

Going Global Partnerships

Women in STEM Scholarships 2023/24

Call for Proposals for UK Universities and Research Institutions

Call opens on 21 September 2022

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04/10/2022	02	Page 9 – number of fellows changed to three (not four)

Associated documents

DATE	TITLE	LINK

1. Background

Going Global Partnerships (GGP) builds stronger, more inclusive, internationally connected higher education and TVET systems which support economic and social growth. Through this British Council programme, you can connect, collaborate and innovate with universities, colleges, education policy makers and other partners in the UK and around the world.

Under GGP, the scholarship programme for Women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths), provides funding for women from eligible countries to complete a Master's degree in the UK or to pursue an Early Academic Fellowship. Since 2020, the British Council has delivered the programme in partnership with selected UK Universities and Research Institutions which have awarded over 200 scholarships.

The gender gap in STEM is well documented¹. But not only do women make up a fraction of the workforce and research teams in STEM, they are published less, paid less and are less likely than their male counterparts to reach positions of leadership², despite being proven to be on average 8% more productive³.

Considering “a typical STEM worker now earns two-thirds more than non-STEM workers”⁴, closing the gender gap in STEM can be considered a key strategy in working towards the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Five – Gender Equality⁵, and not just in direct terms, but in ways far more wide reaching. For example, there is a robust and positive correlation between women's authorship of medical research papers, and the likelihood of a study including gender and sex analysis⁶– which is increasingly recognized as a key factor in creating better healthcare, particularly for women and girls.

The British Council has established programmes to support Women and Girls in STEM around the world, designed with a lifecycle approach in mind, from inspiring young girls to stay in STEM to supporting women working in STEM fields reach positions of leadership and network with their peers in their region and the UK.

2. Objectives

Access to education is one contributing factor leading to the underrepresentation of women in STEM. The objective of this programme is to help address this situation by providing opportunities for women from the countries listed below to continue with their studies and research in STEM subjects.

¹ <https://www.aauw.org/resources/research/the-stem-gap/>

² <http://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/women-science>

³ <https://publications.iadb.org/en/gender-gaps-and-scientific-productivity-middle-income-countries-evidence-mexico>

⁴ https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2018/01/09/women-and-men-in-stem-often-at-odds-over-workplace-equity/ps_2018-01-09_stem_1-09/

⁵ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5>

⁶ <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41562-017-0235-x>

Opportunities will be made available for women to apply to the British Council Scholarships for Women in STEM programme, either to complete a Master’s degree in the United Kingdom, or to pursue an Early Academic Fellowship.

Early Academic Fellowships are specifically designed for women who have recently been awarded their PhD (0-12 months postdoctoral and have not held a permanent academic post with a research element) and wish to have a research experience at a UK university or research institution, converting their doctoral work into publications or other academic outputs, and establishing new research relationships.

The table below lists the countries from which eligible applicants can apply.

Master scholarships are open to applicants from all countries listed below. Early Academic Fellowships are open only to countries listed in South Asia and East Asia.

BRAZIL, MEXICO & THE REST OF THE AMERICAS	SOUTH ASIA	EAST ASIA	MENA	WIDER EUROPE
Brazil Mexico Colombia Peru Jamaica Argentina Venezuela Cuba Trinidad & Tobago	Bangladesh India Nepal Pakistan Sri Lanka	Cambodia Indonesia Laos Malaysia Myanmar Philippines Thailand Vietnam	Egypt	Albania Bosnia and Herzegovina North Macedonia Kosovo Serbia Montenegro Kazakhstan Uzbekistan Turkey

In particular, the British Council Scholarship for Women in STEM and Academic Fellowship Programme will:

- Significantly increase the number of opportunities for women from the eligible countries able to complete a UK Master’s degree in 2023/24 academic year.
- Increase research partnership opportunities for women in South Asia and East Asia with the UK.
- Ensure scholar selection will be based on an individual’s academic potential and demonstrated case for financial support. We will be particularly encouraging of women

whose identities include multiple intersecting factors, including race, class, and religion, and women who are mothers.

- Provide the selected scholars with a foundation to launch their careers in higher education and research in their home country.
- Enable individuals to promote and enhance science and innovation in their home country through their exposure to the expertise in the UK's renowned STEM research sector.
- Ensure scholars create strong and lasting connections with the UK through active engagement in the alumni network, directly contributing towards/supporting the success of this programme in future iterations of the Scholarship.
- Provide a platform for the countries included in this call and the UK to work together to address the significant challenge of the gender gap in STEM.

