

## COMMONWEALTH SHARED SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME

### GUIDANCE FOR COMMONWEALTH SHARED SCHOLARS 2020

**PLEASE READ THESE NOTES CAREFULLY AND KEEP FOR FUTURE REFERENCE**

These notes are intended to give guidance to candidates who have been offered a Shared Scholarship by the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission (CSC) in partnership with a UK university.

We have provided a Frequently Asked Questions page on the Pre-Award Information section of the CSC website, which can be read on the website [here](#). Note that this website requires a password. The password is: Scholar20

Candidates should note that in the first instance all queries should be directed to the Scholarship Contact at your UK University as they are responsible for communicating with you on all aspects of your award, including travel, immigration, welfare and the payment of allowances. Your CSC Programme Officer should be contacted when submitting the requested paperwork in order to confirm your award.

#### **Awards in 2020 and Covid-19**

Due to the current Covid-19 situation and uncertainty over the 2020/2021 academic year for universities in the UK, you should be aware that teaching may not operate in the standard UK academic format and may differ between universities. Currently, we are aware that UK universities might be delivering courses in the following ways:

- Starting courses in the UK from the beginning of the academic year in September/October 2020 as normal but with some elements of blended learning likely
- Starting courses studying online in your Home country for the first semester from September/October and completing the remaining semesters in the UK from the beginning of 2021
- Starting courses in the UK from January 2021 for a full year
- Starting courses in the UK from January 2021 for a shorter 'compressed' year
- Completing the full course online

We realise that this lack of certainty over how courses will be delivered will be difficult for you and very much hope that the picture will become clearer in the coming weeks and are seeking guidance from your host university on how your particular course is being delivered.

We have provided more guidance on queries you may have around Covid-19 on our [Frequently Asked Questions Page](#).

## 1. The Award

1.1. Commonwealth Shared Scholarships (CSS) are jointly funded by the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission (CSC) and participating UK universities. As these awards are funded by the *Department for International Development*, courses undertaken on this Scheme have been pre-selected for their developmental emphasis by the Commission and Scholars have been selected on the basis of their future contribution to sustainable development.

1.2. When referring to your award, you should state that you have been awarded a Commonwealth Shared Scholarship. Further information about the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission can be found on our Website at: [www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk).

## 2. Award Acceptance and Confirmation of Award

**Please inform your Programme Officer within one week of the receipt of this document whether you wish to proceed with your Scholarship or not.**

2.1. If you wish to accept the Commonwealth Shared Scholarship you should complete and sign the Award Acceptance form and Health and Disability form, available on [our website](#), and return them to your CSC Programme Officer ensuring that you have included up to date contact details. Confirmation of an award is only made once the Award Acceptance form and Health and Disability forms have been received by the CSC. The information provided in the health and disability form will be used to assist you with any support or adjustments that may be required during your award.

2.2. All forms should be emailed to your Programme Officer, whose email address is at the bottom of the Award Acceptance form. If you have concerns about data security and would like to protect the documents with a password please do so using your date of birth in the following format: DDMMYYYY.

2.3. If you have made an application to more than one institution, the CSC will only confirm an award at the institution named on the first received Award Acceptance form. You should decide on which institution you wish to study at before returning an Award Acceptance form. Please let the other institution(s) know as soon as possible if you do not intend to accept their offer of an award.

2.4. Details of our [Deferment Policy](#) are given on our Frequently Asked Questions page.

2.5. We will only be able to issue a confirmation of award once placement at your host institution is finalised on terms agreeable to the CSC, and provided that circumstances arising from Covid-19 permit; should this not be possible, no confirmation of award will be made.

2.6. Under no circumstances should you travel to the United Kingdom before your award has been confirmed by the CSC and your host University has advised you on applying for your visa and on arrangements for your flight.

## 3. Visas

3.1. Under UK Immigration Rules, most Commonwealth Scholars will be required to apply

for a visa to come to the UK under Tier 4 of the Immigration Rules. You will need your CSC Confirmation of Award letter in order to apply for your UK visa. You should make sure that you select **Tier 4 student visa (for Chevening, Marshall and Commonwealth scholars)** as the visa type when making your application so that the application fee and Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) is waived. If you are charged for your visa application or asked to pay IHS, you should query this with the visa processing centre immediately and inform the Scholarship contact at your UK University.

3.2. General information on visas can be found on the UKCISA website: <https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information-Advice/Visas-and-Immigration/Tier-4-eligibility-and-requirements>.

You should also seek further advice and guidance from your UK University before you submit your visa application. Your UK University will advise you further on how to make your visa application, including the process of obtaining a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) and information on whether you require a TB test and/or an ATAS Clearance Certificate.

## 4. Travel to the UK

4.1. Your UK University will arrange your travel to the UK, in line with CSC's travel policy. Under no circumstances should you arrange your own flight. You should contact your University on receipt of your Confirmation of Award; they will then inform you of the process to book your flight. Do note that universities require your visa to have been issued before they will arrange your flight booking and that you may be liable for the cost of any flights which you agree to be booked but then do not take.

4.2. We will expect you to arrive in the UK as agreed with your university for the start of your course as set out in your confirmation of award. We are aware that there may need to be increased flexibility over booking travel and university start dates given the uncertainty over Covid-19.

