

# **COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARSHIP COMMISSION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM**

## **BUSINESS PLAN – MARCH 2014**

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## **1. FOREWORD**

The Commission was established by the Commonwealth Scholarships Act, 1959. The constitution and responsibilities of the Commission are set out in Chapter 6 of that Act, and successor legislation, most notably the International Development Act, 2002. The practical operation of the Commission is guided by a Framework Document and associated Financial Memorandum, copies of which can be found on the Commission web site (<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk>). The strategic direction of the Commission is detailed in its Corporate Plan, which can also be found on the web site.

The Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan are guided by principles adopted by Commonwealth Education Ministers, within these, our stated mission is to:

‘deliver the UK contribution to the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan through the granting of academic and professional awards to able and motivated Commonwealth citizens, and the nomination of UK citizens for awards from other Commonwealth countries. Candidates are selected on the basis of merit, and particularly their potential to contribute to the needs of their home countries. We undertake these activities in order to (1) contribute to the UK’s international development aims and wider overseas interests, (2) support excellence in UK higher education, and (3) sustain the principles of the Commonwealth.’

The Commission’s principal sources of funding remain the Department for International Development (DFID), which funds candidates from developing Commonwealth countries, and UK universities, which share the cost of its awards. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Scottish Government support a small number of awards for people from developed countries.

The past decade has seen significant diversification in the type of awards that the Commission offers, as we seek to meet a wider range of needs. Although ‘conventional’ scholarships at doctoral and Master’s level are still prominent, large numbers of award holders study by distance learning, many of whom never visit the UK. New models have also included awards for professional staff in key development occupations to spend time in the UK. We have also sought to strengthen our evaluation of awards, to ensure that funds are used in the most effective way possible, and to maintain much stronger contact with alumni. The Commission has constantly sought to keep its administration costs low, so that maximum funding can be devoted to student related activities.

All of these aspirations are reflected in our four year Strategy from 2011-15, of which the period covered by this Business Plan forms the last year. The Commission is currently reviewing its priorities for the period beyond 2015, as indicated in our Corporate Plan. In the interests of consistency, most of the objectives and targets are shared between these Plans, our 2011-15 Strategy and the log frame document which provides the basis for DFID support. From 2015, it is intended that these documents will be merged into Corporate and Business Plans, in order to avoid duplication.

## **2. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARSHIP COMMISSION**

Under the terms of the Act, the Commission comprises of up to fourteen members, in addition to the Chair. Membership of the Commission at April 1<sup>st</sup> 2014 was as follows:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Appointed</b>	<b>Appointed to</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Professor Tim Unwin	Jan 2009	End Dec 2014	Chair, 2 <sup>nd</sup> term
Professor Mark Cleary	May 2008	End April 2014	2 <sup>nd</sup> term, Deputy-Chair
Dr Nick Brown	Nov 2013	End Oct 2016	
Mr Richard Burge	July 2012	End June 2015	
Mr Anthony Cary	July 2012	End June 2015	
Professor David Cope	Nov 2013	End Oct 2016	
Professor Graham Furniss	Jan 2011	End Dec 2016	2 <sup>nd</sup> term
Professor Christine Humfrey	May 2008	End April 2014	2 <sup>nd</sup> term
Professor Nyovani Madise	May 2008	End April 2014	2 <sup>nd</sup> term
Ms Kathy Mansfield	June 2009	End May 2015	2 <sup>nd</sup> term
Mr Richard Middleton	June 2009	End May 2015	2 <sup>nd</sup> term
Professor Jeff Waage	Jan 2011	End Dec 2016	2 <sup>nd</sup> term
Ms Ros Wade	Jan 2009	End Dec 2014	2 <sup>nd</sup> term
Professor Jonathan Wastling	August 2008	End July 2014	2 <sup>nd</sup> term

Members and the Chair are normally permitted to serve up to two three year terms, depending on renewal by the Secretary of State for International Development. It will be noted that five members plus the Chair will reach the end of their second term during the year. In addition, a vacancy has arisen due to the death of one member, Professor Lorna Casselton, in February 2014.

