**Snowdon Trust**

**Master's Scholarship Q&A**

**Monday, 15th January 2024**

MARIA: Hi, everybody. Welcome to this Q&A session online. I will start with some housekeeping announcements before we start the meeting properly. Meanwhile, my colleagues Emily and Helen will let people in from the waiting room.

So, this meeting is recorded. If you prefer to not have your camera on, you're very welcome to turn it off.

We have a human captioner, Nicola. You can access the captions directly in the Zoom meeting by turning your captions on or you can go to the static link, which we have shared with you before the meeting and is in the chat again here. A transcript will be available for you after the meeting, so you don't have to necessarily make notes. You'll get that shared with you later.

The chat function will remain open during this meeting. It's primarily there for you to send in questions if you want to send anything in or to ask one of our team for help if you need the link to captions or so on. You do not need to have the chat open to follow the content of the meeting. We will be speaking everything aloud and reading all of the slides out loud.

If a question is put to the panel from the chat, we're going to read that question out loud as well. Any relevant new questions asked to the panel during this meeting will be written up and shared with you after the meeting. Again, you don't necessarily have to take notes. We will send you the material covered later.

In this Zoom meeting, we have non‑verbal feedback at the bottom in the meeting settings bar. You can use your regular keyboard shortcuts for controlling Zoom. The ones probably most applicable for this call are: to open or close chat on Windows is Alt+H or if you are using a Mac, Command+Shift+H. If you want to switch your camera on or off, it is Alt+V, or for a Mac, Command+Shift+V.

How are we doing with the meeting room? I think pretty much everyone is in now, so we will go on to introductions. In this meeting, we have some of the Snowdon staff represented and we have a panel. I'm going to start by introducing myself. I am Maria Richards. I'm the Scholarship Manager at the Snowdon Trust. I'm a white woman, with brown hair, to shoulder height, currently wearing a dark blue knitted winter jumper with some decorative detailing around the collar. If I can then ask Emily [to introduce yourself].

EMILY: Yes. Hi, I'm Emily. I'm the Marketing and Communications Officer. I'm a white woman, in my early 30s, with long brown hair and big glasses.

MARIA: Helen, if you wouldn't mind introducing yourself and saying a few words.

HELEN: Hi, everyone. I'm Helen Saelensminde. I'm the Chief Executive of the Snowdon Trust. I'm a white woman. I have got shoulder‑length curly hair and I'm wearing a black jumper.

I'm really delighted there is so many of you here for this session because the Snowdon Trust Master's Scholarship is such an important part of our work. For us, it's a chance to champion the future disabled leaders who are driving real change. We're really excited to help facilitate that process. I wanted to say, I know this is a really competitive award, so I do want to say that during the decision‑making process, we read so many brilliant applications. If you don't end up making it right through to the end, you should really know that that reflects the incredibly high standard of applications that we have and not that your ambitions are not good enough. I want to say to each and every one of you that we're really behind you for now and your future plans. I wish you all the best of luck.

MARIA: Thank you. I will move over to our panel. So, I think some of our panel hasn't made it on to the call but we will start with those that are here. So, Guillem, would you please go first?

GUILLEM: Yes. Hi, I'm Guillem Vivas. I'm a white man with brown hair and I am currently wearing a sweatshirt that for some reason a says "aloud" on it. I have yet to discover why that is. I am,‑‑ I was a scholarship recipient in 2022 and I'm studying piano at the Royal Academy of Music.

MARIA: Thank you. And Connor, can you please go?

CONNOR: Hello. I'm a white male in my mid‑20s. I wear glasses, have brown hair, albeit it is going a little bit grey now! I study MSc Applied Clinical Psychology at the University of Bath.

MARIA: Brilliant. Thank you. I don't think we have anyone else yet; is that correct, Emily? No. OK.

EMILY: Not yet.

MARIA: While we wait for hopefully some more of the panel to join us, I'm going to go through some of the questions that were sent in by you when you signed up to the event. There were some questions that were directed at the office team I feel more, which are about the process and the criteria. Those are ones which I'm going to answer. And then after that, I'm going to basically hand over to the panel and they're going to answer questions about their experience and their top tips for applying.

So, I'm going to share a PowerPoint presentation and I'm going to read everything that is on the screen so you don't need to worry about following the text necessarily.

