



15 December 2017

## GENERAL INFORMATION TO APPLICANTS

### **PLEASE READ THIS CAREFULLY SO THAT YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE APPLICATION PROCESS AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA BEFORE APPLYING COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARSHIPS TENABLE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM, 2018**

Universities South Africa (USAf) is the Nominating Agency for **South African citizens** who wish to apply for the Commonwealth Scholarships tenable in the UK for the academic year commencing in September/October 2018.

South Africa can send a maximum of 50 nominations of which no more than half (22) may be for PhD study.

Applications may be in either of the following two categories for study in the UK:

- Taught Master's courses (One Year) (excluding MBA)
- PhDs

Please note the **Agency does not nominate candidates for:**

- **Distance Learning Scholarships** to study UK Master's degree courses in your home country
- **Academic Fellowships** for mid-career academics to spend time at UK universities
- **Professional Fellowships** for mid-career professionals to spend time at a UK host organization
- **Split-site scholarships**

More information on these awards and other awards available from the Commission are available on the website [www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk).

From 2018, all Commonwealth Scholarships funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) will be offered under six themes:

1. Science and technology for development
2. Strengthening health systems and capacity
3. Promoting global prosperity
4. Strengthening global peace, security and governance
5. Strengthening resilience and response to crises
6. Access, inclusion and opportunity

More information and a detailed description of these themes are available on the CSC-UK website.

**Commonwealth Scholarships are aimed at individuals who could not otherwise afford to study in the UK. From 2018, every applicant will be required to sign a declaration that they do not have access to sufficient funds to study in the UK. No candidate with the independent means to study in the UK would be nominated to the CSC.**

## 1 Eligibility:

Eligibility requirements are outlined in the **Terms and Conditions** attached hereto (Master's and PhD Scholarships). I would particularly draw your attention to the following:

- The Commission will look for evidence of **high academic quality** expected of Commonwealth scholars; intellectual and academic excellence will be paramount in all selections. **Candidates studying a first degree are expected to hold at least upper second class honours level or a degree of second class (i.e. 70%+) by October 2018.**
- Candidates should be able to take up the award in October 2018 as deferments are granted in the most exceptional circumstances, and in any event will not be considered for start dates beyond January 2019.
- Please note that if candidates for Master's awards have undertaken any of their university education outside their home country, they will be asked to state how it was funded and how the education differed from that in their home country.
- **Awards are no longer offered to complete PhD study already under way in the UK.** In other words, all PhD applicants should not be registered for a PhD, or an MPhil leading to a PhD at a UK university before Sept/Oct 2018.
- **All PhD candidates must provide a supporting statement from a named supervisor from at least one of the UK universities to which they are applying.**

Awards are tenable at any UK institution of higher education with whom the Commission has a part-funding agreement. A list of these institutions can be found at <http://bit.ly/cscuk-uk-universities>. **Candidates are expected to state at least one and up to three preferred institution(s) on the application form. The final decision on a host institution will be made by the Commission. In recent years, placement of successful candidates has sometimes been delayed by the process of gaining admission to their host university. For this reason, candidates must submit independent applications for admission directly to their preferred institutions in the UK in advance of their scholarship application.** Where offers of admission have been obtained, these should be included with the nominations, and any subsequent correspondence copied to us.

## 2 Selection Criteria:

Final selection of candidates and host institutions will be made by the UK Commission based on the nominations from the South African Agency. Once again, they will be seeking candidates of the highest academic quality, who demonstrate a real capacity to make a difference to their home country on completion of the award. The main selection criteria are **academic merit**, the **quality of the study plan** and the potential impact of the work on the development of the candidate's home country.

**Applications which do not meet the academic criteria will not be considered by the South African Selection Panel. We receive substantially more nominations than scholarships available, and for this reason, the selection process has become very**

**competitive over the years. It should be noted that even applicants who meet the academic criteria may not be finally selected by the Selection Panel due to the competitive nature of these scholarships.**

The Selection Committee has become concerned in recent years with the way in which papers are increasingly arriving in an incomplete state and has instructed its secretariat to render ineligible applications which do not arrive in the manner requested. **Such incomplete applications will not be considered by the committee.**

### **3 Application process:**

**All applicants** for a Commonwealth Scholarship should use the Electronic Application System (EAS) – see [www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk) and **click on apply**. Any candidate who has not submitted an application via the EAS cannot be considered for a scholarship.

**NOTE:** You need to click on the **submit** button otherwise your application will be **invalid**.

All applicants must have submitted their EAS application by 22 February 2018 (the system will close for applications). Please refer to attached terms and conditions.

**One hard copy** of the application form (with supporting documents, especially academic transcripts) should reach the South African Nominating Agency (USAf) by no later than Tuesday 27 February 2018. **If applicants do not submit a hard copy of the application form, their applications would not be considered by the SA Selection Panel.**

Please note that applications received after the closing date **WILL NOT** be considered.

### **4 Arrangements for submitting applications:**

The following information should be noted by ALL applicants:

- (i) The EAS ask each applicant to upload scanned passport-size photograph, transcripts, birth certificate (copy of green ID will do) and any letters received from a UK institution listed in your application form.
- (ii) **References:** Do allow referees time to complete references. Although the EAS sends an e-mail to each referee with a link to your application to write a reference, the e-mail is only sent when you **submit** your application. **Irrespective of the above (email alert to referees), the onus is on the applicant to ensure that references are available and submitted on time.**

**After submitting your application, you should print one hard copy of your electronic application (with the scanned supporting documents) to reach us on or before 27 February 2018.**

#### **The Postal Address is:**

Universities South Africa – (Commonwealth Scholarships)  
P O Box 27392  
SUNNYSIDE  
Pretoria 0132

**The Physical Address is:**

Universities South Africa – (Commonwealth Scholarships)  
1267 Pretorius Street, Hadeffields Office Park, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Block D, Hatfield, Pretoria,  
0083

**If we do not receive a hard copy of your application, the South African Selection Panel will not be in a position to consider your application. No late applications will be considered.**

If you have any enquiries, please email the undersigned at [jana@usaf.ac.za](mailto:jana@usaf.ac.za)

Kind regards.

**JANA VAN WYK**  
**SENIOR MANAGER: CEO'S OFFICE**