

Applications for the Chevening Scholarships are open until 1 November 2022

Applications for a Chevening Scholarship to study in the UK are open between 2 August and 1 November 2022, with applications to be submitted online via <https://www.chevening.org/venezuela>.

Chevening Scholarships are awarded to individuals from all backgrounds who can demonstrate that they have the commitment and skills required to create positive changes in their communities, and can show how a UK master's degree will help them achieve their professional goals in strategic areas for their home country.

The scholarship offers full financial support for scholars to study an 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, Chevening has provided over 50,000 professionals with the opportunity to thrive academically in the UK. There are more than 1,500 scholarships on offer globally for the 2023/2024 academic year, demonstrating the UK's ongoing commitment to international development and to the next generations of leaders that can tackle the main global challenges.

In the case of Venezuela, since 1983 over 450 scholarships have been awarded to professionals in the country. For the 2021/2022 academic year, a group of nine Venezuelans were selected to study a fully funded master's degree in the UK through a Chevening scholarship, in diverse areas such as microbiology, women's health, public policy, social development, sustainable architecture, leadership and innovation.

For the 2022/2023 period, the priority areas of the British Embassy in Caracas include human rights (encompassing freedom of expression, gender equality and democratic governance), humanitarian affairs, anti-corruption, sustainable development and climate change.

The Chargée d'Affaires a.i. of the British Embassy in Caracas, Becks Buckingham, said:

Chevening scholarships are one of the main cooperation programmes of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. It uses the academic quality of British universities to train talented individuals in strategic areas for the development of their home countries.

We are looking for candidates that not only have an excellent academic background, but who also possess the potential and the

willingness to achieve positive changes and become leaders in their respective areas of expertise. Since I arrived in Venezuela, I have been able to meet tens of Chevening alumni, who are working in diverse areas such as climate change, human rights and the prevention of infectious diseases. All of them have amazed me with their discipline, intelligence, creativity and commitment to Venezuela.

Visit chevening.org/venezuela for detailed information about the eligibility criteria, the conditions and the timeline to apply to the scholarships. You can also follow our social media channels [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) for further information. Successful candidates have been sharing their experiences through the hashtags [#ChosenForChevening](#) and [#CheveningVE](#).

[Implementation of the Marriage and Civil Partnership \(Minimum Age\) Act 2022](#)

News story

The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022 received Royal Assent in April this year. It is planned to come into effect on Monday 27 February 2023.



The Act will raise the age of marriage and civil partnership to 18 in England and Wales to protect children from the scourge of forced marriage.

This means that 16 to 17-year-olds will no longer be able to marry or enter a civil partnership under any circumstances, including with parental or judicial consent from 26 February 2023. It will not be possible for anyone under 18 to marry or enter a civil partnership after this date.

Currently forced marriage is only an offence if the person uses a type of coercion, for example threats, to cause someone to marry, or if the person lacks capacity to consent to marry under the Mental Capacity Act. The Act will therefore also expand the criminal offence of forced marriage in England and Wales to make it an offence in all circumstances to do anything intended to cause a child to marry before they turn 18. It will therefore now be an offence to cause a child under the age of 18 to enter a marriage in any circumstances, without the need to prove that a form of coercion was used. The forced marriage offence will continue to include ceremonies of marriage which are not legally binding, for example in community or traditional settings.

For full details of the provisions of this Act, see [Marriage And Civil Partnership \(Minimum Age\) Act 2022 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk). This early announcement will help provide sufficient time for arrangements to be made where necessary.

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[Discover robots of the future and fusion](#)

Press release

A robotics expert will bring to life a fascinating future where intuitive machines are deployed to go where humans can't in a free public talk.



Robotics at UKAEA's RACE, Culham Science Centre

Free public talk, 7 September, Examinations School, Oxford

A robotics expert will bring to life a fascinating future where intuitive machines are deployed to go where humans can't in a free public talk in

central Oxford next month.

“Essential robotics: a guide to our shared future” will be presented by Professor Rob Buckingham OBE, who leads a team of 300 roboticists at Culham Science Centre’s world-leading fusion robotics centre, RACE (Remote Applications in Challenging Environments).

The September 7 (18.00-19.30) public event at the Examinations School in Oxford is part of the UK Atomic Energy Authority’s (UKAEA) outreach programme.

Rob Buckingham, Director, UKAEA’s RACE, said: “I’m looking forward to sharing our exciting vision of how the world will be supported by robots. They will help make fusion energy – based on the same processes that power the sun and stars – economically viable.”

His talk will focus on case studies from record-breaking fusion energy machine JET (Joint European Torus) and will then turn to the future highlighting how autonomous machines will change lives, both at work and play.

Sign-up for the free public talk here:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/essential-robotics-a-guide-to-our-shared-future-sponsored-by-the-iet-tickets-394333320577>

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Russia is violating International Humanitarian Law: UK statement to OSCE Special Permanent Council

Thank you, Mr Chair. We welcome the calling of this Special Permanent Council on Russian aggression against Ukraine.

We are appalled by the killing of Ukrainian Prisoners of War held in the Olenivka penal facility. Our thoughts are with the victims’ families and loved ones at this terrible time.