3. Opportunity for UK Universities and Research Institutions

Through this programme the British Council, in partnership with selected universities and research institutions, will be able to fund at least 75 full scholarships, covering all academic and living expenses, for women to study full-time, a 1-year Master's programme in the UK or an Early Academic Fellowship programme, beginning in Sept/Oct 2022.

This call seeks proposals from UK universities and research institutions, with a commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), who wish to host **Master's Scholars and/or recent PhD graduates**, in an ODA-eligible programme from the following programme areas:

- Health and Life Sciences
- Climate Change, Environment and Risk Reduction
- Energy Transition
- Agriculture
- Industry 4.0 / Digital Transformation
- Disaster Resilient Infrastructure
- Conversion masters from BA/MA in a range of disciplines

Please consider that the programmes selected should meet the **spirit of ODA**⁷, with the potential to focus on outcomes that promote the long-term sustainable growth of countries on the OECD DAC list (all countries included in this Call are on the DAC list).

⁷ <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/official-development-assistance.htm>

4. Budget and Cohorts

The available scholarships are divided into cohorts. For Masters scholarships, each cohort is expected to be sufficient for institutions to make at least 5 scholarship awards. For Early Academic Fellowships, each cohort is expected to cover at least 3 individual opportunities.

Each **cohort has a value of £180,000** each which the British Council will pay as a grant to the HEI or Research Institution selected for that cohort in November 2022.

For each cohort, the Institution and British Council will select applicants to be recipients of full scholarships (with an average value of £36,000 per Master scholar) to study in the UK.

Should additional funding become available during the application process, the British Council may increase the total funding allocated to some of the cohorts, and subsequently increase the number of expected scholarships allocated.

The Grant is not transferable, and any underspend will need to be returned to the British Council.

HEIs and Research Institutions may apply to any of the cohorts below – but can only be selected as a recipient of one Master cohort and one Early Career Fellowship cohort (unless no other qualifying institutions submit applications). When applying to the cohorts, each institution must establish their order of preference in the online EoI form.

The British Council expects to award at least 15 cohorts. The distribution of these cohorts will depend on geographic priorities and quality of applications. The cohorts available are the following:

4.1 Cohorts for Master programmes

Name of the cohorts	Characteristics
Master's South Asia Cohorts	<p>Cohort must finance at least 5 students from the list of eligible countries listed under South Asia on page 4.</p> <p>The Master's programmes must be ODA compliant and drawn from the eligible programme areas listed on page 5.</p> <p>Within each cohort, a range of eligible master's programmes may be offered by a single institution, including conversion Master's.</p> <p>Institutions need to ensure geographical spread across countries in the region, with a focus on including candidates from India.</p>
Master's East Asia Cohorts	<p>Cohort must finance at least 5 students from the list of eligible countries listed under East Asia on page 4.</p> <p>The Master's programmes must be ODA compliant and drawn from the eligible programme areas listed on page 5.</p> <p>Within each cohort, a range of eligible Master's programmes may be offered by a single institution, including conversion Master's.</p>

	<p>Institutions need to ensure geographical spread across countries in the region, when there are enough applications that meet the criteria.</p>
Master's Brazil Cohort	<p>Cohort must finance at least 5 students from Brazil.</p> <p>The Master's programmes must be ODA compliant and drawn from the eligible programme areas listed on page 5.</p> <p>Within each cohort, a range of eligible Master's programmes may be offered by a single institution, including conversion Master's.</p>
Master's Mexico Cohort	<p>Cohort must finance at least 5 students from Mexico.</p> <p>The Master's programmes must be ODA compliant and drawn from the eligible programme areas listed on page 5.</p> <p>Within each cohort, a range of eligible Master's programmes may be offered by a single institution, including conversion Master's</p>
Master's Americas Cohorts	<p>Cohort must finance at least 5 students from the list of the following eligible countries: Colombia, Peru, Jamaica, Argentina, Venezuela, Cuba, Trinidad & Tobago.</p> <p>The Master's programmes must be ODA compliant and drawn from the eligible programme areas listed on page 4.</p> <p>Within each cohort, a range of eligible master's programmes may be offered by a single institution, including conversion Master's.</p>
Master's Egypt Cohorts	<p>Cohort must finance at least 5 students from Egypt.</p> <p>The Master's programmes must be ODA compliant and drawn from the eligible programme areas listed on page 4.</p> <p>Within each cohort, a range of eligible master's programmes may be offered by a single institution, including conversion Master's.</p>
Master's Wider Europe Cohort	<p>Cohort must finance at least 5 students from the list of eligible countries listed under Wider Europe on page 4 including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Serbia, Montenegro, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. The Master's programmes must be ODA compliant and drawn from the eligible programme areas listed on page 5.</p> <p>Within each cohort, a range of eligible Master's programmes may be offered by a single institution, including conversion Master's.</p>
Master's Turkey Cohort	<p>Cohort must finance at least 5 students from Turkey.</p> <p>The Master's programmes must be ODA compliant and drawn from the eligible programme areas listed on page 5.</p> <p>Within each cohort, a range of eligible Master's programmes may be offered by a single institution, including conversion Master's</p>