The first slide says Master's Scholarship eligibility for the applicant. So, the first criteria is anyone who applies has to have a diagnosed disability. You can read the list of disabilities on our website if you go to the scholarship pages, who can apply, and then eligibility information, and then disability. Regrettably, we can't answer individual queries about whether your particular health condition or illness or disability is eligible. Please read the guidance that we've put on the website. If you have any questions about the accessibility of the website, do let us know. With regards to specific answers to your disability, we can't answer those.

The second criteria is a student has to have a UK home fee status. So, either you are somebody who has lived here for a long time, you're British, or if you're an international student, you might qualify for home fee status. Or if you don't, you will need to have studied your undergraduate degree here in the UK.

Regarding the age, you have to be aged 16 or over. There is no upper age limit. Mature students are very welcome to apply. If you have been out of education for a while, that's not a problem, just tell us what you've been up to. So, if you've been working or if you've had a gap year or been on medical leave, that's fine. We would like to know what you have been doing during the last year or couple since you were in your previous studies.

The next slide says, "Master's Scholarship eligibility ‑ course". So, the type of course you need to be applying for is a full Master's degree. It can be in any subject area, so STEM, arts. It can be related to disability, but it doesn't have to be. Basically, any topic area is very welcome.

You have to be starting a new Master's course. So, if you have already started your studies or you're going into year 2, that is not eligible. So, courses have to be starting after July 2024, which is when the award decisions are made, and before June 2025 when the next awards will typically be made.

So, the scholarship is aimed primarily at those students who are going to study their first Master's degree. There may be some exceptional circumstances when due to ill health or disability, you are having to retrain. Under those circumstances, you could potentially apply for the Scholarship if you are going to study a second Master's degree. But primarily, this is intended for those who are going to study their first Master's.

You have to be studying at a UK university, any UK registered university. Your course can be full time or part time. Part time can be over two years, over three years. We don't really mind how long the course takes. The only impact it will have, is on the frequency at which we'll release your award payments. So, the total amount of money you will be awarded remains the same, but we will divide it between the terms you are studying.

Regarding supporting evidence, if you are shortlisted, we'll ask for your disability evidence and also for an update of your course offer status. So, before that, you don't need to send us any supporting documents. We will ask for them when it's the time.

With regards to all of these eligibility criteria, there are no exceptions to the criteria or to the deadlines that we have outlined in the programme for applications.

The Master's Scholarship award ‑ finances. So, what is available is up to £30,000 and it's up to the Snowdon Trustees to decide how much they award each candidate. The £30,000 will be divided into two parts. It can be up to £15,000 towards tuition fees and up to £15,000 as a maintenance grant which would be like money for you to spend on living costs or whatever you need to. The maintenance grant is usually paid out in instalments throughout the duration of your course.

The scholarship is not means tested. If you have loans or trust funds in some bank account or a particular type of financial background, this is not relevant to our decision making. We will also not restrict you from applying for other funding or loans while you are studying.

If you are awarded a scholarship, it does not affect your Disabled Students Allowance (DSA), as the DSA is not means tested. If your circumstances were to change while you are studying, that's not something that you would need to worry about at this point in time. If something changes in your health or you have to defer whilst you are already studying, then you can contact the [Snowdon Trust] office and we'll find a way forward from there.

Also, the finalists will be invited to join the Disabled Leaders Network (DLN). It is basically what you get with the award; you get the financial components and an invitation to join the DLN.

The application stages [slide] is about the multistage process. We've got a lot of information about this on the website so I'm not going to spend very long talking through this. Just to announce that today, after this call, we are open for applications. This is for stage 1 applications, which is for anyone who meets the eligibility criteria.

We will aim to assess your stage 1 application within 10 working days. We encourage you to send your applications in as soon as possible so that we can then let you know whether you're going to be invited to submit your stage 2 application or not. This 10 days depends on the volume of applications we receive but that's what we are setting out to do at this moment in time. The absolute last time or deadline for you to submit a stage 1 application is 29th February.

If you are invited to submit a stage 2 application, your deadline to submit that is Friday, 15th March.

