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REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP PLAN 2009-2012

Results and recommendations from a survey of national nominating agencies

Executive summary

1. The Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP) continues to be one of the most widely recognised forms of Commonwealth collaboration. Since the last CCEM, the number of new awards has increased, completing over a decade of expansion from a low point in 1999. The number of countries in which awards are held has also increased, and is poised to expand further following the success of the CSFP endowment fund, launched at 17CCEM to mark the 50th anniversary of the Plan. Almost 30,000 individuals have now benefited from the CSFP. A survey carried out specifically for this conference confirms that the national governments whose offices are responsible for managing the Plan on a day-to-day level remain highly supportive. This appears to be true for both donor and recipient countries.
2. Despite this generally positive picture, it appears that the Commonwealth continues to undervalue the benefits and potential of the scheme. The essentially bilateral nature of the CSFP has huge strengths, not least the willingness of national governments to contribute significant resources in the name of the Commonwealth, and the success of the endowment fund, which has been actively supported by the Secretary-General and has, for the first time, provided a central pot of funding which can be used to ensure that Commonwealth Scholarships exist in a broad range of member states. Yet, despite recognition of the need by the last four CCEMs, little resource is available within the Commonwealth Secretariat to actively encourage participation, or to ensure that those benefiting from the scheme feel committed to, and become involved in, Commonwealth activities.
3. This report makes a number of recommendations to address these issues. Drawing both on the recent survey of national agencies, and a wider survey of stakeholders conducted by the Association of Commonwealth Universities

(ACU) at the request of 17CCEM, it proposes to build on the success of the endowment fund appeal by establishing a permanent committee to support and develop the CSFP on a Commonwealth-wide basis, whilst recognising the primacy of national governments and agencies to determine the priorities and level of provision within their own countries. It will be for the Secretariat to determine, in the light of wider discussions on future priorities, whether this can best be achieved by a small in-house facility (as proposed by previous CCEMs and the Eminent Persons Group) or by another suitable Commonwealth organisation. In either case, the resource needs could be limited by ensuring that the majority of meetings are virtual and that, where possible, members of the group have the support of their own governments.

4. These proposals should be seen in the context of a scheme which has made very considerable progress over the past decade, and which remains one of the most substantial examples of Commonwealth collaboration. The response of governments and alumni to the endowment fund appeal launched at 17CCEM further demonstrates this potential. At 18CCEM, Ministers have an exceptional opportunity to build on these achievements.

Introduction

5. The Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP) was established at the first Commonwealth education conference in 1959. The Plan aimed to provide a practical manifestation of Commonwealth collaboration by enabling citizens to share the wide range of educational resources and experiences that existed in member countries. Since that time, other objectives have been introduced to the Plan by individual host countries, such as a desire to contribute to international development, public diplomacy, or the higher education objectives of participating countries. The basic aims and structures of the Plan, however, remain recognisable.
6. The Plan has several distinctive characteristics. Awards emphasise partnership between organisations in home and host countries. National governments, or their appointed agencies, help ensure that activity is linked to national priorities, and their role has historically led to a high proportion of award holders working in the public sector. Within these characteristics, the founders recognised that the Plan would need to change in order to reflect new priorities. Such diversity has been seen particularly over the past decade, with the introduction of distance learning, split-site, postdoctoral, and professional awards and undergraduate visits, alongside the more conventional offer of postgraduate scholarships at Master's and doctoral level. Decisions on what to offer and the financing of awards remain the responsibility of host countries.

Historical development

7. In numerical terms, few programmes can claim to have directly benefited as many individuals as the CSFP. By the end of 2011, almost 30,000 individuals had held awards, originating from every Commonwealth country. In keeping with its commitment made at the 1959 conference, the United Kingdom has been the

largest contributor, but Canada, India, and New Zealand have also been consistent and regular contributors, and over 20 countries in total have hosted awards at some stage during the Plan's development. More recent evidence, described below, is now facilitating evaluation of the wider impact of awards, in terms of the future career progress of alumni and their role in wider society.

- 8.** The historical development of the Plan can be categorised in three main phases. The first of these, from the start of the plan in 1959 until the early 1990s, can be regarded as a period of growth and consolidation. Numbers grew rapidly in the first decade of the Plan, and a revised target of 1,000 scholars on award was met in 1967. That year also saw the largest number of countries to offer awards in a single year – 14. Although some developing countries expressed frustration that their awards did not receive the number of applications that they had hoped for – a factor generally attributed to lack of publicity – the range of countries offering awards was diverse, including countries in Africa and Asia as well as more conventional destinations. Although growth slowed in the 1970s, there was a further surge in activity during the first half of the following decade, partly in response to the decision of governments to impose full-cost overseas tuition fees. In 1984, the 9th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers set a new target level of 1,500 award holders in any year. This was reached in 1986, with a new high of 1,594, and an all-time record of 1,809 was set in 1993.
- 9.** The 1990s, however, can generally be seen as a period of decline – in terms of both the number of awards and the attention given to the Plan generally. The report to the Halifax CCEM, held in 2000, showed that by 1997 the number of new awards had declined to a new low of 400, whilst by 1999 the number of students on award had declined to 1,021, with only six countries hosting awards. These trends can be attributed to several factors: a reduction in donor confidence in the capacity of scholarships (and higher education in general) to make an impact on development; political factors affecting the ability of specific countries to offer awards, such as the suspension of Nigeria and departure of Hong Kong from the Commonwealth; the declining economic position of universities, particularly in Africa; withdrawal of Australia from the programme; and, more generally, a lack of central leadership for the Plan as a whole.
- 10.** The past decade, by contrast, has been a period of gradual renewal and increased diversity, based initially on decisions taken by Ministers at their meetings in 2000 and 2003. The principle of diversity was extended not only to the form of awards, but also to the nomination and selection process, with greater involvement of individual universities and NGOs. The ambitious target, set in 2000, of increasing the number of new awards each year by 50% from the 1999 level of 450 was achieved, with an average of 677 being offered during the three years reported at the Cape Town conference in 2006. There was also progress in increasing the number of countries offering awards from the 1999 level of six, although this remains constantly below the historical high of 14, back in 1967.
- 11.** By the time of the 2006 CCEM, it was clear that the expansion and internationalisation of higher education was becoming an important issue for many states, and also that the role of higher education in international development was being increasingly recognised. Combining these trends with a

desire to mark the forthcoming 50th anniversary, Ministers agreed to work towards an expansion of the number of students on award each year to 2,009 by 2009, surpassing the previous high of 1,809 in 1993. They also recommended the creation, for the first time ever, of a central fund, to leave a permanent one-off legacy of the anniversary, devoted to helping increase the number of Commonwealth awards in low and middle income countries. The conference also reinforced the need for greater coordination between participating countries, recommending that a small central facility be established to assist agencies with the general promotion and development of the Plan; that agencies should expand, and collaborate more on, alumni work; and that appropriate celebrations should take place to mark the anniversary itself.

