

COMMONWEALTH SHARED SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME (CSSS) GUIDANCE NOTES FOR SHARED SCHOLARS 2016

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.

Candidates should note that in the first instance all queries should be directed to the Scholarship Contact at your UK University, 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 only be contacted when submitting the requested paperwork in order to confirm your award.

You are advised to read the following instructions carefully to ensure you fully understand the terms and conditions of your award.

1. The Award

Commonwealth Shared Scholarships are jointly funded by the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission (CSC) and participating UK universities. As CSSS awards are funded by the *Department for International Development*, courses undertaken on this Scheme have been deemed to have a developmental emphasis.

2. Award Acceptance and Confirmation of Award

You should complete and sign the Award Acceptance Form, Data Processing Form and Medical Report Form if you wish to accept a Commonwealth Shared Scholarship 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 when the Acceptance, Data Processing and Medical Report Forms have been received by the CSC.

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.

Please make arrangements to complete the Medical Report in good time. Any expense incurred in the completion of your Medical Report is your own responsibility. Only after a satisfactory Medical Report Form has been received can the CSC confirm your award and ask your host University to make the travel arrangements for your flight to the UK; please note that if the Medical Report Form is received without a recent photograph attached, the Commission may ask you to undergo another medical examination and to provide a new Medical Report Form.

The CSC is not able to confirm receipt of your Award Acceptance, Medical and Data Processing Forms. Your Programme Officer will be working on your placement, so do not be concerned if you do not hear from them. You do not need to check on progress with the CSC; if we need further information from you, we will be in touch.

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.

All Forms should be sent to:

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Commonwealth Scholarship Commission
c/o The Association of Commonwealth Universities
Woburn House, 20 -24 Tavistock Square
London WC1H 9HF
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7380 6716
e-mail: juliette.hargreave@cscuk.org.uk

3. Visa

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 System. You will need your CSC Confirmation of Award in order to apply for your visa. You should make sure that you select **Tier 4 (Chevening, Marshall and Commonwealth) student** 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.

General information on visas can be found on the UKCISA website: <http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Visas-and-Immigration/Making-a-Tier-4-General-application-outside-the-UK>. 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

Your UK University will arrange your travel to the UK. 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 many universities require your visa to have been issued before they will arrange your flight booking.

Your award covers the cost of economy class travel from the nearest major airport in your home country to the nearest major 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 campus from the airport; please note that taxi fares cannot be reimbursed.

5. Terms and Conditions and arrangements whilst on Award

Your stipend will be paid to you by your University at at least the UK Government rate of £1,268 for scholars in London and £1,034 for scholars outside London (2015/16 rates). On arrival in the UK, you will also receive a one-off Warm Clothing Allowance of £401 (2015/16 rate).

In addition, scholars are entitled to apply to their host university for the following, should they be required:

- a study travel grant of up to £200
- a thesis grant of £225
- cost of TB test (where required by UKVI and a receipt provided)
- excess baggage allowance for books on return home up to the specific rate as set by the CSC.

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 can take your homeward airfare early to return to your home country for fieldwork, if your host University and the CSC have given you permission to submit your dissertation from your home country. If this is the case, your stipend will not be paid for the final month of your scholarship, as it is assumed that this month is used for writing up your dissertation. To find out more, refer to the Scholarship Contact at your UK University.

Please note that a Commonwealth Shared Scholarship cannot be extended or renewed.

A Scholarship may be terminated at any time for reasons of unsatisfactory conduct, progress, or attendance.

All terms and conditions of award are subject to UK local law and practices. In line with the UK Bribery Act which came into effect on 1 July 2011, 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

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.

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.

6. Obligation of Scholars to return to their home country at the end of their award

Please note carefully the undertaking that you have signed when accepting this award to return to your home country **within four weeks** 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.

7. 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 remarks 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.

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 – in terms of race, religion, gender, sexuality and cultural values – you are reminded to always be respectful to others.

Any complaints received will be taken very seriously and any behaviour that does not adhere to the above values and expectations will be addressed by the CSC.

8. The CSC 'Community', Evaluation and Alumni

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 activities every year and 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 and professional networks, please see our 'Community Sheet' which will be sent with your Confirmation of Award letter; it can also be found on the CSC's website at: <http://cscuk.dfid.gov.uk/award-holders/>

The Commission carries out on-going evaluation of all our Programmes including the Shared Scholarship Scheme in order to provide important feedback on the outcomes of our work to our funding bodies. We will make contact with Scholars after the end of an award as part of this process and would be very grateful for assistance in this regard.

The Commission will also contact you about membership of our Alumni Association; further information about this can be found on our Website at: <http://cscuk.dfid.gov.uk/alumni/>

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 as we are keen to feature articles arising from the Scholarships in our own publicity materials.