From stage 2, those selected to move on will be asked to submit a stage 3 submission. Again, you will be invited to do so. The turnaround time for submitting your stage 3 submission is quite quick. If you are invited to submit a stage 2 application, I would recommend you take a look at what is required in stage 3 so that you can give some thought to it and prepare, if necessary, for when the time comes to submit it.

From stage 3, it goes to the selection panel who will decide those applications which are shortlisted. At that stage, we will contact your referee asking for a reference. Typically, this is an academic reference. But if you have been out of education, for example, working or you're applying as a mature student, we can ask someone from your workplace instead.

The Snowdon Trust Trustees will make the final awards at the end of June.

The next slide is a popular question which is asking about the Master's Scholarship - probability of being awarded a scholarship. So, as Helen mentioned at the beginning of this call, this is a very, very popular scheme. We get a huge number of applications. Those applications have been increasing in number every year. Last year, we received around 800 applications and up to 12 awards are available each year, so the statistics are not brilliant. We're fully aware of that. Because of that, we have made some changes this year in the eligibility criteria and introduced this multistage application process, basically to try and improve the probability and making the programme more manageable for us here at the office.

Right, that takes us to the end of the technical bit. We're going to move on to asking some questions to the panel. I will take stock and find out if the rest of our panel is here. Richard, are you here and can you hear us?

RICHARD LANSDOWN: Yes, I can. I am here and I can hear you. I will put myself on. Hang on.

MARIA: That's Richard Lansdown. And this is Richard Wheeler. Perfect. Is John here? No. OK. So, we'll proceed as is for the time being.

Rich Wheeler, would you mind doing a brief introduction of yourself with your name and a brief description of what you are studying.

RICH: Yes, I'm Rich Wheeler. I probably need a haircut. It's very thick brown hair and a beard, and white T‑shirt. I'm blind myself, so I can't really describe much further than that to be honest. But I'm part of the 2023 Snowdon Master's Scholarship cohort, studying an MSc in Disability Studies, Rights and Inclusion at Leeds University, which is a part‑time online course. So I actually live in [inaudible].

MARIA: Brilliant. Thank you. OK. So, what we're doing with the questions today is, I'm going to ask some of the questions that you attendees sent in when you signed up to this event. We're going to try and make the most of our panellists' time by trying to not repeat questions. I'm going to ask some first and then once we have gone through those, we will open up to live questions towards the end of this session.

The first question I have here is ‑‑ oh, sorry ‑‑ Richard Lansdown, would you be happy to step in for John Milligan as representative of the Trustees?

RICHARD: Yes.

MARIA: Could you give a short introduction to yourself?

RICHARD: I've been connected with the Snowdon Trust almost from the beginning. I think I joined in its second year of life, so I have a long history. By profession, I was a psychologist. I worked at Great Ormond Street Hospital for many, many years. I've been concerned with disability in various connections. I was a teacher in a school for children with visual handicaps and for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. I've been on various sides of the fence. And I'm about to retire from Snowdon.

MARIA: Thank you for that introduction. OK, back to the panel for questions. So, the first question is, "What advice do you have to applicants who are worried about not having enough experience or how to demonstrate being exceptional or excellent?" We'll ask Guillem to start.

GUILLEM: Yes. So, one of the things that I've learned over the first year here in the UK is that first of all, levels of experience vary wildly at Master's level. So, there are people ‑‑ so I'm in the field of music -- so there are people that will have already had years of experience teaching and will have won ridiculous numbers of competitions and there are people that will just be starting out because of, you know, maybe the opportunities that they had in their country of residence or anything, really.

I'm sure this is true for other fields as well. I, for example, didn't have any employment experience and this was something that did worry me quite a lot. But I think it's important to think about the experience that you do have and about how relevant it might be, things that we might think that might not have any relevance. For example, for me, I was quite worried, there were a couple of questions about leadership in my application. I was quite worried about that, because I was thinking I have never hosted a music festival. I don't know, I have never taught anyone, so I couldn't think of anything that qualified as leadership. And then I thought of chamber music and maybe this is something that in the beginning we wouldn't consider to be a position of leadership, but you do have to lead in a chamber music group. So, I think that's the thing that really helped me, thinking a little bit out of the box about something, things that you do have experience in that you might not necessarily have thought could be relevant to certain parts of the application, for example. Yeah, think about what you've done and how it links to what you want to do even if it is not the most obvious link.