12. The 2009 CCEM heard that mixed progress had been made towards the objectives set out in Cape Town. Both the number of new awards per annum and the number of recipients on award had increased – the latter by 26% to an average of 1,787, but none the less fell short of the ambitious target of 2,009 which had been set three years earlier. Likewise, although new countries had offered awards, the concentration on the United Kingdom in particular remained a cause for concern, as did the need to make more progress in the gender and diversity of recipients. The formal launch of the CSFP endowment fund, which had been first suggested as a means of marking the 50th anniversary of the Plan, was seen as one mechanism for responding to these concerns.

Recent activity under the CSFP

13. Results of the 2012 survey* show further growth in the number of new awards per annum, but a reduction in the number of recipients on award each year. The most likely explanation is a move in some countries to offering more, but shorter, awards; this appears to be the case particularly in Canada. The number of countries hosting awards has risen from 11 to 15. The proportion of new awards held in the United Kingdom, which has been cited as a concern in previous reports, has gradually declined, from 78% in the final year of the 2009 report, to 74.8%, 72.8%, and 71.5%. This trend can also be seen in the actual numbers of non-UK awards. The 2009 report noted that, at 195, this was at the highest level for over a decade; by 2011, the figure had reached 294, and may increase further as a result of the new endowment fund. However, this picture is not replicated in the proportion of recipients on award in the United Kingdom – this figure remains at 79%. This probably reflects the greater proportion of doctoral and also distance learning students, whose awards are likely to take longer, in the UK portfolio.
14. The average number of new awards per year increased to 961 during the three-year period covered by this report. This compares with 421, 460, 677, and 886 in the 2000, 2003, 2006, and 2009 reports. These figures are influenced at various points by methodological differences. Most notably, the 2009 report cites the decision of the United Kingdom to bring its Shared Scholarships scheme under the auspices of Commonwealth Scholarships for the first time. Even discounting this, however, the period has been one of significant and real growth.

* Data was received from 31 agencies, of which 27 also gave views on the wider development of the Plan.

Figure 1: Total number of new Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships, by year

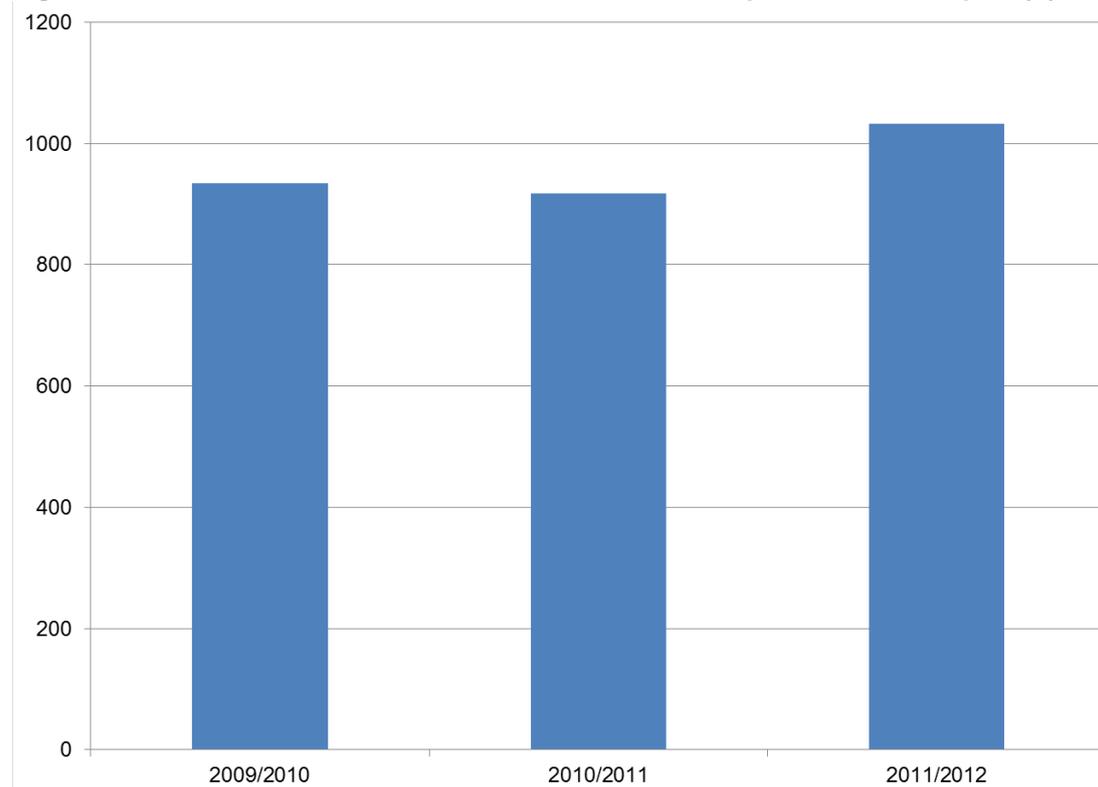


Table 1: Number of new Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships, by awarding country and year

Host country	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	Total
Brunei Darussalam	18	28	14	60
Canada	151	172	228	551
India	30	19	24	73
Kenya*	0	0	1	1
Malaysia	9	10	9	28
Mauritius†	0	0	1	1
New Zealand	26	17	11	54
Nigeria†	0	0	1	1
Samoa (USP)†	0	0	1	1
South Africa	1	3	2	6
Tanzania†	0	0	1	1
Trinidad and Tobago	0	0	1	1
United Kingdom	699	668	737	2104
Total	934	917	1031	2882

* Endowment fund awards

15. Conversely, the average number of Scholars and Fellows on award in each of the three years of the report has fallen back from 1,787 to 1,744. This figure is, however, still high by historical standards, compared with just 1,420 at the time of the 2006 report. The highest ever figure for a single year was 1,837, in 2007-2008.

