



Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK

Corporate plan – April 2016

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1. Mission statement

The Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK seeks to provide the main HMG scholarship scheme led by international development objectives, and offer a vivid demonstration of the UK's enduring commitment to the Commonwealth. We also contribute to UK public diplomacy aims, as well as attracting high quality talent to Britain's universities. We pursue these objectives through rigorous procedures which reward merit and provide widespread access, and within the framework of the international Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan.

2. Background and history

For over 50 years, Commonwealth Scholarships have provided opportunities for exceptional students and mid-career professionals to study and learn in other Commonwealth states. This investment has proved a spectacular success. Our evaluations show that the overwhelming majority have returned to contribute to their home countries, many reaching the highest levels of their profession. In most countries where they operate, Commonwealth Scholarships are one of the most popular and prestigious of all the opportunities available for overseas study.

Commonwealth Scholarships are available in many Commonwealth countries, but the United Kingdom is the largest contributor and host. The Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK (CSC) is the non-departmental public body (NDPB) responsible for managing this contribution.

Our work remains guided by the five principles of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP), which can be found in Appendix 1. These were established by Commonwealth education ministers at their first conference in 1959, and were reaffirmed by their successors at the 19th such conference in 2015.

The CSC seeks to apply these principles in the light of changing conditions and new opportunities. We now complement our awards for postgraduate study in the UK with several innovative programmes, including distance learning awards, opportunities for doctoral students in other Commonwealth countries to study in the UK as part of their research, and opportunities for mid-career professionals to spend short periods working with UK host organisations. In recent years, we have also expanded our alumni activity and developed a new focus on evaluation.

Today, the CSC's work plays a distinctive role in the UK's commitment to international development and the Commonwealth, while contributing to public diplomacy objectives and excellence in British higher education. Our 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 awards. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Scottish Government support a small number of awards for candidates from developed countries, which until 2008 were funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO).

The CSC was established by the Commonwealth Scholarships Act, 1959. The constitution and responsibilities of the CSC are set out in Chapter 6 of that Act and successor legislation, most notably the International Development Act, 2002. The practical operation of the CSC is guided by a framework document and associated financial memorandum, copies of which can be found at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/commonwealth-scholarship-commission-in-the-uk/about. As is the case for all non-departmental public bodies, our work is subject to triennial review by the Cabinet Office. The last such review, in 2013, confirmed both the need for our work and the CSC as the appropriate form of delivery. A cluster review of HMG scholarship schemes in 2015 also concluded that the Commonwealth Scholarship brand remained strong, and our delivery methods efficient and cost effective.

3. Current environment

Planning our work requires an understanding of the needs of our stakeholders, and the impact of our programmes in meeting them. The CSC seeks to acquire this through internal and external reviews, active alumni and evaluation programmes, and regular dialogue with nominating agencies, governments, and universities throughout the Commonwealth.

Five issues have emerged in the past year which will impact on the CSC's planning during the period of this corporate plan:

1. publication of new HMG priorities, including a stronger focus of development expenditure on fragile states and low income countries, and recognition of the soft power benefits that each of the HMG international scholarship schemes provide
2. Inclusion of a specific target for international scholarships in the new Sustainable Development Goals provides welcome recognition of the role that these can play in international development. Equally, it should focus attention on which type of scholarships have most impact, and how this can be measured.
3. Publication of the 2015 cluster review of HMG international scholarships, which identified the potential for Commonwealth, Chevening and Marshall Scholarships to work more closely together while retaining their individual identities.
4. The strong endorsement of Commonwealth Scholarships by the 2015 Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers, combined with increasing concern to ensure that awards are fully accessible to all who are capable of benefiting from them.
5. The increasing impact of HMG reductions on administrative costs, beyond the substantial reductions which have been made in previous years, which calls into question our continued ability to offer types of award that carry a larger administrative overhead.

Other aspects of our environment remain. The overwhelming majority of our awards go to recipients from developing countries, which continue to experience shortages of highly-educated and highly-skilled people, which their own higher education systems are not yet able to produce in sufficient numbers. There are not enough skilled professionals in key areas of government and other institutions which drive development, and there is insufficient capacity in higher education establishments to undertake top quality research into effective solutions to development problems. Those skilled professionals that are available are insufficiently exposed to international networks in their areas of knowledge.

Equity continues to be undermined by the limited access of certain groups to international higher education and scholarships within it. The limited pool of skilled professionals that exists in many developing countries has a male bias, which can hamper gender balance in the labour force, and constrains their ability to devise and implement gender-inclusive policies.

As a result of our work, a large proportion of awardees enhance their skills and knowledge; are employed in development-relevant occupations, and are motivated to contribute to the development efforts of their countries. This, together with more gender-balanced access, helps these countries meet their skilled labour force requirements, and address any medical, public health, agricultural, and other critical challenges. A further catalytic effect is in building domestic capacity for high level teaching and research; attracting international contracts, and engaging effectively in international processes.

The plans that follow seek to address all of these issues. We emphasise our role as the only international development scholarship programme offered by the UK, focus on activities that are distinctive amongst the HMG scholarship schemes – such as our emphasis on research and distance learning – reinforce activities that ensure access and partnership with developing countries and the Commonwealth, and maintain the tight control of administrative costs that has been a characteristic of our work in recent years.

