



Handbook

for Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows
in the United Kingdom

2020

Disclaimer

The Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK (CSC) uses all reasonable skill and care to ensure that the information contained in this publication is accurate at the time of printing. However, matters covered in this publication are subject to a continuous process of review and to unanticipated circumstances. The CSC therefore reserves the right to make any changes without notice.

Contents

Glossary and key	4	Travel to the UK	17	Scholars accompanied by children and spouse	27	Notification of illness	42
Foreword	6	Travel arrangements	17	Scholars accompanied by children only	28	Allowances while in hospital	43
Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the United Kingdom	8	Travel expenses	18	Claiming family allowances	28	Compassionate airfare	43
Administration	9	Family members' fares	19	Claiming child allowances	28	Maternity leave	43
Handbook	9	Currency	19	Council Tax	29	Paternity leave	44
Programme Officers	9	Disability support	19	Award regulations	30	Student engagement	44
CSC Secretariat contacts	10	On award	21	Residence	30	Events	44
General queries	10	Code of conduct	21	Employment	30	Social media	45
Other queries	11	Arrival	22	Progress reports	31	Facebook	45
Before your award	12	Reception on arrival	22	Duration and termination of award	31	Knowledge Hubs	46
Visas	12	Registration form	22	Overseas travel	32	Twitter	46
Family members (dependants)	12	Award allowances	23	Fieldwork	34	Common Knowledge	46
Visa application fees	12	Concurrent awards	23	Mid-term visits	36	Connecting by email	47
Travel for visa appointments	13	Bank accounts	23	Scholarship extensions	37	Crediting your award	47
Financial preparations	14	Warm clothing allowance	24	Visa extensions	38	End of your award	48
Cash card	14	Stipend (living allowance)	24	Deferment of homeward airfare	39	Completion of tenure	48
Research Support Grant	14	Payment dates	24	Health and welfare	40	Travel from the UK	49
Accommodation	15	Tuition fees	25	National Health Service (NHS)	40	Travel arrangements	49
Arranging accommodation	15	Study travel grant	25	Immigration health surcharge (IHS)	40	Travel expenses	49
Accommodation deposits	16	Reimbursements	26	Registering with a doctor	40	After your award	51
		Overpayments	26	Emergency dental and eye care	42	Alumni	51
		Family allowances	26			Evaluation	52
		Scholars accompanied by spouse only	27				

Glossary

- AWARD: a Commonwealth Scholarship or Fellowship
- AWARD TENURE: the duration of a Commonwealth Scholarship or Fellowship
- HOST ORGANISATION: an organisation that hosts Commonwealth Professional Fellows
- CONFIRMATION OF AWARD: the final document confirming a Commonwealth Scholarship or Fellowship
- NOTIFICATION OF AWARD: the document outlining the formal offer of a Commonwealth Scholarship or Fellowship
- STIPEND: living allowance paid to Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows
- UNIVERSITY: a university, college, NHS Trust, or other higher education or academic institution

Key

This handbook does not apply to Commonwealth Shared Scholars, Commonwealth Distance Learning Scholars, or Commonwealth Rutherford Fellows.

Throughout this Handbook, advice and regulations for specific types of Commonwealth Scholars or Fellows are highlighted using the following colours:

Applicable to all Commonwealth Scholars

Applicable to all Commonwealth PhD Scholars

Applicable to all Commonwealth Master's Scholars

Applicable to all Commonwealth PhD Scholars from low and middle income countries

Applicable to all Commonwealth PhD Scholars from high income countries

Applicable to all Commonwealth Fellows

Applicable to all Commonwealth Professional Fellows

Applicable to all Commonwealth Medical Fellows

Foreword

I congratulate you on your success in gaining a prestigious award from the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK (CSC). Very few people have this opportunity, and I urge you to do all you can to make the very most of this opportunity to develop your academic talent, research and experience.

I am confident that you will. My fellow Commissioners and I reviewed your application – along with hundreds of others – very carefully. Most did not make it, but you did. We were looking for people with many talents: intellectual ability, so you would succeed in your studies; a personal commitment to development and to making a contribution to your nation's and region's success; and the potential for leadership and influence, for the common good – for the 'commonwealth'.

At this time of great upheaval, with nations across the Commonwealth being affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, it is more vital than ever that we put health and wellbeing at the forefront of everything we do. The CSC has worked closely with UK universities on arrangements to ensure you feel supported during your scholarship and can access the necessary guidance to navigate any difficulties you may face. Given the unpredictable nature of the Covid-19 situation, the CSC is regularly updating its guidance to provide you with the most up-to-date information. Your welfare and safety are of paramount importance and so I urge you to stay informed as situations change by reading mailings from the CSC, visiting the CSC website, and maintaining contact with your Programme Officer.

I hope that you will really enjoy your time experiencing life and learning at a UK university. Many other Scholars and Fellows have, over the past 60 years of the scholarship scheme, created memories that endure. I am sure you will have a wonderful time and create your own lasting memories too. I encourage you to find out about and participate in the many CSC events, networks, and other activities: join your Regional Network, register for our workshops and lectures, join us at events with the UK Parliament and other areas of interest – and maybe start your own initiative, such as a journal club, research conference, or charity event.

My fellow Commissioners and I look forward to meeting you either remotely or in person and to hearing about your progress and interests. When you finish your award, we will also keep in touch with you as an active member of our alumni network. Please remember to keep telling us about your achievements, as well as encouraging other talented Commonwealth citizens to consider applying for one of our scholarships or fellowships. As Commonwealth Scholars and future alumni, you will be inspiring role models for them.

This Handbook is designed to be of use to you throughout your award. It explains our administrative arrangements and contains general information about the CSC. It also sets out the rules we will abide by to ensure fairness and equity in the delivery of our programmes.

Please make this Handbook the first point of enquiry if you need to know something about your award. If questions remain after reading the Handbook, please, of course, contact your Programme Officer at the CSC Secretariat.

I am confident that your time as a Commonwealth Scholar will be immensely rewarding. On behalf of all of the Commissioners and our Secretariat, I wish you success. Our aspiration for you is that you will continue to thrive in your academic or professional career, and that your experience studying at a UK institution will boost your personal contribution to the development of your country in numerous ways.

Richard Middleton
Chair

Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the United Kingdom

Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK

As at June 2020

Chair

Richard Middleton

Commissioners

Professor Anne Anderson OBE

Professor Madeleine Arnot

Professor Brian Faragher

Professor Sarah Hawkes

Professor Paul Jackson

Emma Judge

Dr Catherine MacKenzie

Professor Morag McDonald

Professor Nuala McGrath

Dr Christine Thurania McKeever

Professor Alfredo Saad Filho

Professor Mary Stiasny OBE

Professor John Wood

The CSC is committed to administering and managing its scholarships and fellowships in a fair and transparent manner. For more information, including the CSC's anti-fraud policy and procedure and complaints procedure, visit www.gov.uk/government/organisations/commonwealth-scholarship-commission-in-the-uk

Executive Secretary

Dr Joanna Newman MBE FRSA

Director of Operations

Dr Jonathan Jenkins

Senior Project Manager – British Council

Becky Hayes

Administration

The Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the United Kingdom (CSC) is the body appointed by Act of Parliament to supervise the operation of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP) in the UK. The CSC is responsible for setting policy, making selections, and providing general direction. Day-to-day administration is undertaken by the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), which provides the CSC Secretariat. The CSC Secretariat is responsible for providing all on-award administration, as well as assisting the CSC with selecting candidates for Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships, securing university placements for them, and supervising their studies. The CSC Secretariat is also responsible for on-award payments, travel, and welfare. The British Council is responsible for providing a pre-departure briefing and is involved in working with our alumni overseas.

Handbook

This Handbook explains the regulations for the administration of Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships in the United Kingdom. These regulations do not apply to Commonwealth Shared Scholarships, Commonwealth Distance Learning Scholarships, or Commonwealth Rutherford Fellowships. Regulations may be changed without notice during the term of a Commonwealth Scholarship or Fellowship and any changes will apply with immediate effect.

This Handbook provides general guidelines only and does not cover in detail every aspect of all awards. You and your supervisors/hosts should always check with the CSC Secretariat, after consulting the Handbook, about specific issues. Your Notification of Award will detail any conditions specifically applicable in your case.

This Handbook is also available online at cscuk.fcdo.gov.uk/current-scholars/handbook-policies-forms

Programme Officers

Your Notification of Award names your Programme Officer. You should contact your Programme Officer in the event of any queries or difficulties during your award. Your Programme Officer will arrange for your initial allowances to be paid and can answer queries about the financial aspects of your award, travel arrangements, and visa and welfare issues. Your Programme Officer may change from time to time during your award.