Table 2: Number of Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows on award, by awarding country and year

Host Country	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	Total
Botswana	1	0	0	1
Brunei Darussalam*	18	28	13	59
Canada	185	189	235	609
India‡	30	19	24	73
Jamaica	1	0	0	1
Kenya**	0	0	1	1
Malaysia	29	25	27	81
Mauritius**	0	0	1	1
New Zealand	74	66	61	201
Nigeria**	0	0	1	1
Samoa (USP)**	0	0	1	1
South Africa	1	4	6	11
Tanzania**	0	0	1	1
Trinidad and Tobago	0	0	1	1
United Kingdom	1455	1357	1377	4189
Total	1794	1688	1749	5231

16. At the time of writing, a total of 13 countries are known to have instigated new awards during the period of the report. These are: Brunei Darussalam, Canada, India, Kenya, Malaysia, Mauritius, New Zealand, Nigeria, Samoa, South Africa, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United Kingdom. This figure compares with 12 in 2009, 14 in 2006, and 9 in 2003. Since these figures were produced, our attention has been drawn to the advertisement by Trinidad and Tobago of four new awards tenable later this year.

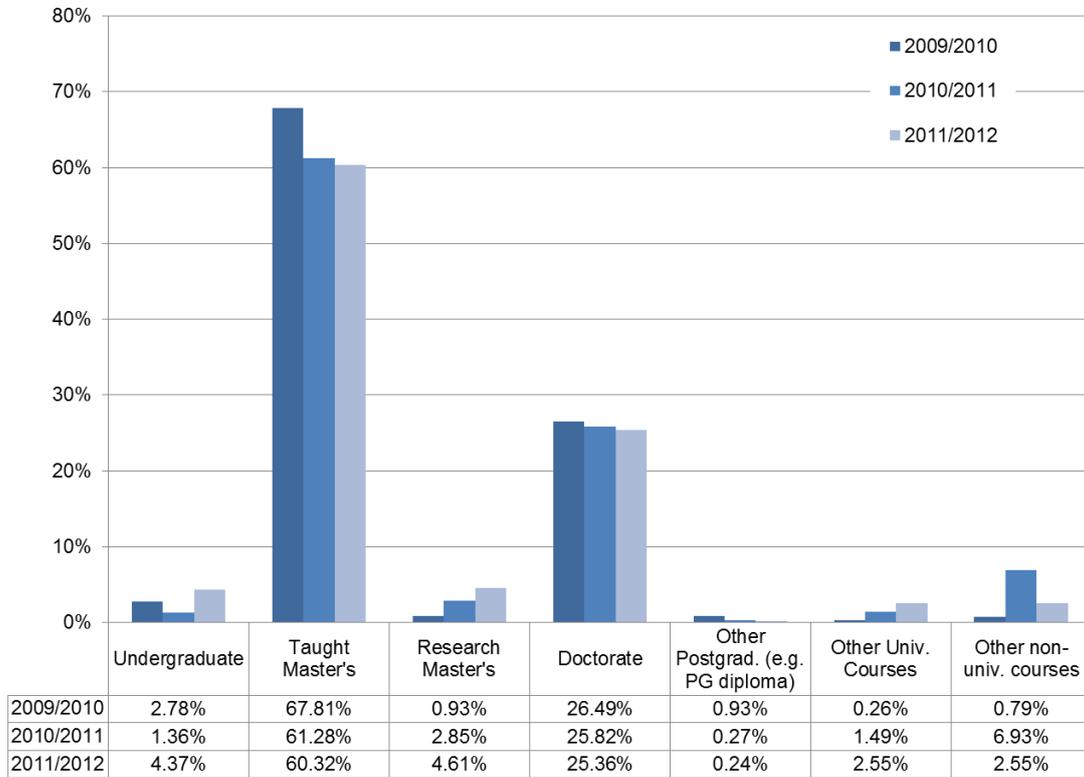
17. The report shows a slight reversal of the trend in recent years towards taught Masters' degrees as the dominant mode, with an average of 63% of Scholarships being awarded for study at this level, down from an average of 65% in the last

* Number of continuers not available

** Endowment fund awards

report. Doctorates (including split-site awards) have risen from an average of 16% in the last report to an average of 26%. Additionally, short-term Fellowships – a mode most typically seen in the United Kingdom – have also increased as a proportion of all new awards, from 15% in 2009 to 17% in 2011. These figures exclude India and Brunei, neither of which is thought to offer Fellowships.

