



ZEN4BLUE

POST HIGH SCHOOL MARINE EXPERIENCE (PHME)

SHARK EDUCATION & FIELD RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIP

Applications are now open for the Zen4Blue PHME Shark Scholarship!

THIS IS MORE THAN AN ONLINE COURSE.

The PHME Shark Scholarship is designed for young adults who are ready to explore a future in marine science, shark conservation, research, education, or ocean-related career, but may not have access to the traditional pathways that make those careers possible.

This scholarship combines 12 online shark education modules with a hands-on field experience in Belize, giving participants the opportunity to take what they learn online and put those skills into practice alongside marine professionals and conservation partners.

You don't need a college degree.

You don't need previous research experience.

You do need curiosity, commitment, and a willingness to learn.

WHAT THE SCHOLARSHIP INCLUDES:

12 SHARK EDUCATION MODULES

- Online learning focused on sharks, shark ecology, conservation, human-shark relationships, and related marine science topics
- Module quizzes and learning activities
- A final course examination
- Completion and passing of all online coursework and project preparatory virtual meetings with educator are required before participating in the Belize field experience

A SHARK FIELD WEEK IN BELIZE — JUNE 2027

The field experience brings the online curriculum into the real world.

During field week scholars will have the opportunity to:

- Participate in supervised shark field research
- Observe and document shark behavior and human responses during field activities
- Conduct surveys and gather community perspectives about sharks and shark conservation
- Work alongside marine conservation professionals
- Explore the relationship between humans and sharks

- Engage directly with local communities
- Develop and investigate an individual research question
- Create a project abstract and research poster
- Present their work and findings to a local Belizean community
- Contribute to a larger Zen4Blue shark research project

ZEN4BLUE SHARK EDUCATOR - TAYLOR'S SHARK CONCEPT

PHME scholars will participate in Taylor's Shark Concept, a research project focused on understanding how education and direct experience with sharks in the water may influence human perceptions of sharks.

The project examines the relationship between:

WHAT PEOPLE BELIEVE ABOUT SHARKS → WHAT THEY EXPERIENCE → WHAT THEY UNDERSTAND AFTERWARD

Scholars will have the opportunity to help examine human fear responses, understanding, attitudes, and perspectives toward shark conservation before and after direct contact with sharks in the water.

Participants will also use surveys to engage with the local community and gather insight and opinions from people who live alongside wildlife in Belize.

WHAT ABOUT SCUBA?

Scuba certification is NOT required to apply.

If you are already a certified diver, you may have the opportunity to use that skill during the field experience.

If you are not certified, you may have an opportunity to pursue scuba certification as part of the field experience, depending on program logistics and individual eligibility.

You must, however, be comfortable with the possibility of traveling by boat and participating in water-based field activities.

YOUR OWN RESEARCH QUESTION

Every scholar will have the opportunity to develop an individual project question or hypothesis.

You do not need to arrive with a completed scientific research proposal.

We want to know:

- What are you curious about?
- What question would you like to explore?
- What do you want to understand better?

- What part of the shark-human relationship interests you?
- What would you like to learn from the people, wildlife, and environment around you?

During the program, your idea can develop into a project abstract, research poster, and community presentation.

Your project doesn't have to be perfect.

YOUR CURIOSITY IS WHERE THE RESEARCH BEGINS.

WHO SHOULD APPLY?

The PHME Shark Scholarship is intended for young adults who are ready to begin building a pathway toward an ocean-related career.

APPLICANTS MUST:

- Be 18–25 years old
- Have graduated from high school or earned a GED/equivalent (will be required to furnish copy)
- Not currently be enrolled in a college or university degree program
- Be able to travel internationally to Belize
- Have a valid passport or be able to obtain one in time for the June 2027 field experience
- Be willing to travel by plane and boat
- Be willing to participate in required online coursework before field week
- Complete and pass all required modules, quizzes, and the final course examination before participating in the Belize field experience
- Be willing to participate fully in the field, research, community engagement, and presentation components of the program

WHO ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

We're especially interested in applicants who have not had easy access to marine science education, field research, international travel, professional mentorship, or career-building opportunities.