CSC Secretariat contacts		
Programme Officers		
Nighat Anwar	+44 (0)20 3751 7875	nighat.anwar@cscuk.org.uk
Irene Costello	+44 (0)20 7380 6774	irene.costello@cscuk.org.uk
James Goldsmith	+44 (0)20 7380 6751	james.goldsmith@cscuk.org.uk
Nadim Khan	+44 (0)20 7380 6753	nadim.khan@cscuk.org.uk
Saima Lone	+44 (0)20 7380 6728	saima.lone@cscuk.org.uk
Jasmin Osman	+44 (0)20 3751 7873	jasmin.osman@cscuk.org.uk
Senior Programme Officers		
Naivasha Mwanji	+44 (0)20 7380 6716	naivasha.mwanji@cscuk.org.uk
Krystal Lee	+44 (0)20 7380 6796	krystal.lee@cscuk.org.uk
Senior Welfare And Immigration Officer		
Ratha Senthinathan	+44 (0)20 7380 6783	ratha.senthinathan@cscuk.org.uk
Programme Assistants		
Luke Stamps	+44 (0)20 3409 2178	luke.stamps@cscuk.org.uk
General queries		
Welfare And Immigration		
	+44 (0)20 7380 6783	welfare@cscuk.org.uk
Finance		
	+44 (0)20 3409 2173	finance@cscuk.org.uk

Other queries		
Student engagement		
		engage@cscuk.org.uk
Alumni		
		alumni@cscuk.org.uk
Evaluation and monitoring		
		evaluation@cscuk.org.uk

You should contact us by email in the first instance. If you need to provide hard copy forms or documents to your Programme Officer or any other member of staff, you can send them by post to: Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK, Woburn House, 20-24 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HF, United Kingdom

Before your award

Visas

Most Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows will need to obtain a visa to enter the UK. For information on current visa regulations and guidance on applying for a visa, visit the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) website at www.gov.uk/visas-immigration

UK immigration rules are constantly changing. For up-to-date news and information on changes relating to international students, you should consult the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) website at www.ukcisa.org.uk

The British Council has produced several brochures to help you make sure your time in the UK is safe and enjoyable. The brochures, along with general information about studying in the UK, are available at study-uk.britishcouncil.org

It is your responsibility to ensure that your permission to enter or remain in the UK and that of any accompanying dependants is valid throughout your time in the UK.

Family members (dependants)

SCHOLARS: You must ensure that you and any accompanying family members (dependants) meet all the UK immigration requirements. You should check the requirements and procedures for obtaining visas for family members carefully at www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Visas-and-Immigration/Dependants. You are liable for any costs incurred in obtaining visas for your family members and are responsible for supporting your family members while they are in the UK.

FELLOWS: Due to the short and intensive nature of fellowship programmes, the CSC recommends that you do not bring family members with you to the UK. The CSC cannot provide support for the family members of Fellows.

Visa application fees

If a tuberculosis test is required for your visa application, you will be charged a fee and on production of your TB certificate you will be reimbursed for a pre-determined amount on arrival in the UK.

SCHOLARS: If you are applying for a visa from outside the UK, in most cases you will be applying for a Tier 4 student visa (for Chevening, Marshall and Commonwealth Scholars) and your application fee will be waived. If you are charged for your visa application, you should query this with the visa application centre immediately and inform the CSC and your university. You should not make any payment as this will not be reimbursed.

If you are planning to apply for a Tier 4 visa from inside the UK, you must seek guidance from your Programme Officer in advance of your visa application. You will be charged an application fee. If a fee reimbursement has been pre-approved, you should submit the receipt with a claim form for reimbursement to your Programme Officer within 3 months of your award start date

If you are applying for a short-term student visa, as instructed by your university, you must seek guidance from your Programme Officer in advance of your visa application. You will be charged an application fee. If a fee reimbursement has been pre-approved, you should submit the receipt with a claim form for reimbursement to your Programme Officer, within 3 months of your start date.

Split-site scholars

If you are a Split-site Scholar, you must check in good time what is required from your university (including any English Language and ATAS requirements) and follow any university instructions.

FELLOWS: You will be charged an application fee when you apply for your visa. This fee, plus any pre-approved immigration health surcharge (IHS) costs (if applicable) and an arrival allowance (if applicable), will be automatically reimbursed once you have arrived in the UK.

Travel for visa appointments

If you are required to travel to another country to attend your visa application appointment, the CSC can arrange your flight booking if pre-approved by your Programme Officer. Contact your Programme Officer at least one week before you intend to travel and they will provide you with instructions on how to book your travel using the CSC-approved travel provider. You will not be reimbursed for any airfare that is not booked via the CSC's travel provider. The CSC will not cover any accommodation costs nor the cost of any domestic travel.

Financial preparations

Cash card

You will be sent a pre-paid bank card – known as a ‘cash card’ – and instructions on how to activate the card with your Confirmation of Award. When you arrive in the UK, the CSC will credit your warm clothing allowance (if applicable) and your first quarter’s stipend (calculated from the first day of your award, as stated on your Notification of Award, or the day that you arrive in the UK, whichever is later) to the cash card. You can use the cash card at cash points (ATMs) across the UK.

You must have booked your flight with the CSC Secretariat and received your e-ticket and have confirmed with the CSC that you have activated your cash card before any money will be loaded on to it. The cash card has no monetary value until it has been activated.

As with any other card of this nature, you are responsible for its security from the moment you receive the cash card. If you lose the cash card, you should immediately report the loss to the card issuer. Contact details for the card issuer are included on the back of the cash card and in the guide provided to you by your Programme Officer.

Research support grant

PHD SCHOLARS: Your supervisor may claim a Research Support Grant (often known as ‘bench fees’) during the negotiations for your placement at a university to cover costs incurred by the

University for the research to be undertaken i.e. equipment and consumables. If you think you will need a Research Support Grant, it is very important that you contact your supervisor before your Notification of Award is issued, so that they can submit a request to the CSC. The CSC will not consider any requests made after your Notification of Award is issued.

Accommodation

Arranging accommodation

Before you arrive in the UK, you must contact the accommodation office at your university/host organisation as early as possible. The CSC does not have a supply of accommodation anywhere in the UK.

Your stipend will be paid from the first day of your award, as stated on your Notification of Award, or the day that you arrive in the UK, whichever is later. You must arrange your travel and accommodation accordingly and ensure that you do not pay for accommodation before you arrive in the UK.

For general advice on the types of accommodation available in the UK, application procedures, and useful links to short-term accommodation, visit www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Preparation-and-Arrival/Planning-your-housing

If you accept university residential accommodation, you will usually have to stay there for one academic year if you are a Scholar, or for the duration of your award if you are a Fellow. Since this type of accommodation is in high demand, you may have to live in private rented accommodation instead. If your university is unable to offer you accommodation, or if you want to live in private rented accommodation, the accommodation office at your university should be able to provide a list of private landlords or agencies.

You are strongly advised not to sign any contract for private accommodation without first viewing the accommodation to assess its suitability. Any signed contract is legally binding, so you should always check the terms and conditions carefully before signing. You should also check that you are able to afford the accommodation, based on your monthly stipend, before signing any contract.

If you decide to leave your accommodation before the end of your contract, you will be personally liable for any fees and outstanding costs.

Accommodation that is suitable for families is scarce and in high demand in most university towns. You may have to spend some time in temporary accommodation before securing suitable long-term family accommodation. You are strongly advised not to bring your family to join you in the UK until you have arranged suitable long-term accommodation.

Many universities or host institutions can provide or advise you about accommodation suitable for disabled students, or they may adapt accommodation to meet your individual needs. If you require accessible or adapted accommodation, we recommend that you contact your university or host institution to discuss your requirements as soon as possible.

You must consult your academic supervisor/host and notify your Programme Officer before renting accommodation so far from your place of study that it may be considered unreasonable (for example, in London, over 15 miles), as this may have an impact upon your attendance or stipend rate.

You must inform your Programme Officer immediately of any change of address, whether temporary or permanent, during your award.

Accommodation deposits

The CSC is unable to reserve or pay a deposit for any accommodation on your behalf before you arrive in the UK. Your Programme Officer is also unable to act as a referee or guarantor for you in any application for accommodation. If you have been offered university accommodation that requires a deposit to secure the accommodation before arrival, your Programme Officer may be able to provide a deposit deferral letter once your award has been confirmed, provided your university will accept this. If this is the case, you will still need to pay the deposit upon, or shortly after, taking up your accommodation. It is very unusual for private landlords to accept this type of letter.

If, after you arrive in the UK, you need to make a substantial rental payment (e.g. six months), the CSC may be able to arrange an advance of your stipend. If you want to apply for such an advance, you must forward your rental agreement for the full academic year, which must clearly state the period for which the agreement applies and the schedule of all rental payments you will need to make during that year, to your Programme Officer. If agreed, your Programme Officer will send you a repayment plan, which you must sign before the advance is released.

