduct research abroad. To date, more than 250,000 individuals have received Fulbright scholarships.

Bill Clinton: The former US President received his Rhodes scholarship in 1968. While at Oxford, he studied law and also played an active part in student life, particularly in protests against the Vietnam War.

Strobe Talbott: The US Deputy Secretary of State from 1994 to 2001 and president of the Brookings Institution (a Washington-based political research facility that helped negotiate an end to the war in Yugoslavia in 1999) also won his scholarship in 1968 and spent his time at Oxford translating Khrushchev's memoirs into English.

Kris Kristofferson: Award-winning musician and actor Kris Kristofferson received his Rhodes scholarship in 1958. He studied English literature, and it was while he was at Oxford that he began his performing career.

Naomi Wolf: The US author and feminist attended Oxford on a Rhodes Scholarship between 1985 and 1987. It was during this time that she embarked on the research that was to eventually form the foundation for her international best seller *The Beauty Myth*, which condemns the exploitation of women by the fashion and beauty industries.

Mitchell Scholarship

The Mitchell Scholarship is administered by the US-Ireland-Alliance and was named in honour of former US Senator George Mitchell's pivotal contribution to the peace process in Northern Ireland. The Mitchell Scholars Programme is designed to introduce and connect generations of future American leaders to Ireland, whilst simultaneously recognising and fostering intellectual achievement, leadership, and a commitment to public service and community.

Each year the Mitchell Scholarship offers up to 12 successful candidates, aged between 18 and 30, the opportunity to spend one year at a university in the Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland, engaging in postgraduate study in any discipline. This number is not absolutely fixed and depends on Selection Committee assessment of candidates, as well as university placement. Applicants are judged on three criteria:

- Scholarship;
- Leadership, and;
- A sustained commitment to service and community.

The Mitchell Scholars Programme covers (for one year only):

- Tuition fees;
- Housing expenses;
- A living expenses stipend;
- An international travel stipend.

Candidates are required to provide five letters of recommendation, proof of US citizenship (passport/birth certificate), academic transcripts, completed online application, and a carefully-considered, well-written 1000-word personal essay. In addition, those candidates who are full-time students at the time of application (all full-time undergraduate, graduate, or professional students are considered enrolled) must obtain an institutional endorsement. Those who are not full-time students at the time of application do not need an institutional endorsement.

The programme looks for persuasive, documented evidence of significant achievement in three areas: scholarship, leadership, and commitment to community and service. All three areas are important. Some applicants have impressive academic credentials but lack a credible record of accomplishment in leadership and service. Membership or participation in a long resume of extracurricular activities is less convincing than demonstrating a significant, tangible impact on a candidate's community or school. Academic excellence, leadership and community service are equally important criteria. Graduating seniors may apply for the following academic year, but an undergraduate degree must be earned by August before starting a graduate study as a Mitchell Scholar.

Although the programme does not have a mandatory grade-point average as a Scholarship prerequisite, applicants are expected, however, to exhibit scholarly excellence in their undergraduate work as well as strong preparation for the proposed field of graduate study. Although this may be in a field different from an applicant's undergraduate major, an applicant still should have the necessary academic or professional training for proposed graduate study.

Ethnic origin or ancestry is not a factor in the selection process. The Mitchell Scholars programme openly welcomes and encourages candidates of all ethnic, racial, religious, and political backgrounds to apply. A Mitchell Scholar may study any academic discipline offered in a degree or certificate programme at an institution of higher learning in Ireland or Northern Ireland.

Fulbright Scholarship

The Fulbright Scholarship was established in 1946 under legislation introduced by the then Senator for Arkansas, J. William Fulbright. The programme is sponsored by the US Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

The Fulbright Scholarship is the flagship international educational exchange programme sponsored by the US government and is designed to increase mutual understanding between the citizens of the US and the citizens of other countries. The Fulbright Programme has provided more than 300,000 participants - chosen for their academic merit and leadership potential - with the opportunity to study, teach and conduct research, exchange ideas and contribute to finding solutions to shared international concerns.

More than 300,000 Fulbright scholars - 114,000 from the United States and 188,000 from other countries - have been awarded Fulbright Scholarships, since its inception. Currently, the Fulbright Programme operates in over 155 countries worldwide and awards approximately 8,000 grants annually.

The Fulbright Scholarship Board is composed of twelve educational and public leaders appointed by the US President to formulate the policies, procedures and selection criteria that govern the scholarship programme. The Board also selects the grantees for Fulbright awards. The primary source of funding for the programme is an annual appropriation by Congress to the Department of State. Participating governments and host institutions overseas and in the US also contribute financially through cost-sharing and indirect support, such as salary supplements, tuition waivers, university housing, etc.

Bi-national commissions and foundations abroad propose the annual country programmes, which establish the numbers and categories of grants based on requests from local institutions. In a country without a commission or foundation, the Public Affairs Section of the US Embassy develops and supervises the scholarship programme. Currently, 50 commissions are active, 48 of which are funded jointly by the US and respective governments. Each commission or foundation has a board, which is composed of an equal number of US citizens and citizens from the participating nations.