4.3. Your award covers the cost of a one-way economy class travel from the nearest major international airport in your home country to the nearest major international airport to your UK university (as determined by the CSC) and one standard class train or coach fare in the UK, if appropriate. Your University will advise you on how to get to your University campus from the airport; please note that taxi fares cannot be reimbursed.

## 5. Terms and Conditions on Award

5.1. Your stipend will be paid to you by your university at the UK Government rate of £1,362 for scholars in London and £1,110 for scholars outside London (2019/20 rates) at least. On arrival in the UK, you will also receive a one-off Warm Clothing Allowance of £431 (2019/20 rate). Where study is undertaken virtually within your home country, a reduced stipend payment is likely to be made for that period of study, in order to reflect the cheaper living costs in your home country. Details will be provided in your confirmation of award.

5.2. Scholars are entitled to apply to their host University for the following, should they be required (all claims must be made before the end date of your award):

- a study travel grant of up to £200
- a thesis grant of £225
- cost of TB test at a pre-determined amount set by the CSC (where required by UKVI and a TB certificate provided)
- excess baggage allowance on return home up to the rate as set by the CSC.

5.3. Your Scholarship is for study in the UK and you are expected to reside in the UK for the duration of your award, unless with prior agreement of the CSC and your host university due to arrangements necessary because of Covid-19. If your course requires you to undertake fieldwork in your home country, you must discuss this with your scholarship contact at your host institution as soon as possible so they can outline the support available. Do note that these awards are designed for study in the UK, periods of overseas fieldwork may not be funded and in some instances may be refused.

5.4. Note that a Commonwealth Shared Scholarship cannot be extended.

5.5 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

5.6. A Scholarship may be terminated at any time for reasons of unsatisfactory conduct, progress, or attendance. You are asked to read carefully the [CSC's Code of Conduct for Award-holders](#) and abide by it at all times.

5.7. You are asked to note the CSC's [Disciplinary Policy](#), [Anti-Fraud Policy and Procedure](#) and [Complaints Policy and Procedure](#).

5.8. All terms and conditions of award are subject to UK local law and practices.

5.9. In line with the UK Bribery Act 2010, it is Commission policy that any candidate convicted of bribery will be banned from reapplying for a Commonwealth Scholarship for a period of up to five years.

5.10. As part of your award, the Commission requires you to submit an annual report on the progress of your studies. You will receive this towards the end of your award and the report will provide the opportunity for you to share both your academic achievements and your general experience of life in the UK,

5.11. Commonwealth Shared Scholarships are funded by the UK Department for International Development and are offered to provide Scholars with the opportunity to gain skills and knowledge which they will apply straight away after their award for the benefit of their home country. By accepting a Commonwealth Shared Scholarship you are committing to return to your home country **within one month** of the end of your award. The CSC will only consider supporting requests to extend leave to remain in the UK for those wishing to move from Master's to PhD study. Strict conditions will apply, and you must seek approval from the CSC well in advance. The CSC will not issue any form of 'No Objection' letter or letter of support to scholars wishing to remain in the UK beyond the end of their award except in the case of PhD study where all conditions have been met.

5.12. Please note that different terms and conditions apply to Commonwealth Shared Scholarships than to Commonwealth Scholarships with nomination by a national agency or home university and information given in the CSC Handbook does not apply to Shared Scholars.

## 6. Welfare Support

6.1. Your university is responsible for providing you with welfare support whilst you are on award including providing reasonable adjustments and additional support if you

have a disability. If you have declared a disability, a full assessment of your needs and eligibility for additional financial support will be offered. If required, the CSC can liaise with your university to ensure that you receive an appropriate level of welfare assistance.

## **7. The CSC Community, Evaluation and Alumni**

7.1. You will have the chance to take part in a wide range of activities, events, and conferences throughout your time in the UK. The CSC organises a series of development training activities every year designed to support you to create long-term development impact following your Scholarship, while building your skills in relevant areas (such as leadership, communication, social enterprise, research writing and bidding, and more) throughout your time on award.

We will also let you know about opportunities to attend events organised by other Commonwealth or educational organisations. For further information about CSC activities for award-holders including our regional networks, please see our 'Community Sheet' which will be sent with your Confirmation of Award letter; information can also be found on the CSC's website at: <http://cscuk.dfid.gov.uk/award-holders/>

7.2. The Commission carries out continuous evaluation of all our schemes including the Shared Scholarship Scheme in order to better understand the experiences of Scholars and Alumni and to gather evidence on the outcomes and impact of our work to share with funders and other stakeholders. As part of this work we will make contact with Scholars at the beginning of their award and follow up after completion. The input of Scholars such as yourself is crucial to this work and we are very grateful for the continuing support of our Scholars and Alumni in this regard.

7.3. Following your award and submission of your Annual Report, you will receive a certificate verifying your Scholarship and information about how to stay engaged and get involved in alumni events and activities. Further information about the Alumni Network can be found at [cscuk.dfid.gov.uk/alumni/](http://cscuk.dfid.gov.uk/alumni/).

7.4. If your Scholarship should generate any publicity at any time, it would be very helpful to let the CSC Secretariat have a copy or a web link or other form of publicity as we are keen to feature articles arising from the Scholarships in our own publicity materials. Please send details of such activities to [engage@cscuk.org.uk](mailto:engage@cscuk.org.uk).

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