

**COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARSHIP COMMISSION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM**

**CORPORATE PLAN – APRIL 2015**

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## **1. MISSION STATEMENT**

The Commission seeks to provide the main HMG scholarship scheme led by international development objectives, and provide a vivid demonstration of the UK's enduring commitment to the Commonwealth. We also contribute to UK public diplomacy objectives, and the attraction of 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**

The Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the United Kingdom (the Commission) is the Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) responsible for managing the UK's contribution to the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP),

Our work remains guided by the five principles of the CSFP, which were established by Commonwealth Education Ministers at their first Conference in 1959. These assert that:

- 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.

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 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/commonwealth-scholarship-commission-in-the-uk/about/publication-scheme>). 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 Commission as the appropriate form of delivery.

Almost 35,000 individuals have now benefited from awards under the CSFP, of which more than 25,000 have been hosted by the UK. Award holders have come from every Commonwealth country. Recent alumni surveys confirm that the vast majority have returned to their home country following their awards, and that a significant number have risen to positions of high-level leadership. Its alumni include Ministers and Prime Ministers, Nobel Prize Winners, Heads of Central Banks, Permanent Secretaries, Central Court Judges and Vice-Chancellors.

Today, The Commission's work plays a distinctive role in the UK's commitment to international development and the Commonwealth, and contributes 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 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, which until 2008 were funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO).

### **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 Commission seeks to acquire this through internal and external reviews, an active alumni and evaluation programme and regular dialogue with nominating agencies and universities throughout the Commonwealth.

Although our work is Commonwealth wide, the overwhelming majority of our awards go to recipients from developing countries, which currently 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.

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. Historically, equity has also been undermined by the limited access of certain groups to international higher education and scholarships within it.

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 balanced access between gender, helps these countries meet their skilled labour force requirements, 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 prestige and rigorous selection standards associated with Commonwealth Scholarships helps ensure that its programmes attract students of the highest academic quality, the vast majority of whom would not otherwise come to the UK. This is enhanced by its continuing willingness to offer doctoral as well as Master's level support. A distinctive public diplomacy influence is reinforced by the excellent record of alumni in rising to positions of influence, and by the distinctively bilateral element of the programme. This, together with our ability to offer awards to students of all Commonwealth countries, also makes a strong statement about the coherence of the Commonwealth. Scholarships for nations not eligible for ODA assistance are supported by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills and the Scottish Government. The significant contribution made by national nominating agencies also ensures a high profile within the governments of other member states and helps align our awards with their national priorities. Although relatively modest at present, opportunities for UK students to study overseas through Commonwealth Scholarships are in many instances the only such scholarships available to UK citizens, and the range of countries in which such opportunities are available is rising.

Fundamental to its fulfilment of these roles is the Commission's capacity to offer a diversified range of awards, which (as anticipated in the third principle of the CSFP cited above) changes over time according to need. The Commission has a strong record of responding to the changing international context of university research and teaching, through the introduction of new types of award, developing new forms of networking, and taking the lead in evaluating the impact of scholarships. Eight different types of award are currently offered (Appendix 1), although we note that UK scholarships in general are less numerous than those of many other countries.

#### **4. SUMMARY OF AIMS**

The following aims will guide the detailed programme of activities specified in section 6, and our aspirations for the remainder of this Corporate Plan. We will:

- maintain a diverse programme of awards, which meet a range of needs throughout the Commonwealth, and place particular emphasis on the needs of developing countries
- ensure that awards are both allocated on merit, and widely accessible, through rigorous selection procedures and a diversity of recruitment methods
- ensure that our work is fully integrated with the activities of our lead sponsor department and other HMG scholarship programmes. This will be achieved through close liaison with other DFID initiatives, other stakeholders in government, British High Commissions and other HMG scholarship programmes, where possible building on recommendations from the Cluster Review of Scholarships, which is expected to report in early 2015
- ensure that our work is effectively, rigorously and proportionately reviewed
- provide evidence of the impact of our awards on recipients and their home countries, and apply lessons from such evidence in our future planning
- encourage award holders and alumni to maintain closer links with the scheme, and thereby contribute more effectively to the fulfilment of international development objectives and Commonwealth values
- maintain robust methods of governance, in line with current good practice for Non Departmental Public Bodies
- minimise the proportion of expenditure devoted to administration costs, thereby maximising the resources available for scholarships and fellowships, and other programme activities which directly support them
- contribute to the maintenance of a vibrant Commonwealth-wide CSFP

