

The Sekforde House Trust Scholarships. Academic Year 2024-2025.

Invitation

Applications are invited for the following Sekforde House Trust scholarships for the academic year September 2024 to June 2025.

Available scholarships.

Six £21,000 scholarships.

An **additional** award contributed by the Will of the late Baroness Betty Boothroyd of £6,000 to one of the six scholars.

About the Sekforde House Trust

The Sekforde House Trust (“the Trust”) was founded in memory of Professor Dame Kathleen Lonsdale FRS who received a scholarship at the age of 16 to study at University in London without which she would have been unable to pursue her career as a scientist and her life as a campaigner for peace and (following her own prison sentence served at Holloway) prison reform.

The purpose of the Trust is to promote education.

The Trust is funded, mainly by the profits generated by the Sekforde public house on Sekforde street in Clerkenwell.

The trustees are David Lonsdale (chairman), Mihail Kostov and Ms Susie Hicks all of 34 Sekforde Street London EC1R OHA.

The Trust has been offering scholarships since 2017.

About the scholarships

We aim to invest in the education and future of exceptional students in the hope and expectation that there will be a return to society. Scholars will be ambitious men and women who want to live extraordinary lives and make a difference to the (unfair and unsustainable) world in which we live. Scholars are not charitable objects. The trustees are proud of all the students in whom we are investing the Trust’s money.

Application criteria

The scholarships are aimed at students who have a place at either the City University or University College London or Queen Mary University.

UCL was Kathleen Lonsdale's university, and she was the first woman to obtain a professorship in 1949.

Students applying will be assessed against the following criteria:

1. Outstanding academic or other ability.
2. Financial need.
3. A desire and ability to make the world fairer and more sustainable.

Foreign students are most welcome to apply but will be required to attend interview in London in person if selected for interview.

The Trust will pay the reasonable cost of attending for interview and can provide overnight accommodation.

It is not essential to meet all the criteria. But most scholars will do so.

The scholarships are available for existing students at all levels as well as students who have places to study.

Opening date for applications and deadline.

The opening date is 1st June 2024, and the closing date is 30th June 2023. Late applications may be allowed where there is an acceptable reason for being late.

Content of Applications

The application should be sent to David Lonsdale at dl@33br.co.uk with the following attachments sent in word.

1. A personal statement of no more than 700 words. The statement should demonstrate how the Applicant meets one or more of the criteria and provide a real insight into the person making the application. These statements often contain very personal information, and the contents will be kept strictly confidential. Statements generated by or with the assistance of Artificial Intelligence are easily detected and will result in the entire application being rejected. The personal statement should provide information as to what resources may be available to the Applicant including student loans, family income or assets, personal income and assets. Some applicants have stated in past years that their religious beliefs prohibit them from having access to student loans on which interest is charged. The Trust does not consider that any such prohibition should assist the applicant in meeting the financial need criterion. All applicants who have not accessed loans for which they are eligible will be assessed on the basis that they do have alternative sources of funds open to them.

2. A curriculum vitae on one A4 page. The cv should have attached a passport sized photograph so that the Applicant can be remembered and more easily identified. The curriculum vitae should include contact details.
3. A closed personal reference. This means that the reference should not be seen by the Applicant. It should be sent by the referee separately to dl@33br.co.uk and should clearly identify the applicant by name and university. It should be provided by a person who knows the Applicant well and should focus on character potential and commitment. It should not be more than 500 words. It should avoid exaggerated praise or “gush”. Ideally the reference should arrive on the same day as the other required documents.
4. A closed academic reference. This means the reference should not be seen by the Applicant. It should be sent by the referee separately to dl@33br.co.uk. The referee should critically assess the Applicant both in terms of academic achievement and potential. The reference should be rigorous objective and fair. The reference should be no more than 500 words. Academic referees of candidates who may be selected for interview should be prepared to be contacted by telephone or email for further information. Ideally the reference should arrive on the same day as the other required documents.
5. Although not required, Applicants may send an example of their work or provide details of anything published on the internet which may be relevant to the Application.

The procedure

The Trust cannot *ordinarily* engage in correspondence or discussion about the scholarships with Applicants. It does not have any employees and all the trustees and external assessors are volunteers. Applicants are asked not to contact the trustees unless they really feel they must do so. The chairman of the trustees may exceptionally be contacted at dl@33br.co.uk and his telephone number is 07979454141.

After the deadline, all applications will be reviewed carefully by the trustees. Approximately 12 to 15 candidates will be selected for interview and contacted by telephone. The interviews will take place on Sunday 8th September 2024 at the Marian Anderson, public house, Bowling Green Lane, London EC1. The interview panel consists of the trustees and three external assessors. At least one of the external assessors is a former scholar. One is a member of staff at the Sekforde.

There is no dress code for the interviews. Casual dress is entirely acceptable. The interviews are friendly but vigorous and will last about 30 minutes. If an applicant is unable to attend an interview in person on the date required, then ordinarily it will not be possible to consider the application further.

Any member of the panel may veto an applicant. This is to ensure that the decision to award is ultimately unanimous, and every member’s views are taken into consideration.

Successful candidates are informed of the decision within 24 hours of the final interview. Scholarships are paid by cheque at the scholars’ dinner which will be held on Friday 13th September 2024 in the ballroom of the Sekforde public house.

Feedback

All unsuccessful applicants will **not** be informed of the decision. The trustees do not provide feedback. This is because all the trustees are volunteers, and we have limited time and resources. Also, decisions are often difficult and involve disagreements. We want to be able to speak freely about relative merits without worrying about how we express ourselves.

Requirement of Scholars

The Trust is a registered charity and must demonstrate its expenditure is for the purpose of advancing education. The Trust cannot and does not monitor how the scholars spend their money. It relies upon them and trusts them to use the scholarships sensibly to further their education. It does require the scholars to report back on their progress at least twice in the academic year. Scholars are expected to attend the scholars' dinner which is a very relaxed occasion which enables us all to meet properly. Past guests of honour at the dinner have included Sir Robert Boyd, David Nott OBE, the Baroness Betty Boothroyd OM, and Sir Geoffrey Nice KC.

It is hoped that the scholars will remain in touch with the Trust as they pursue their goals in life, but this is only a hope and not an expectation or requirement.

Finally

I just wanted to say something personal. I find the whole process of selecting people for interview and then choosing just six scholars out of so many applications extremely hard. Nearly all applicants deserve a scholarship. It is most unjust what a struggle it is for so many students and I wish we had more money available. The money we do have is derived from the hard work of people who work for my public house the Sekforde. I am very proud of them and their dedication to making a profit for the Trust. I can also say that for me personally the Trust has been a source of great interest and satisfaction. I have seen at firsthand what a difference these scholarships make, and I am delighted that some of the past scholars have kept in touch with me. Much of what happens in the world is terrible. But there is always hope and I become more hopeful when I see what young people can achieve.

I do appreciate the effort in applying and the bitter disappointment if you do not hear good news from us. But if you do decide to apply, then I wish you the best of luck and I do look forward to receiving your application.

David Lonsdale

(Chairman of the Trust)

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