<p>Master's Central Asia Cohort</p>	<p>Cohort must finance at least 5 students from Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan</p> <p>The Master's programmes must be ODA compliant and drawn from the eligible programme areas listed on page 5.</p> <p>Within each cohort, a range of eligible Master's programmes may be offered by a single institution, including conversion Master's</p>
<p>Master's Western Balkans Cohort</p>	<p>Cohort must finance at least 5 students from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Serbia, Montenegro.</p> <p>The Master's programmes must be ODA compliant and drawn from the eligible programme areas listed on page 5.</p> <p>Within each cohort, a range of eligible Master's programmes may be offered by a single institution, including conversion Master's</p>

4.2 Cohorts for Early Academic Fellowships

Name of the cohorts	Characteristics
<p>Early Academic Fellowship South Asia Cohorts</p>	<p>Cohort must finance at least 3 scholars from eligible countries listed under South Asia on page 4.</p> <p>Universities cannot have more than 2 scholars from any given country.</p> <p>Postdoc research programmes must be ODA-compliant and drawn from the eligible research areas listed on page 5.</p>
<p>Early Academic Fellowship East Asia Cohorts</p>	<p>Cohort must finance at least 3 scholars from eligible countries listed under East Asia on page 4.</p> <p>Universities cannot have more than 2 scholars from any given country.</p> <p>Postdoc research programmes must be ODA-compliant and drawn from the eligible research areas listed on page 5.</p>

5. Expected Deliverables for Masters

The grant given to the university should be administered as a scholarship for the selected scholars. The scholarship should cover all costs (up to agreed limits for each element) associated with the programme study including:

- Tuition fees.
- Up to 12-months monthly stipend at the rate of £1,236 p/month or £1,516 p/month for London metropolitan area to cover costs of living, including accommodation.
- Where applicable, accompanying child allowance for scholars consistent with [UK visa requirements](#).⁸
- IELTS exam fee (for scholars without a valid Test of English).
- Return economy-class travel from home country to UK.
- Study-related costs, such as essential travel, materials, equipment, thesis printing etc.
- Visa and insurance / NHS surcharge costs
- Ad hoc costs (heavy baggage allowance, etc.)

UK Universities who would like to host students under this scheme would be expected to co-fund the scholarships by way of making up any shortfall in funding, if applicable, for the up-to 12-month period that the £36,000 grant does not cover. This can be cash or in-kind, such as a reduction on the tuition fees or discounted university accommodation.

Host universities, through their international student support structures, would be expected to provide support in the lead up to and throughout the up-to 12-month term. This should include:

- Communications prior to arrival – including support for visa application, arrival to the UK etc.
- Support for the international student experience, including mentoring and welfare support
- Arranging accommodation or housing for the scholar
- General information about adapting to living in the UK
- Opportunities for skills development – including links with industry and networking
- A nominated point of contact for any issues or concerns

6. Expected Deliverables for Early Academic Fellowships

The Early Academic Fellowships will be funded by a grant to the university of £180K, from which at least three fellows should be supported. We welcome proposals from universities with novel

⁸ Further detail on request. For reference, scholars accompanied by their children should receive £680 p/month for each dependent underaged child. This amount increases to £845 p/month for institutions located in London. Candidates travelling with underage dependants will be subject to visa authorisations which are beyond British Council's area.