4. Aims and objectives

The short and long term policies identified in sections 6 and 7 are guided by our aim to be:

- **Relevant** – through providing opportunities that meet a range of academic and professional needs
- **Distinctive** – by developing programmes which add value to and complement other HMG initiatives
- **Development-focused** – by placing the needs of international development at the heart of our activities in low and middle income Commonwealth countries
- **Collaborative** – working in conjunction with a range of stakeholders, including other HMG schemes, nominating agencies, universities, and governments throughout the Commonwealth
- **Accessible** – by ensuring that our portfolio of awards offers opportunities to all who are capable of benefiting from them, and qualified to do so
- **Accountable** – by ensuring that our work is effectively, rigorously, and proportionately reviewed, and that emerging findings are used in our future planning
- **Inclusive** – by engaging with a distinctive Commonwealth Scholarships community of alumni, award holders and other stakeholders that collaborate to ensure the success of our work, and by making the best use of available expertise from Commissioners and expert advisers
- **Efficient** – by maintaining robust methods of governance, in line with current good practice for non-departmental public bodies
- **Value for money** – by attracting contributions from external stakeholders and minimising the proportion of expenditure devoted to administration costs
- **Commonwealth-wide** – by contributing to a vibrant Commonwealth-wide Plan, and encouraging the development of awards in other parts of the Commonwealth

These aims are pursued through three distinct objectives, as follows:

1. To enhance individual research and teaching capacity and to strengthen capacity development through scholarships and academic and professional fellowships awarded to people from all Commonwealth countries
2. To expand the involvement of all award holders and alumni in CSC activities, and to maintain a coherent network that benefits international development, and UK and Commonwealth interests
3. To maintain an informed, effective, efficient, and transparent Commission that provides value for money in delivering its objectives

5. Review of recent activities

The CSC's 2015-2016 business plan identified several key performance indicators. Progress towards these was last reviewed by the Commission in December 2015, with the results shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Progress on key performance indicators

| Key indicator | Timescale | Update 3 (CSC meeting, December 2015) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|----|----|-----|----|-----|----|-----|----|-----|----|-----|----|-----|----|-----|----|-----|----|-----|-------|-----|
| a) Selection of at least 124 recipients from developing Commonwealth countries to commence doctoral studies at UK institutions | By 20 March 2015 'wrap-up' meeting | KPI met 131 doctoral selections made in March; 7 upgrades in July | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| b) Selection of at least 586 recipients from developing Commonwealth countries to commence Master's level studies at UK institutions | By end of March for Agency Master's Scholarships, end of April for Shared Scholarships, and end of July for Distance Learning Scholarships | KPI met 639 Master's selections: - 213 Agency Scholarships (plus 9 upgrades in July) - 219 Shared Scholarships - 207 Distance Learning Scholarships | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| c) A selection breakdown that comprises at least 45% of each gender | By final (3rd) Professional Fellowships selection meeting (October 2015) | KPI met % of female candidates for all selections in 2015: <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>F%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>CA</td> <td>48%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CD</td> <td>43%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CF</td> <td>37%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CM</td> <td>40%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CN</td> <td>48%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CP</td> <td>40%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR</td> <td>38%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CS</td> <td>50%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SS</td> <td>50%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>47%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | | F% | CA | 48% | CD | 43% | CF | 37% | CM | 40% | CN | 48% | CP | 40% | CR | 38% | CS | 50% | SS | 50% | Total | 47% |
| | F% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| CA | 48% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| SS | 50% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 47% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 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 99% of intended applications are received by the EAS | End of March for Agency Scholarships, end of April for Shared Scholarships, and end of June for Distance Learning Scholarships | KPI met All 2015 applications submitted via EAS | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 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 'excellent' (<i>out of categories: excellent, good, average, poor, very poor in 2015</i>) | September E&M meeting | KPI met Responses to the anonymous questionnaire in 2015: 91% of Scholars responding reported that they felt the CSC pre-award support was 'excellent' or 'good', and 96% that support was 'excellent' or 'good' for overall administration of award | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| Key indicator | Timescale | Update 3 (CSC meeting, December 2015) |
|--|---|---|
| f) Selection of at least 178 recipients from developing Commonwealth countries to take up professional or academic fellowships at UK institutions | End of March 2015 for Academic Fellows, and end of Round 3 (October) for Professional Fellows | KPI met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Total of 191 Fellows selected: - 19 Academic Fellows - 20 Medical Fellows - 152 Professional Fellows (59 in Round 1, 61 in Round 2, 32 in Round 3) |
| g) Addition of a further 750 alumni to the CSC alumni database, with contact details being maintained for at least 8,500 alumni in total | By December 2015 | KPI met Total of 831 alumni added in 2015-2016 to date including 361 alumni signed up via CSC and British Council tracing 10,100 alumni members in total, with email addresses for 8,200 alumni. |
| h) A package of alumni activities including at least one hard copy magazine, participation of at least 1,250 alumni in LinkedIn networks and at least ten alumni events in different countries | By December 2015 | KPI met 17 alumni events held in 2015-2016 Commonwealth Scholarships LinkedIn group has over 3,206 members and continues to grow. The 8 Professional Networks post regularly The new enhanced Commonwealth Scholarships magazine <i>Common Knowledge</i> launched in November 2015 Since April 2015 alumni events have taken place in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Canada - India - Cyprus - Lesotho - Uganda - Zambia - Zimbabwe - Sierra Leone - Ghana - Canada x 3 – Ottawa, Halifax, Nova Scotia - Malta (alongside CHOGM) - India – launch of Indian Alumni Association, Chair attending - Nigeria - Kenya – Deputy Chair attending - Sri Lanka Alumni invited to an event hosted by King’s College London at the British Council Delhi. Alumnus Stephen Jolly has agreed to give a talk to Scholars and alumnus Susan North is hosting an event for 25 Scholars at the Victoria and Albert Museum |