Travel to the uk

Travel arrangements

Your award covers the cost of travel at the start of your award, the CSC will book a single economy flight from the nearest major airport to your home town in your home country to the nearest major airport to your university/host organisation in the UK (as determined by the CSC) and one standard class train or coach fare in the UK, if appropriate. Your travel can only be booked once you have received your visa to enter the UK. Split Site scholars on two periods of 6 months or for less than a year will be required to book a return ticket.

Your Programme Officer will provide you with detailed instructions on how to book your travel using the CSC-approved travel provider. All travel to the UK must be booked through the CSC-approved travel provider's online booking form. The travel provider will book your travel in line with the CSC's **Travel Policy**. When completing the booking form, you should ensure your final destination is your UK university to ensure that a coach/rail ticket (if appropriate) can be booked to your final destination. You will not be reimbursed for any airfare, train or coach fares that are not booked via the CSC's travel provider.

If you require any health or disability related assistance, please let us know in advance of making your booking so that we can arrange this with the CSC travel provider.

If you are already in the UK when your award is confirmed and you do not return home before your award commences, you will not be eligible for an airfare or a warm clothing allowance.

All award-holders are expected to be in the UK for their award start date, as stated in the Notification of Award. If you need to travel after the official start date of your award, you must ask for approval from your university and your Programme Officer in advance, giving the reasons for the delay. You should not assume that approval will be given. Scholarships (not Fellowships) are offered for the start of the academic year.

The CSC cannot accept responsibility for accidents during your journey or for the loss of luggage, wherever or however these may occur. You should arrange appropriate insurance to cover your travel to the UK for the duration of your award.

PHD SCHOLARS FROM HIGH INCOME COUNTRIES: You must contact your university to arrange your travel.

PROFESSIONAL FELLOWS: You must arrive in the UK at least one day prior to the scheduled start date of the programme. You may arrive up to five days before the start of your programme.

Travel expenses

Your award will usually cover the following incoming travel expenses:

- **Fares:** One approved airfare from the nearest major airport to your home town in your home country to the nearest major airport to your university/host organisation in the UK (as determined by the CSC); one standard class train or coach fare to your final destination, if the arrival airport is not located in the same city as your university/host organisation.
- **Incidental expenses:** One night's hotel accommodation, only if your journey involves a necessary overnight stop en route to the UK as determined by the CSC travel provider and confirmed in advance by your Programme Officer.
- **Excess baggage:** Only if the standard baggage allowance for your flight is less than 30kg, the cost of bringing an additional 10kg of luggage from your home country to the UK. You must submit receipts clearly showing the weight and cost incurred with a claim form for reimbursement to your Programme Officer after you have arrived in the UK.

See the online link for the full CSC Travel Policy here: cscuk.fcdo.gov.uk/current-scholars/handbook-policies-forms

You must submit any claims for reimbursement within three months of your arrival in the UK. To download the claim form for reimbursement and to see the full CSC Travel Policy, visit cscuk.fcdo.gov.uk/current-scholars/handbook-policies-forms

Family members' fares

You are personally responsible for the fares and luggage expenses of your family members. These can be arranged by the CSC travel provider and billed to you separately.

Currency

You should carry with you sufficient UK currency (pounds sterling) to meet any expenses that you may incur immediately when you arrive, in case there is a problem with accessing the funds on your cash card. A sum of £200 should be sufficient. If you are accompanied by dependants, you will need a correspondingly larger sum.

Disability support

When you are provisionally selected for a Scholarship or a Fellowship, you will be required to submit a form, which asks if you have a disability and if you are likely to need any special provision or treatment during your award. We strongly encourage you to disclose any disabilities at this early stage. This will provide the CSC with a clear picture of your needs, so that arrangements can be made for your welfare in the UK, should you be successful in gaining a Scholarship. Any sensitive personal data that you provide will be handled with maximum discretion.

We will use the information provided to determine what (if any) additional support you may need to excel in your studies, during your academic and daily life, and/or at CSC events. Examples of actions will depend on your needs but may include: liaising with your university/host organisation (with your permission) to ensure you are supported; advising you about any preparations you need to make before you arrive in the UK or anything you may need to bring; advising the CSC's travel provider of any considerations that need to be made for your travel to the UK. We are committed to ensuring you are well-supported during your studies and will work with you to understand your needs.

The disability-related support the CSC provides for Scholars is agreed and determined according to Scholars' individual needs. We will liaise with you to determine what support we can offer, and will take this into account in conjunction with the information that you have provided, additional details provided by your university/host organisation (if they have conducted a needs

assessment), and any other information about additional support that your university/host organisation is able to provide. Additional support provided by the CSC is intended to complement the support already provided by your university/host organisation, ensuring your needs are met throughout your award.

If your Scholarship is tenable in the UK, the CSC will provide support for you in your personal life if your disability-related needs result in the costs of everyday activities being higher than they would be otherwise, or for costs to access services such as medical appointments and therapy. If you declare a disability on the form, a full assessment of your needs and eligibility for additional financial support will be offered once you arrive in the UK.

The CSC organises events for Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows, and coordinates attendance at events hosted by other organisations. If you apply to attend one of these events, you will be asked on the application form if you have a disability that requires any additional assistance. We will make every effort to put adjustments in place to enable you to attend and gain maximum benefit from the event.

On award

Code of conduct

As a Commonwealth Scholar or Fellow, you are an ambassador for both the CSC and your home country, and your actions and communication will have an impact on the reputation of both. You are therefore expected to adhere to high standards of conduct and behaviour and to show respect to others and your surroundings at all times. All Scholars and Fellows must familiarise themselves with the CSC's Disciplinary Policy available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/csc-awardholder-disciplinary-policy which applies once a Scholar or Fellow has accepted their CSC award. The CSC aims to enable a free exchange of ideas during all its activities in order to achieve the maximum potential impact for all participants. Recognising the diversity of backgrounds among our award holders – including in terms of race, religion, gender, sexuality, cultural values and disability status - you are reminded to always be respectful to others and to behave professionally. All communication should be appropriate for an audience including people of many different backgrounds; harassment and sexist, racist, or exclusionary comments or jokes are not appropriate nor is discrimination either direct or indirect.

The same considerations apply to social media and electronic communications and the provisions of this Code and the CSC Disciplinary Policy apply as they would to speaking in public or writing something for publication, either officially or in a personal capacity. When engaging with social media you should at all times respect confidentiality, financial, legal and personal information. Social media and electronic communications, whether public or private, addressed to a group or an individual, should never be used for harassment, bullying, defamation, or any behaviour that makes another individual feel threatened or uncomfortable.

The CSC is committed to proactively safeguarding and promoting the welfare of Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows and to protecting all those with whom award-holders come into contact. This includes contact unrelated to the CSC and applies to electronic contact as well as all activities conducted overseas including fieldwork. The CSC requires Commissioners, Secretariat staff, and Scholars and Fellows to fulfil their role and responsibilities and conduct themselves in a manner consistent with requirements for safeguarding. The CSC Safeguarding Policy is available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/csc-safeguarding-policy

Any complaints received or issues related to the behaviour of award-holders brought to the Commission's attention will be taken very seriously and any behaviour that does not adhere to the above values and expectations will be addressed by the CSC. Your award may be terminated at any time for reasons of unsatisfactory conduct, progress, or attendance, or if your registration is suspended or terminated by your university for any reason.

The CSC operates a zero-tolerance attitude to fraud and will investigate all instances of actual, attempted and suspected fraud, bribery or corruption committed by Scholars and Fellows related to their award. Any such instances will be considered under the CSC's Anti-Fraud Policy. You can view the policy at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/csc-in-the-uk-anti-fraud-policy-and-procedure

Scholars and Fellows are expected to fulfil all requirements put on them as award-holders and return all documentation in a timely and complete manner. Scholars and Fellows are expected to treat any staff engaged within the CSC Secretariat, or within any other organisation contracted to provide services to the Commission, with courtesy and respect. It is expected that such staff will show you the same consideration in return.

Arrival

Reception on arrival

The CSC does not offer a reception on arrival service in the UK. Your university's international office may be able to provide a 'meet and greet' service. You may have been given information about this with your university offer letter. Alternatively, you can contact your university's international office for instructions on how to travel to your final destination; contact details are available on the university's website. If you are using a university service and have any disability-related needs that require additional assistance, please ensure that your university are aware, so they can provide additional support.

PROFESSIONAL FELLOWS: You should make suitable arrangements with your host organisation

Registration form

You are required to complete the registration form provided by the CSC and submit it with a copy of your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) or visa if your award is six months long or less, and passport photo page to your Programme

Officer. If you do not submit your registration form, BRP and passport photo page within the first three months of arriving in the UK, you may risk having your stipend suspended.

