



External evaluation review: terms of reference for consultancy

Contents

1. Summary
2. Overall objective
3. Background
4. Scope of work
5. Deliverables/outputs
6. Timeframe
7. Application and selection process
8. Experience/qualifications
9. Reporting
10. Costs of the review
11. Recommended reading
12. Appendices

1. Summary

The Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the United Kingdom (CSC) is seeking a consultant to undertake an external review of its operations, with particular reference to the evaluation and monitoring functions. This external review is directed at evaluating the relevance and effectiveness of the CSC's programmes with respect to its development objectives. It should address the questions identified as part of the overall objective.

Duration: It is proposed that this project constitute 50 days' work, ideally to be undertaken between February-August 2017. However, the exact schedule of work is negotiable for the right proposal and the right bidder, and amendments to this can be agreed prior to the exchange of contracts.

Deliverables: A final report of approximately 50 pages to be submitted to the CSC by 31 August 2017. As before, the exact length of the report is to be decided upon by the CSC and the successful bidder prior to exchange of contracts.

Intended audience: An initial draft of the report should be presented for review by the CSC's Evaluation and Monitoring Committee in June 2017. This committee, normally comprising up to six Commissioners and a DFID representative, will offer final comment, following which a full and final edited copy of the report will be prepared and submitted to the full Commission at its meeting in September 2017.

As well as the Commission as a whole, the report is also intended to inform future CSC policy and evaluation and monitoring activity. The CSC Secretariat, which administers these programmes, therefore also forms part of the intended audience.

Experience: The consultant should have demonstrable experience in evaluating the impact of higher education and/or international development programmes.

Contact: Rachel Day at the CSC Secretariat – rachel.day@cscuk.org.uk

2. Overall objective

To address the following questions using evidence available in CSC databases, and from investigation and discussion with stakeholders:

- 1) What differences have the Commission's activities made to the CSC's beneficiaries and their associated institutions? How do these contribute to the CSC's stated objectives?
- 2) How effective are the Commission's mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the relevance and effectiveness of its programmes and how can they be improved upon?

3. Background

The CSC has awarded over 25,000 scholarships and fellowships during the past 55 years. Now offering around 900 awards per year across its portfolio of awards, its activities form the UK's contribution to the international Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan.

The funding for the majority of these awards – those for citizens from developing countries in the Commonwealth – is contributed by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), while awards for citizens of developed Commonwealth countries are funded by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS, formerly BIS) and, prior to 2009, by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). In 2015/2016, the CSC managed a budget of approximately £25 million from DFID and £0.5 million from BIS/Scottish Government.

UK institutions and host organisations are also increasingly key stakeholders, making considerable financial contributions to support CSC awards in the form of either fee deductions or stipend allowances, depending on the scheme, as well as contributing time and administrative resource. Overseas employers and nominating agencies are also key stakeholders, both in terms of time spent advertising and administering applications and also, it is hoped, as beneficiaries in the long term. In monetary terms, the CSC estimates that benefits in kind from various stakeholders amounts to approximately £4 million per year.

The CSC itself is a non-governmental public body whose administration is undertaken by a Secretariat based at the Association of Commonwealth Universities. Full details of the CSC's structure and governance are available at www.gov.uk/cscuk

Types of awards

For much of its history, the CSC focused its activity on supporting postgraduate study in the UK, with the majority of its budget being devoted to doctoral study, along with a number of mid-career fellowships for academics or medical personnel in developing countries. These activities continue today. However, over the past decade, there has been significant diversification in the range of awards offered, most notably the introduction of distance learning scholarships, split-site doctorates, a new strand of professional fellowships offering mid-career awards for non-academics, and a strand of awards for Masters' degrees that are jointly funded with UK universities. As of 2016, the CSC funds a portfolio of eight distinct schemes, including Medical, Academic, and Professional Fellowships, PhD and Split-site (PhD) Scholarships, as well three types of Master's Scholarship (two tenable in the UK on a full time basis and one by distance learning). Further information about the types of awards is provided in Appendix One.

It should also be noted that, although for DFID-funded awards at least there is an explicit focus on potential development impact, there is no subject or discipline quota as such and, as a result, awards have been held across the full range of disciplines. The scheme is also truly Commonwealth-wide, with awards being offered to citizens from over 50 Commonwealth countries.

Assessing the impact of awards

The CSC invested in alumni tracing in the late 1990s and early 2000s, establishing an alumni programme in 2000. Having built on this early work, the CSC was much better placed to expand its existing monitoring function to encompass evaluation, leading to the establishment of a dedicated evaluation and monitoring programme in 2007, led by an appointed committee of Commissioners in 2007. This committee was joined by a representative from DFID in 2011.