| Key indicator | Timescale | Update 3 (CSC meeting, December 2015) |
|---|-------------------------|--|
| 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 | E&M Committee | KPI met 97% of known alumni completing during the report year 1 April 2014-31 March 2015 living/working in developing countries (97% of female alumni members and 97% of male) |
| j) Collection of at least 150 new examples of alumni who report a personal contribution to government policies or wider socioeconomic impact in key development fields | E&M Committee | KPI met 230 respondents to 2015 evaluation survey reporting a contribution |
| k) Ensuring that Commission administrative costs should form less than 10% of total expenditure during the year including applicable VAT | Ongoing | KPI met Admin costs at 6.2% |
| l) Generation of matching contributions of at least £3.5 million from UK universities or other donors to the cost of Commission awards | Ongoing | KPI met Contributions from UK Universities estimated at £4.5m |
| m) Completion of all recommendations for administrative reforms made by the NDPB review of the Commission and subsequent internal audit reviews, which reported from 2013 | Completed from CSC side | N/A |

In addition to the above, the CSC's agenda has been influenced by the four external factors highlighted in section 3: the increased attention given to scholarships in the development agenda; the desire of HMG to see greater synergy between its international scholarship programmes; strong endorsement of scholarships by Commonwealth education ministers, combined with the demand to ensure access; and the need to further reduce administrative costs. Proposals in response to these are included in the priorities identified in sections 5 and 6.

6. Planned activities for 2016-2017

The 2016-2017 business plan of the CSC identifies the following programme of activities for the year. These reflect the objectives identified in section 3, and the longer term direction of work outlined in section 7. In accordance with the provisions of our framework document, the work programme is based on indicative budgets supplied by DFID in January 2015, and may be subject to change should this vary. The plan is also based on the premise of the eight programmes currently offered by the CSC being available to new entrants in 2016, recruitment processes for which have commenced at the time of writing.

Objective 1

To enhance individual research and teaching capacity and to strengthen capacity development of academic and non-academic professionals through scholarships and fellowships awarded to people from all Commonwealth countries

In pursuing **Objective 1**, the CSC will undertake the following **activities**:

- a) Monitor the balance of awards provided by the CSC, taking account of both costs and benefits, to report to the May 2016 meeting of the Commission, in time for any changes to be implemented in the following year (details of current awards can be found in Appendix 2)
- b) Select candidates nominated to the CSC for scholarships and fellowships, 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
- c) Undertake a review of the ways in which research undertaken as part of CSC awards contributes to the Commission's objectives, and whether this would be enhanced by increasing the period for which funding is available for doctoral studies
- d) Assess award publicity, nomination arrangements, and selection criteria, to ensure that awards are fully accessible to candidates from all areas of society who are qualified to benefit, with the establishment of a working group of Commissioners to report in time for any changes to be implemented in the 2017 or 2018 competition
- e) Publicise 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
- f) Produce a paper, for consideration by the Commission, on the implications of the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals for our work, and any changes that might be introduced in light of these
- g) Consider the balance of awards between low and middle income countries, and whether new forms of award and partnership funding could be developed for those in the middle income category
- h) Ensure, through ongoing monitoring, that the CSC's selection procedures and criteria, and support to award holders remain fair, open, transparent, and able to draw on independent, expert advice from the UK academic community

Objective 2

To expand the involvement of all award holders and alumni in CSC activities, and to maintain a coherent network that benefits international development, and UK and Commonwealth interests

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

- a) Communicate regularly with existing award holders, through written and electronic means, and meetings in the UK, whether organised by the CSC or jointly with others
- b) Continue to improve mechanisms to ensure that all award holders have opportunities to engage fully with the CSC's activities, paying particular attention to those on distance learning awards and those who are administered jointly with host universities
- c) Develop specific activities and events for research students, as part of the CSC's intention to forge a common identity within this group
- d) Expand post-award activities (profile updates, events, receptions at British High Commissions/British Council offices) to support the engagement of alumni in activities contributing to development, UK interests, and Commonwealth values
- e) Work with the FCO to increase the role of British High Commissions in Commonwealth Scholarships, for example, through pre-departure and alumni activities, in accordance with the recommendations of the 2015 cluster review of HMG scholarships
- f) Increase the proportion of alumni with whom the CSC is in contact, through enhanced tracing activity by the Secretariat, as well as the British Council in those countries where they work on the Commission's behalf
- g) Effectively manage and support networks for the continued professional development of alumni, thereby enhancing the development impact of the CSC
- h) Promote opportunities for alumni to become engaged in relevant development, Commonwealth, and UK-related activities, including establishing alumni associations with the capacity to be self-sustaining, encouraging contact between alumni across national borders, and involving alumni in promotion of the CSC's programmes
- i) Engage with Commonwealth organisations and other member states to promote and develop the CSFP as a Commonwealth-wide scheme, including participation in the review of the CSFP approved by Commonwealth education ministers at their 2015 conference, and further development of awards offered under the CSFP endowment fund