MARIA: Brilliant. Thank you, Guillem. I'm going to ask the next question. "What do you think helped you stand out?" If Rich Wheeler could go for that.

RICH: A difficult one to answer because I have massive impostor syndrome. But I think to be honest there's quite a variety of different kind of areas that I think helped with my application, so there is, with the goalball club, disability sport, there's the work that I do in my employment, chairing the internal disability network. I think -- I do some volunteer work with domestic abuse as well, where I try to focus on disability too. One of the key things ‑‑ I apologise, the door keeps going off ‑‑ but I think one of the key things is just to try and get as many things you can think of that you're involved in on paper before kind of writing down and starting your application properly, so that you can kind of expand on it. When I first started the application, I didn't think there was much to go on and then after getting it all on paper, there was quite a lot that I couldn't actually include and had to leave out rather than the other way around. I think when you actually reflect and think about all of the different ways of including your lived experience of disability, it all adds up to improving your application.

MARIA: I think that's a really good tip, about jotting down on paper your thoughts and then it is a lot easier to take stock of what you have rather than when you've got ideas floating around.

Just a comment to all of you participants. If you are writing in the chat, can you please send messages directly to Emily Lampard and Helen Saelensminde, as I can't read the messages to me when I'm hosting. Thank you.

The next question, "Did you believe you had a good chance of being awarded the scholarship at the start? If not, what made you apply for it anyway?" Connor, can you take that one?

CONNOR: Yes, of course. I personally, I was confident despite the statistics being around 1.5% chance of getting the scholarship. But, I told myself and this is just maybe a little bit of advice, but you've got to back yourself. When you're applying for the scholarship and writing up the application, I think you won't yield your best work when you're telling yourself "I'm not going to get it".

What also helped me and what also might help the disabled students here today is to do some self‑reflection and look back and see what you have overcome, because the chances are you have already done remarkable things to be here now as university students, for example, or graduates and working or doing your year out or whatever. So, you might not realise it, but the chances are that all of you are in a very strong position to get the Scholarship. What it comes down to is about conveying why you are worth it in the end, depending on what part of the application, saying what your aspirations are moving forward.

I was in your position last year. I applied last year. It is very intimidating of course and there are so many applicants. I don't mean to repeat myself but look back and see what you have achieved, and you might think oh, that other person has achieved it or it's not that big of a deal, but it could be, you know. Write it down, have a look at it and ... that's what I think anyway.

MARIA: Thank you.

CONNOR: Just quickly to add something. Even if you don't think you've got a good chance of getting the scholarship, there's no harm in applying anyway. Applying, it increases the likelihood of getting it. Go for it no matter what. The worst is that you're not going to get it, you know, but you might get it.

MARIA: Brilliant. Good. Next Richard Lansdown. "Does the scholarship value other aspects of excellence (for example, activism) equally to academic excellence? Is there a way to still be considered even if I have a learning disorder that prevents academic excellence?"

RICHARD: No, I think this is something that we have talked about quite a lot in the early days where there tended to be an emphasis on academic excellence and in the last couple of years or so we have shifted rather and we give equal weight as far as we can to, as it were, non‑academic excellence. What we're looking for really is excellence in whatever relevant field there may be and, in particular, the potential for developing further.

MARIA: Brilliant. Thank you, Richard.

OK, another top tip question. "What advice would you give yourself at the start of the application process?" That's for Guillem.

--

--

GUILLEM: Sorry, can you hear me now?

MARIA: Yes, we can.

GUILLEM: Sorry about that. I guess it's funny because a lot of the or some of the feedback that we have been giving ‑‑ not feedback but some of the tips we have been giving centre around a similar theme. Yes, I was pretty much, I was going to touch on a bit of the same thing.

Sometimes I think for me, sometimes I struggle and I know we all struggle with, I guess, adequacy and impostor syndrome and knowing what we have done can have an impact or would have an impact. When we think of applying to a programme like this, at the very beginning we either psyche ourselves out of doing it or of including certain things in the application because we don't think they might matter because we might think, yeah, they're not relevant. Or we do the opposite, how can I magnify what I've done so that it does matter in some way.

