

Wednesday, 17 August 2011

## GENERAL INFORMATION TO APPLICANTS

**PLEASE READ THIS CAREFULLY SO THAT YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE APPLICATION PROCESS AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA BEFORE APPLYING**

### COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARSHIPS TENABLE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM, 2012/13

Higher Education South Africa (HESA) is the Nominating Agency for South African citizens who wish to apply for the Commonwealth Scholarships tenable in the UK for 2012/13.

South Africa can send a maximum of 45 nominations of which no more than half (20) may be for doctoral studies (including via a split-site mode).

Applications may be in either of the following categories:

- One year taught masters courses or equivalent degrees (excluding MBA)
- Six months of clinical training in medicine or dentistry
- Doctoral degrees, up to three years of duration (UK institution)
- One year research on a split-site basis, towards a PhD registered at a South African university. (Please note that split-site awards allow candidates to spend up to 12 months in the UK, undertaking research towards a doctoral degree in their home country).

Please note the **Agency does not nominate candidates for:**

- **Distance Learning Scholarships** to study UK Master's degree courses in your home country
- **Academic Fellowships** for mid-career academics to spend time at UK universities
- **Professional Fellowships** for mid-career professionals to spend time at a UK host organization

#### 1 Eligibility:

Eligibility requirements are outlined in the scholarship prospectus which is on the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission website at <http://cscuk.dfid.gov.uk/apply>. I would particularly draw your attention to the following:

- The Commission will look for evidence of the **high academic quality** expected of Commonwealth scholars; intellectual and academic excellence will be paramount in all selections. **Candidates studying a first degree are expected to hold at least upper**

**second class honours level or a degree of second class (i.e. 70%+) by October 2012.**

- Candidates should be able to take up the award in October 2012 as deferments are granted in the most exceptional circumstances, and in any event will not be considered for start dates beyond January 2013.
- Please note that if candidates for Master's awards have undertaken any of their university education outside their home country, they will be asked to state how it was funded and how the education differed from that in their home country.
- It is a new eligibility criteria that all candidates applying for doctoral study must provide the Commission with evidence of support from a prospective supervisor at at least one of their chosen institutions at the time of application.
- Applications for split-site study must be made in context of an institutional link between the institution where the candidate is registered in their home country and the one at which they are applying to study in the UK. Candidates must provide the Commission with evidence of support from their prospective supervisor at the UK institution as well as from their home supervisor at the time of application.

Awards are tenable at any UK institution of higher education for a specific programme of study or research and are not restricted to particular subject areas. **Candidates are expected to state their preferred institutions on the application form, but the final decision on a host institution will be made by the Commission. In recent years, placement of successful candidates has sometimes been delayed by the process of gaining admission to their host university. For this reason, we strongly advise candidates to submit independent applications for admission directly to their chosen institutions in the UK, prior to, or at the time of, their nomination, without waiting for the result of the scholarship selection procedures.** Where offers of admission have been obtained, these should be included with the nominations, and any subsequent correspondence copied to us.

The Commission will not offer awards to scholars already close to completing a doctorate in their own country, though awards may be tenable to complete doctoral studies already underway in the UK.

## **2 Selection Criteria:**

Final selection of candidates and host institutions will be made by the UK Commission based on the nominations from the South African Agency. Once again, they will be seeking candidates of the highest academic quality, who demonstrate a real capacity to make a difference to their home country on completion of the award. The main selection criteria are the **academic merit** of the candidate, the **quality of the proposal** and the likely impact of the scholarship on **national development**.

**Applications which do not meet the academic criteria will not be considered by the South African Selection Panel. We receive substantially more nominations than scholarships available and for this reason the selection process has become very competitive over the years. It should be noted that even applicants meeting the academic criteria may not be finally selected by the Selection Panel due to the competitive nature of these scholarships.**

The Selection Committee has become concerned in recent years with the way in which papers are increasingly arriving in an incomplete state and has instructed its secretariat to render ineligible applications which do not arrive in the manner requested. **Such incomplete applications will not be considered by the committee.**

### 3 Application process:

All applicants for a Commonwealth Scholarship should use the Electronic Application System (EAS) – see [www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk) and click on apply.

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

- (1) If you are a South African citizen **registered** at a Public Higher Education Institution at the time of applying, you should submit your application to the institution (an option will be given to you in the EAS). **You will need to contact your institution well in advance to ascertain what the institutional specific application process and closing date for applications are (it will be no later than 7 November 2011). See attached list.**
- (2) **Individual applications submitted** directly to HESA as the Nominating Agency, will be considered in the case of –
  - (a) A South African citizen who is not registered at any Public Higher Education Institution in South Africa at the time of applying;
  - (b) A South African citizen who is studying or staying in a foreign country at the time of applying; and
  - (c) A South African citizen who obtained his/her **last qualification** from a foreign institution.

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

The closing date for applications if you apply directly to HESA is **Monday, 21 November 2011**.

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

### 4 Arrangements for submitting applications:

Refer to item 3 – applicants who need to submit their applications via a South African Higher Education Institution are reminded to contact the university for more information on the application process. However, the following information should be noted by ALL applicants:

- (i) The EAS ask each applicant to upload a scanned passport-size photograph, scanned, transcripts, a scanned birth certificate (copy of green ID will do) and a scan of any letters received from a UK institution listed in your application form.
- (ii) References: The EAS will send an e-mail to each referee with a link to your application to write a reference. The e-mail is only sent when you **submit** your application well in advance in order for the referees to have time to submit their references before the closing date of **21 November 2011**. **Irrespective of the above (email alert to referees), the onus is on the applicant to ensure that references are available and submitted on time. Applications received without the requested references will not be considered.**

**After submitting your application, you should print one hard copy of your electronic application (with the scanned supporting documents) to reach us on or before 21 November 2011. If you apply via the University, please submit the hard copy to the University.**

**The Postal Address is:**

Higher Education South Africa (HESA) – (Commonwealth Scholarships)  
P O Box 27392  
SUNNYSIDE  
Pretoria 0132

**The Physical Address is:**

Higher Education South Africa (HESA) – (Commonwealth Scholarships)  
UNISA Sunnyside Campus  
Building 3 – Level 1  
Cnr of Rissik and Mears Streets  
SUNNYSIDE  
Pretoria 0002

**If we do not receive a hard copy of your application, the South African Selection Panel will not be in a position to consider your application. No late applications will be considered.**

**5 Timeframe:**

- South African nominations to be submitted to the Agency (HESA) by **Monday, 21 November 2011.**
- Applications are considered by the South African Selection Panel in the first week of December 2011.
- Nominations by the nominating agency (HESA) to be submitted to the UK Scholarship Commission by 21 December 2011.
- Institutions and individuals will be informed of the outcome of the first round early January 2012.
- Applications are considered by the UK Selection Committee in March 2012.
- The final outcome from the UK is expected the end of April or early May 2012.

If you have any enquiries, please send an e-mail to **Nondumiso Lufele** at [sso@hesa.org.za](mailto:sso@hesa.org.za)

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

Kind regards.

**JANA VAN WYK  
SENIOR MANAGER: CEO'S OFFICE**