



Commonwealth Scholarship  
Commission in the UK

# Commonwealth Shared Scholarships 2021

## University bidding guidance

Commonwealth Shared Scholarships are for candidates from least developed and lower-middle income Commonwealth countries, for full-time Master's study on selected courses, jointly supported by UK universities.

Funded by the UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), Commonwealth Shared Scholarships enable talented and motivated individuals to gain the knowledge and skills required to support sustainable development and are aimed at those who could not otherwise afford to study in the UK. These scholarships are offered by the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK (CSC) under six development 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

Whilst the CSC will do everything we can to ensure the impact of COVID-19 on our operations is minimised, we appreciate that some changes may be unavoidable due to external pressures and uncertainty, and recognise that the same may apply to our university partners.

## Bidding requirements

UK universities are invited to bid for **up to ten Commonwealth Shared Scholarships** to be offered in the 2021-2022 academic year.

The CSC is not always able to offer the maximum number of scholarships for which a university bids. It is normal practice for the CSC to offer one scholarship to universities that are new to the programme or that have not taken part in the last three years.

Universities should put forward no more than 10 courses in their bid. These courses must be individually named, not by department; bids for subject areas will not be accepted.

For the small number of universities with candidates deferred from the 2020 academic year, we will discuss arrangements with you separately from the bidding process. If a course was deferred and you wish for new candidates to be considered, please include this in the bid as normal.

The CSC currently expects to allocate around 220 new Commonwealth Shared Scholarships for 2021. Scholarships are normally for one-year taught courses at postgraduate level and are not for research degrees or undergraduate study.

Universities will be asked within the bidding form to detail the following:

- How they will undertake recruitment for the Scholarships
- Any eligibility criteria in addition to the Commission's own criteria which will be used for recruitment
- Where the funding for the awards will come from (i.e. whether from central university funds or from an external source)
- The development impact which will result from the Scholarships. As Commonwealth Shared Scholars are funded by the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), **subjects of study must be demonstrably developmental in nature**. Therefore, as part of their bid, universities must provide a statement explaining the direct or indirect relevance of the course(s) to least developed and lower middle-income countries. The developmental value of the course will be assessed, and allocations of scholarships will be made based on the strength of the statements provided. Generic course descriptions will not be considered. The CSC wishes to see a brief outline of how the proposed course will be advantageous and suitable for individuals from least developed and lower middle-income countries, as well as to their home nations when they return. **Bids not including development statements will be deemed ineligible**

Only courses which do not require further study, training, or employment in the UK, including courses with industry placements are eligible, MBA courses will be supported only in exceptional circumstances where a direct development focus and aim can be demonstrated.

Universities must also provide a link to the key modules within each course in their bid.

Only universities in receipt of UK Government grant funding are eligible to bid for Commonwealth Shared Scholarships.

## **Development statement – dos and don'ts**

### **Do**

- Explain how the course is relevant to least developed and lower middle-income Commonwealth countries
- Be specific about how the course content can be applied to ensure development impact
- Demonstrate how the course could have a development impact on the Scholar's home country when they return
- Explain how the course links to the chosen CSC development theme
- Provide examples of the course or university's record in development, where applicable
- Consult with the course leaders when writing the statements
- Write at least one paragraph
- Provide links to core modules for each course
- Check that the statements are complete and correct before submitting the bid

## Don't

- Use the same statement for each course
- Use generic course descriptions; these will not be considered
- Rely on the name of the course to demonstrate its developmental nature
- Copy and paste course information from the university website

## How to bid

All bids must be made using the [CSC's online application system](#).

The deadline for bids is 09:00 (GMT) on Monday 23 November. Late bids cannot be accepted. Bidding results should be available in January 2021.

For more information about the CSC, visit the [CSC website](#).

If you have any questions about Commonwealth Shared Scholarships or the bidding process, please contact the CSC Secretariat at [shared.scholarships@cscuk.org.uk](mailto:shared.scholarships@cscuk.org.uk). When first accessing the bidding form you will be asked for a key code; to receive this, please email this address from your institutional email account.



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## Bidding terms and conditions

### Recruitment and selection

Universities that are successful at the bidding stage will be notified which courses and how many scholarships have been approved by the CSC. The CSC will issue a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to universities that will confirm the terms and conditions of the scholarship as well as the responsibilities of the CSC and of the university; this will be reviewed on an annual basis. Placement cannot go ahead unless the CSC receives the signed MOU.

All candidates must apply via CSC's online application form and universities must use the CSC's application form to recruit candidates. Candidates are to apply for a place on the course separately through the university's own admissions application system.

The list of eligible courses for 2021 Commonwealth Shared Scholarships will be published on the CSC website, with university contact details, in February 2021.

Applications for 2021 Commonwealth Shared Scholarships are likely to open in February 2021 and close in March 2021. Exact opening and closing dates will be given nearer the time along with the full timetable for nominations.

It is the responsibility of universities to conduct their own recruitment of candidates as they see fit in an open and transparent manner and with reference to the [CSC anti-fraud policy and procedure](#).

The CSC aims to identify talented individuals who have the potential to make change. We are committed to a policy of equal opportunity and non-discrimination and encourage applications from a diverse range of candidates. For further information on the support available to candidates with a disability, see the [CSC disability support statement](#). The CSC asks universities to continue positively to encourage women to apply for Commonwealth Shared Scholarships.

