

# Applications for the UK Government's Chevening Scholarships will close on 3 November 2020

Applications for Chevening Scholarships to study in the UK will close on 3 November 2020, with applications to be submitted [www.chevening.org/venezuela](http://www.chevening.org/venezuela).

Chevening Scholarships are awarded to individuals who can demonstrate that they have the commitment and skills required to create positive change, and can show how a UK master's degree will help them do that. The scholarship offers full financial support for future leaders to study for any eligible master's degree at any UK university whilst also gaining access to a wide range of exclusive academic, professional, and cultural experiences.

Since the programme was created in 1983, over 50,000 professionals have had the opportunity to develop in the UK through Chevening. There are more than 1,500 scholarships on offer globally for the 2021/2022 academic year, demonstrating the UK's ongoing commitment towards developing the leaders of tomorrow.

In the case of Venezuela, since 1983 a total of 437 Chevening scholarships have been awarded to young professionals. For the 2019-2020 academic period, a group of 10 Venezuelans was selected to study master's degrees at British universities, in areas as diverse as infectious diseases, international law, energy, multimedia journalism and public management.

For the 2021-2022 period, the priority areas for the British Embassy in Caracas include human rights (freedom of expression, gender equality and democratic capacity building), humanitarian issues, sustainable development and climate change.

The British Ambassador to Venezuela, Andrew Soper, said:

Chevening scholarships are a perfect opportunity for young professionals that want to have a positive impact in their communities, have a clear vision for their future and the capacity to achieve the objectives that they set for themselves in their diverse spheres of action.

If this describes you, it is very likely that you will fit in our community of over 50,000 alumni around the world, of which over 400 are Venezuelans. Chevening is one of the cooperation mechanisms of the British Government to promote the development and prosperity of Venezuela, helping to educate the next generations of professionals leaders in their fields of expertise. The Chevening programme covers all the expenses for the scholars to study a 1-year master's degree in any university of the UK, in any area of knowledge,

providing a unique opportunity to obtain a world-class education in the multicultural environment of the UK.

For more information about eligibility, deadlines and other conditions of the scholarship, visit [www.chevening.org/venezuela](http://www.chevening.org/venezuela). There is also information in the social media platforms of the British Embassy in Caracas ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#)).

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## [UK statement to the WTO General Council](#)



Thank you Chair.

As we have mentioned in this forum before, the United Kingdom is a strong supporter of the moratorium on imposing customs duties on electronic transmissions, and believe the moratorium should be made permanent.

COVID 19 has revealed just how important digital trade is to the global economy, and it will continue to be of fundamental importance as we look to build back better from this crisis. We are that digital trade should be uninhibited by tariff barriers, like customs duties, in order to provide the

stability and predictability that businesses in developed and developing countries need to innovate, grow and prosper in the digital age. Barriers to trade are barriers to trade and we should refrain from introducing them.

That said, the United Kingdom recognises that there are a range of views held by members on the impacts of the moratorium. We welcome the growth of academic publications in this field, such as the paper by the OECD entitled 'Electronic Transmissions and International Trade – shedding new light on the moratorium debate'. These publications play an invaluable part in increasing our understanding of the complex issues, and they can help to generate informed and constructive debate between members.

The United Kingdom welcomes continued discussions on this important issue through the Work Programme on E-Commerce.

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## [UK statement to the WTO General Council](#)



Thank you Chair. The United Kingdom continues to support this proposal to

improve procedural guidelines for WTO Councils and Committees addressing trade concerns.

Some members have previously referred to the fact that the proposal would apply a common framework across most committees and councils. We think that's a reasonable approach – the proposal sets a fairly light touch 'minimum standard' while still allowing individual committees to develop their own tailored approach within the remit of how each committee operates.

The United Kingdom also recognises additional challenges faced by developing countries and LDCs and therefore the importance of providing technical assistance from the WTO Secretariat.

The United Kingdom looks forward to engaging further with WTO members on this proposal. We would also like to take this opportunity to reiterate our thanks to the Secretariat and to Members for their collective efforts to quickly and effectively resume meetings at the WTO in hybrid format during the pandemic. We are pleased that the important work of these Committees has continued during these unprecedented times.

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## **Clinically extremely vulnerable receive updated advice tailored to local COVID alert levels**

- Those considered most clinically vulnerable to receive updated guidance tailored to their local area, in line with new local COVID alert levels
- New guidance will support them to take appropriate protective actions in their everyday lives, while retaining as much normality as possible
- Clinically extremely vulnerable group includes those with specific health conditions, certain cancers and organ transplant recipients

Clinically extremely vulnerable people in England will receive new guidance to help them reduce their risk from coronavirus, tailored to where they live the government has announced.