Objective 3

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

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

- a) Monitor procedures and actively benchmark activities against other relevant scholarship providers, to ensure a robust value-for-money administration that is efficient, transparent, and accountable, so as to maximise funding available for awards
- b) Consider arrangements with current service providers, to establish whether these represent the most efficient and effective means of meeting the CSC's requirements, in light of the cluster review findings, practice in other NDPBs, and legal requirements, and to instigate any new procedures that might be required
- c) Consider current sources of partnership and other external funding accessed by the CSC, and identify any opportunities for increasing this, where compatible with other policies of the Commission and avoiding undue competition with other HMG scholarship programmes
- d) Ensure, through regular monitoring, that the CSC's governance and committee structures are fit for purpose, with provision for issues of sufficient strategic importance to be addressed between regular Commission meetings, including developing the role of Lead Commissioners to provide an overview of work in specific areas
- e) Expand the reach of the CSC's programme of evaluation and monitoring, including developing new survey frameworks, undertaking studies relating to themes emerging from the doctoral award review, and maintaining relations with other scholarship providers to ensure that the Commission remains at the cutting edge of practice in this area
- f) Monitor 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
- g) Develop closer working relationships with UK government departments and relevant Commonwealth organisations to ensure that the CSC delivers on their intentions and values
- h) Support DFID to ensure selection of an effective balance of Commissioners, providing the expertise, skills, and continuity necessary for effective decision-making
- i) Coordinate an external review of the CSC's activities for the period 2011-2015

7. Activities and objectives beyond 2016-2017

Continuity is important to scholarship programmes. The international reputation of Commonwealth Scholarships has developed over more than 50 years, maintained by successive cohorts of talented alumni. For this reason, the CSC seeks to maintain a time horizon of at least three years in its planning. While specific proposals will depend on annual budgets notified by our lead department in accordance with our framework document, we will also be proactive in seeking additional funds where need is identified, and be flexible in order to deploy additional funding should this become available.

Our priorities for years 2 and 3 of this plan are as follows:

- 1. Maintain a portfolio of awards which meets diverse needs, while consistent with the need for administrative efficiency**
This is likely to include Master's, doctoral, distance learning, and professional awards. In this area, we recognise that any change to the balance of provision will require a timeline of at least 12-18 months.
- 2. Ensure that awards are available to candidates from a wide range of backgrounds**
Priority will be given to reviewing the nomination routes and selection criteria by which Scholars are chosen, ensuring that the CSC has adequate information about nomination procedures, maintaining equitable marketing and promotional activity, and considering targets in appropriate cases.
- 3. Further establish the role of the CSC as a supporter of high quality postgraduate research**
This is likely to involve maintaining support for doctoral work at the current level at least, developing doctoral students as a more visible community, and working with external partners with a particular interest in high quality research.
- 4. Rebalance awards to low, middle and high income countries, where necessary encouraging new forms of partnership, whilst remaining a Commonwealth wide programme**
By so doing, we seek to combine the requirements of a Commonwealth-wide scheme with ensuring that we make a distinctive contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals.
- 5. Develop further synergies with other HMG scholarship schemes, to ensure that the UK derives maximum benefit from its investment in international scholarships**
Particular priorities will be developing closer relations with British High Commissions and including Commonwealth Scholars in their activities, and identifying further ways in which our activities can contribute to HMG international development and higher education strategies.
- 6. Further enhance our alumni programme, building on the new engagement strategy introduced in 2014-2015 to develop a distinctive community that contributes to the CSFP and the wider international development and public diplomacy objectives of HMG**
Activities will include measures to increase the alumni base, and to facilitate opportunities for interaction both within and across national boundaries.
- 7. Develop the Commonwealth-wide profile of the CSFP, through liaison with national nominating agencies, the CSFP endowment fund, other Commonwealth governments, and the Commonwealth Secretariat**
The CSC will be particularly active in encouraging the availability of Commonwealth Scholarships for UK scholars to study in new destinations.
- 8. Continue to ensure value for money, through aggressive monitoring and control of administrative costs, use of competitive tendering as appropriate, and the development of new income sources**
In doing so, we will focus on activities that are distinctive to the CSC, seeking to avoid duplication and competition with other HMG scholarships.
- 9. Ensure that our decision-making is based on the best possible information**
This will be achieved by a programme of monitoring and evaluation that reflects international good practice, close links with other providers, and the use of Commissioners and advisers to maximum effect.
- 10. Explore ways in which partnerships with UK host universities can be further strengthened, without infringing the principle that the CSC maintains direct contact with its award holders**
Possibilities include multi-year arrangements, and the co-financing arrangements that accompany them.

Table 2 below places the priorities listed above in the context of our current provision, wider aims, and the actions that we will be taking towards them in 2016-2017, as part of our business plan.

Table 2: CSC priority areas for business and corporate plans

| Corporate plan activity | Rationale | Long term objective (3+ years) | Mid term activities (corporate plan) | Short term activities (business plan) | Activities ongoing on an annual basis or recently completed |
|--|---|---|--|---|--|
| Maintain a portfolio of awards which meets diverse needs, while consistent with the need for administrative efficiency | Meets CSC aims of relevance and accessibility. Provides a balanced approach to development impact | A Commission whose awards benefit individuals and society at multiple levels | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review portfolio annually, following advice from APC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit proposals for 2017-2018 portfolio to the Commission meeting in May 2016 | Following award types currently provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full doctoral scholarships in the UK Full Master's scholarships in the UK Split-site doctoral scholarships Shared Scholarships (at Master's level) Distance Learning Scholarships (at Master's level) Professional Fellowships Academic Fellowships Medical Fellowships |
| Ensure that awards are available to candidates from a wide range of backgrounds | Meets CSC goal of accessibility. Supports DFID/HMG goals of equity, justice and transparency. Recruiting such candidates will assist development impact | A fully inclusive award holder profile, reflecting the composition of society, taking into account the need for applicants to meet certain eligibility criteria. Maintain the diversity of the CSC's awards | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider how CSC might take forward work on equity; establish a working group of Commissioners to look into this Seek better targeting through survey of national agencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established gender targets Explicit provisions in Shared Scholarships Distance learning opportunities Work with agencies Stipend provision for families Support for those with disabilities Professional Fellowships to those who have not necessarily gone through a traditional university route to establish their career Paper submitted to September CSC meeting |

