



Applicant Information and Guidelines

Foreword from the Chair

Thank you for your interest in applying for *The Duke of Edinburgh's Commonwealth Study Conference (CSC) UK 2027*, which I have the privilege to chair.

Founded 70 years ago by Prince Philip, CSC was created with a bold ambition: to bring together the next generation of leaders from across the Commonwealth to study the intersection of business, society, and leadership. Now under the patronage of HRH The Princess Royal, our mission is clear: to build a network of well-informed, connected, and influential leaders who can drive positive change across the Commonwealth. The need to develop, support and inspire this next generation of leaders has never been more important.

In April 2027, we will host ~100 outstanding leaders from business, government, academia, and civil society for an intensive UK programme on the theme "*The Impact of Emerging Technologies on Future Cities*." Through immersive study tours, world-class speakers, and peer-to-peer exchange, participants will gain insights and connections that will reframe their understanding of this topic and their roles as leaders.

The conference remains a truly game changing weeklong leadership programme greatly accelerating the participants' professional development and creating a powerful community across the Commonwealth. Over the next five years, we hope to bring together around 1,000 leaders and to create a truly transformative alumni community.

We are now seeking nominations of exceptional individuals from across the Commonwealth and are looking forward to hearing from you should you meet requirements and wish to apply for this programme.

Sir Alan Parker CVO

Chair of The Duke of Edinburgh's Commonwealth Study Conferences UK

What is the CSC Programme?

The Duke of Edinburgh's Commonwealth Study Conference (CSC) is a distinctive leadership development programme bringing together emerging leaders from across sectors (business, public service, NGOs, culture, and academia) across the Commonwealth.

It was founded in 1956 by Prince Philip to explore the intersection of business success and community development. Inspired by a visit to Canada where he observed the unique challenges of single-industry towns, he envisioned a forum where emerging leaders from diverse backgrounds could examine complex human, societal and economic issues together through immersive experiences and open dialogue.

Since its inception, CSC has brought together over 8,000 leaders from across the Commonwealth, equipping them with the insights, networks, and global perspectives needed to drive meaningful change.



The unique study group model, which combines plenary sessions with on-the-ground visits to, commercial, industrial and community sites, enables participants to deeply engage with real-world challenges.

The impact of CSC is profound, with alumni applying their experiences to influence policy, strengthen communities, and foster international cooperation. Delegates gain a sense of purpose and a global network of peers committed to shaping a more inclusive and prosperous future. As CSC continues to evolve, it remains dedicated to its founding mission: bringing together diverse perspectives to explore the human dimensions of leadership, industry, and society.

For more information on our history please visit our website: <https://www.cscuk2027.com/>

What is special about CSC? - An introduction by Orianna Fielding, Director of CSCUK 2027

CSCUK 2027 is more than an executive leadership programme. It is a global experience designed to challenge assumptions, connect diverse perspectives and inspire lasting impact across the Commonwealth and beyond.

Our ambition is for delegates to leave with more than new knowledge: with a different understanding of leadership, the Commonwealth and their own potential. The programme combines personal transformation with the practical insight and relationships needed to drive meaningful change in organisations, communities and countries.

Starting with Questions

Rather than beginning with predetermined topics and speakers, CSCUK 2027 starts with the questions that matter most. The Commonwealth's most complex challenges cannot be addressed through simple answers. They require curiosity, dialogue and collaboration across sectors, generations and cultures. Designing the programme around questions creates space for unexpected connections, fresh thinking and ideas that conventional approaches may overlook.

Curating Conversations

Every session is shaped around the conversation and the impact it can create. Some ideas call for robust debate; others benefit from an intimate fireside conversation, a practical roundtable or a carefully moderated panel. The format serves the content, not the other way around. This creates a programme that is intentional, dynamic and intellectually rigorous.

The Power of Place

CSCUK 2027 will unfold across multiple cities, each with its own identity, industries, institutions and communities. Conversations will be located where they can have the greatest relevance and impact. By connecting themes with place, the programme will deepen local engagement, enrich discussion and create a compelling narrative across the journey. Each city will become more than a destination; it will become part of the conversation.



Creating Unexpected Connections

Innovation rarely comes from following a template. It emerges when different people, ideas and experiences meet in an environment built on curiosity, trust and constructive challenge. By connecting people, ideas and places in new ways, CSCUK 2027 will create opportunities for collaboration, thoughtful disagreement and partnerships that continue long after the programme ends.

A Community of Leaders

CSCUK 2027 will bring together emerging leaders from government, business, academia and civil society to explore challenges that cannot be solved in isolation. Delegates will not be passive attendees. They will be active contributors to conversations crossing borders, sectors and generations. Every discussion will challenge established perspectives, encourage strategic thinking and inspire collective action.