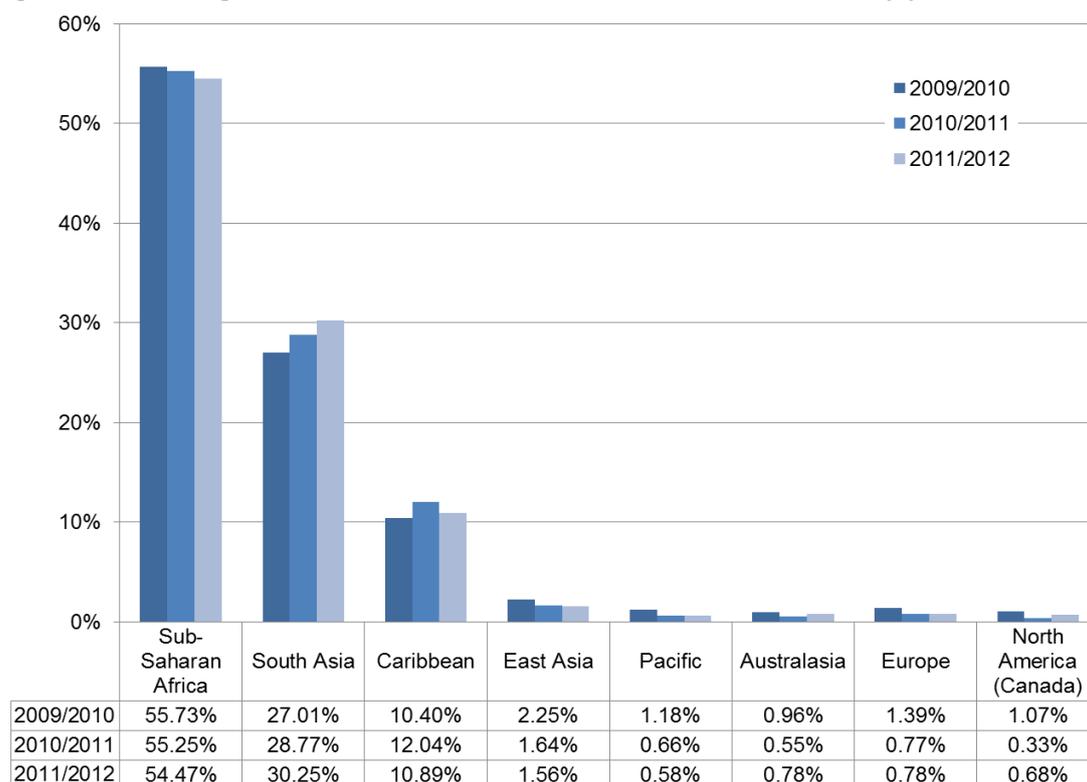
Figure 2: Level/type of new Commonwealth Scholarships, by year*



18. In terms of the recipients of awards by region, the picture has been relatively consistent throughout the period. Africa remains the biggest beneficiary of the Plan, their proportion of award holders settling at around 55%, having varied between 50% and 63% in the previous three-year period. Likewise South Asia, which had varied between 22% and 30% in the period covered by the last report, has settled at the upper end of that range. The most notable decline has been in the proportion of awards for citizens of developed Commonwealth countries. Awards for those from Australasia (Australia and New Zealand), North America (Canada) and Europe (United Kingdom, Malta, and Cyprus) now account for just 2% of the total, compared with 7% three years ago. Whilst the new endowment fund discussed below will provide some additional opportunities for candidates from these countries, it is worth noting that this decline could ultimately endanger the claims of the CSFP to be a genuinely Commonwealth-wide activity.

* Data available for 2,315 Scholars

Figure 3: Home region of new Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows, by year*



19. The average age of award holders has increased slightly over the three-year period, reversing the situation described in 2009, but continuing a trend from the earlier part of the last decade. This trend can best be seen at the two extremes. The proportion of award holders aged 20-24 has declined from 16% to 13%, whilst that for those aged 40-44 has risen from 9% to 11%, and that for those aged over 45 has also nudged up beyond the 10% mark. The proportion of those aged 25-29 has remained fairly constant at 31%, and that for the 30-34 age group at 21%.

Table 3: Age groups of new Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows**

	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45+
Commonwealth Fellows	0.25%	3.50%	12.00%	19.25%	26.50%	38.50%
Commonwealth Scholars	15.65%	37.69%	23.42%	12.39%	6.91%	3.94%
Total	12.78%	31.33%	21.29%	13.67%	10.55%	10.37%

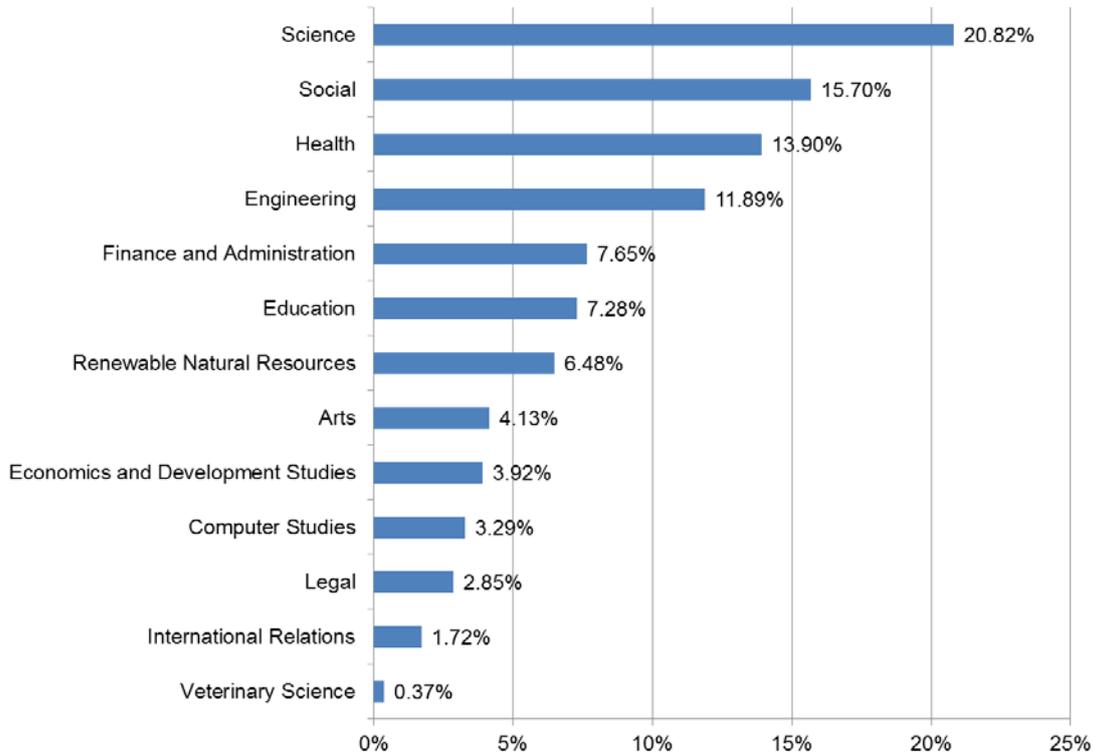
20. All areas of study remain eligible under the Plan, but recent years have seen a shift towards those areas considered to have important development implications. It is slightly surprising, therefore, to see that the proportion of awards classified as 'health' has declined from 18% to 14% during the period. This might, however, be a result of classification issues. The proportion of awards for science has risen from 19% to 21%, and engineering from 9% to 12%. Awards for social

* Data available for 2,876 award holders

** Data available for 2,151 award holders

sciences display the biggest single increase, from 11% to 16%. The proportion of awards categorised as arts remains low, at 4%.