and creative ways to support the early academic fellows, possibly travelling with dependents, to ensure they derive the most benefit from their research period in the UK. The costs for each fellow should include at a minimum:

- Minimum £26,396 per annum salary (postdoctoral intern, spine point 20 as of September 2022) plus relevant London weighting if applicable. This would be pro rata for fellowships shorter than 12 months.
- Scholars travelling with dependent children should be supported with childcare, consistent with the allowance rates listed above for Master scholars £10,000 per 12 months (pro rata for shorter fellowships) for research related expenses. This can contribute to consumables, small equipment, travel and subsistence within the UK, publication costs, or other expenses related directly to the research project.
- Other allowable costs within the grant include:
 - IELTS exam fee (for scholars without a valid Test of English)
 - Return economy-class travel from home country to UK (this will not reimburse costs of fares for dependants)
 - Visa and insurance / NHS surcharge costs
 - Ad hoc costs (heavy baggage allowance, etc.)

UK universities who would like to host scholars under this scheme would be expected to co-fund the scholarships by way of making up any shortfall in funding. This can be cash or in-kind, such as discounted university accommodation.

Host universities, through their international support structures, would be expected to provide support in the lead up to and throughout the up-to 12-month term. This should include:

- Communications prior to arrival – including support for visa application, arrival to the UK etc.
- Support for the international student experience, including mentoring and welfare support
- Arranging accommodation or housing for the scholar
- General information about adapting to living in the UK
- Opportunities for skills development – including links with industry and networking
- A nominated point of contact for any issues or concerns

7. UK Institutions Participation Criteria

7.1 For Masters scholarships

- All participating institutions must be listed on the UK Home Office Register of Student Route Sponsors (approved Education Providers) and QAA/OfS/SFC/HEFCW/DfE inspected and approved
- UK institutions should propose 1-year Master’s programmes fit within each eligible subject area, and which meet the spirit of ODA funding, and will therefore be included in the scheme
- UK Universities should demonstrate how they will connect scholars with industry partners and provide opportunities for internships, placements or networking for the students – including support for the scholar to stay in the UK via the Graduate Route, if desired.
- UK Universities should demonstrate how they will support welfare of applicants and the “student experience”
- Desirable: special consideration will be given to UK Universities that can contribute with cash or in-kind to the overall Scholarship programme (beyond making up any projected shortfall) potentially increasing the number of scholarships available in their cohort, and/or that can demonstrate added value to the overall student study and welfare experience.

7.2 For Early Academic Fellowships

- All participating institutions must be UK Higher Education Institutions, or other UK institutions eligible to receive UKRI funding.
- UK institutions should propose 6 to 12-month research fellowship opportunities, which meet the spirit of ODA funding.
- If a fellowship lasts longer than one year, funding will be capped for the first year only. The costs of any subsequent years **must be guaranteed and covered in full** by the UK institution and to the same level as in year 1 with reasonable allowances for cost-of-living increases.
- Institutions should demonstrate how they will support welfare and career development of scholars.
- Desirable: special consideration will be given to UK institutions that can contribute with cash or in-kind to the overall Fellowship programme (beyond making up any projected shortfall) potentially increasing the number of fellowships available in their cohort, and/or that can demonstrate added value to career development.

8. How will the programme be managed?

The British Council will pay £180,000 to selected UK institutions in November or December 2022, which will then be administered as a bursary to the selected scholars by the UK institution in the academic year 2023/24.

- The selected UK Institutions will advertise the opportunities and encourage applications to their selected programmes.
- The British Council will support, with the wide promotion of the Scholarship and Fellowship programme in the eligible countries.
- The UK institutions will manage the application process, submitting to the British Council a shortlist with the pre-selection of the scholars. It is important to note that the British Council will work with the institutions to ensure might have to apply geographic restrictions to select the final awardees.
- UK institutions will be required to share all applicant data with the British Council – not only shortlisted applicants.
- A coordinated selection panel between the HEI and the British Council will determine which applicants will be awarded the scholarships and fellowships. Details of the scholar selection process will be agreed at contracting stage.
- Once successful applicants have been confirmed, the UK Institutions will administer the scholarship to each recipient in their cohort, covering all academic and living expenses.

