



24 August 2016

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, 2017

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 2017.

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.

1 Eligibility:

Eligibility requirements are outlined in the **Terms and Conditions** 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 2017.**

- Candidates should be able to take up the award in October 2017 as deferments are granted in the most exceptional circumstances, and in any event will not be considered for start dates beyond January 2018.
- 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 and **click on apply**. Any candidate who has not submitted an application via the EAS cannot be considered for a scholarship.

However, there are two ways to **submit** your application:

- (1) If you are a South African citizen **registered** at a Public University in South Africa at the time of applying, you should submit your application via the university. In the EAS you will be given an option to choose the university of your choice with two further options. In applying for the Commonwealth Scholarships, please **choose the option University X (to CSC via Universities South Africa)**. **You will need to contact your university well in advance to ascertain what the institutional specific application process and closing date for applications are (it will in all probability be no later than 3 November 2016). See attached contact list.**
- (2) **Individual applications submitted** directly to Universities South Africa as the South African Nominating Agency, will be considered in the case of –
 - (a) A South African citizen who is not registered at any Public Higher Education Institution in South Africa at the time of applying;
 - (b) A South African citizen who is studying or staying in a foreign country at the time of applying; and
 - (c) A South African citizen who obtained his/her **last qualification** from a foreign institution.

All other applications received directly from individuals will not be considered.

NOTE: In both cases, (1) and (2) above, you need to click on the **submit** button otherwise your application will be **invalid**.

All applicants must have submitted their EAS application by 15 November 2016 (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 us by **Friday, 18 November 2016**.

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

4 Arrangements for submitting applications:

Refer to item 3 – applicants who need to submit their applications via a South African Higher Education Institution are reminded to contact the university for more information on the application process. However, 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 18 November 2016. If you apply via the University, please submit the hard copy to the University by its given closing date.

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

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.

5 Timeframe:

- South African nominations to be submitted to the Agency (Universities South Africa) by **Friday, 18 November 2016.**
- Applications are considered by the South African Selection Panel in the first week of December 2016.
- Nominations by the nominating agency (Universities South Africa) to be submitted to the UK Scholarship Commission by 13 December 2016.
- 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 2017.
- The final outcome from the UK is expected the end of April or early May 2017.

If you have any enquiries, please send an e-mail to **Nondumiso Ndonga** at sso@usaf.ac.za.

Kind regards.

JANA VAN WYK

SENIOR MANAGER: CEO'S OFFICE