To download the registration form, visit cscuk.fcdo.gov.uk/current-scholars/handbook-policies-forms

Award allowances

Concurrent awards

A Commonwealth Scholarship or Fellowship covers fares, fees, and a living allowance. PhD awards also cover approved research and fieldwork costs. Other scholarships, awards, or bursaries that cover the same costs as those provided by the CSC may not be held concurrently. If you are offered a concurrent award you should seek advice from your Programme Officer. If you accept another award without declaring it to the CSC, the CSC reserves the right to withdraw your Commonwealth Scholarship/Fellowship.

Bank accounts

If your full award tenure is more than six months long, you must open a UK bank account (this includes online UK bank accounts), in order to receive your allowances and to minimise bank charges. The information and documentation you need to open a bank account may vary between different banks, as well as the time it takes. Opening a bank account with an approved 'high street' bank or an approved online/mobile bank are acceptable for CSC purposes. For further information, visit www.ukcisa.org.uk/information--advice/living-in-the-uk/opening-a-bank-account

You must submit your bank details to the CSC using the form available at cscuk.fcdo.gov.uk/current-scholars/handbook-policies-forms. You must follow the instructions on this form carefully. The CSC cannot accept bank account details provided in a name other than your own.

If you do not provide the CSC with your UK bank account details within the first three months of arriving in the UK, you may risk having your stipend suspended.

The CSC will not transfer remaining allowances on a cash card to your UK bank account – you are responsible for doing this yourself.

It is very important that you inform your Programme Officer about any changes to your bank account details. If you decide to change your bank account, you

must provide the new details to your Programme Officer as soon as possible, using the form on the CSC website and following the instructions carefully. You must keep your old account open until your stipend is credited to your new account. If you do not keep your old account open, there may be a delay in receiving any allowances paid during this period.

Warm clothing allowance

Where applicable, you will receive a warm clothing allowance when you first arrive in the UK. This payment will be transferred automatically onto your cash card upon arrival.

Stipend (living allowance)

You will receive a stipend (living allowance) which is calculated to cover your basic living expenses, such as accommodation, meals, personal expenses, daily travel, and an element for books and other sundry items whilst you are on award in the UK. Your stipend will include a London living weighting if you are studying at a university/hosted by an organisation in London and are residing in London. Your Programme Officer will inform you of any changes to your stipend rate as and when they occur.

If you have declared a disability, the CSC will undertake an assessment of your needs and eligibility for any additional financial support you may be eligible for whilst you are on award in the UK.

Your stipend will be paid from the first day of your award, as stated on your Notification of Award, or the day that you arrive in the UK, whichever is later. Your stipend will stop on the last day of your award, as stated on your Notification of Award, or the day that you leave the UK, whichever is earlier. You should arrange your accommodation accordingly.

Payment dates

All regular allowances will usually be paid into your bank account in advance, by the first day of each quarter. Although the money will often reach your account a few days earlier, you should arrange for any direct debits to be paid after the first day of the quarter. Allowances cannot be paid before the due date.

Payment of your allowance is initiated fourteen working days before your bank account is credited. If you change your bank account, you must inform your Programme Officer well in advance of when payments are due.

Your final quarter's stipend will be suspended and will not be released until you make contact with your Programme Officer to confirm your departure arrangements. Your stipend and allowances will be released only after you confirm your homeward flight booking, or (for PhD Scholars) your request to defer your homeward airfare is approved.

Tuition fees

Your university will send invoices for approved fees to the CSC. If you receive an invoice for these fees, you should inform your university that you are a Commonwealth Scholar/Fellow and provide a copy of your Notification of Award as evidence of your sponsorship, so that your university can invoice the CSC.

SCHOLARS: Approved fees usually include fees for tuition, and a Research Support Grant if applicable. You must pay subscriptions to any university or college clubs or societies that you join yourself.

MEDICAL FELLOWS: The CSC pays a fixed support grant to your host institution as part of your fellowship. This grant is non-negotiable. Your host institution must invoice the CSC for this.

PROFESSIONAL FELLOWS: Your host organisation is granted a flat fee as part of your fellowship. It may also negotiate additional fees (for example, for short courses) with the CSC, before your fellowship is confirmed.

Study travel grant

The amount of study travel grant available to you is stated on your Notification of Award. You should apply for a study travel grant in advance of travel or within three weeks of the travel. The sum you apply for may cover travel, conference fees, and accommodation related to your studies. Your application may not be approved if the CSC deems your request to not be related to your studies. You cannot use your study travel grant to attend an event held after the end of your award tenure. Your study travel grant application will not be approved if it does not meet the above criteria. To download a study travel grant application form, visit cscuk.fcdo.gov.uk/current-scholars/handbook-policies-forms

The CSC aims to process your study travel grant within 10 working days of submission.

PROFESSIONAL FELLOWS: You are not eligible for study travel grants, as these expenses should be included in your host organisation's grant.

Reimbursements

You can claim reimbursement for certain costs incurred either before the start of your award, or during your award. Before incurring any such costs, you should confirm with your Programme Officer that they will be reimbursed.

For costs incurred before your award, you must submit all claims for reimbursement within three months of your arrival in the UK. For costs incurred during your award, you must submit all claims for reimbursement within three months of incurring the cost. Costs for reimbursements must be of benefit to your award, therefore if your cost is submitted towards the end of your award and the CSC deems the reimbursement claim to not be of benefit to your award, the CSC may not approve your reimbursement.

To download the claim form for reimbursement, visit cscuk.fcdo.gov.uk/current-scholars/handbook-policies-forms. You should submit this form with original receipts to your Programme Officer. The CSC aims to process all claims within 10 working days of submission.

Overpayments

Any cases where an award holder is found to have falsely claimed expenses, not declared their absence from the UK, or failed to repay a stipend advance or an overpayment of stipend or allowances to which they were not otherwise entitled will be considered under the CSC's **Anti-fraud Policy**. If you believe that you have been overpaid any amount of money, you must contact your Programme Officer immediately. Your Programme Officer will advise on how to repay any overpayment made to you.

Family allowances

If your scholarship is at least 18 months long or if you are a single parent, you may be eligible to claim family allowances. These allowances are intended to be only a contribution towards the cost of maintaining your family in the UK. The true costs are likely to be considerably higher, and you should bear this in mind when you are deciding whether to bring your family to the UK. The CSC assumes that, if you are accompanied by your spouse and children, your spouse will be primarily responsible for childcare. If this is not the case, you should contact your university as soon as possible to determine what childcare facilities may be available.

Spouse and child allowances are paid only from the date your spouse and/or children arrive in the UK. If you are receiving a grant or allowances to support your family from another source, you are not eligible to claim spouse or child allowances from the CSC and you must notify your Programme Officer. If you receive spouse or child allowances, you will not be eligible for a mid-term visit to your home country.

You may be required at any time during your award to provide proof that your spouse and/or children are still in the UK.

Eligibility for spouse and/or child allowance does not guarantee that your spouse and/or child/children will be eligible for a UK visa. Visa and Immigration Health Surcharge fees are very high for dependants and are not reimbursed by the CSC. You should read the current immigration requirements carefully before deciding to apply for a visa for your spouse and/ or child/children. For guidance, visit www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Visas-and-Immigration/Dependants

Scholars accompanied by spouse only

SCHOLARS: Spouse allowance is payable only in respect of a legally recognised marriage or civil partnership. If your scholarship is at least 18 months long and you are accompanied by your spouse, you are eligible to claim spouse allowance for the first nine months of their stay only, provided that they are living with you in the UK for a continuous period of at least three months. You are not eligible to claim spouse allowance if your spouse is also in receipt of a scholarship, a citizen or permanent resident of an EU country (including the UK), or residing in the UK on a working visa.

Scholars accompanied by children and spouse

SCHOLARS: If your scholarship is at least 18 months long and you are accompanied by your spouse and children, you are eligible to claim spouse allowance and child allowance for the first, second, and third child under the age of 16, provided that they are living with you in the UK for a continuous period of at least three months. You can also claim child allowance for children between the ages of 16 and 18 who remain in full-time education in the UK during your award. You are not eligible to claim spouse allowance if your spouse is also in receipt of a scholarship, a citizen or permanent resident of an EU country (including the UK), or residing in the UK on a working visa.

Scholars accompanied by children only

SCHOLARS: If your scholarship is at least 18 months long you are eligible to claim child allowance for up to three of your accompanying children, provided that they are living with you in the UK for a continuous period of at least three months. You can also claim child allowance for children between the ages of 16 and 18 who remain in full-time education in the UK during your award.

If your scholarship is less than 18 months long and you are a single parent (i.e. you do not have a second parent supporting your child/children in your home country), you are eligible to claim child allowance for up to three of your accompanying children, provided that they are living with you in the UK for a continuous period of at least three months. You can also claim child allowance for children between the ages of 16 and 18 who remain in full-time education in the UK during your award.

