

COMMONWEALTH COMMISSION / CHEVENING SCHOLARSHIPS FOR AFRICAN HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATES

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Scholarship Guidance Notes for Applicants 2012-13 Admission



1. What do the scholarships offer?

The five scholarships provide fully funded opportunities for part-time postgraduate study in international human rights law at the University of Oxford, starting September 2012. The course of study is taught over 22 months and consists of two residential sessions in Oxford and two periods of distance learning. The scholarships are funded by the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission and the Foreign Office's Chevening Scholarship Fund and are intended for human rights advocates from African Commonwealth countries (see Appendix 1 for list of eligible countries) who would be unable, without assistance, to take up their place on this course. Subject to satisfactory progress, the scholarships lead to the award of a Master of Studies (MSt) in International Human Rights Law.

Each scholarship provides course and college fees at the University of Oxford over two years, a stipend to cover living costs and return air travel from the scholar's home country for each residential session.

2. Who is eligible to apply?

Applicants must:

- (i) display intellectual ability and leadership potential;
- (ii) have an adequate standard of English, as defined and required by the University for studies at which the awards are given (see <http://humanrightslaw.conted.ox.ac.uk/MStIHRL/admissions/index.php>);
- (iii) be citizens of a developing African Commonwealth country (see Appendix 1 for eligible countries) and resident/working in a developing African Commonwealth country when the award is taken up and for its duration (this does not have to be the applicant's home country).

and will normally:

- (i) already hold a law degree to a high standard. The degree must be at a level at least equivalent to a Bachelor's degree in Law awarded in the UK. Applications from those with extensive human-rights related experience, but without a law degree, will also be considered.
- (ii) have work experience in a related field/s;
- (iii) not already have received or be currently receiving financial benefit from a previous British Government funded scholarship or a previous Commonwealth Commission funded scholarship.

A preference will be given to applicants who have not previously studied outside of their home country.

Employees, employee's relatives (or former employees who have left employment less than 2 years before) of FCO (including FCO Posts), the British Council or the Commonwealth Commission will not be eligible to apply for these awards.

3. How can I apply?

Before making an application, please check that you meet both the eligibility requirements for the scholarship (see above) and for the course itself (see <http://humanrightslaw.conted.ox.ac.uk/MStIHRL/admissions/index.php#admissionscriteria>). If you are satisfied that you meet the criteria please follow the instructions below.

Stage 1 – making an initial application

Go to http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/postgraduate_courses/apply/application_forms.html, find the heading 'Applications for Graduate Study' and download the two documents entitled: '*Application Form for Graduate Study 2012-13*' and '*Reference Form for Graduate Study 2012-13*'. The deadline for submitting the completed application form (to the Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria, where the initial assessment of applications will take place) is **30 March 2012** (please note this has been extended from 30 November 2011) so you need to leave sufficient time to complete the application form, to gather the required supporting materials (including references) and to send everything to Pretoria.

Please note: Although Oxford's graduate admissions web pages strongly encourage all applicants to apply using Oxford's online application system, for these scholarships you **must** use the PDF application form.

When completing the application form please follow carefully the instructions contained in the Application Guide at http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/postgraduate_courses/apply/application_guide.html and, additionally, please note the points below:

- **Section G/H** (English Language Skills/Proficiency): Unless your first language is English or you meet the conditions for applying for a waiver of the language requirement, please remember to include evidence of your proficiency (i.e. a certificate showing you meet the required score from one of the tests recognized by the University). If you wish to apply for a waiver you will need to include a letter with your application outlining the reasons why you should be exempted from the requirement.
- **Section I Part 2** (Programme of Study – Applicants for Taught Programmes): the course code is 000160, the qualification is MSt and the course title MSt International Human Rights Law. You can leave blank parts 1 and 3 of this section.
- **Section L** (Funding): list your primary funding source as 'FCO Commonwealth African Scholarships'.
- **Section M** (Oxford Scholarships): leave this section blank.
- **Section N** (Supporting Materials): the materials required for the MSt in International Human Rights Law are the compulsory materials required for all graduate courses (i.e. three references, transcript(s) of previous higher education, CV and statement of purpose). No written work is required. With regards to references please send your referees the '*Reference Form for Graduate Study 2012-13*' which you downloaded from the University's website and ask them to provide their reference on letter-headed paper in a sealed envelope, and to sign across the seal and cover their signature with clear adhesive tape. Your references should be returned to you in the sealed envelopes and you should submit them, unopened, with your application.
- **Section O** (Application Fee): add a note saying that you are applying for the course through the FCO Commonwealth African scholarship scheme and that your application fee will be paid by the FCO.
- With regards to submitting your application please **do not** follow the instructions for submitting to Oxford but, instead, submit your completed application form (**in hard copy and with all supporting materials**) to the address below by **Friday 30 March 2012**.