The profile of Commonwealth Shared Scholarships has increased in recent years with over 21,000 individual applications received for the current academic year and the CSC is committed to supporting universities to manage recruitment and selection. As part of this, we would like to highlight the option for universities to state a regional or country preference in the bidding form; this should ensure you receive a more focused set of applications.

## Candidate eligibility

Candidates are expected to hold a first degree at either first class or upper-second class level, or at lower-second class level plus a Master's degree. The CSC cannot assess work experience in lieu of this minimum academic qualification.

Pre-sessional English courses are not supported by this programme. Universities must therefore confirm that candidates are sufficiently fluent in written and oral English to pursue their studies immediately and ensure that they meet the English language requirement set by UK Visas and Immigration.

To apply for these scholarships, candidates must:

- Be a citizen of or have been granted refugee status by an eligible Commonwealth country, or be a British Protected Person
- Be permanently resident in an eligible Commonwealth country
- Be available to start their academic studies in the UK by the start of the UK academic year in September/October 2021
- By October 2021, hold a first degree of at least upper second class (2:1) standard, or a second-class degree and a relevant postgraduate qualification (usually a Master's degree).
- Not have studied or worked for one (academic) year or more in a high-income country (for CSC purposes this is classified as a country **which does not appear** on the [DAC list of ODA recipients](#)).
- Be unable to afford to study in the UK without this scholarship (note the university may be asked to state its procedures for verifying applicants' financial status).
- Commit to return to their home country within one month of the end date of their scholarship

These eligibility criteria are current as of October 2020 and are subject to minor changes.

## Eligible Commonwealth countries

(Please see list of eligible countries below as stated in the [DAC list](#) published in October 2020)

Bangladesh	Lesotho	Solomon Islands
Cameroon	Malawi	Sri Lanka
Eswatini	Mozambique	Tanzania
The Gambia	Nigeria	Tuvalu
Ghana	Pakistan	Uganda
India	Papua New Guinea	Vanuatu
Kenya	Rwanda	Zambia
Kiribati	Sierra Leone	

The CSC is keen to ensure a good geographical spread of these awards; a high percentage of Commonwealth Shared Scholarships are currently awarded to candidates from Pakistan and Nigeria; the CSC encourages recruitment from currently under-represented countries.

## Financial commitment and branding

Commonwealth Shared Scholarships are jointly financed by the CSC and host universities. Any contribution towards the university's share of the scholarship costs must come from the university's own funds or from an organisation whose mission and aims are in line with those of the CSC. All documentation and promotional material must recognise that Commonwealth Shared Scholarships are jointly funded by the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK (CSC) and the university.

Commonwealth Shared Scholars must not be asked to contribute to the university element of the scholarship. Any university expecting a Shared Scholar to do this will render themselves liable to repayment of the tuition fee to the CSC and exclusion from the programme in future years.

The **CSC** will pay the following (on receipt of an invoice and relevant supporting documentation from the university):

- Course tuition fees up to a cap of £22,500
- Airfares to and from the UK, booked in line with CSC's travel policy
- Grant to contribute to study-related costs (exact amount for 2021 to be confirmed); additional sums available for CSC events
- Tuberculosis test fees at a pre-determined amount set by the CSC where required by UK Visas and Immigration
- Excess baggage allowance on return home up to the specific rate as set by the CSC
- Disability Support Allowance for personal living costs (if eligible)
- For Scholars who are widowed, divorced, or a single parent, child allowance of £478 per month for the first child, and £118 per month for the second and third child under the age of 16 (at 2020/2021 rate)

The costs of any compulsory field trips or bench fees should be included in the tuition fee; the CSC will not cover any additional costs beyond the listed course tuition fee.

The **university** is expected to provide **at least** the following level of support (figures for 2020/2021 quoted; 2021/2022 figures will be available in advance of the 2021 academic year):

- Stipend (living allowance) at the rate of £1116 per month, or £1369 per month for Scholars at universities in the London metropolitan area; this must be paid for the full duration of the scholarship
- Warm clothing allowance of £433

These amounts are set by the UK government for all students on government-funded scholarships. If universities provide free accommodation in lieu of part of the stipend payment, they must ensure that family accommodation is available if required by a Commonwealth Shared Scholar. All Commonwealth Shared Scholars must have commenced their award in the UK for stipend to be paid.

## Scholarship tenure and return home

Commonwealth Shared Scholarships are tenable for one year and cannot be extended or renewed.

All Commonwealth Shared Scholars are required to return to their home country within one month of the end of their courses. No permission will be given to defer the homeward

airfare, except where a Scholar has secured an offer of PhD study in the UK with full funding for three years of study from a university or recognised scholarship body. In such cases, if the Shared Scholarship host university agrees, the CSC will allow the Scholar to remain in the UK and will issue a 'no objection' letter to support their visa application.

## **Welfare**

The university is responsible for managing the welfare of Commonwealth Shared Scholars while they are on award. While the CSC pays for tuition fees, the university must pay for living allowances and provide any additional funding necessary to support the welfare of Scholars. This includes supporting Scholars with disabilities and funding any academic related reasonable adjustments that are required. If a Commonwealth Shared Scholar requires additional support in their personal life and they declare a disability to the CSC, a full assessment of their needs and eligibility for additional financial support will be offered by the CSC.