We will also continue to focus on:

- Increasing the accessibility of our awards, through developing new access routes, using electronic application methods, enhancing our policy towards historically disadvantaged groups, including women and those with disabilities, and considering how new and private universities might be more involved.
- Strengthening the relationship between the Commission and UK universities – both as a means to ensure continuing academic excellence and also to involve UK universities as collaborative funding partners.
- Maintaining the principle that all subject areas can qualify for support from the Commission, providing that applicants can justify their relevance to its objectives, and those of its funding bodies.
- Maintaining a priority to offer awards for non-academic Professional Fellows, and introducing greater flexibility in their regulations, with stronger targeting towards professions that have specific international development objectives.
- Prioritising Master's degrees that contribute effectively to professional development, including those in technical and vocational subjects, and considering the potential benefits of transnational programme delivery.

- Paying increasing attention to Distance Learning Scholarships in Commission evaluation activity, including the development of benchmarks against the performance of other distance learning providers.
- Increasing the involvement of Distance Learning Scholars in networking activities, so that they feel integrated in the Commission's work and are more likely to participate in future alumni and evaluation activities.
- Encouraging and making more visible the availability of opportunities for UK citizens to study in other Commonwealth countries under the CSFP, and actively promoting such awards as invited by other CSFP agencies.

The Commission will continue to pursue these aims through **three distinct objectives**, as follows:

- 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
- To expand the involvement of all award holders and alumni in Commission activities, and to maintain a coherent network that benefits international development, and UK and Commonwealth interests
- To maintain an informed, effective, efficient and transparent Commission that provides value for money in delivering its objectives

The detailed ways in which we will pursue these objectives are outlined in Section 6 below.

## **5. REVIEW OF RECENT ACTIVITIES**

2014-15 represented the final year of the four-year Strategic Plan, agreed by the Commission, in conjunction with DFID, in December 2010. Our work over this period will be subject to an external review in 2015, which will demonstrate:

- An increase in the numbers of Scholars and Fellows – from an intake of 737 in 2011-12 to approximately 950 in 2013-14 and in 2014-15;
- Reduced administration costs and efficiency savings – the proportion of Commission resources devoted to administration has declined from 9.4% in 2011-12 to an anticipated 5.5% in 2014-15 (both figures net of VAT);
- Emerging evaluation findings – our continuing programmes of alumni and evaluation are now in contact with over 8,000 alumni, whilst regular surveys and reports continue to confirm high numbers of students returning to their home countries and rising to senior positions within their chosen professions;
- The amended nature of our portfolio to help meet identified needs – in particular for Medical Fellowships and Academic Fellowships to support early career staff in developing country universities;
- Continued high level of student satisfaction – annual surveys conducted in each year of the Plan confirm that 90% of award holders consider the administration of their award to have been ‘excellent’ or ‘good’;
- Reform of Commission governance to meet good practice for NDPB’s, reflecting independent reviews by the DFID Internal Audit Department and the Triennial Review conducted under Cabinet Office requirements;
- Agreement of a new, more holistic alumni engagement strategy, for implementation during the three years of this Corporate Plan;
- Reform of the purpose, format and attendance at the orientation Welcome Programme, as part of an on-going policy to maximise the opportunities for, and effectiveness of, award holder engagement.

## **6. PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR 2015-16**

Our portfolio of activities for 2015-16 is based on the budget approved by the Commission at its meeting on 2 December, and contained in the Commission Business Plan. In accordance with the terms of our Framework Document, the budget is based on the indicative budget notified by DFID earlier in the year.

