

[Chevening Scholarships awarded to Guatemalan Scholars](#)

The UK is supporting four Guatemalan scholars to study a one-year Master's degree in the UK, funded by the UK Government's prestigious Chevening Scholarship programme. The scholars who are off to study at some of the best universities in the world are:

- Ana Lucía González Muñoz, MA International Heritage Management, University of Birmingham
 - Grecia Anaí Rosal Rosales, MSc International Social and Public Policy, London School of Economics and Political Science
 - Daniela Da Costa Franco, MSc Health and Society: Social Epidemiology, University College London
 - Javier Zelada de León, LLM International Law and International Relations, University of Bristol
- Chevening Scholarships are the UK Government's global scholarship programme, funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and partner organisations. The scholarships support study at UK universities –one-year master's degrees – for individuals with demonstrable potential to become future leaders, decision-makers, and opinion formers.

To mark the farewell event, the British Ambassador to Guatemala, Carolyn Davidson, said:

I am delighted to announce that this year we will be sending four Guatemalans to study at some of the best universities in the world, meaning the number of Chevening Scholars in Guatemala continues to grow. There are over 50,000 Chevening alumni around the world. I am confident that these scholars will have an enjoyable and rewarding experience and return to contribute to a bright and prosperous future for Guatemala.

The application window for the 2020/2021 Chevening Scholarships is now open and applications can be submitted through the online application system until 5 November 2019. For more details, please visit Chevening [website](#)

[The UK will not nominate a new Commissioner to the EU](#)

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The UK will not nominate a new Commissioner to the EU as it prepares to leave on 31 October 2019.

The UK's Permanent Representative to the EU Sir Tim Barrow has written to the EU to confirm that the UK will not be nominating a candidate for the 2019-2024 College of Commissioners.

This delivers on the commitment that Prime Minister Boris Johnson made to the House of Commons on 25 July.

The Government has been clear that we are leaving the EU on 31 October whatever the circumstances. Given that the new Commission will not be taking up office until after we have left (1 November) we will not need a new Commissioner.

The Prime Minister was clear in his statement to the House of Commons that our decision not to appoint a new Commissioner should not prevent the EU from appointing a new Commission. This letter will enable the EU to proceed without a UK nominee.

Secretary of State for the Department for Exiting the EU Steve Barclay said:

"We are leaving the EU on 31 October. As a departing member state we will not be involved in the new Commission so it would be a distraction to nominate a new Commissioner.

"This is part of the UK's ongoing preparations for Brexit which allows us to focus on our future relationship with the EU while continuing to explore new opportunities with partners across the world."

Background:

- All Member States have been invited to submit nominations for Commissioners by 26 August 2019.
- The Prime Minister announced in the House of Commons on 25 July that the UK will not nominate a UK commissioner for the new Commission and this is not intended to stop the EU appointing a new Commission.
- Sir Tim Barrow has written to the Secretary-General of the European Council and the Head of the Transition Team of European Commission President-elect to confirm this.
- The letter also confirms that the UK is content for the European Council to proceed with the adoption of the list of candidates without a UK candidate.

[Theresa Villiers visits RSPB headquarters](#)

Environment Secretary Theresa Villiers this week visited the headquarters of one of the country's leading environmental charities, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).

During her visit to the Lodge in Sandy, Bedfordshire on Wednesday (21 August), the Environment Secretary met the RSPB's newly-appointed CEO, Beccy Speight, to gain a better understanding of the charity's priorities for improving and enhancing the environment.

The visit comes ahead of the government's introduction of the Environment Bill – the first for more than 20 years – later this year, and the UK's exit from the European Union on 31 October.

Environment Secretary Theresa Villiers said:

I want to thank the RSPB and Beccy for welcoming me to the Lodge. It's a truly great example of a charity practising what it preaches and providing a perfect environment for nature to thrive.

Our landmark Environment Bill will underpin the ambition we set out in our 25 Year Environment Plan and help us meet our goal of protecting the environment for future generations.

The measures in the Environment Bill will ensure that environmental ambition and accountability remain at the heart of government after EU exit, improve air quality, restore and recover environmental biodiversity, strive towards a circular economy, and ensure we can manage our precious water resources in a changing climate.

Last month, the government published a [policy statement updating on progress on the Bill](#).

During the visit, the Secretary of State was also given a tour of the reserve by the RSPB's regional director, Jeff Knot, and saw the charity's ongoing heathland restoration project first-hand.

Work began to restore lost heathland in 2005 and now heather seedlings are growing on Sandy Warren. Heathland covered The Lodge for 5,000 years, but almost all of it was lost to forestry and agriculture in the 1800s. Now, a large area is being re-seeded to bring the heathland back to the site.