The Big Idea

At the heart of CSCUK 2027 is The Big Idea, a Commonwealth-focused innovation challenge that transforms learning into action. Throughout the Study Conference, each study group of ten delegates will identify a real-world challenge facing the Commonwealth and, drawing on the insights, experiences and relationships developed throughout the programme, design an ambitious yet practical solution with the potential to deliver lasting positive impact.

Working across cultures, sectors and disciplines, delegates will apply the perspectives gained from every conversation, visit and challenge to develop an evidence-informed project that addresses a significant Commonwealth opportunity. The emphasis is not simply on generating ideas, but on creating solutions that are innovative, collaborative and capable of being implemented beyond the Study Conference.

At the Closing Dinner, each study group will present its Big Idea during the Closing Plenary before our Patron, Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, Princess Anne, together with distinguished leaders from government, business, academia and civil society from across the Commonwealth. These presentations will showcase not only what delegates have learned, but how they have combined diverse perspectives to develop tangible solutions to real-world Commonwealth challenges that have the potential to drive positive change across the Commonwealth and create a lasting legacy beyond the programme.

Leadership That Creates Impact

The true measure of CSCUK 2027 will be what happens afterwards: the partnerships sustained, the ideas implemented and the perspectives permanently changed. Its impact will be seen in leaders who return home thinking differently, acting more boldly and creating positive change.



CSCUK 2027 is not simply a conference. It is a carefully curated global programme that equips emerging leaders to challenge convention, catalyse ideas, build cross-sector collaboration and create lasting impact across the Commonwealth and beyond.

1. **A unique and impactful model**

Unlike so many executive development programmes, our participants are experiencing on the road on study tours, not in a classroom. This is where they learn through immersion and are united by these shared experiences. They meet exceptional leaders from all sorts of walks of life and learn how they approach and address issues, bringing new perspectives to the common problem they are studying.

2. **A diverse talent mix**

What makes the CSC conferences so successful and impactful is bringing together a rich mix of people from business, politics, NGOs, culture, civil service, and academia to work together. Not only are the participants learning from their common experiences, but they are also in the process building an appreciation and shared understanding of their peers' different perspectives and backgrounds.

3. **An enduring and connected alumni of next generation leaders**

As an Alumni of the CSC UK Programme, they will be invited to join the CSC Global Alumni, a group of over 8,000 Alumni from across the Commonwealth from programmes dating back to the original programme in 1956. This extraordinary group of exceptional individuals have been leaders of nations; government bureaucracies; businesses; labour movements; academia; charities; arts and culture; and civil society organisations. Our aim is to create a series of conferences over the next five years that draws on our heritage but creates the next generation of leaders as an Alumni who have been significantly enhanced through attending the conferences and become more connected to their peers around the world.

Candidate Profile

The ideal candidates for the CSC UK 2027 programme demonstrate the following leadership qualities, experience, and commitment:

Leadership and Professional Experience

- 10 to 15 years of professional experience
- Identified as a future leader in their workplace and likely to hold a senior middle management role currently. Alternatively, a proven entrepreneur or start-up founder.
- Proven leadership abilities with experience driving or significantly contributing to impactful projects or initiatives in both professional and voluntary roles
- Strong professional track record with at least 5 years at their current organisation



Learning and Future Vision

- A clear vision for their future leadership path, with a commitment to making long-term contributions to their field or community
- Aims to contribute to long-term societal or global change through their work and initiatives
- Highly motivated to expand their knowledge and network with other global leaders
- Seeks personal and professional growth through knowledge-sharing and diverse experiences

Global and Local Impact

- Represents a Commonwealth country
- Demonstrates a strong understanding of both local and global issues
- Actively engaged in initiatives addressing societal or development issues in their community or country
- Committed to creating positive change through their work and volunteer efforts

Commitment to Development and Innovation

- Understands the importance of collaboration and partnerships across sectors (government, private, non-profit)
- Passionate about contributing to sustainable development and social good
- Innovative in solving problems and approaching challenges with creative solutions

Personal Strength and Resilience

- Demonstrates resilience in overcoming personal or professional challenges
- Driven by a strong sense of purpose and determination to make a difference
- Exhibits qualities of integrity, inclusivity, and a commitment to empowering others

Motivation for Participation

- Motivated to connect with like-minded leaders and learn from their experiences
- Interested in exchanging ideas and perspectives to address shared challenges
- Eager to bring insights from the event back to their professional and community work

Cost and Logistics

If a candidate is successful, the participant fee is **£10,000 per person**. This covers full participation in the **CSC UK 2027 programme**, including accommodation, meals, programme materials, and travel associated with the UK programme, including regional study tours and administrative costs of running the CSC Charity.