Maybe college isn't your path right now.

Maybe you have had to work instead of pursue unpaid internships.

Maybe you've never had the opportunity to travel internationally.

Maybe you discovered your passion for the ocean after high school and didn't know what came next.

Maybe you're simply someone with enormous curiosity who has never had anyone open the door.

THAT'S WHY THIS PROGRAM EXISTS.

Zen4Blue is committed to creating meaningful pathways into marine careers for young adults whose potential may not be reflected by a traditional academic résumé.

BEFORE YOU APPLY

Please understand that this is a SELECTIVE SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY.

Being selected means committing to the entire experience — not just the trip to Belize.

Successful applicants will be expected to:

- Complete the online shark education program
- Complete all quizzes and required coursework
- Pass the final course examination
- Participate fully in the June 2027 field week
- Contribute to field research and data collection
- Participate in community surveys and engagement
- Develop an individual research question or hypothesis
- Create a project abstract and poster
- Present their work to a local Belizean community
- Work respectfully with fellow scholars, researchers, community members, and conservation professionals
- Represent Zen4Blue throughout the experience

WE ARE LOOKING FOR COMMITMENT, NOT PERFECTION.

PHME SHARK SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

PART 1 — TELL US ABOUT YOU

Full Name: _____

Preferred Name: _____

Age: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

City / State / Country: _____

What is the best way to contact you? (Circle One) Phone WhatsApp Email

Tell us about your education:

High School / GED Program: _____

Year Graduated: _____

WHAT ARE YOU DOING RIGHT NOW?

Tell us about your current situation. You may be working, taking classes, exploring a career, volunteering, taking time to figure things out, or doing something completely different.

What does your life look like right now?

PART 2 — YOUR STORY

1. TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF.

Who are you beyond your résumé?

Tell us about your interests, experiences, hobbies, passions, responsibilities, or anything else that helps us understand who you are

2. WHAT FIRST SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN SHARKS OR THE OCEAN?

There is no wrong answer.

Maybe it was a childhood experience. A documentary. A dive. A beach. A person. A fear. A fascination.

Tell us your story.

3. WHY DOES THIS OPPORTUNITY INTEREST YOU?

What about the PHME Shark Scholarship caught your attention?

4. WHY NOW?

What makes this the right time in your life to pursue this opportunity?

PART 3 — YOUR FUTURE

5. WHAT KIND OF FUTURE CAN YOU IMAGINE FOR YOURSELF?

You do not need to know exactly what career you want.

Tell us what you're curious about and where you might like to go.

Your answer might involve:

- Marine science
- Shark conservation
- Research
- Wildlife
- Diving
- Environmental education
- Photography or filmmaking
- Scientific communication
- Community conservation
- Environmental policy
- Conservation careers
- Or something we haven't thought of yet

6. WHAT IS ONE SKILL YOU WOULD LOVE TO DEVELOP THROUGH PHME?

Tell us why that skill matters to you.

PART 4 — ACCESS & OPPORTUNITY

Zen4Blue created this scholarship because talent and curiosity should not depend on whether someone had the money, connections, or opportunities to get started.

7. WHAT OPPORTUNITIES HAVE YOU HAD TO EXPLORE MARINE SCIENCE OR CONSERVATION?

Tell us about any classes, camps, internships, volunteer experiences, jobs, travel, diving, research, clubs, mentorship, or other experiences you've had.

IT'S COMPLETELY OKAY IF THE ANSWER IS "NONE."

8. WHAT OPPORTUNITIES HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT FOR YOU TO ACCESS?

This might include educational opportunities, travel, transportation, unpaid internships, professional networks, equipment, certifications, mentorship, or other barriers.

Please share only what you are comfortable sharing.

9. WHAT WOULD HAVING THIS OPPORTUNITY MAKE POSSIBLE FOR YOU?

We want to understand the difference this scholarship could make in your life and your future.