The government set out its commitment to restoring heathland and other wildlife-rich habitats in its [25 Year Plan for the Environment](#).

Armed forces personnel complete Hajj

Led by the Islamic Religious Advisor to the Chief of Defence Staff Imam Asim Hafiz OBE, the Hajj was a chance for British Muslim armed forces personnel to reflect on the role of their religion as part of their service. Hosted by the Royal Saudi Arabian armed forces throughout, the Hajj took place 10 to 14 August, culminating with the festival of Eid ul Adha.

Hajj, meaning 'to intend to journey', is the fifth pillar of Islam and requires all Muslims who are able, to make a pilgrimage to Mecca and surrounding locations of historical significance.

The group, which consisted of regular and reservist personnel from the army and Royal Air Force, arrived in Jeddah and performed the Umrah pilgrimage prior to visiting Medina. Here, the group were hosted by the Royal Saudi Arabian armed forces who arranged a visit to the Mosque of Prophet Muhammad as well as to the site of the Battle of Uhud before returning to Mecca to complete all of the Hajj rituals.

Major Nabeela Malik, a Reservist from the 212 Field Hospital Unit said:

Performing Hajj has been a magnificent experience for me. However, what made it more so was undertaking this once in a lifetime journey with colleagues from the UK Armed Forces.

We were all supported by our respective units and were superbly hosted by our friends in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Armed Forces.

The team travelled to Mina from Mecca where they stayed in a sprawling tent city which accommodated approximately 2.5 million pilgrims from around the world. This was followed by a visit the Jamaraat for the symbolic stoning of the devil, represented by three stone pillars, replicating Prophet Abraham's experience.

Corporal Abdoulie Jobe, from the Royal Logistics Corps said:

Having already experienced many memorable events during my service, I was speechless when I found out that I was going to Saudi Arabia to perform Hajj.

The visit was made more special as I was able to visit with colleagues who are also serving. My senior team were very supportive.

The service personnel also met with the British Consul General Mr Seif Usher,

who congratulated the group on achieving one of the five pillars of Islam, before returning to the UK.

Officer Cadet Zrar Maqsood, from the Defence School of Communications and Information Systems said:

I feel extremely privileged to have been given an opportunity to perform Hajj during my service with the Royal Air Force, as a guest of the Saudi Armed Forces.

I feel reenergised to get back into my engineering training followed by a Commissioning Course!

The armed forces personnel were selected to join 25,000 pilgrims from the UK travelling for the Hajj this year.

The Ministry of Defence encourages and celebrates diversity, promoting an inclusive working environment. To achieve this a wide range of initiatives under a defence wide Diversity and Inclusion Programme (DDIP) have been established. While recruitment is an important element, the wider programme takes a much broader view of diversity and inclusion. It is driving real change by embedding diversity and inclusion within leadership and culture and taking steps to increase the retention and progression of people from underrepresented groups.

[Advancing aerospace designs: funding for projects](#)



The UK's aerospace sector is among the best in the world, with a turnover of £35 billion and hosting 123,000 direct employees in 2017. To remain at its peak, the UK needs to explore emerging opportunities and markets.

Organisations are invited to express an interest in a competition worth £150 million a year with their innovative ideas for future aerospace design and

manufacture. The best projects will then be invited to apply for grant funding.

The investment is part of the £3.9 billion UK Aerospace Technology Institute (ATI) programme, a partnership between government and industry, managed by Innovate UK, the ATI and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

Aircraft of the future

This competition provides funding for industrial research or capital investment projects that align with the UK Aerospace Technology Strategy.

Priority areas include whole aircraft design and integration, aerostructures, advanced systems and propulsion technologies.

Project themes are detailed in the UK Aerospace Technology Strategy, and include:

- improving UK whole-aircraft design and system integration
- future-proofing advanced systems technologies in the UK – specifically, smart, connected and more electric aircrafts
- securing the UK's world-leading position in large, complex aviation structures, particularly wings
- developing more efficient propulsion technologies, including large turbofans

Competition information

- the competition will open on 9 September 2019, and the closing date is 25 September 2019
- UK-based business, research and technology groups and academic organisations can be the project lead, depending on the project type
- businesses could get up to 70% of their costs for industry-led research projects, or up to 50% of their costs for capital investment projects
- an online briefing event will be held on 16 September 2019

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Last updated 27 August 2019 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 27 August 2019 The programme name has been corrected to the ATI programme.
2. 23 August 2019 Amending broken link
3. 23 August 2019 Removing an incorrect link to a competition that hasn't been posted on IFS yet
4. 22 August 2019 First published.