I know this will sound a bit cliché, I had to remind myself to be myself at the beginning. That's really the main thing. Just keep your values close and be yourself. Leverage what you have done and your experience and knowledge. No matter how much it is or how much of it you have, work with what you have. Don't think about starting ‑‑ don't think too much about how you could adapt what ‑‑ I guess I'm having trouble wording this. Pretty much what I said earlier, include what you do have, think about what you do have. Don't leave anything out for fear of it not being relevant. Don't think too much about how you can magnify it into something that you think could be relevant. I hope that makes sense. That was a little bit confusingly worded.

MARIA: Thank you, Guillem. The next question ‑‑ I can see someone has their hand up, but I think we will come back to hands later. We are continuing with this question section first.

The next question is for Rich Wheeler, "How did you research and prepare for your own application?"

RICH: I mean, I think to be honest a lot of the preparation, as others have said before, is more just trying to rack your brains about everything you have done and there's things that you may not feel are relevant but they can show you a lot about your skills and kind of what you have to bring to the table as well. The main thing is just getting all of it on paper.

I work with spreadsheets better than other things. For everything, I put everything in a spreadsheet. So, to be honest I had lots of different drafts of spreadsheets and then kind of similarly to how I'm attempting the Master's itself at the moment, is as things come along, I will just have thoughts that come to my mind that I will jot down.

The key thing is to give yourself enough time for the application as well. You can rush anything off but if you really want to put your all into it, you need to give it more than enough time to come back to, to draft it through. To be honest, I spoke with my wife and family members to kind of think about it. It is really easy to forget about all of the great things that you do. So just pulling all of those together at first and then thinking how I can weave those into the pillars [questions] I think is a really key point.

I think one of the other things is to really try and put your personality and your spin on so those reading your application can get to know you as well. That's a really important part of it too. Yeah, the main thing is to try and get everything that you're involved in and then afterwards I went back and tried to draw in more clearer examples.

MARIA: Brilliant. Thank you, Rich. The next question goes to Connor. This is just briefly, "What do you think differentiates a successful application from an unsuccessful one?"

CONNOR: I think the ability to be open and honest about your disability and how it impacts your life in some way, be that because of good or bad. If you're transparent, if you're open about who you are and everything, that will help in my opinion.

I remember last year and then as I mentioned earlier, I was in the position of all of the students applying for the scholarship. I saw some people were saying in the comments that they didn't want to talk about their disability, or they didn't feel too comfortable talking about their disability and is it even required to talk about what they have. I think if you don't really talk about your disability or beat around the bush about it or think about how it links with your studies or future aspirations and your families, et cetera, then the chances are that you will not be successful. At the Snowdon Trust, for the people looking over the application, they want to know who you are as a person. Since this scholarship is for disabled students, a big part of it is for you to be open about the disability. It doesn't mean you have to go and list every single thing, but kind of, you know, I think just being open about it. Maybe you can refer to, as I said earlier, why it inspires you to go into field X, Y and Z, for example, and your previous experiences. At times ‑‑ I know you said to be brief ‑‑ but I suppose at times it can be difficult to write that down. It can be uncomfortable to maybe look back and think oh, I went through that. If you find that uncomfortable to talk about your disability, you can ‑‑ I found it at times a bit uncomfortable to talk about what I went through when I was younger, but you don't have to do this application by yourself. What I mean by that, of course, it is your own work but if you want to be with someone like a family member next to you while you're typing it up or over the other side of the room or something, or something like that, that helps. Or to talk about your ideas with someone.

Just another point quickly is that I placed as much I suppose care into the application, as much enthusiasm and attention to detail as I did for my final year project, my dissertation as an undergraduate. I treated this application incredibly seriously. With that, I took a lot of time, and I made a lot of edits, and at times I had a paragraph I liked, but I removed it because I thought is it actually answering a question or is it getting to point. So, I wouldn't quickly type it up or just treat it half‑heartedly, you know. Treat it I suppose with respect in many ways. It's a very privileged position to apply for this scholarship. It's a great opportunity as well for not just your own studies but to potentially be in a position to make change moving forward. I know it was a long-winded answer. I apologise.

MARIA: Thank you, Connor. Actually, it leads a little bit on to the next question I have. This one would be for Richard Lansdown. "Is there a weighting on either the severity of the impact of the disability, or, how the Master's would help develop my leadership to support other community members with disabilities?"