| Corporate plan activity | Rationale | Long term objective (3+ years) | Mid term activities (corporate plan) | Short term activities (business plan) | Activities ongoing on an annual basis or recently completed |
|---|---|---|---|--|---|
| Further establish the role of the CSC as a supporter of high quality postgraduate research | Distinctive role – CSC is the only HMG international scholarship which offers PhDs for low and middle income countries. Past focus has been on future research contribution, but valuable research also produced during awards. Link between CSC award and critical early career. Potential for stronger links with UK universities | CSC recognised as a leading funder of research, as well as research capacity. This expressed through a virtual CSC doctoral school | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish programme of events aimed specifically at researchers Give stronger profile to research achievements (e.g. in <i>Common Knowledge</i> and on website) Establish greater links between award holders doing research (inc. split-site scholars and fellows) Expand research prizes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review length and terms of research support Consider expansion of activities specifically for research students, building on the experience of the Development Module | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development module Sponsored prize for best publication (BJAP) Appointment of Lead Commissioner for research Emphasis on quality of the proposal in a robust selection procedure Link to early career, for example, early career fellowships for CSC doctoral alumni E&M review of PhD awards Discussion on possible four-year PhDs by APC Redesign of magazine to give higher profile to research |
| Rebalance awards to low, middle and high income countries, whilst remaining a Commonwealth wide programme | Distinctive role – CSC is the only HMG scholarship scheme with a substantial proportion of awards in low income countries. Recognition of countries' different needs and capacity to contribute | Move over time to a partnership model with middle income countries, characterised by targeting of awards towards areas of need. Movement towards split-site awards in areas where domestic capacity exists and two-way movement, with the countries concerned hosting CSFP awards | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Shared Scholarships scheme to consider whether a higher proportion of awards could go to low / low middle income countries, or other DFID priority areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open discussions with pilot middle income countries (e.g. South Africa) Consider the practicality of 'targets' for low income or other target categories in selection policy Further highlight the need for continued awards for developed Commonwealth countries in discussions with BIS, FCO, and other relevant parties | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing relationships with national agencies Existence of split-site awards as a possible model for collaboration Some existing middle income countries already offer Commonwealth Scholarships (Malaysia, India, now South Africa) |

| Corporate plan activity | Rationale | Long term objective (3+ years) | Mid term activities (corporate plan) | Short term activities (business plan) | Activities ongoing on an annual basis or recently completed |
|--|---|---|--|---|--|
| Develop further synergies with other HMG scholarship schemes, to ensure that the UK derives maximum benefit from its investment in international scholarships | Maximise collective impact and value for public money. Implement findings from the HMG scholarships cluster review. Better understand the areas in which CSC makes a distinctive contribution | CSC recognised as making a distinctive contribution towards a robust, renowned HMG portfolio of international scholarships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the development of long-term structures for collaboration across all HMG scholarship schemes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish target for inclusion of Commonwealth Scholars in British High Commission pre-departure and alumni events in 2016 BHCs to use joint marketing materials in 2016 CSC to participate in any cross-government body established by HMG Include references to other HMG schemes in CSC materials Collaborate with HMG (and other) programmes to effectively evaluate impact | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three HMG departments are invited to attend CSC meetings Cluster review found that CSC is run effectively and economies of scale have been realised Briefings and mailings are sent to BHCs Pilot marketing materials have been produced and sent to the FCO for review Common scholar and alumni database in operation Some joint student activity takes place, while retaining the distinctive brands |
| Further enhance our alumni programme, building on the new engagement strategy introduced in 2014-2015 to develop a distinctive community that contributes to the CSFP and the wider international development and public diplomacy objectives of HMG | Effective contact with alumni is critical to our ability to evaluate the scheme and demonstrate impact. Alumni can be strong advocates for the scheme in their own countries. CSC may be able to help alumni to increase their development impact | A strong and visible Commonwealth Scholarships community, involving alumni, current award holders, potential applicants, and other stakeholders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop technology for working with alumni, from annual update of Directory to interactive profiles of alumni linked to their social media platforms, in a new online environment Increase contact between alumni across national borders, through the CSC LinkedIn group and other mechanisms Consider recognition of alumni activities through international impact awards | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue emphasis on tracing alumni, with enhanced targets Increase involvement of alumni in promoting awards and pre-departure events Transition of newly formed alumni associations to be self-sustaining | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSC already has 10,000 traced alumni Established communication mechanisms exist Increased number of alumni associations in recent years Alumni links are used extensively to support evaluation work Professional Networks for alumni with subject focus Advice to new award holders from alumni with some attending pre-departure briefings to share their experiences Redesign of magazine to more accurately reflect alumni engagement objectives Holistic engagement strategy agreed by the CSC in 2015 |