Figure 5: Disciplines of study of new Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships*



21. The proportion of female Commonwealth Scholars continues to remain below 50%, rising from an average of 44% in the previous two reports to an average of 45% in the three years under review. The proportion of female Commonwealth Fellows – awards in which women have historically been further underrepresented due to the seniority of candidates – has fallen to 35% in 2011, following a period of strong growth (36% to 41% from 2006-2009). Overall, the proportion of female Scholars and Fellows taking up awards has remained at 44%. Nominating agencies might, however, point out that these proportions are still significantly higher than those for applications and nominations received from women, suggesting that some concern for gender balance exists in the selection process. It is noted that, in advance of the 2013 competition, the United Kingdom has included further nominating bodies with specific responsibility for increasing the proportion of women in its selection pool.

* Data available for 2,733 award holders

Figure 6: Gender of new Commonwealth Scholars*

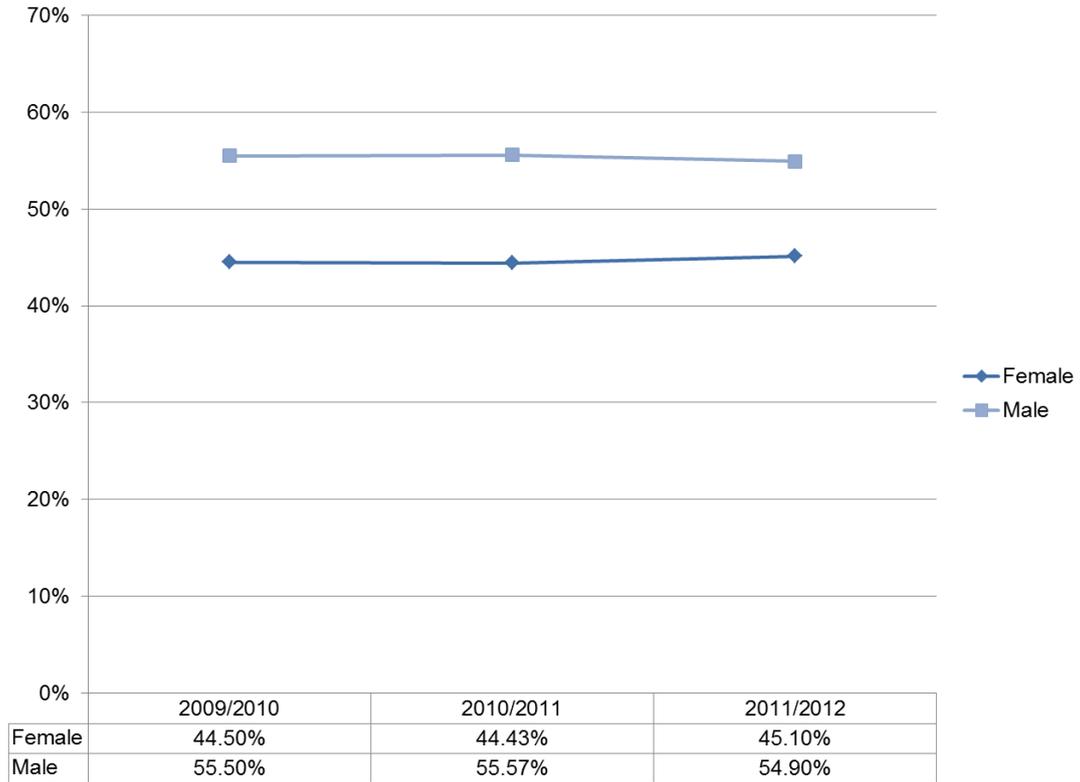
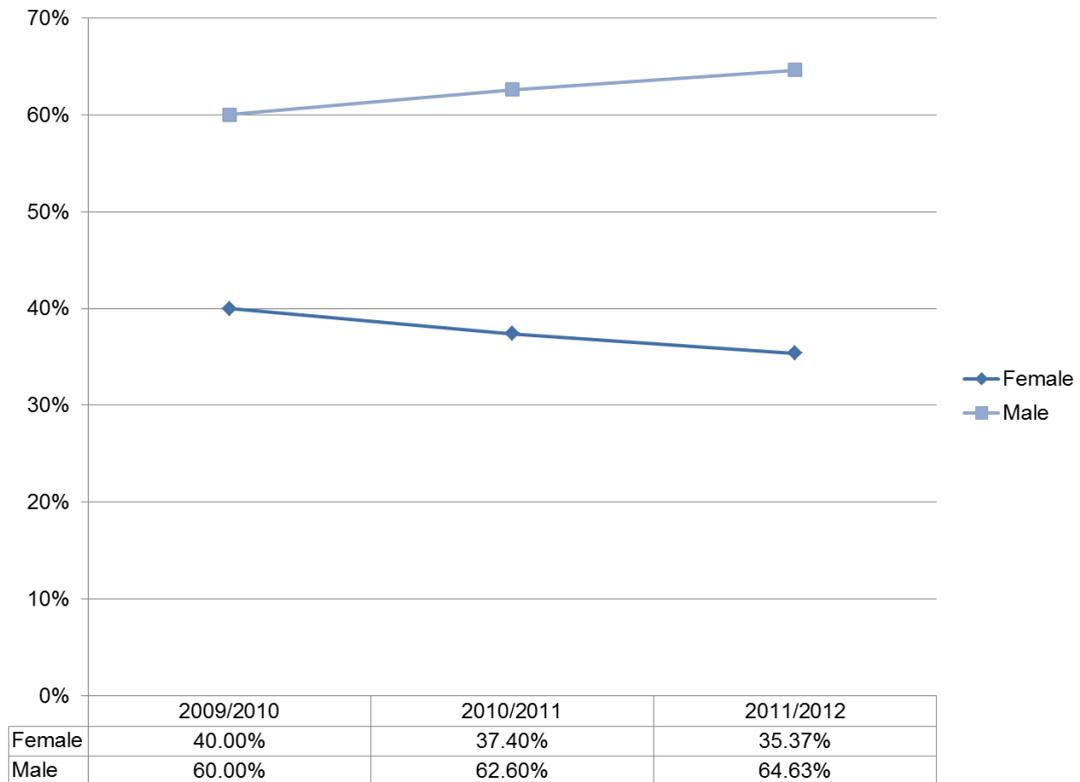


