



COMMONWEALTH
SCHOLARSHIPS

Commonwealth Distance Learning Scholarships

**2021 terms and
conditions**

Introduction

The Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP) is one of the largest and most prestigious scholarship schemes for international study in the world. Since it was established in 1959, around 35,000 individuals have benefited – 27,000 of them have held awards funded by the UK government, managed by the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the United Kingdom (CSC).

This document outlines the terms and conditions of Commonwealth Distance Learning Scholarships offered by the CSC for citizens of developing Commonwealth countries in 2021. These scholarships are funded by the [UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office](#) (FCDO), with the aim of contributing to the UK's international development aims and wider overseas interests, supporting excellence in UK higher education, and sustaining the principles of the Commonwealth.

For information about the other scholarships and fellowships offered by the CSC, visit the [CSC website](#). For information about Commonwealth Scholarships offered by other Commonwealth countries, visit the [ACU website](#).

The CSC's Secretariat is provided by the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), which is responsible for all matters concerning selection, academic studies, and evaluation. The British Council is responsible for supporting award holders in their home countries before and after their awards.

Commonwealth Distance learning scholarships

Scholarships for individuals to study for a UK Master's degree while residing in their home country.

Purpose: To contribute to development needs of Commonwealth countries by providing training for skilled and qualified professionals in key development areas.

Intended beneficiaries: High-quality postgraduate students who wish to access training not available in their home countries, who wish or need to remain in their home country while they study, and who have the potential to enhance the development of their home countries with the knowledge and leadership skills they acquire.

Commonwealth Distance Learning Scholarships support courses offered in partnership with local providers in developing countries, as well as courses delivered directly by UK universities.

How to apply

UK universities are invited to apply for **up to 15** Commonwealth Distance Learning Scholarships to be offered in the 2021 academic year. Applications must be submitted via the online application system by **16:00 (GMT) on 11 December 2020**.

The CSC is not always able to offer the maximum number of scholarships for which a university applies, and reserves the right to limit the number of scholarships for programmes that are new

to the scheme. It is normal practice for the CSC to offer a maximum of five awards to universities that are new to the scheme or have not participated in the scheme in the last three years.

These scholarships support distance learning Master's degree courses offered in partnership with local providers in eligible countries, as well as courses delivered directly by UK universities. Universities may apply for a single course, or for a cluster programme containing multiple courses, as long as these courses are within the same department or share similar objectives.

Applications should be made through the CSC's application system. Please note that you will require a key code to enter the application system. If you have received a letter or email from the CSC inviting you to apply for these scholarships a key code will be contained within this correspondence. If you require a key code please email distance.learning@cscuk.org.uk with your name, job title and your university and you will be provided with a key code.

Development themes and impact

Commonwealth Distance Learning Scholarships enable talented and motivated individuals to gain the knowledge and skills required for sustainable development, and are aimed at those unable to study in the UK for financial and other reasons. These scholarships are offered under six themes:

1. Science and technology for development

The scholarship, which may be in any area of science or technology (including, for example, agriculture, veterinary science, or forestry), will develop knowledge and/or skills that are directly related to the specific needs of a low or middle income country. Where possible, applications should cite expressed national or local priorities.

2. Strengthening health systems and capacity

The scholarship will develop knowledge and/or skills that will improve health provision or outcomes for disadvantaged groups in low and middle income countries. A range of approaches could be adopted, such as training staff to fill critical shortage areas; establishing better systems, processes, or management; health promotion and improving understanding of non-take up; or developing new treatments.

3. Promoting global prosperity

The scholarship will support economic prosperity in low and middle income countries. The knowledge and/or skills gained could lead to, for example, enhanced trade capacity; improved economic understanding or decision-making by business or government; new products and services; or long-term capacity building, through the development of entrepreneurial skills, for instance.

4. Strengthening global peace, security and governance

The scholarship will develop knowledge and/or skills that will strengthen peace and security at national, regional, or international levels. Multiple approaches could be used, such as strengthening open and transparent governance; improving mutual understanding within and between societies; or building systems that reduce the potential for conflict or encourage its resolution.

5. Strengthening resilience and response to crises

The scholarship will develop knowledge and/or skills which will help low and middle countries adapt to changing contexts, withstand sudden shocks, or increase capacity to preserve the

continuity of operations following such events. This could apply to a broad range of threats, including natural and physical disasters; long-term threats such as climate change; interruptions to the supply of key resources; or sudden economic or technological disruption.