At the core of our activities will be provision of awards under eight programmes, an expanded involvement of all award holders in alumni activities and a continuing emphasis on efficiency. The details of the award programmes can be found in the Business Plan 2015-16 (appendix 1); demographics of the programmes from 2003-13 are shown in Appendix 1 of this document.

The objectives identified in Section 4 above will be pursued through the following detailed activities:

### **Objective 1**

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

Commonwealth Scholars enter a wide range of occupations. The Commission places particular emphasis on the development of higher education and research, which are important for development, good governance, and future economic competitiveness, as well as leadership. Targeting awards on individual careers that match development needs has become an increasingly important part of the Commission's activities since 2000. Professional Fellowships – an innovation launched in 2002 – have provided specific mid-career development opportunities hosted by UK organisations. Many of its Distance Learning Master's awards are also focused on particular professions, and a high proportion of its Master's provision in the UK has a strong vocational base. Likewise, PhD research can also have specifically vocational impact, particularly in the higher education and research sectors.

In this plan period, the Commission will demonstrate its contribution to higher education and capacity development:

1. by providing early career academics with the opportunity to conduct research, to encourage applications for those institutions where capacity building is a priority, and to enhance knowledge, skills and contacts in Fellows' given disciplines
2. by providing professionals with the opportunity to enhance knowledge and skills in their given sector and to have catalytic effects on their workplaces
3. by providing mid-career medics with the opportunity to enhance their clinical skills and to have catalytic effects on their workplaces
4. through the support of doctoral research, enhancing individual teaching and research capacity leading to increased institutional capacity in nominating countries; and contributing to UK higher education and research by attracting high calibre international candidates and encouraging links and collaboration
5. through the support of split-site doctoral research, widening access to UK equipment and expertise for quality doctoral candidates from Commonwealth countries as well as contributing to UK and Commonwealth higher education and research through collaboration and partnerships
6. by providing master's level training in the UK for skilled and qualified professionals and academics, some of whom would not otherwise have been able to study in the United Kingdom,



and thereby contributing to UK Higher Education and foreign policy aims by encouraging collaboration and links

7. by providing UK master's level training at a distance for skilled and qualified professionals in key development areas.

In providing these opportunities, the Commission will maintain doctoral support at approximately the current proportion of its funding (some 36-39% of funding commitment); continue to provide a diversity of Master's awards whilst keeping alternative methods of delivery under review to ensure that they provide maximum value for money and fitness for purpose; and enable as many people as possible to benefit from UK research facilities and expertise.

Through these programmes the Commission will introduce, improve or enhance

In the academic environment :

- research quality and outputs;
- catalytic effects on university workplaces;
- networking and building or maintaining collaborative partnerships and links with UK research/academic institutions;
- development of future research collaboration.

In the professional environment:

- enhanced collaboration and links between UK hosts and overseas partners;
- improved management practices and outcomes.

In the medical environment:

- implementation of new clinical skills;
- improved management practices.

In the public, private and third sectors

- increased collaboration between Commonwealth and UK institutions and development of future research collaboration;
- improved research quality and outputs;
- improved institutional working practices and policy formulation;
- increased capacity of qualified individuals working in home countries;
- professional development of individuals leading to improved outcomes in workplaces, further study and/or career development;
- widened access of CSC awards to high quality individuals who might otherwise have been unable to benefit.

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

- a) Rigorously monitor 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.
- b) 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 leadership potential (for those from developed Commonwealth countries), and the quality of their research or study plans; and review these selection procedures, to ensure that these remain fair, open, and transparent, and reflect the programme objectives.

- c) 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.
- 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) 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.
- g) 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.
- h) 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.

