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## TO: INTERNATIONAL AND POSTGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP ADMINISTRATORS

### COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARSHIPS TENABLE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM, 2015

I am writing to invite you to take part in the nomination process for the Commonwealth Scholarships in the United Kingdom, tenable from October 2015. Your institution is invited to send a maximum of **eight (8)** nominations from students who are currently registered at your institution and eligible to apply (**South African citizens only**) for the Commonwealth Scholarships.

These may be in either of the following categories:

- One year taught Master's courses (excluding MBA)
- Doctoral degrees, up to three years of duration (UK institution) (You may nominate candidates who wish to undertake extensive periods of fieldwork in their home country)

Note that the Scholarship Commission is no longer inviting national agencies to nominate candidates for split-site awards, as from 2015 the Commission will invite applications directly (more information on these awards are available on the website [www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk)).

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

#### 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 the **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 2015.**
- Candidates should be able to take up the award in October 2015 as deferments are granted in the most exceptional circumstances, and in any event will not be considered for start dates beyond January 2016.
- 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 candidates applying for doctoral study must provide the Commission with evidence of support from a prospective supervisor at least one of their chosen institutions at the time of application.**

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, but 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, we expect candidates to submit independent applications for admission directly to their preferred institutions in the UK, prior to, or at the time of applying for the Scholarship.** 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 development impact that a candidate will have after their award.

**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**.

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

All nominations should reach us before or on **Monday, 17 November 2014**. **The Electronic Application System has automatically set the deadline for applications to be made via a University for 3 November 2014 (14 days prior to the closing date of the Nominating Agency). This means that candidates applying via your University will not be allowed to apply after 3 November 2014.**

**One hard copy** of the application form (with supporting documents) from your nominated candidates should reach us by **Monday, 17 November 2014**.

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 8 candidates to the HESA 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: [P.Bourdillon@acu.ac.uk](mailto:P.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.
- (ii) References: The EAS will send an e-mail to each referee with a link to the applicants application form to write a reference. The e-mail is only sent when the application is **submitted** and therefore candidates are encouraged to this well in advance in order for the referees to have time to submit their references before the closing date of **17 November 2014**. **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.**

If have any enquiries, please send an email to Nondumiso Ndonga at [sso@hesa.org.za](mailto:sso@hesa.org.za).

We thank you for your assistance and cooperation in this regard.

Kind regards



**JANA VAN WYK**  
**SENIOR MANAGER: OFFICE OF THE CEO**