



21 August 2015

**TO: INTERNATIONAL AND POSTGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP ADMINISTRATORS**

**COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARSHIPS TENABLE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM, 2016**

I am writing to invite you to take part in the nomination process for the Commonwealth Scholarships in the United Kingdom, tenable from October 2016. Your institution is invited to send a maximum of **ten (10)** nominations from students who are currently registered at your institution and eligible to apply (**South African citizens only**) for the Commonwealth Scholarships. No reserves candidates submitted by a university would be considered.

Universities South Africa (formerly known as Higher Education South Africa (HESA)) 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 2016.

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

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).

## 1 Eligibility:

Eligibility requirements are outlined in the Scholarship Prospectus attached hereto. 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 2016.**
- Candidates should be able to take up the award in October 2016 as deferments are granted in the most exceptional circumstances, and in any event will not be considered for start dates beyond January 2017.
- 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.
- **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.

The Commission will not offer awards to scholars already close to completing a doctorate in their own country, though awards may be offered to complete doctoral studies already underway in the UK.

## 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.

Kindly note that candidates applying via your university for these scholarships should **choose the option University X (to CSC via HESA) in the EAS.**

**NOTE: Please inform candidates that they have to click on the submit button otherwise the application will be invalid.**

**One hard copy of the application form (with supporting documents) should reach us by **Wednesday, 18 November 2015.****

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

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

We would like to encourage universities to nominate their final 10 candidates to Universities South Africa by using the EAS. **We would however still need ONE hard copy of the nominated candidates.** If you need assistance or information on using the EAS in this regard, kindly contact Peter Bourdillon, Project Manager at email: [Peter.Bourdillon@acu.ac.uk](mailto:Peter.Bourdillon@acu.ac.uk).

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 their application form.
- (i) **References:** The EAS will send an email to each referee with a link to the applicant's application to write a reference. The e-mail is only sent when the applicant **submits** his/her application. Please encourage your applicants to make contact with their respective referees well in advance in order for the referees to have time to submit their references before the closing date of **18 November 2015.**
- (ii) **Irrespective of the above (email alert to referees), the onus is on the applicant to ensure that references are available and submitted on time. Applications received without the requested references will not be considered.**

**Please assist and/or support your applicants as far as possible to obtain the requisite references. Referees could be requested to write a reference letter prior to the application being submitted as the EAS has a function now which allows referees to upload a document in pdf.**

**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)  
UNISA Sunnyside Campus  
Building 3 – Level 1  
Cnr of Rissik and Steve Biko Streets  
SUNNYSIDE  
Pretoria, 0002

**5 Timeframe:**

- South African nominations to be submitted to the Agency (Universities South Africa) by **Wednesday, 18 November 2015**.
- Applications are considered by the South African Selection Panel in the first week of December 2015.
- Nominations by the nominating agency (Universities South Africa) to be submitted to the UK Scholarship Commission by 17 December 2015.
- Institutions and individuals will be informed of the outcome of the first round early January 2016.
- Applications are considered by the UK Selection Committee in March 2016.
- The final outcome from the UK is expected the end of April or early May 2016.

If you have any enquiries, please send an e-mail to **Nondumiso Ndonga** at [sso@universitiessa.ac.za](mailto:sso@universitiessa.ac.za)

Kind regards.

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