PART 5 — SHARKS & RESEARCH

10. WHAT IS ONE QUESTION ABOUT SHARKS THAT YOU WOULD LOVE TO ANSWER?

Don't worry about whether it's scientifically perfect.

We're interested in your curiosity.

11. IMAGINE YOU HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEND A WEEK IN BELIZE STUDYING SHARKS AND WORKING WITH A LOCAL COMMUNITY.

What would you want to learn?

12. HOW DO YOU THINK PEOPLE DEVELOP FEAR OR FASCINATION TOWARD SHARKS?

There is no right answer.

Tell us what you think.

13. AFTER LEARNING ABOUT SHARKS AND EXPERIENCING THEM IN THE WATER, WHAT DO YOU THINK MIGHT CHANGE ABOUT THE WAY PEOPLE SEE THEM?

Again, we're interested in your thinking — not a textbook answer.

PART 6 — FIELD EXPERIENCE

The Belize experience will involve planes, boats, water, outdoor conditions, research activities, teamwork, community engagement, and unfamiliar environments.

14. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT TRAVELING OUTSIDE YOUR HOME COUNTRY?

15. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT TRAVELING BY BOAT?

16. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT BEING IN THE WATER AROUND MARINE WILDLIFE?

17. ARE YOU CURRENTLY SCUBA CERTIFIED?

☐ YES

☐ NO

If yes, please tell us about your certification and experience.

If no, tell us whether you would be interested in pursuing scuba certification as part of the opportunity if available.

18. TELL US ABOUT A TIME YOU WERE OUTSIDE YOUR COMFORT ZONE.

What happened, and what did you learn from it?

PART 7 — YOUR PROJECT IDEA

You don't need a research proposal.

You don't need to know the scientific method.

You don't need to know exactly what your final project will be.

TELL US ONE THING YOU WOULD LOVE TO INVESTIGATE DURING PHME.

It could involve:

- Sharks
- Human perceptions of sharks
- Conservation
- Wildlife
- Local communities
- Ocean ecosystems
- Education
- Tourism
- Climate
- Or another question connected to the ocean

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW THAT YOU DON'T KNOW NOW?

PART 8 — THE QUESTION WE REALLY WANT TO ASK

19. WHY SHOULD WE CHOOSE YOU?

Don't tell us what you think we want to hear.

Tell us why YOU.

What would you bring to this experience?

What would you do with the opportunity afterward?

PART 9 — COMMITMENT

If selected, I understand that this scholarship requires me to:

- ☐ Complete all 12 shark education modules
- ☐ Complete and pass all required quizzes
- ☐ Pass the final course examination
- ☐ Complete all required coursework before participating in the Belize field experience
- ☐ Participate fully in the June 2027 field week
- ☐ Participate in research, data collection, surveys, and community engagement
- ☐ Develop an individual research question or hypothesis
- ☐ Create a project abstract and poster
- ☐ Present my project and findings to a local Belizean community
- ☐ Follow all safety and program requirements
- ☐ Represent Zen4Blue respectfully throughout the experience

Applicant Signature: _____

Date: _____

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

A valid passport is required for international travel to Belize.

DO YOU CURRENTLY HAVE A VALID PASSPORT?

☐ YES

☐ NO

If no:

ARE YOU ABLE TO OBTAIN A PASSPORT IN TIME FOR THE JUNE 2027 FIELD EXPERIENCE?

☐ YES

☐ I believe so and will begin the process immediately

☐ I am unsure and would need assistance understanding the process

ONE LAST THING

PHME doesn't end when you leave Belize.

Our goal is to create a community of young marine professionals who continue learning, building skills, creating projects, and opening doors for others.

As Zen4Blue's programs grow, PHME alumni and Women in Blue Science scholars may have opportunities to return to the Zen4Blue community, share their work, and eventually present their research and experiences on a global stage at the Zen4Blue Marine Summit in Singapore.

YOUR FIRST FIELD EXPERIENCE COULD BE THE BEGINNING OF A MUCH BIGGER JOURNEY.

READY TO TAKE THE FIRST STEP?

Submit your completed application to:

PHME@ZEN4BLUE.ORG