

THE ASSOCIATION OF COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITIES

Programme Officer (International Scholarships)

Further particulars and terms and conditions

Background to the organisation

The Association of Commonwealth Universities is a membership body for universities throughout the Commonwealth. Our 530 member institutions – the highest level ever – cover an exceptionally wide range of backgrounds – from over 100 universities in Africa, and 250 in Asia, to the majority of universities in the UK, Australia, and Canada. Around 50 staff are employed at our office in Bloomsbury, central London, and we also maintain a global presence through international travel. The ACU is a registered charity, and our Patron is Her Majesty The Queen.

This diversity makes us exceptionally well placed to comment on developments in the increasingly globalised world of higher education. We achieve this through specialist networks, research and publications, conferences, and provision of discounts and specialist services, both for members and external bodies. We also provide small travel and networking grants from our own Endowment Fund. 2013 will be a particularly exciting year for the ACU, as it marks our centenary. As the first international university organisation to reach this milestone, we will be marking the occasion with a series of high-profile events worldwide. Further details of ACU activities can be found at www.acu.ac.uk

The ACU and international scholarships

Membership subscriptions make up about a third of the ACU's income. The remainder comes from a range of activities undertaken for external organisations. The largest of these is the management of international scholarship programmes. Our experience in this area dates back almost 60 years, and has included collaboration with a range of bodies, including the Royal Society, the British Academy, the Commonwealth Foundation, and a range of international agencies and charities.

Our largest scholarship programmes are funded by the UK government. We currently manage schemes on behalf of the Department for International Development, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, and the Scottish Government. Programmes under management include Commonwealth Scholarships (www.dfid.gov.uk/cscuk) and Marshall Scholarships (www.marshallscholarship.org). In 2011-2012, these had a combined budget of over £21 million, and the funds under our management are expected to increase significantly in 2012-2013. The vast majority of our awards are scholarships at postgraduate (Master's and doctoral) level, but we also manage a number of fellowship programmes, which provide experience for mid-career professionals.

Sponsors have multiple objectives in supporting international scholarships. These include contributing to the development of the world's poorest countries, enhancing the role and reputation of the UK in the wider world, and ensuring that Britain's universities retain their international reputation for excellence. Managing these programmes requires an understanding of these objectives, as well as empathy for the needs of individual award holders. Increasingly, too, donors require firm evidence of the impact that their investment is making. This has led us in recent years to expand and develop alumni and evaluation

programmes for the schemes that we manage. Early products of this can be found at <http://bit.ly/cscuk-evaluation>

Following the recent confirmation of budgets for the 2012-2015 period and natural staff progression, the ACU is currently re-organising its scholarship team. This has created opportunities at several levels. While specific responsibilities will be allocated according to current needs and the skills of individuals recruited, the following generic description indicates the overall qualities being sought.

Programme Officer (International Scholarships): the role

The post holder will typically manage a portfolio of individual students, acting as first point of contact for individual issues, which may relate to placement, logistics, or simple personal matters. While capacity exists to refer to more expert or senior-level advice in more complex cases, the post holder will play a critical role in representing our work to its most important recipients: the award holders themselves. A need therefore exists to combine a patient, sympathetic, and understanding approach with a clear understanding of rules and a determination that these should be applied fairly and consistently. Although post holders at this level have less opportunity to develop policy directly, our open approach encourages inputs and ideas at all times, and some contact with external stakeholders can still be expected. Post holders at this level might normally be in a second position or, exceptionally, be embarking on a career having demonstrated exceptional interest in the areas covered.

In addition to the above, candidates would be expected to demonstrate a genuine interest in the wider issues which underpin our work – most notably higher education, international relations, and development. A flexible, team-based approach is also needed, together with a willingness to undertake UK and overseas travel where required. Candidates should normally be educated to at least degree level.

Terms and conditions of service

Term

This post is a permanent position.

Location

The position will be based at the London offices of the Association of Commonwealth Universities.

Salary

The salary range for the post is ACU Grade C (£25,552-£29,424). It is ACU policy to appoint at the first point of a grade, except in exceptional circumstances.

Increments within the grade, which are dependent on performance and at least six months' service, are made on 1 August each year as are any cost of living awards.

Pension

The post is superannuable under the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS), a contributory pension scheme. Further details can be found at www.uss.co.uk

Other benefits

An interest-free season ticket loan scheme is available.

Office hours

The working week is 35 hours. Normal office hours are Monday to Friday, 9.30 am to 5.30 pm, with a one-hour lunch break each day, but reasonable flexibility is permissible with agreement of the line manager. It is in the nature of the post that there may be out-of-hours duties and some travel, within the UK and overseas. Overtime payments are not normally made, but time off in lieu of significant work out of hours is given by agreement.

Holidays

The holiday entitlement is 27 days in each completed year of service. The annual leave year runs from 1 February to 31 January. There are also generous privilege days amounting to 4 full days in a calendar year, in addition to 8 public holidays.

Probation

The successful candidate will be subject to a probationary period of six months.

Application process

Applicants should submit a current CV (no more than three A4 pages in length) with a covering letter (no more than 500 words in length), stating why they are interested in the position and drawing attention to any relevant experience, by email to recruitment@acu.ac.uk by **5 pm (GMT) on 13 February 2012**. Applications should include details of current or most recent salary (if appropriate) and the names and contact details of two referees. Referees will not be approached without prior consultation with the candidate.

Please note that, in order to keep administration costs to a minimum, we do not acknowledge the receipt of job applications. Shortlisted candidates will be contacted after the closing date.