The guidance will be tied into the new local COVID alert levels framework, meaning those at the highest risk of serious illness from the virus will receive specific advice depending on the level of risk in their local area, as coronavirus rates continue to rise.

With many national measures now in place that apply to everyone – for example, the rule of 6 and mandatory face coverings – the clinically



extremely vulnerable group is already helped by wider protection measures not previously in place when shielding was originally introduced in March.

These additional precautions set out today, recommended by the Deputy Chief Medical Officer (DCMO) for England, will ensure an extra layer of protection specifically adapted to people's locations and level of risk, as dictated by the local COVID alert levels.

Deputy Chief Medical Officer for England Dr Jenny Harries said:

Over the last few weeks, we've seen a sharp increase in the prevalence of the virus across the country and we know those who are clinically extremely vulnerable are looking for practical advice on how they can carry on their lives while the virus remains in our communities.

The new system will provide clarity on how best those in this group can keep themselves as safe as possible depending on the rates of transmission in their local area. Whilst advisory, I would urge all those affected to follow the guidance wherever they can and to continue to access health services for their medical conditions.

We will continue to monitor the evidence closely and fine-tune this approach to make sure everyone in this group is clear about the safest way to go about their daily lives, particularly over the coming winter months.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

With coronavirus rates continuing to increase, now is the time to take action and ensure we protect the most vulnerable in our society.

Today's announcement will mean every person most at risk from serious outcomes from the virus will have specific advice targeted to local levels, which they can follow to keep themselves as safe as possible, while ensuring they can also keep as much normality in their lives as possible.

The clinically extremely vulnerable group includes those with conditions affecting the immune system, certain cancers and organ transplant recipients among others. The new advice will help this higher risk group better protect themselves from the virus, without needing to follow more restrictive shielding guidance.

Those in exceptionally high-risk areas may still be advised to adopt formal shielding in the future, including to stay at home, not go to work or school and limit social interactions to their own household and support bubble. Those in these areas will also be updated if the decision is not to follow

shielding advice. If shielding advice is reintroduced in their area, they will also be eligible for a support package – including food access support, medicines deliveries and any additional care or support required. They may also be eligible for Statutory Sick Pay or Employment and Support Allowance.

Shielding advice will not automatically be triggered by an area going into local COVID alert level very high, but will be considered as an additional intervention, agreed by ministers under advice from local public health experts and the Chief Medical Officer or DCMO. The government will write to people in these areas if they are advised to adopt formal shielding again.

The advice for the clinically extremely vulnerable, which will be in addition to the basic restrictions set out in the local COVID alert levels framework everyone must follow, includes:

- for local COVID alert level medium: strictly observe social distancing, meet others outside where possible, limit unnecessary journeys on public transport and work from home where possible, but you can still go to work and children should still attend school. This is on top of restrictions for everyone to only meet in groups of up to 6 people
- for local COVID alert level high: reduce the number of different people met outside, avoid travel except for essential journeys, work from home where possible and reduce the number of shopping trips made or go at quieter times of the day. You can still go to work if you cannot work from home because all workplaces should be COVID-secure, and children should still attend school. This is on top of restrictions for everyone to not meet other households indoors, unless part of a support bubble, and to only meet in groups of up to 6 people outdoors
- for local COVID alert level very high: work from home, in general stay at home as much as possible, and avoid all but essential travel. You should also significantly reduce shopping trips, and if possible use online delivery or ask people in your household, support bubble or volunteers to collect food and medicines. People in these areas are encouraged to still go outside for exercise, and can still go to school and to work if they cannot work from home. We recognise that a small number of individuals may require additional support to follow the guidance at this alert level, and they are advised to contact their local authority if they need assistance

It is extremely important that clinically extremely vulnerable people continue to receive the care and support they need to help them stay safe and well. Providers of social care and medical services are making every effort to ensure services remain open and as safe as possible. You should continue to seek support from the NHS for your existing health conditions. If you are told to go to hospital for a routine appointment, then the NHS has measures in place to make sure that it is safe for you to do so.

There are currently 2.2 million people identified as clinically extremely vulnerable. The Department of Health and Social Care and the NHS will write to all those identified as clinically extremely vulnerable and their doctors, outlining the changes to the guidance. Anyone advised to shield in the future will be written to individually as before.