RICHARD: I'm sorry you asked that question because it is one we have struggled with in the panels. No, the answer is no, there's no particular weighting, although inevitably I think people have individual ‑‑ each individual member of the panel will have his or her own views on the matter. So, the short answer is no, there isn't. The real answer is, probably each one of us does have our own personal weighting scheme. Sorry about if that is not very helpful but it really is the truth.

MARIA: Yes. Just to say that the decisions are taken as a whole panel so individual opinions don't outweigh the democratic vote that comes out at the end.

RICHARD: I think that's a very important point. Both the scholarship panels for awards is a collective decision and it is a very important point to make.

MARIA: Thank you. Last round of questions. If we can go through these at pace so we've got some time left for live questions. First one for Guillem, "What are some of the barriers that the scholarship has helped you overcome?"

GUILLEM: I think for me, the main thing was kind of peace of mind and ability to focus on my studies. I was quite worried about having to ‑‑ because of the fact that I'm in music, there is few things that we can do in terms of work to support ourselves during our Master's especially for piano. Really one of the few things you can do is teach and if you don't have a studio in which you can teach, it's a problem because you have to move around quite a bit to people's houses. You know, as someone who is blind, that also signifies having to learn the route, spending a long time on transport, possibly having to spend money on transport, as in private transport, depending on, you know, where I would be teaching, and that was quite worrying.

Yeah, that was, I guess, the peace of mind of knowing that I still want that work experience and I'm still seeking it, but I can do it sort of on my own time instead of worrying about whether I will be able to pay for my next, I guess, accommodations bill and such things.

Yeah, I was able to focus entirely on my studies, especially during the first year in which I wasn't really sure what was going on and I spent the first few months, the first good few months in an adapting phase. Yeah, it really helped me that way, I think.

MARIA: Brilliant. Thank you. The next one goes to Rich Wheeler. "Has being a Snowdon scholar given you the opportunity to advocate for inclusivity and accessibility in education?"

RICH: Yeah, I mean I think it has. Having only been a scholar for one term so far, I hope it will give me the opportunity further on. To be perfectly honest, I've had a lot of difficulties with access barriers at the university so far. I think that being a scholar has given me some confidence there in terms of some of the opportunities it's given me as well. There's the Disabled Students' Allowance laptop I was given which wasn't powerful enough. So, I managed to use some of the funding from the Scholarship towards a much more powerful laptop to help out in that respect. I mean, the nature of my course is disability studies and I've been looking into that quite a lot too and the events that the Disabled Leaders Network run, I think are really interesting and important. I think that a common theme that comes out of the ones that I've been to far are about empowerment as well, so recognising what is out there, recognising what abilities you've got and how you can take things forward. So, I think the answer in short is yes, I think it has so far but it also I feel I'm really excited to kind of get more involved with the Disabled Leaders Network and take more learnings as I go on as well.

MARIA: Brilliant, a lot more to come. Thank you, Rich. The last one to Connor, "Do you have any final top tips you would like to share that we haven't already talked about so far?"

CONNOR: I think that's covered a lot of tips to be fair, that I think of right now.

MARIA: That's fine.

CONNOR: If I answer, my answer might be a little bit too long. I think we have pretty much covered everything.

MARIA: Brilliant. Thank you. If something else does crop up, interrupt at any time.

The last one to Richard Lansdown. "Do you have any words of encouragement from the Trustees for these potential applicants here on the call?"

RICHARD: I'm not sure we need to encourage when we had something like 800 applying. But I think, I hope that the way we respond to all applicants is in itself encouraging, and encouraging whatever you're doing or not doing, at least if you're trying, we would certainly support that.

I'd like to just add one point, not a general point, sorry one specific point, on expressing examples of leadership and so on in the application form. And that is, if applicants ask themselves how I effected change in some way, how have I been responsible for change, if you ask that rather more general question rather than related only to disability, something may come to mind which is really very important which should be added. What we're looking for, as I said earlier, is potential. Not necessarily actual examples of leadership, but potential. So, any example of ways in which you as a person have been able to bring about change in any field, that would be really helpful to us.