The following **specific measures will** be used to assess the impact made by the Commission in the above areas:

- (a) Selection of at least 124 recipients from developing Commonwealth countries to commence doctoral studies at UK institutions, building upon the target achieved of 481 selections over the four year period to 2015;
- (b) Selection of at least 586 recipients from developing Commonwealth countries to commence Master's level studies at UK institutions, building upon the target achieved of 1857 selections over the four year period to 2015;
- (c) Selection of at least 178 recipients from developing Commonwealth countries taking up professional or academic fellowships at UK institutions, building upon the target achieved of 642 fellowships over the four year period to 2015;
- (d) A selection breakdown that comprises at least 45% of each gender;
- (e) Confirmation that all applications are possible through electronic means, and that 99% of intended applications are received by the Electronic Application System;
- (f) Confirmation, through an anonymous survey open to all award holders, that at least 90% of Scholars responding regard support from the Commission to be 'good' or 'very good' (the top two categories available).

## **Objective 2**

***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***

Enhanced research and professional capacity among individual scholars and alumni represent the main output of the Commission's work. The Commission will increase its support for these individuals through activities that help them to make the best use of their time on award, to retain affinity with its main purpose, and to increase their impact throughout later life. The Commission will develop closer relationships with award holders and alumni by:

1. Maintaining regular contact with award holders, to help ensure happy and involved scholars and fellows, who are aware of the scheme's objectives and who want to be engaged in subsequent alumni activities.
2. Facilitating the engagement of alumni proactively in the delivery of development objectives that respond to local needs and are aligned with UK strategic priorities.
3. Ensuring effective professional and national alumni networks that continue to build local capacity and develop international institutional partnerships in the strategic interest of the UK.
4. Increasing the engagement of alumni in support of the CSFP and wider Commonwealth values and initiatives.
5. Working, where possible, with other national and Commonwealth agencies to promote the further development of the CSFP as a Commonwealth-wide programme providing scholarships and fellowships in both developed and developing countries, and providing support for the UK government in such negotiations.

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

- a) Regular communications 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 management and support 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 our alumni can provide.
- g) Engage with Commonwealth organisations and other member states to promote and develop the CSFP as a Commonwealth-wide institution.

The following **specific measures will** be used to assess the impact made by the Commission in the above areas

- (a) Addition of a further 750 alumni to the CSC alumni database, with contact details being maintained for at least 8,500 alumni in total;
- (b) 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;
- (c) Evidence from alumni surveys that at least 90% of completing alumni from DFID sponsored countries completing awards living/working in developing countries, and/or development related organisations;
- (d) Collection of an accumulated 750 examples since 2010 of alumni who report a personal contribution to government policy or wider socio-economic impact in key development fields.

### **Objective 3**

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

The Commission is committed to demonstrating value for money in all of its activities. It will do this by:

1. Expanding its evaluation programme to deliver evidence on the value of the Commission's work which can determine future policy.
2. Ensuring that all of the Commission's initiatives are delivered to achieve the best value for money.
3. Ensuring that selection mechanisms for awards are transparent and fair throughout the nomination system.
4. Ensuring that good governance principles are adhered to.
5. Increasing awareness of the Commission's work and maximising transparency, with clear articulation of the benefits of scholarships to the UK and its partner Commonwealth countries.
6. Taking full opportunity to identify synergies with other relevant bodies, and exploring opportunities for complementary project funding.
7. Reviewing selection processes to ensure that potential disadvantage due to gender, disability, ethnic or social background is recognised in our decision-making.

In pursuing **Objective 3**, 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) 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.
- e) Develop closer working relationships with UK government departments and relevant Commonwealth organisations to ensure that the Commission delivers on their intentions and values.
- f) Support DFID to ensure selection of an effective balance of Commissioners, necessary to ensure that appropriate expertise and skills are available to make future policy

The following **specific measures will** be used to assess the impact made by the Commission in the above areas:

- (a) Commission administrative costs should form less than 10% of total expenditure during the year, now including any applicable Value Added Tax;

- (b) Generation of matching contributions of at least £3.5 million from UK universities or other donors to the cost of Commission awards;
- (c) Completion of all recommendations for administrative reforms made by the NDPB review of the Commission and subsequent internal audit reviews, reporting from 2013.