FAO Mr Norman Taku
FCO Commonwealth African Scholarships
Centre for Human Rights
Faculty of Law
University of Pretoria
PRETORIA 0002
South Africa

All completed applications submitted to the above address by the given deadline will be assessed by a representative of the High Commission in Pretoria and an academic from the University of Pretoria. Please note that where an application arrives late or is missing any of the supporting materials, it will not be considered.

Applicants who meet the course and scholarship requirements will be called for an interview in April 2012 and, again, assessed by the representatives listed above. Applicants will be interviewed by telephone unless they live within the Gauteng Province and are able to travel to Pretoria in person.

Once interviews have taken place, the assessors will produce a shortlist and the applications of these candidates will be forwarded to Oxford University for the next stage of the process.

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of this first stage of the application process in late April/early May 2012. If you are not shortlisted, your application for both the scholarships and the course will not be taken any further. Furthermore, you will not, at this stage, be able to apply for the course directly through Oxford (i.e. without this particular source of funding) as admissions close in March.

Stage 2 –shortlisted applicants only

The applications of shortlisted students will be sent from Pretoria to Oxford University in late April/early May 2012. They will be assessed by a selection panel of academics from the Department for Continuing Education and the Law Faculty. The panel will select five candidates (plus a small number of reserves) who will then be invited to submit an application to the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission for consideration.

Applicants will be informed of the outcome of this second stage of the process in mid-May 2012. Please note that successful candidates will only have a short period of two weeks (the last two weeks of May) to submit their application to the Commonwealth Commission and should therefore reserve sufficient time to do this. Candidates will be required to submit two references and their degree transcripts via the Commonwealth Commission's online application system and are therefore advised to have these documents available in advance, where possible. Further details will be provided at the time. If you are not selected, your application for both the scholarships and the course will not be taken any further and it will be too late to apply through Oxford directly.

Stage 3 – Oxford's shortlisted applicants only

The Commonwealth Scholarship Commission selection committee will consider the five candidates (and reserves) nominated by Oxford to ensure that they meet CSC requirements. This stage of the process is essentially an endorsement of the chosen candidates by the CSC and it is unlikely, though not impossible, that candidates will be rejected by the CSC.

Applicants will be informed of the outcome of the third and final stage of the process in July 2012. A small number of candidates may be offered reserve places for scholarships, which means that there is a **possibility** that they will be given a scholarship, if one of the successful candidates withdraws from the programme.

4. How can I find out more about the University of Oxford?

- Visit the Oxford University home page <http://www.ox.ac.uk/> and the Graduate Studies Prospectus online at http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/postgraduate_courses/index.html.
- If you wish to find out more about the content of the course, or you are interested in applying directly to the programme (i.e. not through this scholarship scheme), please visit the course web site at <http://humanrightslaw.conted.ox.ac.uk/MStIHRL/index.php>.

5. Who should I contact if I have any questions?

Please make use of all of the information available to you:

- the course website at <http://humanrightslaw.conted.ox.ac.uk/MStIHRL/index.php>
- the Graduate Studies Prospectus at http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/postgraduate_courses/index.html,
- the application guide at http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/postgraduate_courses/apply/application_guide.html
- these guidance notes

If the above websites do not answer your questions please contact the Administrator for this course at Oxford University on iphumrts@conted.ox.ac.uk.

Appendix 1

List of African Commonwealth countries

- Botswana
- Cameroon
- The Gambia
- Ghana
- Kenya
- Lesotho
- Malawi
- Mauritius
- Mozambique
- Namibia
- Nigeria
- Rwanda
- Seychelles
- Sierra Leone
- South Africa
- Swaziland
- Tanzania
- Uganda
- Zambia

Please note: Applications from candidates living and working in Zimbabwe cannot be accepted although Zimbabwean citizens who are living/working in another Commonwealth Southern African country and who have refugee status may apply.