

## What makes a strong Kennedy Scholarship application?

- **Provide a clear context for your application:**
  - Academic, professional, and personal
- **Thoroughly research your intended Harvard/MIT programme:**
  - Schools and programmes
  - Particular academics you may wish to work with or classes you may want to take
  - Admissions criteria of programme of choice
- **Convey your future aims and intended impact:**
  - Personal/professional aims and impact
  - Positive impact on society; public service

See [here](#) for specific guidance on framing your personal statement for a Kennedy Scholarship application.

### General Advice:

- **Don't apply too early in your academic/professional career.** If your intended Harvard/MIT course requires particular experience post-graduation, ensure that you have it. More generally, you will be competing against applicants whose academic and professional experience makes them strong candidates for their preferred programme. Why does it make sense for you to take this particular course of study, at this particular stage in your career? Use some of your personal statement to make this clear.
- **Do your research thoroughly.** MIT and Harvard have a lot of detailed information on their Graduate School/Department websites. Admissions Offices will answer questions and give good advice over the phone or by email. You will not be seen as a nuisance! Please note that many Masters programmes at Harvard GSAS are integral to the PhD and cannot be taken as a free-standing course. MIT does still offer some free-standing Masters degrees but you will need a clear academic context for your application.
- **Identify particular academics whose research is of interest.** Masters applicants, and especially PhD applicants, are expected to have identified academics whose research interests match their own. Your personal statement provides an opportunity to discuss this, and noting particular academics in your field who you hope to work with, or specific classes that you hope to take, can enhance your application and help establish why you are a good fit for this particular department and programme. Bear in mind that faculty members may be on research leave at times, so it is a good idea to establish whether the individuals you would like to work with will be on campus and teaching their usual courses in a given year.
- **Take GRE tests in good time if required.** These have to be booked and are only available on particular dates. *Do not leave it too late* to book yours or you may have to submit your US application without your results. UK Arts graduates will have to work at their Maths to ensure a strong enough Quantitative score. You can re-take the test to improve your score, if you have left yourself enough time. There is a fee to take these tests.
- **Consider Special Student/Non-degree options.** Both [Harvard](#) and [MIT](#) offer the chance to take a self-directed course of study for one academic year rather than a degree programme. This can be an excellent option for students wishing to study in Harvard's Faculty of Arts and Sciences (via the [Special Student program](#)) or take MIT graduate courses (via the [Advanced Study program](#)) but you will need a compelling case for choosing it over a degree and at this stage in your professional/academic career. (It is also possible for current UK PhD candidates to apply for a Visiting Fellowship at Harvard/MIT, though again a very strong rationale must be provided. Contact with the intended department would be essential for such applications).
- **If eligible, apply for both a Kennedy Scholarship and a Frank Knox Fellowship.** These are totally separate awards with totally separate application procedures and selection panels, so if you are eligible for both awards it makes sense to apply for both. The Kennedy Trust's Director, Dr Emily Charnock, is the only person in common for both competitions, as the UK Knox competition is administered by the Kennedy Trust.
- **Get in touch:** Following your initial research, feel free to contact Emily Charnock if you have particular questions about the awards, application processes, or courses of interest at Harvard or MIT.