Three of these vacancies have already been filled, with Mr Sandy Balfour, Ms Sarah Laessig, Mr Mark Robson, scheduled to take up appointments in May 2014. Advertisements for further positions, including that of the Chair, will be placed in Spring 2014. All appointments to the Commission are publicly advertised, in accordance with the regulations of the Office of Public Appointments.

### **3. PRIORITIES FOR THE YEAR**

In accordance with the Corporate Plan, the priorities for the Commission during 2014-15 will be to:

- ensure that awards are fully aligned with the objectives of DFID and other sponsoring organisations, whilst maintaining academic and professional integrity
- maintain progress towards the targets agreed with DFID for the 2011-15 period which are set out below
- ensure that our provision of awards remains relevant, accessible, and good value for money
- provide evidence of the impact of its awards on recipients and their home countries
- initiate activities and encourage award holders and alumni to maintain closer links with the scheme, and thereby contribute more effectively to development
- introduce and consolidate new methods of governance, in line with the recommendations of the recent review of the Commission's Non Departmental Public Body (NDPB) status
- continue to review the proportion of our administration costs, thereby maximising the proportion of resources devoted to scholarships and fellowships, and other directly related activities
- contribute to the maintenance of a vibrant Commonwealth-wide CSFP
- develop new strategies for 2015 onwards
- undertake a review of the work of nominating Agencies

#### **4. PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR 2014-15**

The Commission will pursue these priorities through four distinct objectives, as follows:

- Enhancing of individual research and teaching capacity through Scholarships and academic Fellowships awarded to people from all Commonwealth countries
- Strengthening capacity development of non-academic professionals in Commonwealth countries
- Expanding the involvement of all award holders and alumni in development activities, and maintaining a coherent network that benefits international development, and UK and Commonwealth interests
- Maintaining an informed, efficient and transparent Commission that provides value for money in delivering its objectives

These objectives will be advanced through a number of specific measures, as follows

##### ***Objective 1: To enhance individual research and teaching capacity through scholarships and academic fellowships to people from all Commonwealth countries***

In pursuing **Objective 1** the Commission will undertake the following activities:

- a) Select candidates for Scholarships and Fellowships nominated to the Commission, based on the criteria of academic excellence, development potential (for those from developing Commonwealth countries), research and impact potential (for those from developed Commonwealth countries), and the quality of their research or study plans.
- b) Review the balance of awards provided by the Commission, with reports being considered at the May or July meetings of the Commission, in time for any changes to be implemented in the following year.
- c) Review the current arrangement for a distinct strand of Fellowships for those working in the academic sector, to assess whether this is still appropriate and, if so, how it can most effectively be targeted
- d) Review nomination routes and processes, to ensure as far as possible that its awards are available to diverse groups and attract candidates of the highest standard.
- e) Continue to develop and enhance its electronic application systems, and promoting these to applicants, both directly and through nominating agencies.
- f) Rigorous monitoring the Commission's selection procedures, criteria and support to award holders, to ensure that these remain fair, open, transparent, and able to draw on independent, expert advice from the UK academic community.

##### ***Objective 2: To strengthen capacity development of non-academic professionals in Commonwealth countries***

In pursuing **Objective 2**, the Commission will undertake the following activities:

- a) Publicise (as permitted under HMG marketing restrictions) and make new awards of Professional Fellowships and appropriate Master's programmes to deliver on the commitment to support capacity development in non-academic professions.

- b) Review the balance of awards between Professional Fellowships and Master's awards (including distance learning) to take into account stated development priorities, national strategies of countries within the CSFP, and the objectives of its funding departments.
- c) Review nominating routes, working particularly to target priority areas identified in (b) above, and disseminating information thereon to appropriate stakeholders.
- d) Review the Commission's own selection procedures, to ensure that these remain fair, open, and transparent, and reflect the above objectives.
- e) Implement mechanisms to ensure that all award holders have opportunities to engage fully with the Commission's activities, paying particular attention to those on distance learning awards and those who are administered jointly with host universities.