Claiming family allowances (for Scholarships of at least 18 months)

If you are eligible for spouse allowance you should send a completed family record form to your Programme Officer with a copy of your valid marriage/civil partnership certificate or proof of legal status of relationship (with certified English translation, where necessary) and copies of your spouse's passport pages showing their photograph, entry stamp, and leave to remain stamp.

If you are eligible for child allowance, you must provide copies of each child's birth certificate, passport and visa with a copy of the entry date stamp (with certified translations, where necessary). If any children join you at a later date or are born in the UK, proof of their arrival/ birth will be required before child allowances can be paid. To claim child allowance for children between the ages of 16 and 18, you must provide documentary evidence that they are still in full-time education.

You must inform your Programme Officer in advance of any expected change in your family circumstances (for example, arrival or departure of your family in the UK, any change in the number of children who qualify for child allowance), as this will affect your entitlement.

Claiming child allowances (for Scholarships of less than 18 months)

If you are eligible for child allowance, you should send a completed family record form to your Programme Officer with copies of each child's birth certificate, passport and visa with a copy of the entry date stamp (with certified translations,

where necessary) and evidence of your single parent status. To claim child allowance for children between the ages of 16 and 18, you must provide documentary evidence that they are still in full-time education. If any children join you at a later date or are born in the UK, proof of their arrival/birth will be required before child allowances can be paid.

You must inform your Programme Officer in advance of any expected change in your family circumstances (for example, arrival or departure of your family in the UK, any change in the number of children who qualify for child allowance), as this will affect your entitlement.

Council tax

Council Tax is a charge for the services provided by local councils.

You must never ignore any bills you receive for Council Tax, even if you believe that the amount is incorrect or that you should not be paying the charge. If you are in any doubt, you should contact your local council immediately.

SCHOLARS: If you are living in university halls of residence, a hostel owned by a charity, or a home shared with other full-time students or with their family, then you should not have to pay Council Tax. If you receive a demand for Council Tax and you are not living in student accommodation, you may be able to obtain a Certificate of Student Status from your university, which may entitle you to exemption or a reduction.

SPLIT-SITE SCHOLARS: If you are a Commonwealth Split-site Scholar you can claim reimbursement if eligible. If you are a Split-site scholar in the UK for a period of six months or less and you are not eligible for an exemption, you may be eligible to claim reimbursement of Council Tax charges. You should send a claim form with a copy of the bill and original receipts to your Programme Officer.

FELLOWS: If you are not eligible for a council tax exemption, you will be eligible to claim reimbursement of Council Tax charges for the period of your award only. You should send a claim form with a copy of the bill and original receipts to your Programme Officer. You must make your claim within 3 months of paying for your Council tax. To download the claim form for reimbursement, visit [cscuk.fcdo.gov.uk/current-scholars/handbook-policies-forms](https://www.cscuk.fcdo.gov.uk/current-scholars/handbook-policies-forms)

For further information on Council Tax, visit www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Fees-and-Money/Council-Tax

Award regulations

You must observe the regulations of your university/host organisation. The CSC supports full-time study only.

Residence

You are expected to reside in the UK for your entire award tenure. The only exceptions to this rule are if:

- You are a Scholar; and
- You are undertaking approved travel overseas; or
- You are undertaking approved fieldwork or a mid-term visit overseas.

To find out more, refer to 'Overseas travel' (page 32), 'Fieldwork' (page 34), and 'Mid-term visits' (page 36).

Employment

You cannot serve on the staff of the official representative of your country in the UK.

SCHOLARS: You are expected to study full time for your entire award tenure and not to undertake paid employment. The only exception to this rule is if you are employed in a role relevant to your studies for not more than six hours per week. If you want to take up such employment, you must inform your Programme Officer in advance.

If a paid internship is a compulsory part of your course, then your stipend will be suspended for the duration of the internship.

If you think that there are exceptional academic circumstances in your case, you should ask your Programme Officer in advance for approval.

You must not take up any employment that is not permitted by your visa.

PROFESSIONAL FELLOWS: You cannot normally undertake any paid employment within your university/host organisation or elsewhere in the UK during your fellowship.

MEDICAL FELLOWS: You may undertake ad hoc work under certain conditions. You should speak to your Programme Officer in advance for advice on working during your fellowship.

Progress reports

PHD SCHOLARS: You must submit a report on your work to the CSC at the end of your first term, at the end of each academic year, and at the end of your scholarship. You will be instructed when to submit the report. The form is available at cscuk.fcdo.gov.uk/current-scholars/handbook-policies-forms. Your supervisor must also report on your progress at the end of your first term, at the end of each academic year, and at the end of your scholarship. They will be sent a CSC report form for this purpose.

If you do not submit your progress reports within one month of the deadline, you may risk having your stipend suspended. You will not meet all terms of your scholarship nor receive a certificate until all reports are submitted.

MASTER'S SCHOLARS: You must submit a report on your work to the CSC at the end of your first term, and at the end of your scholarship. You will be instructed when to submit the report. The form is available at cscuk.fcdo.gov.uk/current-scholars/handbook-policies-forms. Your supervisor must also report on your progress at the end of your scholarship.

If you do not submit your first term report within one month of the deadline, you may risk having your stipend suspended. You will not meet all terms of your scholarship nor receive a certificate until all reports are submitted.

FELLOWS: You must submit a report on your fellowship to the CSC at the end of your award. You will not meet all terms of your fellowship nor receive a certificate until the report is submitted.

Duration and termination of award

Your award will start on the date stated on your Notification of Award or on the date you arrive in the UK, whichever is later.

Your award may be terminated at any time for reasons of unsatisfactory conduct, progress, or attendance, or if your registration is suspended or terminated by your university/host organisation for any reason. If you have any concerns about your studies/programme or delays to your studies/ programme for any reason, or if you fail any component of your course, you must report this to your Programme Officer immediately. This will help your Programme Officer to assist you appropriately.

You must inform your Programme Officer immediately if your university registration is terminated or suspended for any period. You must also inform your Programme Officer immediately if you experience any problems with your visa or if you leave the UK unexpectedly.

SCHOLARS: Your scholarship will continue until the date stated on your Notification of Award, the date that you complete or discontinue your studies, or the date that you leave the UK, whichever is earlier. If your scholarship is for more than one year, its continuation is conditional on positive recommendation from your supervisor each year and the submission of your progress reports.

PROFESSIONAL FELLOWS: Your fellowship will continue until the date stated on your Notification of Award or the date that you leave the UK, whichever is earlier, subject to your compliance with the terms of your fellowship. Fellowships cannot be extended under any circumstances.

Overseas travel

If you are planning to travel overseas during your award, you are responsible for arranging any visas that may be required. You are strongly advised to arrange adequate insurance to cover your possessions, accidents, and illness.

SCHOLARS: Your scholarship is for study in the UK and you are expected to spend the majority of your time on award in the UK. You do not have to ask your Programme Officer to approve overseas travel within the limits outlined below, but you must notify your Programme Officer of each proposed trip in advance. You must also ensure that your passport and UK visa are valid for a reasonable period from your expected date of return, and that you have your Notification of Award with you when you re-enter the UK, in case you are asked to produce it.

If for any reason you want to travel overseas for longer than the periods outlined below, you must ask your Programme Officer in advance for approval. Approval is not likely to be granted, with the exception of short absences made necessary by special circumstances. If you travel overseas for longer than the periods outlined below, your scholarship and all associated payments (including tuition fees) will be suspended and any overpayments made will have to be returned to the CSC immediately.

If your scholarship is at least 18 months long and you want to travel overseas at your own expense, you can do so for a period not exceeding four weeks during any one academic year.

If your scholarship is less than 18 months long and you want to travel overseas at your own expense, you can do so for a period not exceeding two weeks. Different rules apply for Commonwealth Split-site Scholars depending on the length and periods of your award tenure. Split-site Scholars on 2 periods of 6 months should spend their full time in the UK. You should speak to your Programme Officer before making any plans.

Such travel should take place during the university vacation and must be at a time approved by your supervisor in the UK. If you are registered on a taught course, you must ask your supervisor to approve any overseas travel during term time, however short the trip.

You do not have to ask your Programme Officer to approve overseas travel within the limits outlined above, but you must notify your Programme Officer of each proposed trip in advance. You must also ensure that your passport and UK visa are valid for a reasonable period from your expected date of return, and that you have your Notification of Award with you when you re-enter the UK, in case you are asked to produce it.

If for any reason you want to travel overseas for longer than the periods outlined above, you must ask your Programme Officer in advance for approval. Approval is not likely to be granted, with the exception of short absences made necessary by special circumstances. If you travel overseas for longer than the periods outlined above, your scholarship and all associated payments (including tuition fees) will be suspended and any overpayments made will have to be returned to the CSC immediately.

If you are in receipt of family allowances and your family is planning to travel overseas for any period of time, you must inform your Programme Officer at least three months in advance, as spouse and/or child allowances will be suspended for the duration of their absence. If you are unable to inform your Programme Officer in advance, you must contact them as soon as reasonably possible and any family allowances paid for that period will need to be returned.