In the early years of the evaluation programme, activity focused on identifying and tracing alumni (contact has been made with almost 8,000 individuals) and learning more about their subsequent activities through surveys and interviews, as well as further developing evaluation tools and methods. Two international

seminars have also been held, to enable the CSC to interact with other funding agencies in the field. More recently, a scoping study exploring the research methodologies of other scholarship donors has been published.

In the past ten years, the CSC has undertaken reviews of a number of its programmes internally, with reports being published or in the process of being published along with an internal review of the Evaluation & Monitoring Programme's activities between 2008 and 2014 which was completed in 2015. In addition, two external reviews were undertaken in 2006 and 2010. These reviews both marked the end of previous funding cycles. The external review that is the subject of this tender process will conclude the funding period 2011-2016. It comes at a key point in time for the CSC, which has invested much thought and time in redrafting its strategy for 2015 onwards and is now both reflecting on past experience and planning for the future.

4. Scope of work

The consultant will:

- Using existing reviews and reports on CSC programmes and data, and consultations with CSC staff and other relevant stakeholders, consider whether there is evidence from the past five years to support the hypothesis that the CSC is having an impact.

To do this, the consultant will:

- Meet with CSC staff and Commissioners to ensure a sound understanding of the programme and the CSC's objectives, current procedures, and methodologies already being employed, as well as the contributions of the various stakeholders involved
- Review materials and data from the CSC, particularly the 2015 internal review and analysis papers, and, where appropriate, consult with other awarding bodies to examine their approaches and experiences
- Following this initial information gathering exercise, liaise with the CSC to determine the extent to which further data collection may or may not be necessary and to ensure mutual understanding of objectives and approach. Please note that capacity for much further in-depth data collection is likely to be limited.
- Write an interim report summarising the results of background and development research and submit this to the CSC's Evaluation and Monitoring Committee for comment.
- Produce a final report incorporating any final comments or suggestions for submission to the full Commission and, if desired by the CSC, wider publication

5. Deliverables

The consultant will be expected to deliver a single report of at least 50 A4 pages in length by June 2017 (the exact length and date will be agreed prior to the signing of contracts). This paper will be reviewed and signed off by the CSC's Evaluation and Monitoring Committee before being submitted to the full Commission. The report is expected to inform future practice and as such will remain the property of the CSC and may be shared more widely with its internal and external contacts. Any primary data that may be collected as a result of the project will also remain the property of the CSC, and should also be submitted to the CSC on conclusion of the project.

Proposed deadlines (subject to negotiated agreement between both parties)

Delivery of interim report plan	To be agreed
Delivery of final draft report	June 2017
Delivery of agreed final report	September 2017

6. Suggested timeframe

Activity	Days	Deadline
Liaison with CSC contacts regarding background of programme and project requirements	2 days	Informal progress updates at agreed points.
Submission of initial inception report and progress update.	8 days	To be agreed prior to signing of contracts
Collecting and analysing information	20 days – to be agreed following discussion of the inception report	To be determined
Progress update including first draft of report structure	2 days	To be agreed
Submission of draft report to CSC for comment	10-15 days	June/July 2017 (TBC, pending confirmation of E&M Committee meeting date)
Final report edits and amendments following submission of draft report	2 -3days	1 September 2017 (TBC)
Total	50 days approx	Exact TBC

It is suggested that this piece of work will consist of up to 50 days. An indicative breakdown of possible time allocation is given above. However, as noted, the exact duration of the work is negotiable for the right proposal and bidder. Amendments to the above timeframe will be agreed prior to the exchange of contracts.

Ideally, we would anticipate delivery of the final report by June/July 2017, with final revisions made and the complete report submitted by 1 September 2017.

7. Application and selection process

Applicants should submit an expression of interest to the CSC contact named below by **5.00 pm (GMT) on Monday 19 December 2016**.

Expressions of interest should include the following information:

- Details of the applicant(s) background and experience with regards to the following: evaluation, higher education, international development
- Statement of availability from February 2017-September 2017
- Proposed daily rate of the applicant(s) for evaluation work
- Outline of the proposed approach and methods that the applicant(s) would apply to this review for initial discussion.
- Examples of previous work undertaken

All expressions of interest will be submitted to a panel comprising members of the CSC's Evaluation and Monitoring Committee. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview, after which a final selection will be made.

8. Experience/qualifications

The consultant will be qualified to at least Master's level in a relevant field and will have demonstrable experience in impact evaluation techniques, ideally in the context of measuring the development impact of aid initiatives. An understanding of higher education systems is also desirable, along with some experience of DFID policy and systems.

