

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY / KULIKA UGANDA: MSc IN DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT
COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS 2015**

Dear Applicant

Thank you very much for your interest in applying for a *Commonwealth Scholarship* to study our MSc in Development Management. I am writing to say something about the process of application and about the degree.

1. The application process:

The Open University UK is in partnership with Kulika Uganda in managing both the recruitment process and the progress of students who succeed in receiving an award. We have been working together successfully on Commonwealth Scholarship awards since 2006, but our partnership stretches back to the 1990s. This year we have been asked to nominate 10 people for Scholarships and a further 5 people as reserves.

The Commonwealth Scholarship Commission (CSC) has its own application system, and applicants **must** complete their electronic application form if they are to be considered for a Scholarship. This can be accessed via <http://cscuk.dfid.gov.uk/apply/distance-learning/>. If this, or any other link you have been directed to, doesn't work then search electronically for 'Commonwealth Distance Learning Scholarships' and follow the links on the **cscuk** (CSC UK) website to the application process.

You will then need to click on 'Applicant's Portal'. This will invite you to 'register as a new user': you take it from there! This form has to be completed **no later than 15 May**. You are of course free to complete this form at any time up to 15 May, but I would recommend that you at least look at it – and ideally complete it – at your earliest opportunity. It is quite a demanding form, which includes requests for supporting material (for example, references, university degree transcripts) which it might take you some time to organise, so 'sooner rather than later' would be a good rule to follow!

There is one particular part of the form that I need to draw your attention to. In Section 2.3 it asks questions concerning your English language proficiency, and says that "evidence of a minimum IELTS score of 6.5 may be required as a condition of eligibility". In Kenya and Uganda, that requirement is not as far as I know enforced by the CSC. However, the Open University has a rule that states that: "*If English is not your first language, we recommend that you will need a minimum overall score of 6 and minimum score of 5.5 in each of the four components: reading, writing, speaking and listening under the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Please see the [IELTS website](#) for details.*" I hope that this does not pose a problem for you. But if you are uncertain about this, please feel free to get in touch with me: richard.pinder@open.ac.uk

As you fill the form in, bear in mind that as well as a good educational record and good work record you need to provide evidence of:

- the contribution your work makes to development in your country
- your professional skills and competences
- your vision of development in your country, and the values that inform your decision
- your appreciation of the value of the MSc for you as a professional and for the work of your organisation

If you have any problem with this, please feel free to contact me at the above address.

The evidence supplied on this form will provide the basis for our decision-making. All applications will be considered by a panel that includes both Kulika and Open University representatives. This panel will choose the people to be nominated for Scholarships and those asked to be reserves. In the selection process we may well need to contact you and the organisation you work for, to explore what you say on the application form and to ensure **that both you and your organisation** would be committed to this demanding three-year course of study: we take your completing the application form as giving us consent to do so. Until you hear from us, which will be in May, there is nothing more for you to do once you have fully completed the CSC form.

We have to make our choices known to the CSC, which has the final decision on awards, **no later than 31 May**. The Commission will let us know the results later in the year, possibly in July. Those people who are awarded Scholarships will be expected to start their studies in November.

2. The Open University MSc in Development Management

The MSc is a course that was established in 1996, and is well regarded internationally. Over 1000 students have achieved this award, including a significant number in Uganda and Kenya. You may well know one or more of our MScs, and if you do I would strongly recommend that you ask them both about its value and about the demands it puts upon students. I am confident that they will say it is both very valuable and very demanding!

The MSc follows a set pattern, beginning in November this year. Each year, Scholars study two 6 month modules (November – April, May to October). These are organised as follows:

Year 1: Postgraduate Certificate in Development Management

Development: Context and Practice
Capacities for Managing Development

Year 2: Diploma in Development Management

Institutional Development
Conflict and development

Year 3: MSc in Development Management

Optional module (usually relating to education/the environment/human rights)
The Development Management Project

Synopses of the modules (though not the optional ones) are provided at the end of this letter. The whole programme is undertaken on a distance learning basis, and most of the teaching/learning is online, though provision is made for at least one day school in Kampala and in Nairobi for each module, provided by an experienced tutor. Throughout each module, students have the benefit of a specialist tutor who guides their learning and assesses their performance.

Fees for these modules are covered by the Scholarships. I should also say that students who fail a module have to cover the fee themselves if they want to retake the module – though this is a comparatively rare occurrence.

I hope that this is helpful and that you will be encouraged to proceed with your application. And, if you are not successful, please be aware that we would be delighted to see you applying to study any or all of these modules. Whether with a Scholarship or without, you would be joining an impressive body of development management professionals in East Africa who have pursued this course.