***Objective 3: To expand the involvement of all award holders and alumni in the Commission's activities, and to maintain a coherent network that benefits international development, as well as UK and Commonwealth interests***

In pursuing **Objective 3**, the Commission will undertake the following **activities**:

- a) Regular communicating with existing award holders, through written and electronic means, and meetings in the UK, whether organised by the Commission or jointly with others.
- b) Expand post-award activities (profile updates, events, annual receptions in High Commissions/British Council offices) to support the engagement of alumni in activities contributing to development, UK interests, and Commonwealth values.
- c) Increase the proportion of alumni with whom the Commission is in contact, in particular through increased tracing activity of the British Council in the countries where they are represented.
- d) Effective managing and supporting of networks for the continued professional development of alumni and thereby enhancing the development impact of the Commission.
- e) Promote opportunities for alumni to become engaged in relevant development, Commonwealth and UK-related activities.
- f) Ensure that DFID offices and High Commissions in Commonwealth countries are made more aware of our schemes and the resource that its alumni can provide.
- g) Engage with Commonwealth organisations and other member states to promote and develop the CSFP as a Commonwealth-wide institution.

***Objective 4: To maintain an informed, effective, efficient and transparent Commission that provides value for money in delivering its objectives***

In pursuing **Objective 4**, the Commission will undertake the following **activities**:

- a) Monitor procedures to ensure a robust value-for-money administration that is efficient, transparent, and accountable, so as to maximise funding available for awards. This activity will include the review and approval of all administrative fees and service-level agreements with providers.
- b) Regular monitoring to ensure that the Commission's governance and committee structures are fit for purpose, with provision for issues of sufficient strategic importance to be addressed between regular

Commission meetings. In particular, to ensure implementation of the recommendations of the Commission's NDPB triennial review, on a timescale agreed with DFID.

- c) Expansion of the Commission's programme of evaluation and monitoring, reviewing the consequences of the Commission's activities to inform future policy and debate, and sharing information with UK funding departments and other agencies. This will also support the arrangements for a three-yearly review of the Commission's activities.
- d) Monitoring of regulations and procedures to ensure that these do not disadvantage any group of potential applicants, drawing, where possible, on comparison with good practice from other scholarship and fellowship programmes.
- e) Developing closer working relationships with UK government departments and relevant Commonwealth organisations to ensure that the Commission delivers on their intentions and values.
- f) Supporting DFID to ensure selection of an effective balance of Commissioners, necessary to ensure that appropriate expertise and skills are available to make future policy

## **5. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

The Commission has agreed thirteen key indicators with DFID, which will be used to measure success in meeting the above objectives. These are as follows:

- a) Selection of at least 124 recipients from developing Commonwealth countries to commence doctoral studies at UK institutions, completing the target set in 2010 of 481 selections over the four year period to 2015;
- b) Selection of at least 490 recipients from developing Commonwealth countries to commence Master's level studies at UK institutions, completing the target set in 2010 of 1857 selections over the four year period to 2015;
- c) A selection breakdown that comprises at least 45% of each gender;
- d) Confirmation that all applications for doctoral and Master's programmes in the UK selected by the Commission are possible through electronic means, and that 95% of intended applications are received by the Electronic Application System;
- e) Confirmation, through an anonymous survey open to all scholars and fellows in the UK, that at least 90% of Scholars responding regard support from the Commission to be 'good' or 'very good' (the top two categories available);
- f) Selection of at least 172 recipients from developing Commonwealth countries to take up professional or academic fellowships at UK institutions, completing the target set in 2010 of 642 fellowships over the four year period to 2015;
- g) Addition of a further 500 alumni to the CSC alumni database, with contact details being maintained for at least 8,000 alumni in total;
- h) A package of alumni activities including at least two hard copy magazines, participation of at least 1,000 alumni in LinkedIn networks and at least ten alumni events in different countries;
- i) Evidence from alumni surveys that at least 90% of completing alumni from DFID sponsored countries completing awards are living/working in developing countries, and/or development related organisations;
- j) Successful completion of a four year programme to collect at least 1350 examples of alumni who report a personal contribution to government policies or wider socio-economic impact in key development fields;
- k) Ensuring that Commission administrative costs should form less than 10% of total expenditure during the year including applicable VAT.
- l) Generation of matching contributions of at least £3.5 million from UK universities or other donors to the cost of Commission awards;
- m) Completion of all recommendations for administrative reforms made by the NDPB review of the Commission, which reported in 2013.