| Corporate plan activity | Rationale | Long term objective (3+ years) | Mid term activities (corporate plan) | Short term activities (business plan) | Activities ongoing on an annual basis or recently completed |
|---|--|--|---|---|--|
| Develop the Commonwealth-wide profile of the CSFP, through liaison with national nominating agencies, the CSFP endowment fund, other Commonwealth governments, and the Commonwealth Secretariat | Support for the Commonwealth remains a UK diplomatic priority. The large network of Commonwealth professional and civil society organisations is a huge untapped resource for award holders and alumni. The Commonwealth has a potential role in development | Scholarships and fellowships are regarded as an integral part of the Commonwealth 'offer' – both at policy level and in civil society activity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively promote links between current students and Commonwealth organisations Encourage alumni participation in RCS branches, or other in-country groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve more stakeholders through a loose 'Friends of Commonwealth Scholarships' group Advocate for, and actively take part in, a Commonwealth-wide review of the CSFP, as proposed at 19CCEM Attempt to stage at least one 'Commonwealth-themed' event, possibly at Marlborough House Where possible, encourage more countries to host CSFP awards, and the work of the CSFP endowment fund | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active participation in 19CCEM Development of the CSFP endowment fund in recent years Commonwealth civil society bodies already benefit from Professional Fellowships CSFP is often referenced by the current SG and DSG in speeches Existing events put on for CSC award holders by Commonwealth organisations – e.g. CPA Substantial goodwill already exists amongst key groups, as well as communication mechanisms that can be built on |
| Continue to ensure value for money, through aggressive monitoring and control of administrative costs, use of competitive tendering as appropriate, and the development of new income sources | Meets CSC aim of efficiency. Desire to provide more awards within budget. HMG requirement for lower administrative costs and diversification of income. HMG support for partnership and joint funding models | A cost effective Commission that delivers maximum value for money, within its academic and development objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the potential for fundraising with other HMG scholarship schemes, as proposed by the cluster review, while recognising distinctive strengths of each Build on the current leveraging of support through joint sponsorship of awards with UK universities and others | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the balance of costs within the Shared Scholarships scheme, in particular the university contribution to tuition fees Consider shared cost contributions in the context of any expansion of doctoral support Review present relationships with suppliers, in time for any new structures to be introduced prior to current agreements expiring in 2017 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20% discount on tuition fees for doctoral and Master's awards in the UK Universities contribute c. 40% to the cost of Shared Scholarships Negotiated discounts for Distance Learning Scholarships In-kind contribution of fellowship hosts In-kind contribution of nominating agencies to selection process Academic advisers and Commissioners provide their services free of charge |

| Corporate plan activity | Rationale | Long term objective (3+ years) | Mid term activities (corporate plan) | Short term activities (business plan) | Activities ongoing on an annual basis or recently completed |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| Ensure that our decision-making is based on the best possible information | CSC has access to significant expertise and goodwill, which can help increase impact and cost effectiveness. Independence and expertise are cited by HMG as key justifications for our NDPB status. Stronger awareness of CSC work amongst stakeholders will provide greater accountability | A well informed Commission, which fully utilises available expertise in making policy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further institutionalise the role of advisers, for example, through an annual event • Consider the development of channels through which other stakeholders can input advice and information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop role definition for Lead Commissioners • Maintain and strengthen relationships with the panel of academic advisers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantial programme of evaluation to review the impact of our awards and feed back into policy • Regular monitoring to establish feedback from key stakeholders • A panel of over 200 academic advisers who assist with selection • Commissioners contribute expert advice to selection |
| Explore ways in which partnerships with UK host universities can be further strengthened, without infringing the principle that the CSC maintains direct contact with its award holders | Meets CSC aim of collaboration. HMG objective of high quality higher education. Can assist value for money through partnerships | A Commission whose work is recognised as meeting the highest academic standards, and whose award recipients are highly acclaimed and sought after | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further institutionalise the relationship with universities through an annual event for key contacts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target senior university figures in the next Commission recruitment round (late 2016) • Give greater prominence to key university figures as speakers and in event invitations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership agreements exist with most UK universities • Programme Officers undertake visits to universities on a regular basis • Key university representatives are invited to CSC events |

8. Financial plan

The budget for the CSC in 2016-2017 was agreed at its meeting on 1 December 2015 and can be found in the CSC business plan. The programme budget is based on an indicative budget from the lead department, which is expected to be confirmed by 31 January 2016, in line with the CSC's framework document. Confirmation of the CSC's allocated administration resource is awaited, and in these circumstances the figure shown in the business plan may be subject to change. The CSC framework document and financial memorandum outline the procedure and timetable for agreeing budgets for future years.

It should be noted that the budget refers only to direct income and expenditure. In addition, the CSC benefits from the in-kind support of UK universities, nominating agencies, advisers, Commissioners, and others which, in financial terms, we estimate to have a value of over £4 million per annum.

Our assumptions are based on the indicative assumption provided by DFID in January 2015, which assumed level funding in cash terms for a second consecutive year. This may lead to a reduction in the number of new awards that can be made. The very small amount of funding now available to the CSC for scholarships to developed countries has also resulted in only very small numbers of awards being given to these. In view of our aspiration to reflect the UK's commitment to the Commonwealth as a whole, this gives rise to serious concern.