PROFESSIONAL FELLOWS: You have been awarded a fellowship in the UK and you are expected to remain in the UK for the duration of your fellowship.

Fieldwork

PHD SCHOLARS: During the placement process, your supervisor must confirm that fieldwork is essential to your plan of study.

Your Programme Officer must approve the actual timing of your fieldwork, at least eight weeks in advance of travel before any arrangements or flights can be confirmed. Fieldwork flights must be booked through the CSC approved travel provider and within the parameters of CSC's travel policy. Any flights booked without following these instructions will not be reimbursed. You should discuss any fieldwork requests not covered by the standard provision outlined below with your Programme Officer. See the online link for the full CSC Travel Policy here: cscuk.fcdo.gov.uk/current-scholars/handbook-policies-forms

You must inform your Programme Officer of any changes to the timing of your fieldwork and confirm your return to the UK in writing. You may be liable for any costs if your fieldwork plans change.

If you have a disability or a condition that means you are likely to require adjustments during fieldwork, please let the CSC and your host institution know as soon as possible.

If you are eligible for a mid-term visit, this will be forfeited if you receive a return airfare to your home country for fieldwork. To find out more, refer to 'Mid-term visits' (page 36).

Any period of fieldwork during which you are paid your stipend, or a reduced rate stipend, is considered part of your award tenure.

If your stipend is suspended during fieldwork and you wish to extend your award tenure by an equivalent period in order to complete your studies, you must ask your Programme Officer for formal approval.

Spouse and child allowances cannot be paid for any period of time when your family is not in the UK. If your family stays in the UK while you are away on fieldwork, spouse and/or child allowances will be maintained, in addition to your stipend, if applicable. If your stipend is suspended during fieldwork, spouse and/or child allowances will also be suspended, even if your family is still in the UK.

PHD SCHOLARS FROM LOW AND MIDDLE INCOME COUNTRIES: Standard fieldwork provision covers the reasonable costs of one economy return flight to one fieldwork location and the maintenance of your stipend (at the non-London

rate) for a period of up to six months. Any internal travel to other locations whilst on your fieldwork will not be covered by the CSC. You cannot book open-ended return flights or arrange stopovers. You are expected to have planned and confirmed your fieldwork dates with your UK supervisor in advance of booking your flights. Your stipend will continue to be paid into your UK bank account. Please refer to the CSC travel policy.

Exceptional fieldwork provision covers the maintenance of your stipend at a reduced fieldwork rate beyond the six-month period. This fieldwork rate is one third of the non-London stipend, payable for a specified period approved in advance by your Programme Officer.

You can ask for your stipend to be suspended for the full period of your fieldwork. Your stipend will automatically be suspended should your period of fieldwork go beyond six months of your agreed fieldwork period. If approved, the duration of your suspension will be added to the end of your award.

PHD SCHOLARS FROM HIGH INCOME COUNTRIES: Standard fieldwork provision covers the reasonable costs of one return flight and the maintenance of your stipend (at the non-London rate) for the full period of your fieldwork. Your university will book your flights.

MASTER'S SCHOLARS: During the placement process, your university must inform the CSC of any fieldwork that is essential to your plan of study. The CSC may refuse a fieldwork request if its value to the plan of study has not been sufficiently demonstrated.

If your fieldwork request is approved, provision will cover the maintenance of your stipend (at the non-London rate) for a period of up to two months. It will not cover the costs of a return flight nor any further costs.

If your fieldwork is in your home country and your university has given you permission to submit your dissertation remotely, you can use your homeward airfare for your travel. In this case, your stipend will not be paid for the final month of your scholarship, which it is assumed will be used for writing up your dissertation. To find out more, refer to 'Travel arrangements' (page 49).

Mid-term visits

PHD SCHOLARS: You are eligible for a paid mid-term visit to your home country if:

- You have received written confirmation from the CSC that your scholarship has been extended to its maximum tenure
- You have not claimed (and do not intend to claim) spouse and/or child allowances during your scholarship; and
- You have not received (or will not be receiving) a return airfare to your home country for fieldwork.

The mid-term visit is for a period not exceeding 28 days, usually between the 15th and 28th month of your scholarship. Requests for visits towards the end of your scholarship may be refused.

PHD SCHOLARS FROM LOW AND MIDDLE INCOME COUNTRIES: You must submit your request to your Programme Officer at least eight weeks in advance of your intended date of travel using the mid-term visit form; the form is available at cscuk.fcdo.gov.uk/current-scholars/handbook-policies-forms. You must state your preferred outward and return journey dates on the form, which must be countersigned by your supervisor.

If your request for a mid-term visit is approved, the CSC approved travel provider will book you a return flight from the nearest major airport to your university in the UK (as determined by the CSC) to the nearest major airport to your home town in your home country on the most cost effective route available. You cannot book open-dated return flights, arrange stopovers, or take a mid-term visit to a country other than your home country. Any flights booked without following these instructions that fall outside of the CSC's travel policy, will not be reimbursed. The full CSC Travel Policy is available here: cscuk.fcdo.gov.uk/current-scholars/handbook-policies-forms

You must ensure that your passport and UK visa are valid to re-enter the UK and continue your studies., You should also make sure that you have your Confirmation of Award with you when you re-enter the UK, in case you are asked to produce it.

Your stipend will be suspended from the day that you leave the UK until the day that you arrive back in the UK. A visits home allowance, payable for the

purposes of retention of lodgings, can be paid for up to 28 days. This will be limited to the actual costs incurred, or a pre-determined daily rate (currently £13.80 per day), whichever is lower. You must submit your rental agreements to your Programme Officer when you submit your mid-term visit form. Your rental agreement must cover the period that you will be on mid-term visit for.

Your award tenure will be extended by the length of your mid-term visit – to a maximum of 28 days – once you return to the UK. Your stipend will be suspended for any time over 28 days, and this period of time will not be added to the end of your tenure.

PHD SCHOLARS FROM HIGH INCOME COUNTRIES: You must inform both your Programme Officer and your university contact at least eight weeks in advance of your intended date of travel, to confirm your eligibility for a mid-term visit and the arrangements for your travel. Your university will book your flights in line with CSC's Travel Policy. Your stipend will not be suspended during the mid-term visit and your award tenure cannot be extended.

Scholarship extensions

SCHOLARS: Commonwealth Scholarships are awarded for the completion of one course of study or research only.

If your scholarship is for a taught course leading to a university qualification, it will usually be awarded for the full duration of your course, as specified by your university.

PHD SCHOLARS: Your scholarship will be awarded for 22 months in the first instance. Your Notification of Award will state:

- The initial dates of your award tenure
- Your eligibility to apply for an extension of tenure; and
- The grounds on which you can do so.

You must apply for an extension well in advance of the end of your initial award tenure, in order to ensure that there are no delays with the extension and continued stipend payments. If you anticipate any delay, you must inform your Programme Officer as early as possible.

To apply for your scholarship to be extended to its maximum tenure, you must send the following documents to your Programme Officer:

- An email request from yourself
- A letter from your university confirming that you have upgraded from MPhil to PhD/DPhil status; and
- A letter of support for the extension from your supervisor.

An interim extension of two months may be arranged in exceptional circumstances. You will not be granted an extension beyond 24 months until you are registered for a full PhD/DPhil.

Visa extensions

SCHOLARS: If you need to extend your visa before the end of your award, you must apply during the last three months of your current permission to stay. You should speak to your university's International Office to arrange this. Your Programme Officer may be able to provide a letter to support your application to extend your visa to your current award or deferment end date.

It is your responsibility to apply for an extension and to do so in good time. Failure to do so may delay the extension of your award at the appropriate time and will result in the suspension of your stipend and other allowances.

You are eligible for reimbursement of the standard postal application fee (£475.00), the biometric information enrolment fee (£19.20), and immigration health surcharge (IHS) costs for yourself only to cover one agreed period of deferment. Application fees for dependants will not be reimbursed. . Any subsequent application fees to cover any additional deferment periods will not be reimbursed. You should submit the receipts with a claim form for reimbursement to your Programme Officer within 3 months of making your application. To download the claim form for reimbursement, visit [cscuk.fcdo.gov.uk/current-scholars/handbook-policies-forms](https://www.cscuk.fcdo.gov.uk/current-scholars/handbook-policies-forms)

Deferment of homeward airfare

PHD SCHOLARS: You may request deferment of your return airfare if:

- Your supervisor agrees and provides written support; and
- You are still working towards the degree for which your scholarship was originally awarded. Requests for deferments are not automatically approved, and are usually approved only for PhD

Scholars who are registered at a UK university. Deferments for you to undertake further studies beyond the scope of your scholarship, or to stay in the UK to attend graduation ceremonies after the end of your award, will not be approved. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have a valid deferment in place. If you do not have a valid deferment in place, you may forfeit your homeward airfare.