### **Additional Sources of Information**

In addition to the detailed targets set out above, the Commission will draw information from the sources below in order to assess performance and formulate future strategy:

- i. *Breakdown of application and selection data* – Electronic Application System (EAS) and other CSC data; CSC objectives regarding gender, region, scheme, and qualification distribution; comparable rates from other scholarship programmes
- ii. *Submission and completion rates* – qualification reports; comparable rates from Research Councils, UK universities, Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)
- iii. *Breakdown of nomination and application data* – nominating agency and institution reports; data from the EAS and Libra, our in-house database; numbers of nominations received disaggregated in terms of gender, social groups, etc
- iv. *Percentage of satisfied award holders* – anonymous questionnaires; annual reports; comparable data relating to scholarship holders, international students, postgraduates/doctoral fellows in general
- v. *Percentage of alumni reporting increased skills and capacity post-award* – alumni and employer surveys and interviews; evaluation surveys
- vi. *Percentage of alumni who return home or to their region to work and who work on development issues* – data from alumni and employer surveys; evaluation surveys; comparable rates from other scholarship programmes where available
- vii. *Members of alumni networks in relation to total numbers of alumni* – Libra data; comparable rates, where available, from university and other scholarship scheme alumni programmes
- viii. *Evidence of activity in alumni programme* - numbers attending events, contributing to Commonwealth Scholarships News, etc. – data broken down by country, age, and nature of activity
- ix. *Evidence of alumni working and collaborating with UK and Commonwealth institutions, and involved in policy-related activities in their home countries and regions* – quantitative data from alumni surveys; case studies and qualitative evidence from alumni activity and supervisor reports; trends according to age, gender, location, area of study, and other relevant variables
- x. *Percentage of alumni working in development-related fields* – alumni surveys; case studies and anecdotal evidence as described above
- xi. *Costs of administration of the overall awards programmes* – both in absolute terms and as a total of overall expenditure, and also relative to previous years and other scholarship programmes where meaningful comparisons are available
- xii. *Number of applicants for awards* – EAS data; analyses of performance of nominating agencies, institutions and hosts; comparable rates, where available, from other scholarship bodies

xiii. *Evidence of synergy and links with other cognate bodies* – meetings and the sharing of philosophies, evidences, and good practices; identification of potential partner organisations who could be donors or partners in capacity development or project funding, including organisations hosting Professional Fellowships; and the establishment of mutually-relevant schemes with some of them.

In addition to the above activities in pursuit of all three objectives, the Commission has prioritised the following areas for policy development during the years:

- Consideration of the aspects of the Shared Scholarship Scheme, including university allocation processes, award structure and scholar engagement;
- Development of mechanisms to further increase response rates for award-holder and supervisor Annual Reports;
- Continuing review of our award selection criteria;
- Reviewing policy towards the length and structure of our support for doctoral students;
- Further strengthening of our relationship with UK universities, and the benefits of our work to British higher education, including consideration of the benefits of forging longer term support agreements with selected UK universities in some programmes;
- Reviewing the current provision and level family allowances and their effect on Scholar experience;
- A scheduled review of the purpose and delivery of the Development Module offered by the Commission to doctoral students, following its third year of operation;
- Consideration of alumni newsletter structure and professional networks, as part of the overall alumni plan of the Commission;
- Further enhancement of our techniques for monitoring and evaluation, including the development of methodologies to assess value for money and effectiveness of CSC awards, a pilot pre-award survey to better establish baseline data, further development of qualitative analysis techniques and review of the current framework of evaluation and monitoring practices.

## **7. ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES POST 2015-2016**

The Commission values the importance of continuity and medium strategic planning in its work. It therefore seeks to maintain a time horizon of at least three years in its activity. Whilst specific proposals will depend on annual budgets notified by our lead department in accordance with the Framework Document, we will also be pro-active in seeking additional funds where need is identified, and be flexible in order to deploy additional funding should this become available.