Against this background, the main components of our financial planning will be as follows:

Annual budgeting and budget review

The framework document and financial memorandum agreed by the CSC in December 2013 established a procedure for the formulation of a detailed expenditure budget in advance of each financial year, and follow a transparent process. Commission committees are asked to contribute ideas and priorities by mid-September. These are incorporated into a draft budget, to be considered by the Finance Committee at its autumn meeting, followed by a budget that is presented to the full Commission at its December meeting. This budget is reflected in recommendations for the number of selections to be made by Commission selection committees in the following February and March. The agreed budgets run in financial years, from 1 April to 31 March, and are reviewed by the Finance Committee at its meeting in June. In addition, the Chair of the Finance Committee and the Director of Operations meet on a monthly basis to review recent developments and propose any modifications necessary.

Supplementation with income from external sources

The CSC will seek to add value to HMG support where possible, by attracting contributions and support from third parties. Such support should, however, be consistent with the principle that candidates are selected on merit, and in accordance with the CSC's criteria. It will not normally be CSC policy to allocate awards to particular sponsors or candidates where these would not otherwise have been selected, or to agree jointly funded programmes where these involve a disproportionate increase in administration costs.

It is expected that the main source of such contributions during the funding period will be UK universities, with whom agreement has been reached for tuition fee waivers of at least 20% on selections under the CSC's current Master's and doctoral competitions. In some areas of its work, it has been possible to arrange even higher university contributions. In particular, for our doctoral awards to developed countries and Shared Scholarship programme, UK universities typically meet between 30-40% of the total cost of scholarships. In addition, the CSC seeks to negotiate advantageous tuition fee rates with suppliers of distance learning courses, reflecting the fact that groups of students are normally being supported. The CSC also recognises that hosts of Academic and Professional Fellowships make significant in-kind contributions to these schemes. The CSC receives further substantial in-kind benefit from the work of Commissioners, academic advisers, nominating agencies, and others, who provide their time without payment or at rates significantly below their market value.

Matching income with expenditure in each financial year

As an NDPB, the CSC seeks to spend its annual budget as exactly as possible in the year of allocation, and does not aim to accumulate reserves between financial years. Our target is for expenditure to come within 2% of budget in each financial year – a figure that was met for the previous four-year planning period. It is recognised, however, that some safeguard is necessary against uncertainty and to maintain cash flow. In this regard, the CSC framework document and financial memorandum provide for the possibility of cash balances being maintained. However, funds shall be kept at a minimum level consistent with the efficient operation of the Commission. We believe that the availability of such funds is critical to our ability to be a well-governed organisation.

Supporting strategic priorities

The allocation of funds will reflect the priorities of the CSC as identified in this corporate plan, and, where appropriate, the financial objectives of funding bodies.

Rigorous control of administration costs

Efficient and streamlined administration is a critical element in our current strategy, which committed the CSC to ensure that its administrative costs do not account for more than 10% of total expenditure. The CSC does, however, view this figure as a maximum, rather than a target, and has reduced the rate to significantly lower than this level, through successive reductions in each of the past four years. In 2015-2016, this figure will be approximately 6.2%, including Value Added Tax (VAT).

The CSC's financial memorandum provides mechanisms through which it will continue to keep expenditure in this area under review by:

- a) Ensuring that administration fees are approved annually as part of the budgeting process for the following financial year. This involves detailed discussion of proposals by the Finance Committee at its October meeting, and the necessity for administrative fees to be approved explicitly (rather than simply as part of the overall budget) by the full Commission
- b) Undertaking periodic comparison between the administrative costs of the CSC and those of other comparable scholarship schemes funded by HMG, and other international programmes

9. Risk management

The CSC has an Audit and Risk Management (ARM) Committee, in line with recommendations in the Cabinet Office document *Managing Public Money (MPM)*. This committee, whose membership comprises at least three members of the Commission who do not sit on the Finance Committee, or serve as Chair or Deputy Chair, will report directly to the Commission at each of its meetings on any aspects that it considers to be of concern. The committee shall also maintain (and present to the Commission for review at regular intervals) a register of risks with the potential to seriously impair the effective performance of the CSC, together with an assessment of the potential impact of each risk, and a list of mitigating measures in each case. In addition to the work of the committee, the CSC's framework document includes other measures to mitigate and ensure transparency in its policies towards risk. These can be found, in particular, in paragraphs 4.6, 4.7, and 5.1.

In addition to external financial inspection, the CSC benefits from reviews of its operation by a programme of internal audit, currently provided by the DFID Internal Audit Department. This programme is managed by the ARM Committee, which determines the list of topics to be reviewed on an annual basis. By agreement with the ACU, their internal reports which relate specifically to work undertaken for the CSC are also made available to the ARM Committee.

Appendix 1: Founding principles of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan

The Plan should be additional to, and distinct from, any other plan in operation.

The Plan should be based on mutual cooperation and the sharing of educational experience among the countries of the Commonwealth.

The Plan should be sufficiently flexible to take account of the diverse and changing needs of the countries of the Commonwealth.

While the Plan will be Commonwealth-wide, it is operated through a series of bilateral arrangements, to allow for the necessary flexibility.

Awards should be designed to recognise and promote the highest standards of intellectual achievement as well as technical and professional performance, and have regard to any expressed human resource or development needs of nominating countries.