## 6. BUDGET AND RESOURCES

The budget for the Commission in 2014-15 was agreed at its meeting on 3 December 2013. Minor revisions were agreed in March 2014 and the revised budget can be seen below. The Programme budget is based on a firm commitment of support from sponsoring departments. Confirmation of the Commission's allocated Administration Resource is awaited; the figure shown in Table 1 is the previously agreed maximum figure and is subject to change. The Commission Framework Document and Financial Memorandum outline the procedure and timetable for agreeing budgets for future years.

Table 1 shows the budget for 2014-15, approved in December 2013. Detail of the Programme budgets is presented in Table 2.

**Table 1: All Costs 2014-15: Approved, March 2014**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Approximate Expenditure / 000s</b>
<b>Awards Programmes (DFID)</b>	22,380
<b>Awards Programmes (BIS)</b>	400
<b>Awards Programmes (Scotland)</b>	50
<b>Administration</b>	1,724
<b>Other Programmes</b>	1,000
<b>Total</b>	25,554

### **Award Expenditure 2014-15**

Table 2 shows the 2013 budget and the budget for 2014/15 approved in December 2013. The intake for 2013 is subject to confirmation.

**Table 2: DFID Programme (Awards) Budget 2014-15, approved March 2014**

<b>Programme</b>	<b>2013 Intake</b>	<b>Forecast Spend / 000's (all awards)</b>	<b>2014 Intake (Projected)</b>	<b>Allocation / 000's (all awards)</b>	<b>Allocation / % Programme</b>
<b>Agency Master's</b>	155	4,000	172	4,850	21.6
<b>Shared Scholarships</b>	218	3,680	235	3,900	17.4
<b>Distance Learning</b>	240	2,050	220	1,900	8.5
<b>PhDs</b>	122	8,770	108	9,500	42.4
<b>Split-site PhDs</b>	16	670	12	400	1.8
<b>Academic Fellows</b>	69	760	75	800	3.6
<b>Professional Fellows</b>	135	925	135	1,050	4.7
<b>Total</b>	955	20,855	957	22,400	100

## 7. PUBLISHED INFORMATION

As laid out in its publication scheme, the CSC publishes the following information:<sup>1</sup>

Class of information	Location
<b>Who we are and what we do</b>	
List of all Commission members	<a href="http://www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk">www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk</a>
Location and contact details	<a href="http://www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk">www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk</a>
Governance statement	Annual Report / <a href="http://www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk">www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk</a>
<b>What we spend and how we spend it</b>	
Statement of income and expenditure	Annual Report / <a href="http://www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk">www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk</a>
<b>What our priorities are and how we are doing</b>	
Monitoring progress	Annual Report / <a href="http://www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk">www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk</a>
Evaluation Programme results	<a href="http://www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk">www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk</a>
<b>How we make decisions</b>	
Scholarship eligibility and selection criteria	<a href="http://www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk">www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk</a>
<b>Our policies and procedures</b>	
Prospectuses for each type of award offered by the CSC	<a href="http://www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk">www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk</a>
Handbook for Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows on award	<a href="http://www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk">www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk</a>
Guidance on using the Electronic Application System	<a href="http://www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk">www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk</a>
FAQs for selected candidates	<a href="http://www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk">www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk</a>
Travel Policy	<a href="http://www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk">www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk</a>
<b>Lists and registers</b>	
Register of Interests	Available upon request
Risk Register	Available upon request
CSC Anti-Fraud Policy	<a href="http://www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk">www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk</a>
CSC Code of Conduct	<a href="http://www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk">www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk</a>
CSC Rules on Conflicts of Interest	<a href="http://www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk">www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk</a>
CSC Complaints Procedure	<a href="http://www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk">www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk</a>

<sup>1</sup> <http://cscuk.dfid.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/foi-publication-scheme-2012-08.pdf>