Following a review of strategy by Commissioners, we anticipate that priorities for activity in years 2 and 3 of this Corporate Plan will include the following:

- (a) A high degree of continuity in the overall portfolio of scholarships and fellowships offered, including continuation in at least some form of masters, doctoral, early- and mid-career awards. It is important to recognise that any change to the provision in scholarship schemes requires a time line of at least 12-18 months in advance of scholars taking up their awards. Therefore, it is likely that the balance of awards offered in the 2016-17 academic year will bear a strong resemblance to that of 2015-16-15, given that many of the awards will need to be announced in the summer of 2015;
- (b) Within this, the Commission will explore ways in which the specific needs of each recipient group can be differentiated, for example through expanding our series of activities for doctoral students and closer evaluation of the different types of Master's degrees offered by the Commission;
- (c) The Commission expects to maintain support for doctoral provision at its current proportion of expenditure of higher, reflecting Member's belief in the importance of such awards for development objectives, and the targets for such provision now adopted by some Commonwealth governments;
- (d) The Commission will continue to seek innovative ways to ensure that awards remain accessible to, and attract, a diverse group of applicants by gender and other criteria, whilst remaining consistent with our published selection criteria;
- (e) The Commission will continue to explore how it might better support talented award holders who upon their return to take up academic appointments in their home countries, following the introduction of Academic Fellowships for this group. By doing so, we will be responding to the recommendation of the House of Commons Select Committee on Science and Technology that more could be done to support talented academics in developing countries during the early stages of their careers;
- (f) Seeking to ensure that the CSFP continues to be genuinely Commonwealth-wide, by encouraging other governments and hosts to offer awards, and seeking to ensure that resources exist for awards for citizens of all Commonwealth countries to study in the UK;
- (g) Exploration of ways in which partnerships with UK host universities can be further strengthened, including the possibility of multi-year arrangements, and the co-financing arrangements that accompany them, without infringing the principle that the Commission will maintain direct contact with its award holders;
- (h) Development of a strategy to identify further ways in which the Commission can contribute to other areas of DFID strategy, and that of other interested government departments. This will reflect (but not be limited to) findings of the recent DFID Task Force on Higher Education;
- (i) Continuing measures to minimising administrative costs, building on the substantial progress already achieved in recent years;
- (j) The launch of a new alumni strategy, bringing together existing strands of activity in this field into a more coherent and holistic programme, which will maintain a strong feeling of community

between past, present and potential award holders. Creation of a more consistent package of involvement for alumni between countries through stronger liaison with HMG public diplomacy objectives;

- (k) Further expansion of the CSC monitoring and evaluation programme, which, as evidenced by the increased in other donor agencies in our work, we believe has the potential to be a world leader in scholarship evaluation.



## **8. FINANCIAL PLAN**

The budget for the Commission in 2015-6 was agreed at its meeting on 2 December 2014 and can be found in the Commission Business Plan. The Programme budget is based on an indicative budget from the lead Department, which is expected to be confirmed by 31 January 2015, in line with the Commission Framework Document. Confirmation of the Commission's allocated Administration Resource is awaited, and in these circumstances the figure shown in the Business Plan subject to change. The Commission 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 Commission 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.