Appendix 2: Basic demographics of CSC programmes 2005-2014

Commonwealth PhD Scholarships

- The CSC has offered a total of 1,028 doctoral scholarships from 2005-2014.¹
- Overall, the gender breakdown for this scheme is 44% female.
- 54% (553) of doctoral Scholars come from a country in sub-Saharan Africa, while 27% (276) have citizenship of a south Asian country.
- 62% of doctoral Scholars fall between the ages of 26-35, and 22% between the ages of 36-45, while 13% were aged 25 or under.

Commonwealth Split-site Scholarships

- The CSC has offered a total of 256 Split-site Scholarships from 2005-2014.
- Overall, the gender breakdown for this scheme is 50% female
- 50% (128) of Split-site Scholars come from sub-Saharan Africa, while 41% (104) have citizenship of a south Asian country.
- 62% (157) of Split-site Scholars fall between the ages of 26-35.

Commonwealth Master's Scholarships

- The CSC has offered a total of 1,251 Master's scholarships from 2005-2014.²
- Overall, the gender breakdown for this scheme is 48% female
- 51% (638) of Master's Scholars come from a country in sub-Saharan Africa, while 22% (279) have citizenship of a south Asian country.
- 54% of Master's Scholars fall between the ages of 26-35, and 37% are aged 25 and under.

Commonwealth Shared Scholarships

- The CSC has offered a total of 1,725 Shared Scholarships from 2005-2014.
- Overall, the gender breakdown for this scheme is 44% female.
- 68% (1,168) of Shared Scholars come from a country in sub-Saharan Africa, while 27% (473) have citizenship of a south Asian country.
- 52% (888) of Shared Scholars fall between the ages of 26-35, and 44% (760) are aged 25 or under.

Commonwealth Distance Learning Scholarships

- The CSC has offered a total of 1,887 Distance Learning Scholarships from 2005-2014.
- Overall, the gender breakdown for this scheme is 41% female.
- 78% (1,476) of Distance Learning Scholars are studying in a country in sub-Saharan Africa, while 19% (355) are studying in a south Asian country.
- 55% of CSC Distance Learning Scholars fall between the ages of 26-35, and 30% between 36-45 years old.

Commonwealth Academic Fellowships

- The CSC has offered a total of 619 Academic Fellowships from 2005-2014.³
- Over the ten-year period, the gender breakdown for this scheme is 32% female.
- 80% (496) of Academic Fellows have come from a south Asian country, while 19% (116) have citizenship of a sub-Saharan African country.
- 56% of Academic Fellows fall between the ages of 36-45, and 37% between the ages of 46-55
- The tenure of these awards has changed over time from twelve to 6 to 3 months, and now to between 3 and 10 months.

¹ Includes awards funded by both DFID and FCO (until 2008)/BIS

² Includes a small number of taught undergraduate awards, and awards for medical training (which are no longer offered under scholarships); also includes awards funded by both DFID and FCO (until 2008)/BIS

³ Includes Medical Fellowships. From 2015, these will be reported as a separate programme

Commonwealth Professional Fellowships

- The CSC has hosted a total number of 868 Professional Fellowships from 2005-2014.
- 42% (365) were undertaken by women.
- 34% of people undertaking a Professional Fellowship fell within the age range of 26-35, and 40% within the age group of 36-45.
- The vast majority (78%, 675) of Professional Fellows come from a country in sub-Saharan Africa, with the next largest group from a south Asian country (16%, 135).
- Public health was the most popular fellowship subject area, with 39% (336) undertaking an award in this area, followed by education (22%, 195).

Appendix 3: CSC budget for 2016-2017

The budget for the CSC in 2016-2017 was agreed at its meeting on 1 December 2015. The programme budget is based on a firm commitment of support from sponsoring departments. Confirmation of the CSC's allocated administration resource is awaited. The CSC framework document and financial memorandum outline the procedure and timetable for agreeing budgets for future years.

Table 1 shows the budget for 2016-2017, approved in December 2015. Detail of the programme budget is presented in Table 2.

Table 1: All costs 2016-2017, approved December 2015

| Year | Allocation 2016-17, December 2015, £000s |
|------------------------------|---|
| Awards programmes (DFID) | 22,670 |
| Awards programmes (BIS) | 280 |
| Awards programmes (Scotland) | 25 |
| Administration ¹ | 1,624 |
| Other programmes | 1,180 |
| Health levy costs | 150 |
| Expenditure/allocation | 25,929 |

Award expenditure 2016-2017

Table 2: DFID programme (awards) budget 2016-2017, approved December 2015

| Programme | Allocation / 000s (all awards) | Committed costs / 000s | New award costs | 2016 intake (projected) | 2016 intake vs 2015 | Allocation / % programme |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Agency Master's | 5,110 | 1,040 | 4,070 | 172 | +1 | 22.4% |
| Shared Scholarships | 3,890 | 0 | 3,890 | 214 | -5 | 17.0% |
| Distance Learning | 2,100 | 1,000 | 1,100 | 185 | -13 | 9.2% |
| PhDs | 9,760 | 6,700 | 3,060 | 120 | +1 | 42.8% |
| Split-site PhDs | 600 | 150 | 450 | 19 | -4 | 2.6% |
| Academic Fellows | 485 | 10 | 475 | 24 | +6 | 2.1% |
| Medical Fellows | 225 | 0 | 225 | 14 | +7 | 1.0% |
| Professional Fellows | 650 | 0 | 650 | 100 | -43 | 2.8% |
| | 22,820 | 8,900 | 13,920 | 848 | -50 | 100% of £22.82m |

¹ Confirmation awaited