MARIA: Thank you, Richard. That's a good top tip to add in there at the end. We're going to open up now for live questions. We're primarily going to focus on first scanning through the chat messages that have come through. After that, if we have time, we will open it up for spoken questions. If you're using keyboard navigation, open the chat with Alt+H or Command+Shift+H. I will check in with Emily for any important questions that have come in on the chat.

EMILY: Yes, there's been a question, if there is any advice for people wondering if they're disabled enough to apply for this. So, I don't know who wants to answer that one, maybe you, Maria, or one of our panellists.

MARIA: Helen?

HELEN: Sorry, I confess that I was reading the chat. I missed the question.

EMILY: It was just a question of whether there is any advice, if someone is thinking am I disabled enough to apply for this scholarship.

HELEN: I think the reality is, as Maria said earlier, we can't give you specific guidance on every type of disability, if you think about it in the medical sense. The way we look at it is through the social model. If you experience barriers as a result of a disability, we want to hear from you, absolutely.

EMILY: As this scholarship is primarily for people doing their first Master's, in what kind of circumstances will a second Master's be considered? Maria or Helen.

HELEN: The reality is, we're really looking to support people in their first Master's because this is a big investment and we think that that's the fairest way of doing things. However, we do accept that in certain very exceptional circumstances, there might be a reason why you need to take on a second Master's. We would consider an application from somebody in those circumstances where the reason for having to do a second Master's is disability related. So, that might be because you have acquired a disability since your first Master's or it might be because of your experience of disability, if your condition has worsened, for example, that has made you have to retrain.

We can't give you specific advice on each application. I'd suggest if you feel that you have a disability related reason for applying for a second Master's, then just mention that in your application. Give us a reason to want to fund you.

EMILY: Great. A question for one of the panellists. "Did you prepare for the scenario of not receiving the award?" Obviously, you apply with the hope that you will be awarded a scholarship but how did you prepare for the possibility you didn't receive it?

CONNOR: After my graduation, I worked for a year as a learning support assistant so I did save some money, but I was also incredibly reliant on this scholarship to allow me to live on campus, on campus accommodation. For those who cannot see, I have an en suite bedroom which is very nice, and it makes my needs easier to be there. If I did not get the Scholarship, I would probably have lived off campus which is cheaper and probably worked part‑time alongside my studies. Thanks to the Scholarship, I can live on campus, with an en suite and not work part‑time, and I can focus on my studies. So, I suppose I did have plans of living in a different place and working part‑time, and maybe even taking out a loan or something.

EMILY: Great. Thank you. So, a question from a mature student who has struggled with employment and discrimination and so has large gaps in their CV. Is there any advice on how to approach writing about their employment experience while applying? Helen.

HELEN: Yes, we are interested in applications from everyone who is eligible regardless of their background and the circumstances they have experienced. We recognise that actually future disabled leaders are often those who have experienced lots of challenges. So, we're really interested in hearing your story and how that has shaped your future plans. I'm sorry it is not specific enough. To echo what I have heard several of the panellists say, yes, we are asking you questions to guide your answers, but we want to hear the story of you. For each of you, that will be different.

EMILY: Great. Another question probably for you as well, Helen, about when you make the application you are talking about the course you want to study, but what do you do when you want to apply to multiple Master's courses? So, you don't yet know what course you're going to be studying.

HELEN: Yes, I think we recognise that there will be applicants who have applied for several courses. But I think we would anticipate that those would all be in a relatively small area. I'm assuming that somebody's not applying for one in maths and one in art, for example. So, I think, you know, as long as you can talk about the general arc that you're trying to follow with those applications, we completely understand you might not have the final exact course worked out at the beginning of the process. But hopefully, we would expect you would have a confirmed place by the time the Trustees are making their decision.

EMILY: Great. Someone's asking about whether people with autism can apply for this. The answer is yes. And then whether you need an offer from your university at stage 1 and 2 of the application process.

MARIA: I can answer that one. It's Maria. So, you don't need to have a confirmed offer at stage 1 or stage 2. We hope you will have applied for your course by then. If you proceed to the final stages when it is the shortlist and the Trustees are about to review your application, at that point we will ask you for an update to see how far you have got. I know many undergraduate degrees will not award you your final certificate until you have finished your dissertation or it has been marked and you might have delays in seeing that. If you have a conditional offer, that's fine, no problem. And at the very end of it, if you are awarded a Scholarship, we obviously will need to see your unconditional offer before we process any payments.