Candidates may select one of three funding routes:

1. **Self-funded**
2. **Corporate or employer-sponsored**
3. **Bursary application**

Please note that bursary support will be **means-assessed** and is not guaranteed.



Thanks to the generous support of one of our sponsors, CSCUK 2027 is able to provide financial support towards international travel for delegates who need it.

We recognise that the cost of travelling to and from the UK can be a significant barrier for some applicants. This new funding will enable us to support the full cost of return air travel for a number of delegates for whom international travel costs would otherwise make participation difficult.

This additional support reflects our commitment to bringing together an exceptional and genuinely diverse group of leaders from across the Commonwealth, and to ensuring that financial circumstances do not prevent outstanding candidates from taking part.

Applicants will be able to indicate as part of the application process whether they would require support with international travel. This will not form part of the selection decision; following successful selection, travel support will be allocated to eligible delegates according to need and the funding available.

Application Process

Stage	Assessment
Stage One – Leadership Potential	Online application assessing leadership purpose, leadership experience, self-awareness and systems thinking.
Stage Two – Leadership in Practice	Leadership Video and Leadership Case Study assessing judgment, communication and decision-making.
Final Stage – Leadership Conversation	Structured panel interview for select candidates.

Proposed Timeline

Period	Activity
July-October	Stage One opens August 4 th and runs until October 14 th with rolling review.
October	Stage Two assessments completed and finalists identified.
November	Interviews (where required), final panel deliberations and delegate offer by latest November 30 th .



Stage One Questionnaire Guidance

How long to allow

Please allow up to 2 hours to complete the application thoughtfully. This includes gathering details, drafting your responses, editing them to fit the word limits and checking the final version before submission. You will need to complete the form in one sitting, but questions can be found on the website to pre-prepare as you like.

Before you start

Have the following information ready: your current role and employer details, LinkedIn profile, personal website, relevant professional or academic achievements, funding route, and the names, titles and email addresses of two professional referees. Make sure you are comfortable confirming the eligibility and travel requirements before beginning.

Completing the written questions

Be concise and specific. The Selection Panel is not looking for a full career history; they are trying to understand who you are, how you lead and what contribution you hope to make. Use concrete examples wherever possible. A strong answer will usually explain the situation, your role, the action you took, the impact achieved and what you learned.

Use the word limits well

The word limits are short, so focus on the most relevant example rather than trying to cover everything. Avoid broad claims such as “I am passionate about leadership” unless they are supported by evidence. Wherever possible, include measurable or observable impact.

Save and review

Save your work regularly and consider drafting longer answers separately before pasting them into the form. Before submitting, check that each answer responds directly to the question, that all required sections are complete, and that your examples do not unnecessarily repeat the same achievement.

Tone

Use your own voice. The form specifically encourages concise, authentic responses, and there are no “right” answers. Aim to be reflective, honest and practical rather than overly polished or generic.

Those who are successful in Stage One will be notified by email and invited to take part in Stage Two. Guidance on that will be given at that point.



Commonwealth Study Conference UK 2027 Indicative Programme Outline

12 th – 15 th April 2027	Oxford	All Delegates
15 th -18 th April 2027	Edinburgh	Study Group One 30-33 Delegates
15 th -18 th April 2027	Manchester	Study Group Two 30-33 Delegates
15 th -18 th April 2027	Birmingham	Study Group Three 30-33 Delegates
19 th – 23 rd April 2027	London	All Delegates

Please Note: The below are indicative schedules, programming is under development now and speakers will be formally confirmed shortly. Furthermore, recognising the demands of senior leaders participating in CSCUK 2027, dedicated time will be built into each day of the programme to allow delegates to attend to personal and professional commitments. These periods are designed to provide flexibility for essential communications, meetings and individual requirements, while ensuring delegates can fully engage with the core programme activities, discussions and relationship-building opportunities. The balance of structured learning, reflection and personal time is intended to support an enriching and sustainable experience throughout the Study Conference.