6. Access, inclusion and opportunity

The scholarship will develop knowledge and/or skills that will promote opportunity amongst historically disadvantaged groups in low and middle income countries. This could be through, for example, expanding educational opportunities; conducting community outreach; enhancing access to decision-making; or increasing understanding of the barriers faced. A range of disadvantage can be addressed – including social, economic, gender, ethnic, regional, or political – provided that the need is clearly stated.

Subjects of study must be developmental in nature, and must be aligned with one of these six themes.

As part of its application, the university will be asked to provide a statement explaining the direct relevance of the course to one of the above themes, including a brief outline of how the course will benefit individuals and their home countries. The developmental value of the course will be assessed and allocations of awards will be made based on the strength of the statements provided. Generic course descriptions will not be considered.

Applications must be supported by a letter from the university's Vice-Chancellor. This letter should be uploaded onto the application form.

Any application that is incomplete or does not include a supporting statement from the Vice-Chancellor (or Acting Vice-Chancellor) of the relevant institution will be deemed ineligible.

The CSC does not fund MBA programmes.

Selection criteria

Applications are considered according to the following selection criteria:

- The **quality of the course**, the quality assurance record, and the track record for delivery of the course through distance learning. Applications are strengthened by copies of any independent/external reports of the programme undertaken in recent years.
- The **learning opportunities** provided for developing country students, including whether the course takes into account appropriate use of technology, whether course providers can identify a target audience of potential applicants and recruit them successfully, and the factors likely to affect candidates' successful completion of their studies.
- The **development impact** of the course of study, including how the course content can be applied to DFID priority areas, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the subsequent career patterns of course alumni.

If the University is working with a partner, the partner must be based in a developing Commonwealth country (see page 5).

Value

All applications must adhere to the CSC's overall funding cap of £18,000 per scholarship. This figure must cover all elements of the award, including tuition fees, grants to recipients, applicable partnership development costs, and any UK residential programmes.

If the actual costs of delivering the course are higher than £18,000, the university must clearly identify the source of top-up funding in its application.

Funding is available for five years from the start of an approved programme.

Memorandum of understanding

Successful universities will be required to sign an MOU with the CSC for the provision of the scholarships. The MOU will detail the various obligations placed on the university, including responsibility for:

- Publicising and advertising the awards
- Recruiting and nominating candidates
- Maintaining and developing the relationship with the partner institution
- Accreditation of existing course modules and any developments made to the curriculum
- Delivery of the course
- Associated quality assurance

The MOU will also detail the financial arrangements between the university and the CSC.

Monitoring and evaluation

By entering into a formal agreement with the CSC, the university also agrees to facilitate the monitoring and evaluation of the scholarship, the development impact of each student, and the capacity building potential of the course.

The university must provide full annual reports and scholars must participate in annual surveys. The university must also provide brief interim reports on examination results and any significant developments or constraints.

Information required to facilitate evaluation includes demographic details (for example, gender, age, employment details, country of origin), future career plans, academic progress, curriculum development, and a breakdown of financial expenditure.

Candidate applications

Applications for 2021 are likely to open to candidates in mid-February 2021 with a likely final closing date of March 2021. The university must nominate its chosen candidates within four weeks of the CSC's final closing date for applications.

If you have any questions about Commonwealth Distance Learning Scholarships or the application process, please contact the CSC Secretariat at distance.learning@cscuk.org.uk or on 020 7380 6716.

Selected universities are required to conduct their own recruitment process to nominate a specified number of candidates for Distance Learning Scholarships to the CSC. The selection committee selects Scholars from these shortlists of nominated candidates in July 2021

Eligibility criteria

The university is responsible for ensuring its candidates meet the CSC's eligibility criteria.

To apply for these scholarships, candidates must:

- Be a citizen of, or be granted refugee status in, an eligible developing Commonwealth country (see overleaf), or be a British Protected Person;
- Be permanently resident in a developing Commonwealth country (see overleaf);
- Hold a first degree of at least upper second class (2:1) standard. A lower qualification and sufficient relevant experience may be considered in certain cases.
- All candidates must provide at least one reference
- All candidates must hold an offer to start their chosen course of study in the 2020

Commonwealth Distance Learning Scholarships may not be held concurrently for more than one course.

If selected for a scholarship, candidates **must** be resident and remain in a developing Commonwealth country and **must not** undertake study towards any other qualification for the duration of their award.

Eligible commonwealth countries

Bangladesh
Cameroon
Eswatini
The Gambia

Ghana
Guyana
India
Kenya
Kiribati
Lesotho
Malawi
Mozambique
Nigeria
Pakistan
Papua New Guinea
Rwanda
Samoa
Sierra Leone
Solomon Islands
Sri Lanka
Swaziland
Tanzania
Tuvalu
Uganda
Vanuatu
Zambia