We remind Russia again that it voluntarily signed up to, and helped to create, the elements of International Humanitarian Law under which parties to armed conflict are obliged to safeguard the life, dignity and integrity of persons under their power – including Prisoners of War. Russia’s denial of access to humanitarian organisations is in direct contravention of these laws. Indeed, Russia’s actions are in contravention of basic humanity – even

offers of supplies have gone unanswered.

We are not interested in whatever preposterous narrative Russian officials deploy this week. We are interested in urgent humanitarian assistance for those injured at Olenivka. We are interested in the evidenced findings of independent international institutions, including full, unimpeded access for the recently-launched UN fact-finding mission to Olenivka. And we are interested in justice for the victims. We are determined that justice will prevail.

Denial of access to Olenivka is just the latest example of Russia's contempt for International Humanitarian Law. The second Moscow Mechanism report noted concern over 'clear patterns of serious violations of international humanitarian law attributable mostly to the Russian armed forces', including the magnitude and frequency of the indiscriminate attacks carried out against civilians and civilian objects. Russia willingly entered into agreements on International Humanitarian Law, and it cannot shirk its responsibilities.

The Moscow Mechanism report also highlighted the cases of British nationals, Shaun Pinner and Aiden Aslin, and Moroccan national Brahim Saadoun – sentenced to death by Russian proxies in illegitimate trials. Russia appears to be preparing to take similar action and put Andrew Hill and John Harding, serving members in the Ukrainian Armed Forces on trial – along with Dylan Healy, a civilian detained while undertaking humanitarian work. All 3 are entitled to protection under International Humanitarian Law, and their trial by an unrecognised court would be another clear violation by Russia. Attempts to use detainees for propaganda and to force engagement to legitimise Russian proxies are disgraceful. The UK does not recognise or engage with so-called DPR or LPR; we are clear that Russia is responsible and accountable for the treatment of detainees.

Each week, as the devastating consequences of Russia's barbaric tactics bring more death and destruction, evidence builds and charges mount. Russian missile attacks continue across Ukraine – on 28 July, while Russian officials reeled off Kremlin-approved lies and disinformation in the Permanent Council, 5 people were killed and 25 injured following a strike on a flight academy in Kropyvnytskyi. Meanwhile, IAEA Director-General Grossi has described the situation at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, where Russian troops are present, as completely out of control. According to Director-General Grossi, "all nuclear security measures" have been violated. This behaviour is irresponsible and reflects cruel indifference to potential impacts on civilian populations. But after more than five months, this is what we have come to expect from Putin's Russia – a state operating outside of the international laws and standards designed to support everyone – including Russia.

The Kremlin has demonstrated again and again that they set no store by international law, including international humanitarian law. Unfortunately for Russia, the rest of the world does. The international community is watching every transgression, and perpetrators will be brought to justice. We have stood with Ukraine from the start. For the sake of European security, we must continue to support Ukraine militarily, economically and with

humanitarian aid, until Ukraine's victory is secured. Thank you, Mr Chair.

[England Woodland Creation Offer to transition into Local Nature Recovery scheme in 2025](#)

Press release

The England Woodland Creation Offer will become part of the Local Nature Recovery scheme – one of the new environmental land management (ELM) schemes – from 2025.



£25 million in funding has been made available to support woodland creation and tree planting.

Farmers and landowners were today urged to apply for a share of £25 million in funding to support woodland creation and tree planting.

The money is available in the year ahead after it was announced the England Woodland Creation Offer will become part of the Local Nature Recovery scheme – one of the new environmental land management schemes – from 2025.

Landowners and farmers could get a one-off payment of £8,500 per hectare followed by annual maintenance payments of £300 per hectare for 10 years. Higher payment rates are also available which offers thousands more for schemes that provide additional public benefits.

Going forward, the future design of Local Nature Recovery and the approach to payment rates for planting trees will largely mirror those within the England Woodland Creation Offer – meaning there is no reason to delay tree planting.

Well-designed and managed woodlands can support the foundations of food production. Woodlands on farms can boost productivity through healthy soil

and water by reducing erosion and nutrient loss from surface run-off whilst improving drought and flood resilience. Woodlands also support biodiverse ecosystems through habitat creation and can benefit animal welfare by providing shelter in adverse weather and provide additional fodder for livestock, as well as diversification opportunities through firewood and timber.

Richard Stanford, the Forestry Commission's Chief Executive, said:

Farmers and land managers can now have the confidence to grow trees under EWCO, safe in the knowledge that they will be able to easily transition into the Local Nature Recovery scheme in the future, and without the worry that future schemes will be significantly different.

Trees play an important role in providing shade and shelter for livestock, and reducing soil and nutrient loss. Given the recent hot dry weather it's vital our farmers and land managers plan for the future to build in resilience to climate change and take advantage of the woodland creation incentives available today.

The majority of new applications for woodland creation payments from 2025 will be made through the Local Nature Recovery scheme.

We expect existing England Woodland Creation Offer agreement holders will have the opportunity to transition their maintenance payments into the Local Nature Recovery scheme from 2026. This continues the government's pledge that no one will be made worse off if they start planting now, rather than waiting for future government schemes.

Find out more about [how trees can benefit your farm business](#) and [read our blog](#) for further information.

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