9. Reporting

The consultant will report to the CSC's Evaluation and Monitoring Committee, currently chaired by Professor Jeff Waage. The contact person will be Rachel Day, Programme Manager (Evaluation) at the CSC Secretariat (rachel.day@cscuk.org.uk). Information, guidance, and documentation will be provided by Rachel Day and colleagues at the Secretariat.

Contact details:

Rachel Day
Programme Manager (Evaluation)
Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK
Woburn House
20-24 Tavistock Square
London WC1H 9HF
Tel: +44 (0)20 7380 6736
Email: rachel.day@cscuk.org.uk
www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk

10. Costs

Costs of the tender

Tenderers must bear all costs incurred in connection with the preparation and submission of this tender and are to bear any further pre-contractual costs.

Costs of the project

The tenderer should submit proposed costs for consultant time at the point of application. Specific additional expenses relating to data collection and other activities may be available, if the need arises and is agreed prior to the event between the CSC contact and the consultant.

11. Recommended reading

Available on request or at www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk

- *Successes and complexities: the outcomes of UK Commonwealth Scholarships 1960-2012*, Mawer M, Day R, Quraishi S (2016) London, CSC
- CSC Corporate Plan, Business Plan, and Framework Document (2015/2016)
- Evaluating Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships in the United Kingdom: Review of the CSC Evaluation & Monitoring Programme 2008 – 2014 (2014/15)
- *Trajectories and Impact of Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Alumni: An interim quantitative analysis*, Mawer M (2014) London: CSC
- *A study of research methodology used in evaluations of international scholarship schemes for higher education*, Mawer M (2014) London: CSC
- *Measuring the economic impact of Commonwealth Scholarships: Identifying Methodologies for Cost Benefit Analysis and Value for Money*, Vardakoulias O (2012) London: Nef Consulting
- *Evaluating Commonwealth Scholarships in the United Kingdom: Assessing impact in key priority areas*, Day R, Stackhouse J, Geddes N (2009) London: CSC
- CSC Logical Framework and Business Case/Intervention Summary 2011-2014/5

In addition, a number of impact evaluation reports published by the CSC are available at <http://bit.ly/cscuk-evaluation-publications>. Internal papers and data will be shared with the successful applicant as part of the initial information gathering stage.

For further information, please contact Rachel Day at rachel.day@cscuk.org.uk

Appendix One: Overview of awards offered by the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK

In the early days of the CSFP, the CSC offered scholarships for study leading to doctoral and Master's level qualifications, as well as separate fellowships for medical training and academic staff. Medical Fellowships for senior and junior medics were merged with the broader scholarship and fellowship programmes in the 1990s. In the past 15 years, however, and as of 2015, the range of schemes has once again expanded to include not only the reintroduction of a separate Medical Fellowship scheme, but also Professional Fellowships of typically three months in length, Split-site Scholarships for doctoral students registered for PhD study in their home country allowing for a period of research at a UK university, and Distance Learning Scholarships for Master's study. The former Overseas Development Agency Shared Scholarship Scheme was also brought under the umbrella of the CSC in 2002, adding a further Master's study scheme to the overall portfolio of awards.

Commonwealth Scholarships for PhD study: Offering funding for three years for a UK registered PhD or other doctoral level qualification. Candidates are nominated by a nominating agency in their home country or, for academic staff scholarships, by their higher education institution in their home country.

Commonwealth Scholarships for Master's study: Offering funding for Master's study in the UK. Candidates are nominated by a nominating agency in their home country or, prior to 2015 for academic staff scholarships, by their higher education institution in their home country.

Commonwealth Split-site Scholarships: Introduced in 1998, offering funding for PhD students registered at a 'home institution' in another Commonwealth country to spend up to one year at a UK institution. Applicants were previously nominated by their home institution but now, as of 2015, can apply directly.

Commonwealth Shared Scholarships: Offering funding for Master's study in the UK with different cost-sharing arrangements between the CSC and universities. Applicants are put forward by UK universities.

Commonwealth Distance Learning Scholarships: Introduced in 2002, offering funding for Master's courses run by UK institutions and studied at distance (i.e. in home countries). Awards are offered for selected courses.

Commonwealth Academic Fellowships: Short-term mobility scheme for established academic researchers and medical professionals to build skills and contacts at a UK institution. Eligible lengths of tenure have varied from 12 months to six months to three months at different times across the history of the scheme; currently, as of 2016, awards are offered for a period of between three and ten months.

Commonwealth Medical Fellowships and Senior Medical Fellowships: historical scheme for medical training fellowships, subsequently merged with Commonwealth Academic Fellowships scheme or discontinued in some elements; reintroduced as a separate programme in 2015.

Commonwealth Professional Fellowships: Introduced in 2001, a short-term mobility scheme for professionals to build skills and contacts at a UK host organisation.