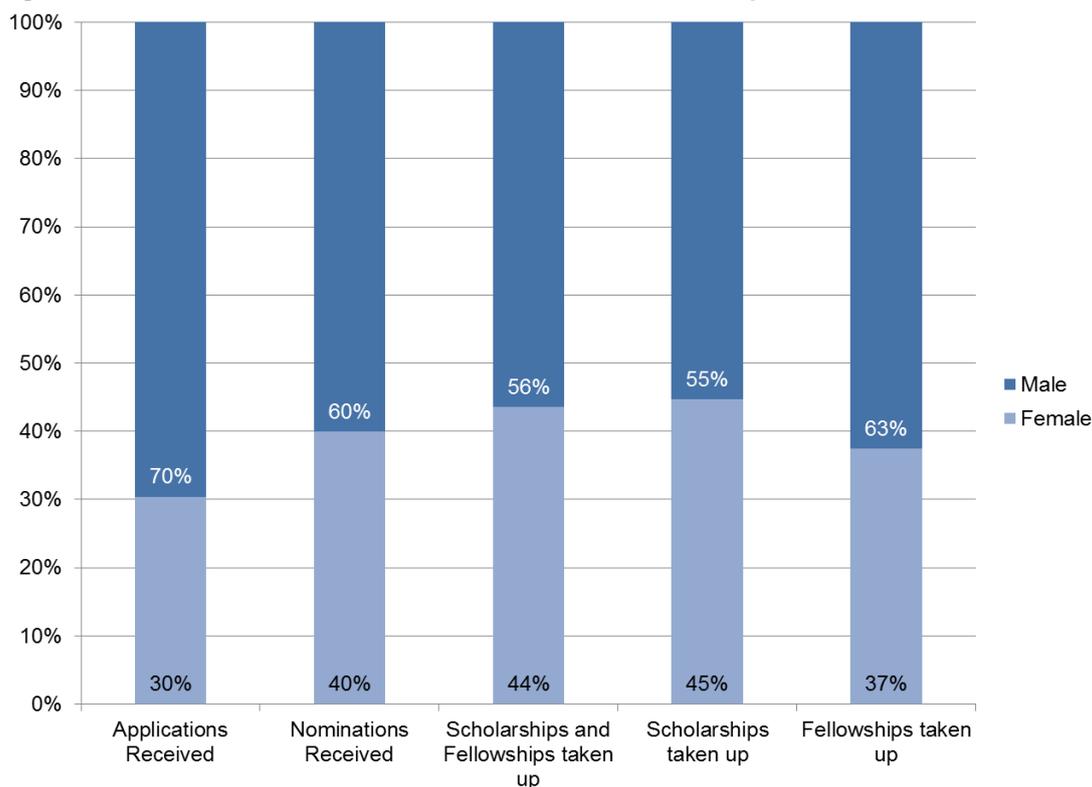
Figure 7: Gender of new Commonwealth Fellows**



* Data available for 2,317 Scholars

** Data available for 425 Fellows

Figure 8: Gender balance across nomination and selection process*



The role and views of national agencies

- 22.** Given the status of the CSFP as a bilateral scheme, the national agencies that administer it in each country have a critical role. Such agencies are appointed by each national government, and are responsible for advertising awards for their citizens; administering the final selection process; and providing support to the beneficiaries while in country.
- 23.** As part of the pre-CCEM survey, national agencies were asked to give their views on the relationship between the scheme and other national priorities, the effectiveness of current procedures, and any challenges that they face in administering the awards. In May 2012, the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) distributed a questionnaire to all agencies seeking their views on the recent operation of the Plan. 27 responses were received.
- 24.** The general consensus amongst the responses received from the agencies was that the CSFP is a positive scheme that has had significant developmental impact. The Maldives agency acknowledged the contributions of the Plan, saying *‘The Government of Maldives aims to gain maximum benefit from these opportunities by allocating the awards to priority sectors and by selecting the most suitable candidates... The scheme is of utmost importance to the country, as we still rely on bilateral assistance for building the human resource capacity of the nation’*. Similarly, the agency in Montserrat also said *‘This Plan is very important to Montserrat... It is very much welcome as applicants are given the opportunity to*

* Data available for 43,245 applications received, 4,268 nominations received, 2,317 Scholarships taken up and 425 Fellowships taken up.

further gain knowledge and skills that will benefit Montserrat in general and provide future leadership and specialist human resource capacity for the island. We are indeed grateful for the opportunity to benefit and would encourage the committee to continue offering it to Montserrat for many years to come'. The Canadian agency, which has recently diversified its award offering to maximise development potential, also stressed the benefits of internationalisation for both host and nominating countries: *'The internationalization of education is a priority for the Government of Canada and the CSFP works toward this end by internationalizing Canada's campuses, offering opportunities for Canadians to study abroad, and fostering people-to-people linkages'*. In many countries, including Canada, the desire for internationalisation means that the Commonwealth scheme now runs alongside several other scholarship programmes, with a constant need to retain its distinct identity. This issue was also mentioned by New Zealand, which is about to embark on a review of its international scholarship programmes.