To apply for a deferment, you must write to your Programme Officer at least eight weeks before the end of your scholarship stating how long you need the deferment for and include the expected date of submission, viva date, and correction deadline. You must also explain whether it is necessary for you to remain in the UK for corrections. Failure to give sufficient notice will result in the suspension of your stipend.

The CSC does not support the Doctorate Extension Scheme.

PHD SCHOLARS FROM LOW AND MIDDLE INCOME COUNTRIES: If deferment of your homeward airfare has been approved, you are eligible for a half-rate stipend allowance (based on your current stipend rate at the time) for up to six months after the end of your scholarship.

If you are eligible for child allowance as a single or unaccompanied parent, you will continue to receive this allowance for the six-month period only. If you are not a single or unaccompanied parent, you will not continue to receive family allowances. The CSC will determine your final entitlement to any family allowances.

This additional stipend will be paid for up to six months, as long as you remain in the UK. You must notify your Programme Officer if you are likely to leave the UK before the approved end date of your deferment.

PHD SCHOLARS FROM HIGH INCOME COUNTRIES: If deferment of your homeward airfare has been approved, you are eligible for a viva allowance (equivalent to one month's stipend) once you have submitted your thesis. To claim the viva allowance, you should contact your university funding contact.

Health And Welfare

National Health Service (NHS)

There is a range of information and resources to help you prepare for living in the UK. Please visit the CSC website for further information: cscuk.fcdo.gov.uk/student-wellbeing. The NHS (National Health Service) is the UK's state health service. NHS regulations are subject to change and vary slightly in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. For information on how the UK healthcare system works, visit www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Studying--living-in-the-UK/Health-and-healthcare. You should also check the NHS website for your location:

- NHS: www.nhs.uk
- NHS Scotland: www.scot.nhs.uk
- NHS Wales: www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk
- NHS Northern Ireland: www.hscni.net

Immigration health surcharge (IHS)

If your award is at least six months long, you may need to pay the immigration health surcharge (IHS). The IHS is intended to cover the health services under the NHS and means that you will be able to access the NHS in the same way as a permanent resident. To find out more about the IHS, visit www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application

SCHOLARS: If you are applying for a Tier 4 visa from outside the UK, the IHS will be waived, but you will still need to complete the section of the form relating to the IHS and select Tier 4 student visa (for Chevening, Marshall and Commonwealth Scholars) as your visa type. If you are asked to pay the IHS, you should query this with the visa application centre immediately and inform your Programme Officer and your university. You should not make any payment as this will not be reimbursed.

If you are applying to extend your visa from within the UK, you must pay the IHS before you can submit your visa application. You are eligible for reimbursement of the IHS for one approved visa extension application; you should submit the receipt with a claim form for reimbursement to your Programme Officer within 3 months of making your application. To download the claim form for reimbursement, visit cscuk.fcdo.gov.uk/current-scholars/handbook-policies-forms

If you are accompanied by your spouse and/or children, they may need to pay the IHS in order to be eligible for the same medical treatment as you. To find out how much your dependants will need to pay, visit www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application

If you are a Commonwealth Split-site Scholar and your tenure is for six months or less, you will not be able to pay the IHS and you will be required to pay for any care you get on the NHS at the point at which you use it (with the exception of some services that are free), or you may need to seek private treatment, which is expensive in the UK. You must therefore ensure that you have private health insurance to cover your entire time in the UK and arrange this insurance before you arrive in the UK. The CSC cannot advise on insurance policies. However, you should note that, if you are able to buy insurance from your home country, this is likely to be much less expensive than insurance purchased in the UK. If your award is more than six months long, you should check whether you are required to pay the IHS when you apply for your visa, as this will depend on the visa category you are applying under.

FELLOWS: If your award is for six months or less, you will not be able to pay the IHS and you will be required to pay for any care you get on the NHS at the point at which you use it (with the exception of some services that are free), or you may need to seek private treatment, which is expensive in the UK. You must therefore ensure that you have private health insurance to cover your entire time in the UK and arrange this insurance before you arrive in the UK. The CSC cannot advise on insurance policies. However, you should note that, if you are able to buy insurance from your home country, this is likely to be much less expensive than insurance purchased in the UK.

Registering with a doctor (general practitioner - GP)

When you arrive in the UK, you should register with a local doctor (known as a GP) as soon as possible. Many universities have their own health centres that you can use – you should check your university's website for information about healthcare and access to local health services. For further information, visit www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Studying--living-in-the-UK/Health-and-healthcare. If you have a disability, mental health condition or health requirement, the GP will be able to advise you on treatment and support available in the local area.

Emergency dental and eye care

Not all dental practices accept NHS patients, and you may find that registering with an NHS dentist is difficult. If this is the case, you should ask your university/host organisation for advice, as they may be able to assist with finding an appropriate dental practice.

You may claim, on production of receipts, certain costs of emergency dental treatment, as well as opticians' costs of eye tests and basic spectacles (if required) purchased at an opticians, up to a pre-determined maximum allowance per academic year. For the 2020-21 academic year, the maximum allowance you may claim for eye care costs is £85. If claiming reimbursement for dental treatment, you must provide evidence of the emergency nature of the treatment. All requests for opticians' costs or emergency dental treatment must be of benefit to your award. If your request is submitted towards the end of your award, the CSC may deem this to not be of benefit to your award and may not approve your reimbursement. All requests for reimbursements must be submitted to your Programme Officer within three months of incurring the cost. Claims made at the end of your award may not be granted. The assessment of individual claims is at the discretion of the CSC. You cannot claim reimbursement if your award has ended and you are on deferment. To download the claim form for reimbursement, visit cscuk.fcdo.gov.uk/current-scholars/handbook-policies-forms

Notification of illness

If you fall ill, you must inform your Programme Officer and university/host organisation as soon as possible. You should ask your Programme Officer for further information about the CSC **Ill Health Policy**.

PHD SCHOLARS: If you are unable to study because of an illness lasting more than four consecutive weeks, you may be eligible for an extension of your

scholarship on grounds of ill health, for a maximum of 13 weeks. If this is the case, you must inform your Programme Officer of the date of onset of the illness immediately in writing.

Please refer to the CSC's **Ill Health Policy** for more information.

Allowances while in hospital

If you are admitted to hospital, you are eligible to receive your stipend in full for the first 14 days. After this period, your stipend will be suspended and you will receive a daily allowance for incidental expenses, retention of lodgings allowance (if applicable), and spouse and/or child allowances (if applicable). If you need to stay in hospital for more than 28 days, your allowances will be reviewed.

Compassionate airfare

The CSC has a compassionate airfare policy for award-holders that are affected by the bereavement of a partner or first-degree relative. If this applies to you, please contact your Programme Officer for further information.

Please refer to the CSC's **Compassionate Policy** for more information.

Maternity leave

PHD SCHOLARS: Any maternity leave must be approved by your university. If you remain in the UK to give birth, you are eligible for:

- Paid maternity leave for the period of authorised absence granted by your university, up to a maximum of 17 weeks; and
- Unpaid maternity leave, if an authorised absence is approved by your university, up to a further 35 weeks. This must immediately follow the paid leave.

If you return to your home country to give birth, you are eligible for:

- One approved CSC funded return airfare for yourself only to the nearest major airport to your home town in your home country. Stipend will be suspended for the duration that the Scholar is out of the country and the period of suspension will be added to the award tenure.

Your maternity leave must start during your award tenure, and no earlier than 11 weeks before the expected date of delivery and no later than the date the baby is born.

The CSC must be notified in writing by the 26th week of pregnancy. Before any maternity leave can be approved, you must also provide

- the Expected Date of Delivery from your GP (General Practitioner) or Midwife with confirmation that you are able to fly on the intended date that the Maternity Fare has been requested; and
- the university's agreement to maternity leave, giving the agreed dates of leave from the university

You should ask your Programme Officer for further information about the CSC **Maternity Policy** which you can read on the CSC website.

Paternity leave

PHD SCHOLARS: You are eligible for two consecutive weeks of paid paternity leave. The paternity leave must be taken either during the last 11 weeks of the pregnancy of your partner, or within 13 weeks of the birth of the baby.

You must inform your Programme Officer of your intention to take paternity leave prior to the birth of the baby. In order for paternity leave to be authorised, you must forward confirmation of the due date from the GP/Midwife, and also written confirmation from the university that the paternity leave has been authorised by your Programme Officer.

You should ask your Programme Officer for further information about the CSC **Paternity Policy** which you can read on the CSC website.

Student engagement

The CSC offers a range of student engagement activities to bring Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows together, and to create opportunities that will enhance your award experience.