Shall we open ‑‑ we have about five minutes left in the meeting; shall we open for anyone who wants to ask a question by speaking?

EMILY: Sorry, Maria. There is one more question in the chat that is for you, I think, about Snowdon Trust grants and when these will be opening.

MARIA: So, the grant programme is obviously very separate to the scholarships. We're currently evaluating that [grant’s programme] before we open it up for the next academic year. We will post information online on our website by early April at the latest. We will also open for applications for grants then, but we will keep that separate to this information meeting. Thank you.

OK, let's see if someone wants to ask a question. Hi, Tor.

>> Hello. Can you hear me?

MARIA: Yes, we can hear you.

>> Hi, my name is Tor. I'd like to know a little bit more about any potential further support, so when you apply and say you're successful, I know there is obviously the financial component and the invitation to the DLN. I was wondering if there is any support with helping access to university where there are barriers to education due to disability. So, me personally, I've had a few incidences of barriers to education and I've had a few support from my university. I was wondering if there is external support provided by the Snowdon Trust.

MARIA: So, the Snowdon Trust scholarship is the financial component and then an invitation to join the Disabled Leaders Network. So, we won't be taking up any particular access needs or adjustments at your university. That will be between you and your disability support services to arrange at the university. However, I will put a plug in for the DLN. I think the panellists can jump in and correct me if you feel otherwise, but I think that you have found support from one another, like peer support and comparing notes and best practice and avenues for chasing up on support that's maybe lagging or not in place.

>> Thank you.

MARIA: Edward.

>> Hi. When I started at university, I was on a four‑year [inaudible]. When I started the third year, I was starting a Master's module and unfortunately ... [problem with audio quality] ... the way those modules were set up and they were not accessible for me. So, unfortunately, I had to drop out of my Master's on to the undergraduate. Would I still be eligible?

MARIA: I'm not sure if I caught everything you said. I think you said that you are on an integrated undergraduate and were not able to complete some of the modules, so you have now ...

>> No. Yes, so I was doing an integrated Master's and I started the modules. Maths was one of the modules and due to discrimination, I wasn't able to complete them or do the work. I'm just wondering, I dropped down on to the undergraduate. I was wondering whether that would make me ineligible for the Master's scholarship.

MARIA: If you haven't already, by the sound of it, you haven't graduated with a Master's degree. So, if you're going to apply for a new Master's course, which you haven't already started, and at the end of [the course] you would be awarded a full Master's degree, then, I believe, you should be eligible to apply for it.

>> Thank you.

MARIA: Thank you. We've got time for one more quick question. The next one in line is someone who is just iPad. I will ask you to unmute. Hello.

>> Hello. Is that me or is that somebody else?

MARIA: Yes. I think this is correct.

>> Yes. Sorry. I don't know why it is just iPad. It's Gavin. I want to ask a quick question around, I'm currently studying a Master's part‑time. I started that back in 2022. I just didn't know of the Snowdon Trust was around, if I'm honest. My disability is getting worse so I'm likely to have an amputation in the next year or so and then I'm going to go and study another Master's or PhD, I'm not quite sure which yet. Because I have done this Master's currently, am I then effectively not going to be able to apply again if that makes sense for the Master's scholarship afterwards?

MARIA: Helen, are you going to answer that one?

HELEN: Yes, I can answer that one. Gavin, I'm really sorry. It sounds like unless there is a specific disability related reason for the second Master's, it wouldn't be eligible for this programme, I'm sorry to say.

>> Yes, I thought that would probably be the case. I thought I'd check.

HELEN: Always worth checking.

MARIA: Thank you. Thank you everybody. It's now fifty-nine past. It's coming to the end of our meeting. Thank you to our panellists for your time and top tips. Thank you to everyone who has joined the call. I hope you found it informative. On your way out, there will be an exit survey. Please leave us some feedback on how we're doing and any improvements we can make note of for next year. Any questions that haven't been answered in the chat which are new questions, by that I mean questions that are not already answered on our website, we will answer those questions and send out a document alongside the transcript and a link to the video once it's available. All of the information will come to you on the email address that you signed up with.

So, on that note, thank you very much. Hope you have a good rest of Monday. The applications are now open so you can start stage 1. Bye‑bye.