25. The questionnaire revealed that Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows are utilised in various ways when they return to their home countries. For example, in Bangladesh, Commonwealth Scholars share their experiences and expertise obtained while studying abroad with students and colleagues through teaching, research, and seminars and workshops. The prestige of the CSFP means that Commonwealth Scholars are often held in high esteem in their communities and work environments. For instance, according to its agency, the small community on the Falkland Islands means that former award holders are readily identifiable both personally and by virtue of their positions.
26. Evidence of the CSFP's developmental impact is also seen in the response from the agency in Pakistan, which said that the country *'benefits from the expertise of the beneficiaries in the field of agricultural, petrochemical industries, geology, physics and chemistry, as well as in field of medical science'*. This was reiterated in Ghana's response: *'the Plan has helped to train scholars in critical areas to contribute to the development of the country in governmental, public and private organisations'*. However, in contrast, the agency in Singapore said that the *'Commonwealth Scholarship scheme is not directly influenced by national development priorities [but rather the] candidates are evaluated and ranked based on selection criteria stated in the scholarship prospectus'*. Nevertheless, the Singapore agency acknowledged the contribution of Commonwealth Scholarships to the development of the country: *'the scholarships as part of the Plan are beneficial as it provides developmental opportunities for citizens of Commonwealth countries'*. Host countries such as the United Kingdom and New Zealand continue to regard Commonwealth Scholarships as expenditure from their development budgets.
27. The Plan advocates for Commonwealth countries to become hosts of Commonwealth Scholarships funded by their government. However, this is more commonly taken up by 'developed' Commonwealth countries and those with stable economies. The agency in Sierra Leone, a less developed country, said *'it is the desire of the Republic of Sierra Leone to provide Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan, but the opportunity is yet to avail itself. The nation has just emerged from a civil war and the economy has not stabilised and*

developed enough to support such a programme'. Clearly, economic and social stability, together with quality and range of provision available, will continue to be constraining issues, although the new CSFP endowment fund, discussed below, will offer significant opportunities for a much wider range of hosts. In the meantime, it should also be noted that many Commonwealth countries offer awards to each other without Commonwealth branding. For example, in 2003, Nigerian tertiary institutions gave 100 scholarships to Sierra Leone for middle-level capacity building.

28. The agencies in Trinidad and Tobago, Singapore, and the Maldives also commented on gender with regard to the application process. In Trinidad and Tobago, *'more persons both male and female within a younger age group have demonstrated a keen interest in the Plan'*, and in the Maldives *'equal opportunities are given to both male and female applicants in competing for the awards'*. On the other hand, in Singapore, there is a disparity between the numbers of male and female applicants because *'while the number of male applicants has stayed relatively constant throughout the 3 cycles, there was a greater variation in the number of female applicants. There was a significant decline in female applicants in 2011/2012; only 4 as compared to 10 for 2010/2011'*. This highlights the importance of ensuring that gender equity is incorporated and reinforced in the Plan and implemented by the agencies involved.
29. Recent years have seen increased use of electronic application systems, in particular by the United Kingdom. Comments regarding the EAS were varied across the agencies. Some found it to be effective and useful. The agency in Barbados said *'it has made the application process easier and easily accessible by all candidates'*. However, Lesotho said it is a *'little bit complicated to use'* and Australia found that *'past rounds' applicants were still able to submit documentation after the closing date*'. The Maldives said that *'once the nominations are made, direct communication takes place with the candidates and sometimes the Government is unaware of such communication. This makes it difficult for the Department of Higher Education to its complete internal procedures'*. These responses show that there is a need for improvement of the system, as well as possibly for a capacity building exercise to train agencies which find it difficult to navigate.
30. The agencies highlighted various challenges in their questionnaire responses. Some of the smallest recipient countries experienced difficulties in promoting the scheme. For instance, the agency in Gibraltar strives to attract eligible citizens to apply for the scholarships, yet *'Sadly, despite an aggressive campaign inviting applications, these are often very few'*. The agency in Bermuda said that *'there are very few nominated applicants from Bermuda, therefore, there has been little to no contact with persons who have received awards. Additionally, awardees may choose not to return to Bermuda'*. Montserrat *'lacks the Colleges and Universities because of its small size and population so we are unable to host any awards'*.
31. However, the challenge described by most of the agencies is that the supply of Commonwealth Scholarships does not meet demand. The agency in Nigeria said

that *'The number of candidates seeking the award has continued to increase yearly, while the number of actual awards made by CSC had been very low. Feelings of frustration had been expressed by highly qualified candidates who had attempted the selection process for more than four times. An increase in the new awards is desirable'*. In addition, due to funding restrictions, most countries cannot host awards – this was widely recognised by the agencies as a major challenge. It was recommended that the number of Commonwealth Scholarships be increased to meet the needs of citizens.

A broader perspective

32. The views of nominating agencies can be supplemented by a wider survey conducted by the ACU, on behalf of the Commonwealth Secretariat, in 2010. This attracted large numbers of responses from three sources: 1,006 alumni from the programme; 252 current award holders; and, surveyed for the first time ever, 598 recent applicants to the programme, the vast majority of whom had not been successful in obtaining a scholarship. Those responding came from over 50 countries.
33. The results of the survey are now over two years old, and will not be recited in depth here. They do, however, make several important points for future policy. There was agreement that Commonwealth Scholarships are associated with the words 'prestigious' (76% very strongly agreed; 21% agreed to some extent); 'academic' (82% very strongly; 15% to some extent); 'distinctive' (69% very strongly; 34% to some extent); and 'relevant to national needs' (63% very strongly; 30% to some extent). The awards are much less likely to be regarded as 'accessible' (24% agreed very strongly; 43% agreed to some extent). This could be interpreted in several ways. It may mean that some applicants believe that selection procedures are designed to be exclusive. Equally, it could reflect the high degree of selectivity that is inevitably associated with high-level awards.
34. Respondents were also asked to state their level of agreement with specific statements. 80% agreed (32% strongly) that Commonwealth Scholarships are associated with wider Commonwealth values, and 84% that they improve relations between home and host countries. Interestingly, 75% agreed that the awards are one of the best known of all Commonwealth activities; this despite the fact that the Plan is not actually organised or financially supported by the official Commonwealth. There was also a strong indication that the Commonwealth is not making the most of the opportunity. 80% agreed that 'candidates and alumni would contribute more to wider Commonwealth activities if they had a higher awareness of them'.