The Commission appreciates the increased budget in real terms that has been received from governments of both parties over the past decade, whilst noting its projected grant for 2015-16 is reduced in real terms. 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 Commission for scholarships to developed countries has also resulted in the Commission not being able to offer awards this year to the full range of Commonwealth countries, for the first time since the CSFP was established in 1959. In view of our aspiration to reflect the UK's commitment to the Commonwealth as a whole, this gives rise to very 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 Commission 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 will be asked to contribute ideas and priorities by mid-September. These will be incorporated into a draft budget, to be considered by the Finance Committee at its autumn meeting; followed by a budget that will be presented to the full Commission at its December meeting. This budget will be reflected in recommendations for the number of selections to be made by Commission Selection Committees in the following February and March. The agreed budgets will run in financial years, from the 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March and will be 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 Commission 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 Commission's criteria. It will not normally be Commission 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 Commission'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 programmes, UK universities typically meet between 30-40% of the total cost of scholarships. The Commission also 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 Commission also recognises that hosts of academic and professional fellowships make significant in kind contributions to these schemes. The Commission receives further substantial in-kind benefit from the work of members, 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 a NDPB, the Commission 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 its 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 Commission 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 four year strategy, which committed the Commission to ensure that its administrative costs do not account for more than 10% of total expenditure. The Commission 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 three years. In 2015-16, the planned figure is in the range of 6.3-6.5% inc VAT.

The Commission'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 will involve 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; and
- (b) Undertaking periodic comparison between the administrative costs of the Commission and those of other comparable scholarship schemes funded by HMG, and other international programmes.

## **9. RISK MANAGEMENT**

The Commission has an Audit and Risk Management 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 Commission, 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 Framework Document of the Commission 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 2011, in line with HMT Treasury *Clear Line of Sight* policy, the Commission established a bank account, under the auspices of the Government Banking Service. During the period of this Corporate Plan, it is expected that annual external audits will be conducted independently by the National Audit Office.

In addition to external financial audit, the Commission will benefit from reviews of its operation by a programme of Internal Audit, currently provided by the DFID Internal Audit Department. This programme will be managed by the Commission's Audit and Risk Management (ARM) committee. By agreement with the ACU, their internal reports which relate specifically to work undertaken for the Commission are also made available to the Commission Audit and Risk Management Committee.

## **Appendix 1: Basic Demographics of the Programmes from 2002-2013**

### **1. CSC Academic Fellowships**

- The CSC has offered a total of 691 Academic Fellowships from 2002 -2013
- Overall, the gender breakdown for this scheme is 31% (214) female and 69% (477) male
- 75% (521) of Academic Fellows come from a South Asian country, while 21% (148) hold their citizenship from a Sub-Saharan African country
- 58% (404) of Academic Fellows fall between the ages of 36-45, and 36% (246) between the ages of 46-55
- The tenure of these awards has changed over time from 12 to 6 to 3 and now to between 3 and 10 months

### **2. CSC Professional Fellowships**

- The CSC has hosted a total number of 876 Professional Fellowships since its inception in 2002 to 2013
- Of the 876, 59% (514) of awards went to men, while 41% (362) were undertaken by women
- 33% (292) of people undertaking a Professional Fellowship fell within the age range of 26-35, and 40% (349) within the age group of 36-45
- The vast majority (77%, 675) of Professional Fellows come from a country in Sub-Saharan Africa, with the next largest group from a South Asian country (15%, 134)
- Public health was the most popular Fellowship subject area with 37% (322) undertaking an award in this discipline, followed by education (24%, 213)

### **3. CSC Medical Fellowships**

- The CSC has offered a total of 118 Medic Training awards from 2002-2013
- Overall, the gender breakdown for this scheme is 36% (43) female and 64% (75) male
- 90% (106) of Medics come from a South Asian country
- 59% (70) of Medics are aged between 36-45

### **4. CSC Doctoral Scholarships**

- The CSC has offered a total of 1244 doctoral scholarships between 2002-2013\*
- Overall, the gender breakdown for this scheme is 44% (544) female and 56% (700) male
- 51% (634) of doctoral Scholars come from a country in Sub-Saharan Africa, while 26% (324) hold their citizenship from a South Asian country
- 62% (766) of doctoral Commonwealth Scholars fall between the ages of 26-35, and 21% (265) between the ages of 36-45

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

### **5. CSC Split-Site Doctoral Scholarships**

- The CSC has offered a total of 343 Split-Site doctoral scholarships between 2002 -2013
- Overall, the gender breakdown for this scheme is 47% (160) female and 53% (183) male
- 49% (167) of Split-Site doctoral Scholars come from Sub-Saharan Africa, while 38% (129) hold their citizenship from a South Asian country