With best wishes,

Richard Pinder

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MANAGING DEVELOPMENT

A picture of managers dealing in the diversity and complexity of particular contexts emerges from the five modules that form the heart of the **Open University Postgraduate Development Management Programme**. It is a picture of managers who:

- understand and engage with the context in which development is intended to take place
- are clear about the values, meanings and interests that inform their actions
- recognise the values, meanings and interests of other actors
- recognise the political and ethical dimensions of the processes in which they are engaged
- can manage conflict
- appreciate the significance of good inter-organisational relationships
- can negotiate understandings and agreements that enable a range of actors to work together for change
- reflect critically on their own practice

The picture is of managers working in development contexts. But the skills displayed - the skills taught on the Programme - are skills required by managers working in any and all contexts.

Setting the framework:

T877: Development: context and practice

T877 explores contemporary debates on 'development'. It does so in inter-disciplinary fashion, and with an understanding that development is not confined to a particular geographical area but is happening anywhere and everywhere, presenting us all with challenges that are professional and personal, practical and political. It confronts conventional understandings of development and encourages critical reflection on how development is best undertaken, from local through to global levels.

Above all, it demonstrates the need on the part of managers to appreciate the significance of context – historical, cultural, social, political, economic – if they are to bring about development.

The analytical and professional/practical skills presented encourage understanding both of what development is and might be and of how it is and might be done. The module thus provides an excellent grounding in development studies and a sound academic framework within which to build up skills for managing development, the concern of our wider postgraduate development management programme.

Getting the basics in place:

T878: Capacities for managing development

Development management engages with the multiple challenges of 'development', and this module sets out to build up the basic capacities for managing those challenges. It rests on the assumption that management – any management, anywhere - is essentially a political and ethical process, a matter of the use of power to bring about desired goals in contexts characterised by conflicts of interests, values and agendas.

The module teaches a range of skills needed and used by any manager, skills to do in particular with strategic thinking, research, advocacy, planning, policy making, and evaluation. The teaching is sharpened by exploration of the use of these skills in development contexts, contexts where the issues are issues of freedom, of well-being, even issues of life and death, for individuals, organisations, communities, and nations.

The module – like the Postgraduate Development Management Programme as a whole - is designed for managers seeking to develop these skills and willing and able to reflect on the politics and ethics of their use. It is of relevance to managers in any sector – public, private, civil society – anywhere. No less importantly, it is open to all who have to manage, whether or not they are called ‘managers’.

In all this, the module demonstrates that capacities for managing development are quite simply capacities for managing.

Making for sustainability:

TU872: institutional development: conflicts, values and meanings

Institutions are critical for the success and sustainability of development processes. Managers – whether in the public sector, the private sector, or civil society – need the capacity to analyse the institutional landscape, design appropriate institutions, and establish good inter-organisational relationships.

This module aims to develop those capacities by:

- exploring the theory of institutions and institutional development
- examining the policy and practice of institutional development, in a variety of fields, including poverty reduction, governance, and humanitarian interventions
- exploring how relationships built around competition, coordination and cooperation underpin institutional development
- demonstrating how the skills of mapping and modelling, negotiating and brokering, contribute to institutional development.

The module examines issues of power, explores ways in which values, meanings and worldviews shape policy and practice, and shows how development management is always a negotiated process. In all this, it addresses and responds to the overwhelming experience of development management practitioners that the success or failure of their interventions depends primarily on getting the right relationships in place.

Intervening with understanding:

T879: Conflict and development

Conflict is found in all societies and takes a variety of forms. Any development intervention must deal with both the causes of conflict and its consequences. Additionally, some development interventions themselves generate conflict within societies. This module addresses the multi-faceted nature of conflict: the complex causes, the diverse impacts conflicts have on development, and the range of actions that can help mitigate conflicts.

Throughout, issues of direct concern to practitioners – such as how to assess the background to conflict, how to engage with those involved, how to work with diverse agencies, how to formulate

interventions, how to evaluate their impact – are at the forefront of the study material. The module also examines how organisations respond to conflict, as well as the consequences, both positive and negative, of those responses, from social, cultural, economic and political perspectives.

By equipping development managers and others working on or in conflict situations with both analytical and practical tools, the module will help them to intervene in ways that are sensitive to these complex contexts.

Making the case for change:

TU874: The development management project

Development managers are often called upon to undertake investigations that contribute to changes in practice and policy. The Development Management Project, the final, compulsory element of the MSc, provides an opportunity to learn, develop and practise the skills required for such an undertaking:

- establishing the need for an investigation
- defining the problem under investigation
- identifying ways of investigating the problem
- carrying out the research
- analysing the data gathered
- making an evidence-based case for change

The project is individually chosen, the choice determined by the student's own passions and priorities. The process is guided by learning from previous modules of the Masters Programme. And the product is a report that makes the case for change in the understanding of, and the practice and policy related to, a significant development management problem.

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