The CSFP endowment fund and future prospects

35. It is not possible, in a survey of this nature, to obtain firm evidence about the future intention of national authorities to offer Commonwealth Scholarships. Such budgets are reviewed periodically, if not annually, against a range of factors, including the overall economic and international situation, of which the Commonwealth may only be a small element.

- 36.** Such evidence as we do have, however, is positive. The dominant funder of Commonwealth Scholarships in the United Kingdom, the Department for International Development, is known to have agreed a substantial increase in the budget for Commonwealth Scholarships over the period 2011-2015, which should ensure more awards for 2012 and 2013 entry. It is understood that India has indicated that more awards might be made available, at least on a one-off basis, as part of its contribution to the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. From the evidence of the survey quoted above, other countries also view the CSFP in a positive light.
- 37.** The establishment of the CSFP endowment fund should also serve to increase the number of awards available and, in particular, the number of countries hosting them. In launching the fund at their last meeting, Ministers particularly recognised the goodwill of low and middle income countries that would like to offer international awards under the Plan, and increasingly had the capacity in their universities to do this, but for whom budget restrictions were a major constraint.
- 38.** By 30 June 2012, the value of the CSFP endowment fund had reached some £5.8 million, with contributions from national governments and almost 200 alumni and other individuals. Contributions have been received from the governments of Australia, Barbados, Brunei Darussalam, Kenya, Malaysia, the Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles, and the United Kingdom.
- 39.** The first awards under the endowment fund were made in 2011, and included four postgraduate Scholarships and one Fellowship. The Scholarships were based at the universities of Nairobi, Dar es Salaam, Mauritius, and the South Pacific (Samoa campus). Recipients were from, respectively, Ghana, Canada, Tanzania and Sri Lanka. The Fellowship, which resulted from a donation by the Britain-Nigeria Educational Trust, was based at the University of Ibadan and taken up by a candidate from the United Kingdom. It is interesting to note that, although the awards are all available to candidates from throughout the Commonwealth, two of the five have been awarded to candidates from 'developed' Commonwealth countries. All of the four scholarships are for Master's courses of two years' duration. All of the recipients to date have been male.
- 40.** Steadily increasing income from the endowment fund and, more particularly, substantial donations in recent months will enable significant growth in future years. It is estimated that the fund now has resources to support some 30 award holders at any given time. Accordingly, letters were sent in early July 2012 to the nominating agencies of applicable countries asking whether they would be willing to host awards from 2013. In line with the partnership ethos of the fund, a typical arrangement is for the host country or university to make some concession towards tuition fees, but for the fund to meet all other costs. Recognising that some of the poorest countries in the Commonwealth may not be able to offer international scholarships due to a lack of facilities or capacity, a distinct programme is envisaged through which their university might apply to host a new strand of Commonwealth Fellowships, which will enable senior academics to visit their campus.

41. During the past three years, the endowment fund has been managed by the ACU (at no cost, other than the use of professional fund managers) under the policy direction of a management committee appointed by 17CCEM. Ministers will wish to show their appreciation to committee members, whose advice has been critical in the early stages of activity. In the section below, recommendations are made for committee membership in the next three years. In particular, it is suggested that the committee might in future assume a wide role in the development of the CSFP, and particularly reflect a balance of donors and recipient countries.

Conclusions and recommendations

42. The analysis above suggests that Commonwealth Scholarships continue to enjoy widespread support and recognition. The number of awards has increased, as has the number of countries offering them, to almost the highest point in over 50 years, although the average length of awards (and thus the number of award holders actually on award) has declined slightly from a high point in 2009. Member governments continue to speak highly of the scheme, and its importance is recognised by award holders, alumni, and (more surprisingly) unsuccessful candidates. The success of the new CSFP endowment fund – an idea instigated at the 2006 CCEM and formally launched at the 2009 CCEM – provides a unique opportunity to launch Commonwealth Scholarships in a significantly wider range of countries than ever before.
43. Amidst this generally positive picture, there remain some concerns. The scheme is widely regarded as one of the best known Commonwealth activities, yet the Commonwealth itself does not make the most of the potential of almost 30,000 alumni trained in its name. 80% of those surveyed said that they would be inclined to become more involved in Commonwealth activities if they were made more aware of them.
44. Perhaps related to this, the CSFP continues to have no central organisation, and no formal link with the Commonwealth. There is no central statement of why countries should offer Commonwealth Scholarships, and no mechanism to encourage individual governments. In this situation, there is a continuing danger that the scheme could decline, or become dependent on a small group of donors – all the more so if the Commonwealth were no longer seen to include education in its priorities. In such circumstances, a danger could exist of governments dropping the Commonwealth branding and remit from their awards. At their last four conferences, Education Ministers have recommended that the Commonwealth Secretariat address this danger by devoting a small resource to support the activities of national agencies, on whose funding and management the Plan continues to depend.
45. The launch of the endowment fund described above provides an excellent opportunity to address this issue. The fund is important not only because of the awards that it will support, but also because it provides, for the first time, a central structure. The overall direction of the fund is given by an international management committee, appointed by the last CCEM. Day-to-day administration is provided by the ACU.

46. For the next three years, it is **recommended** that the remit of this committee be extended from managing the endowment fund to supporting the CSFP as a whole. To achieve this, it is proposed that new Terms of Reference are proposed by the Commonwealth Secretariat in conjunction with the ACU. Whilst extending the remit more widely, these should in no way undermine the critical role played by national agencies. Rather, it would seek to promote the idea of offering Commonwealth Scholarships to a wider range of countries, encourage existing donors, share good practice, and monitor progress.
47. This change in function would also entail a change in membership. Henceforth, it is **recommended** that the majority of members should be appointed by national governments or Commonwealth Scholarship agencies. Invitations to participate would be issued by the Commonwealth Secretariat, after advice from the ACU. It is anticipated that member governments would combine key donors to the fund and countries who offer significant numbers of scholarships in their own right with recipient countries. Until such time as membership has been approved by the Secretariat, the current membership of the committee would be invited to continue in office.
48. In addition to the above, Ministers are **recommended** to endorse the significant achievements of the scheme over the past 50 years, note its continuing high profile in the range of Commonwealth activities, and convey encouragement to member governments to maintain, and where possible increase, their provision of Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships over the coming three years.

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