Events & development training

You will have the chance to take part in a wide range of activities, events, and conferences during your time in the UK. The CSC organises a series of activities every year enabling you to meet other Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows as well as offering a Development Training Programme which supports Scholars and Fellows to gain the knowledge and skills required for sustainable development. We will also let you know about opportunities to attend events organised by other Commonwealth or educational organisations.

Whilst many of these opportunities traditionally take the form of face to face events, we are also ensuring there is provision for virtual participation to allow you to connect with other Scholars and Fellows and access training resources online.

You will also have the opportunity to participate in a shared learning experience with other Scholars and Fellows through our online training module, 'Understanding Development Impact'. This training module is made available through the FutureLearn platform.

To find out more, visit cscuk.fcdo.gov.uk/events and browse photos from past events at www.flickr.com/cscuk

Social media

Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows are deeply engaged in their academic research with the commitment to help improve their home country and beyond. Throughout your scholarship you will have access to a range of opportunities arranged for you by the CSC Secretariat and partner organisations where you will connect with other Scholars and Fellows as well as key figures in your research field and beyond.

The Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK uses social media to further support such engagement, to reach and engage current and new audiences, to highlight and encourage the work of our Scholars and Fellows, to share the impact achieved by our Scholars and Fellows in academia and across the Commonwealth, and to continue building an online CSC community.

Follow the main CSC channels on Twitter, Facebook, Flickr and YouTube and find out more about the wide range of Scholar social networking groups that you can join as well as how best to join in online discussions below.

Facebook

The CSC Regional Networks connect Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows in the same university or region across the UK. They offer enriching opportunities to get to know other Scholars and Fellows, through a wide range of events and activities organised throughout the year.

Open to all Scholars and Fellows, each Regional Network has its own Facebook group and a dedicated coordinator from among its members. To find out more

about activities in your region and to get in touch with your coordinator, visit cscuk.fcdo.gov.uk/networks/regional-networks

You can also join the Commonwealth Scholars cohort which is for current Scholars and Fellows from a single award year. You will receive an invite to join by the CSC in your COA (Confirmation of Award) email.

Knowledge Hubs

You can also join one of the CSC's six Knowledge Hubs, which provide a platform for Commonwealth Scholars and alumni studying and working in similar disciplines to network and exchange ideas to support a shared sustainable development outcome. The Knowledge Hubs are run via LinkedIn and are supported by Knowledge Hub Coordinators, who will share insights on their own studies and work, and help you connect with other Scholars and Fellows. To find out more, visit cscuk.fcdo.gov.uk/networks/knowledge-hubs-2

Twitter

The Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK (CSC) encourages Scholars and Fellows to join Twitter and share any exciting news they may have about their studies by tagging us **@commschols**. By doing this we will be able to retweet and share your research to various partners and help you connect with other Scholars and Fellows for further support for your research as well as any potential collaboration in the future. Follow us on twitter here: twitter.com/commschols

Common Knowledge

Common Knowledge is the CSC's magazine for the Commonwealth Scholarships community. It features articles on the work and achievements of current and former Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows, as well as news, events, and alumni updates. The magazine is published twice a year and is also available online. To find out more, visit cscuk.fcdo.gov.uk/common-knowledge

The CSC is always keen to hear from Scholars and Fellows, so send in your news to your Programme Officer to be included in the magazine, social media or on the CSC website.

Connecting by email

CSCmail is the monthly email newsletter for all CSC Scholars and Fellows containing information about your award, as well as updates from the Programme Team and news of activities you can get involved in.

If you have a story about a piece of work or research that you would like to share with the CSC community, you can contact us at engage@cscuk.org.uk. We are always keen to hear about the projects that Scholars and Fellows are involved in.

Crediting your award

If you want to credit your award in your thesis, dissertation, presentation, poster, or other appropriate medium, you should do so in the following ways:

SCHOLARS:

[Your name] is a Commonwealth Scholar, funded by the UK government.

PROFESSIONAL FELLOWS:

[Your name] is a Commonwealth Professional Fellow, funded by the UK government.

MEDICAL FELLOWS:

[Your name] is a Commonwealth Medical Fellow, funded by the UK government.

End of your award

Completion of tenure

Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships aim to equip Scholars to contribute to the development of their home countries, and to help Fellows benefit their employing universities/ organisations. When you accept your award, you commit to return to your home country after the end of your award. Please see the CSC's policy on requests to enter or remain in the UK for further study. You must leave the UK within one month of the end of your award tenure or one month after the end of your programme, whichever is earlier. If you fail to do so, your airfare and excess baggage entitlements may be withdrawn. You cannot remain in the UK to attend graduation ceremonies that take place after this point.

You must inform your Programme Officer of your departure date at least eight weeks in advance (or when the CSC request for this), so that a suitable flight can be arranged, and your allowances are paid correctly. Your stipend and any allowances will stop on the last day of your award, or on the day that you leave the UK, whichever is earlier.

Your final quarter's stipend will be held and will not be released until you confirm your homeward flight booking.

PHD SCHOLARS FROM LOW AND MIDDLE INCOME COUNTRIES: You must let your Programme Officer know when you are due to complete and must have a valid deferment of airfare in place to qualify for a homeward airfare and excess baggage allowance.

PHD SCHOLARS FROM HIGH INCOME COUNTRIES: You must arrange your flight with your university, which will cover the costs. Once you have done this, you must complete and send a departure form to your Programme Officer.

FELLOWS: You must leave the UK within five days of the end of your award

Travel from the uk

Travel arrangements

Your Programme Officer will advise you on the procedure for booking your flight home. Any flights booked without following this procedure will not be reimbursed.

Your award covers the cost of travel from the nearest major airport to your university/host organisation in the UK (as determined by the CSC) to the nearest major airport to your address in your home country. The airfare will be chosen by the CSC travel provider. If you want to specify a particular airline, you may be asked to pay the difference in the cost of the airfare. Deviations from the approved route are not usually approved and are subject to limitations; you must pay any extra costs. Please refer to the CSC Travel Policy.

If you need to change the date of your flight for reasons within your control, you must pay the cost of any changes. If you miss your flight, and the reason is within your control, you will be liable for any costs incurred in booking a new flight. You must contact your Programme Officer as soon as possible if you need to change your flight.

All flights must be booked within CSC's Travel Policy. See the online link for the full CSC travel policy here: cscuk.fcdo.gov.uk/current-scholars/handbook-policies-forms

Travel expenses

Your award covers the following travel expenses:

- **Fares:** One standard-class train or coach fare, if appropriate, and one single economy airfare booked through the CSC-approved travel provider on an approved carrier using the most economic and practical route possible, in accordance with airline schedules and the CSC's Travel Policy
- **Luggage expenses:** If your award is more than three months long, a fixed rate (non-negotiable) non-accountable allowance for excess baggage. This will allow you to send considerably more baggage by air freight or as unaccompanied personal effects.
- Taxi, Tube or local bus fares will not be reimbursed.

Family members' fares

You are personally responsible for the fares and luggage expenses of your family members. These can be arranged by the CSC travel provider and billed to you separately.

After your award

Alumni

You are a Commonwealth Scholar for life and part of a community of over 28,500 Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows funded through the CSC. As an engaged alumnus, you will:

- Receive a CSC certificate verifying your scholarship or fellowship
- Have the opportunity to feature in and contribute to Common Knowledge, the CSC's magazine for the Commonwealth Scholarships community
- Be able to join and contribute to local alumni associations (where applicable) and attend in-country events
- Receive The Common Room, our quarterly alumni email newsletter featuring updates from the CSC community
- Have access to the CSC's six Knowledge Hubs, which provide a platform to network and exchange ideas with Scholars and alumni studying and working in similar disciplines
- Be eligible to apply to join the Alumni Advisory Panel and contribute to the development of CSC activities
- Have the opportunity to take part in the Taylor & Francis Commonwealth Scholar Best Journal Article Prize (doctoral Scholars and graduates only)

To find out more about the CSC Alumni Network, visit cscuk.fcdo.gov.uk/alumni or contact alumni@cscuk.org.uk

Evaluation

The CSC Evaluation and Monitoring Programme is responsible for identifying and measuring the outcomes and impact of Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships on individuals, institutions, communities and societies. This work is crucial to understanding the experiences of Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows and to the CSC's long term strategic and operational planning as well as providing vital evidence to the CSC's funders and other stakeholders.

The Evaluation team relies on Scholars and Fellows to help with this, mostly through pre- and post-award surveys and increasingly through more in-depth activities, such as interviews or focus groups. The team aims to ensure that this is not onerous for Scholars and Fellows – most of you will simply be invited to complete surveys at particular points before and after your award, but there are opportunities to play a more active role, for example through the work of the Alumni Advisory Panel or by contributing to specific research projects.

To find out more, visit cscuk.fcdo.gov.uk/evaluation or contact evaluation@cscuk.org.uk. Thank you in advance for your assistance with this very important work.





www.cscuk.fcdo.gov.uk

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