The British Council may be able to increase the number of students available in each of the cohorts. This would take the form of additional grants of £36,000. Universities interested in hosting additional students should indicate this in their Expression of Interest.

The UK Institutions selected to receive scholars will go through a screening process and shall then sign a Grant Agreement with the British Council. This Grant Agreement will detail all items to be funded, payment methods, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting requirements. A template Grant Agreement can be found in the Annexes of this Call.

The UK institutions will also be responsible for reporting proof of enrolment in the Master's programme by the end of October 2023.

9. Eligibility and selection of scholars

A Steering Committee, composed of academic reviewers from the University and Programme Leads from the British Council will select the candidates through a points-based system, encompassing the programme's criteria.

The following guidelines should be considered for the selection of scholars. Scholars must:

- Be a woman

- Be a passport holder and permanent resident of one of the eligible countries listed on page 4.
- For Masters: Meet the entry requirement of the UK HEI for the course they apply for, including academic equivalents and English language
- For the Early Academic Fellowship: have received your PhD in the last 12 months and have a letter of acceptance from the hosting lab or department.
- Demonstrate case for financial support / socio-economic need⁹
- Not be in receipt of financial support or funding towards their study programme in the UK from any other source
- Have not previously studied at degree level or higher in the UK or lived recently in the UK
- Indicate their preference for course and institution in the case of applying to multiple institutions.
- Meet the English language requirement of the UK HEI
- Be motivated and academically able to follow and benefit from a UK postgraduate taught course.
- Be active in the field with work experience or with a proven interest in the proposed subject area.
- Be willing to demonstrate future contribution to capacity-building and socio-economic advancement through the benefits achieved after graduating from UK higher education.
- Agree to maintain contact with the British Council and act as an ambassador for the UK and engage with activities as part of a Scholarships for Women in STEM alumnus during and after their studies in the UK.
- Demonstrate a plan and a passion to engage other women and girls in STEM from their home country.
- Agree to their personal data being shared with the British Council as a condition of applying for the scholarship.

Employees of the British Council, the UK government or Scottish, Welsh or Northern Irish governments are not eligible to be awarded scholarships.

10. Scholarship branding

The scholarships will be branded as “British Council Scholarships for Women in STEM”. Branding guidelines will be included in the grant agreement.

⁹ To assess socio-economic need at the point of scholar’s application, the British Council will provide guidelines and a standard evaluation framework that institutions will be expected to incorporate into their application process.

11. Timeline

Please consider the following indicative timeline for the implementation of this programme:

Date	Action
28 October 2022	Deadline for submission of applications
Mid-November 2022	The British Council to inform bidding institutions of results
November 2022	Institutions to provide confirmed scholarship details and any other promotional content
By early December 2022	Grant agreements signed between the British Council and participating institutions
December 2022	Launch of the Scholarships marketing campaigns in all eligible countries listed in this call.
9 March 2023	Deadline for scholars to apply to the programme (Masters & Fellowship Programme)
By 30 March 2023	Institutions present shortlisted candidates to the British Council
September/October 2023	Courses start in the UK

12. Proposal and selection criteria

In order to participate in this call, UK institutions are requested to send the required supporting documents listed below to womeninstem.HEPs@britishcouncil.org with the subject line “Scholarships for Women in STEM – EoI 2022” by 28 October 2022 (16.00 UK time) and complete the online Expression of Interest form (link to form available on the call website).

- The templates for your supporting documents are linked to below.
- SD01a_Application to Scholarships
- SD01b_Application to Fellowships
- SD02_Track record (plus any supplementary evidence needed)
- SD03_Budget calculator

UK institutions participating in the call must submit the online form and all supporting documents. Submissions which are incomplete or have made in a format other than the templates provided will be dismissed.

The following selection criteria will be used:

Criteria	%
Selection and suitability of programmes (Masters or Fellows), including ODA compliance and relevance to Sustainable Development Goals.	25%
Holistic support offered to Scholars and university's commitment to EDI values	25%
Cash or in-kind contributions to the programme	25%
Professional/Industry and career development opportunities for the Scholars or Fellows, linked to programmes	15%
Track Record in administering similar schemes	10%

If eligible institutions are awarded evaluation scores within 5% of each other, the British Council reserves the right to award the grant with consideration to the geographical spread of institutions across the UK.

All participating institutions will be informed of the results of the bid, and written feedback will be provided upon request.