Dr Yvonne Doyle, Medical Director and Director of Health Protection at Public Health England (PHE), said:

People who are defined as clinically extremely vulnerable are at very high risk of severe illness from COVID-19. If you are in this group, we recommend that you follow the advice to help protect yourself at each alert level as set out in the guidance.

In addition to the rules you must follow at each alert level, you can take additional precautions. Continue to maintain strict social distancing, wash your hands regularly and try to keep the number of social interactions that you have low. The fewer social interactions you have, the lower your risk of catching COVID-19.

[See the updated guidance](#)

Those with the following conditions fall into the clinically extremely vulnerable group:

- solid organ transplant recipients
- people with specific cancers:
  - people with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy
  - people with lung cancer who are undergoing radical radiotherapy
  - people with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
  - people having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
  - people having other targeted cancer treatments that can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
- people who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
- people with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- people with rare diseases that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as severe combined immunodeficiency (SCID), homozygous sickle cell)
- people on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection
- women who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired
- other people who have also been classed as clinically extremely vulnerable, based on clinical judgement and an assessment of their needs. GPs and hospital clinicians have been provided with guidance to support these decision

[Find out more on the local COVID alert levels framework](#)

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# UK and NASA sign international agreement ahead of mission to the Moon

NASA's Artemis programme aims to land the first woman and the next man on the Moon by 2024. Commercial and international partners will collaborate to achieve a sustainable presence on the lunar surface as a steppingstone to the first human mission to Mars.

The UK will play a key role in this mission. Businesses across the UK will be involved in building the service module and habitation module of the Lunar Gateway, a new space station orbiting the moon, generating economic benefits and high-skilled jobs. The UK has already committed over £16 million for the first phase of the design of these elements.

## **Science Minister Amanda Solloway said:**

The prospect of the first woman landing on the Moon in the coming years will be a source of inspiration for thousands of young people across the UK who may be considering a career in space or science.

Today's historic agreement, backed by £16 million of UK funding, underlines our commitment to strengthening the UK's role in the global space sector, building on our existing strengths in satellites, robotics and communications to grow our economy and improve life on Earth.

With numerous countries and companies conducting operations in space it is vital to establish a set of principles to govern the civil exploration and use of outer space.

The US worked with the UK, along with other spacefaring nations including Japan, Australia, Canada, Italy and the UAE, to develop the Artemis Accords, a set of principles to ensure a shared understanding of safe operations, use of space resources, minimising space debris and sharing scientific data.

## **James Cleverly, Minister for Defence and International Security at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, said:**

By signing the Artemis Accords, the UK is joining international partners to agree a common set of principles which will guide space exploration for years to come. This ground-breaking agreement will guide how states should operate in space, as envisaged in the Outer Space Treaty.

The UK is at the forefront of international collaboration to explore and preserve outer space for future generations. We're



committed to keeping space – and the crucial space systems upon which our societies depend – safe and secure, by launching a landmark UN resolution to agree responsible behaviour for operating in space.

Artemis astronauts on surface of Moon (NASA)

While NASA is leading the Artemis programme, international partnerships with countries including the UK will play a key role in achieving a safe and sustainable human presence on the Moon.

**UK Space Agency CEO Graham Turnock, who signed the Artemis Accords during a virtual ceremony at the International Astronautical Congress (IAC), said:**

Signing the Accords is a strong signal of our intent to take a leading global role in civil space. We hope to deepen our relationship with the US when it comes to space and enhance the UK's global influence in the space sector.

This exciting step could open up new opportunities for UK companies and scientists to be part of NASA missions to the Moon and Mars.

International cooperation on Artemis is intended not only to bolster space exploration but to enhance peaceful relationships between nations. At the core of the Artemis Accords is the requirement that all activities will be conducted for peaceful purposes, in line with the Outer Space Treaty.

Sustaining human life for long periods of time on space missions is a significant challenge and one that requires resources such as water, building materials and fuel. As transporting these resources into space is expensive, a key enabler of future missions will be the ability to extract and use resources from the Moon, asteroids or Mars. The UK has worked with international partners to ensure the Artemis Accords are clear that any such resource extraction in space should be carried out in a manner that complies with the Outer Space Treaty.

### **Notes:**

Full list of countries signed up to the Artemis Accords: US, UK, Japan, Australia, Canada, Italy, Luxembourg and UAE