- 61% (208) of Split-Site doctoral Scholars fall between the ages of 26-35

## **6. CSC Masters Scholarship**

- The CSC has offered a total of 1516 CSC Masters scholarships between 2002 -2013\*\*
- Overall, the gender breakdown for this scheme is 49% (745) female and 51% (771) male
- 48% (721) of CSC Masters Scholars come from a country in Sub-Saharan Africa, while 20% (304) hold their citizenship from a South Asian country
- 51% (772) of CSC Masters Scholars fall between the ages of 26-35, and 41% (616) between 18-25  
\*\*This category includes a small number (13) of taught undergraduate awards who are not counted separately. It also includes awards funded by both DFID and FCO (until 2008)/BIS.

## **7. CSC Shared Scholarships for Masters Study**

- The CSC has offered a total of 1950 Shared Scholarships between 2002-2013\*\*\*
- Overall, the gender breakdown for this scheme is 41% (806) female and 59% (1144) male
- 65% (1272) of CSC Shared Scholars come from a country in Sub-Saharan Africa, while 30% (588) hold their citizenship from a South Asian country
- 52% (1009) of CSC Shared Scholars fall between the ages of 26-35, and 44% (855) between 18-25  
\*\*\*This category includes a small number (3) of taught undergraduate awards from 2002

## **8. CSC Distance Learning Scholarships for Masters Study**

- The CSC has offered a total of 2076 Distance Learning Scholarships between 2002-2013
- Overall, the gender breakdown for this scheme is 41% (844) female and 59% (1232) male
- 76% (1578) of CSC Distance Learning Scholars are studying in a country in Sub-Saharan Africa, while 22% (452) are studying in a South Asian country
- 52% (1075) of CSC Distance Learning Scholars fall between the ages of 26-35, and 31% (638) between 36-45 years old

## **Appendix 2: Commission Budget for 2015-16**

The budget for the Commission in 2015-16 was agreed at its meeting on 2 December 2014. 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 Commission Framework Document and Financial Memorandum outline the procedure and timetable for agreeing budgets for future years.

Table 1 shows the budget for 2015-16, approved in December 2014. Detail of the Programme budgets is presented in Table 2.

**Table 1 : All Costs 2015-16: Approved, December 2014**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Allocation 2015-16, December 2014, 000s</b>
<b>Awards Programmes (DFID)</b>	22,750
<b>Awards Programmes (BIS) *</b>	415
<b>Awards Programmes (Scotland) *</b>	50
<b>Administration</b>	1,600
<b>Other Programmes</b>	1,050
<b>Health Levy costs</b>	150
<b>External Evaluation</b>	100
<b>Expenditure/Allocation</b>	26,115

\* confirmation awaited

### **Award Expenditure 2015-16**

**Table 2: DFID Programme (Awards) Budget 2015-16, approved December 2014**

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Allocation / 000's (all awards)</b>	<b>Costs already committed / 000s</b>	<b>Available for new Awards</b>	<b>2015 Intake (Projected)</b>	<b>2015 Intake vs 2014</b>	<b>Allocation / % Programme</b>
<b>Agency Master's</b>	4,850	940	3,910	160	0	21.3
<b>Shared Scholarships</b>	3,700	0	3,700	211	-21	16.3
<b>Distance Learning</b>	1,900	1,000	900	215	-5	8.4
<b>PhDs</b>	9,775	7,212	2,563	100	-10	43.0
<b>Split-site PhDs</b>	600	115	485	18	+6	2.6
<b>Academic Fellows</b>	625	0	625	30	n/a	2.7
<b>Medical Fellows</b>	225	0	225	15	0	1.0
<b>Professional Fellows</b>	1,075	0	1,075	133	-2	4.7
	22,750	9,267	13,483	882	-32	100