Programme Elements	Purpose	Format
Opening Plenary: The Impact of Emerging Technologies on Future Cities	Establish conference vision, explain the programme journey and introduce the central challenges facing future cities	Plenary & Keynotes
Perspectives: Shaping Tomorrow Today	Explore how emerging technologies affect cities, society and human experience through leading thinkers	Keynotes, Conversations & Panels
Salon of Unfinished Ideas	Create a space for delegates to reflect, challenge assumptions and develop new concepts & perspectives	Round Table Discussions in groups of 10
The Big Questions: Plenary Debates	Debate fundamental questions around technology, governance, trust and human agency	Formal Debate



Commonwealth Project Showcase

Showcase innovative projects and solutions from across Commonwealth countries

Keynote/
Presentations / AV

The Big Idea: Delegate Innovation Challenge

Enable delegates to develop practical solutions to future city challenges inspired by their experiences and learnings during the conference

Innovation Challenge

Example Oxford Day

Time	Session	Venue	Format	Speaker / Contributors
08:00	Breakfast	Lady Margaret Hall	Networking	
09:30	Opening Plenary: The Impact of Emerging Technologies on Future Cities	Talbot Hall, Lady Margaret Hall	Opening Plenary	Conference Chair: Sir Alan Parker
09:30	Welcome, Conference Vision and Introduction to the Programme Journey	Talbot Hall	Opening Address	Sir Alan Parker
10:00	Leadership, Democracy and International Cooperation in an Age of Technological Transformation	Talbot Hall	Keynote Address	Baron William Hague of Richmond
	Ethics, Artificial Intelligence and the Human Future City	Talbot Hall	Keynote Address	Professor Edward Harcourt MBE
11:30	Delegate Introductions and Networking Activity	Talbot Hall	Interactive Session	Delegates
12:15	Transfer to Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities		Transfer	
12:45	Lunch	Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities	Networking	
13:45	Cultural Visit – Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities	Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities	Cultural Visit	University of Oxford
14:30	Perspectives – Shaping Tomorrow Today The Ethical Foundations of Future Cities	Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities	Keynote & Conversation	Professor Edward Harcourt MBE
15:45	Audience Discussion and Reflections	Schwarzman Centre	Q&A	



16:30	Return to Lady Margaret Hall		Transfer
19:00	Drinks Reception	Talbot Hall, Lady Margaret Hall	Reception
20:00–22:00	Formal Dinner	Deneke Hall, Lady Margaret Hall	Formal Dinner

Example Edinburgh Day

Time	Session	Venue	Format	Speakers / Contributors
08:30	Depart W Edinburgh		Transfer	
09:00–09:30	Edinburgh: The Birthplace of Artificial Intelligence	University of Edinburgh	Keynote	Senior University representative (TBC)
09:30–10:30	Artificial Intelligence, Supercomputing and Scientific Discovery	University of Edinburgh	Panel and Q&A	University AI and Advanced Computing leaders (TBC)
10:30–11:30	Advanced Computing Facility and the UK's Future Supercomputing Capability	University of Edinburgh	Visit	Advanced Computing Facility leadership (TBC)
11:30–12:30	Strategic Leadership in an AI-Driven World	University of Edinburgh	Panel and Q&A	University AI researchers, Advanced Computing specialists and industry leaders (TBC)
12:30–13:30	Lunch	University of Edinburgh	Networking	Speakers and delegates
13:45–15:45	National Robotarium	National Robotarium,	Study Visit	National Robotarium



	University of Edinburgh	Executive Team (TBC)
15:45–16:30	Leadership Conversation: Robotics, Ethics and the Future Workforce <i>Followed by Q&A</i>	National Robotarium Panel and Q&A National Robotarium leadership (TBC)
19:00	Delegate Dinner	Vesta Networking Delegates

Example Manchester Day

Time	Session	Venue	Format	Speakers / Contributors
08:30	Depart hotel		Transfer	
09:00–09:30	Exploring how Greater Manchester is working with communities, businesses and public partners to create technology solutions to real urban challenges.	Manchester Metropolitan University / Manchester City Council (TBC)	Keynote	Communcity Representatives (TBC)
09:30–10:15	The Greater Manchester People's Panel for AI: Building Trust in Artificial Intelligence	Manchester Metropolitan University / Manchester City Council (TBC)	Keynote	People's Panel For AI Representatives (TBC)
10:15–11:30	Panel Discussion: Responsible AI, Public Trust and the Future City	Manchester Metropolitan University / Manchester City Council (TBC)	Panel and Q&A	Communcity, People's Panel For AI, Manchester City Council (TBC)
11:30–12:30	Transfer to MediaCity UK		Transfer	
12:30–13:30	Lunch and networking	MediaCity UK	Networking	Speakers And Delegates
13:30–14:00	MediaCity UK: Building a Global Creative and Digital Innovation District	MediaCity UK	Keynote	Mediacity Leadership (TBC)
14:00–15:15	Exploring one of Europe's leading production facilities, including virtual production technologies and green screen experiences.	Dock10 Studios	Guided Tour	Dock10 Leadership (TBC)



15:15–16:00	HOST Innovation Hub Visit Exploring support for entrepreneurs, start-ups and scale-ups across creative, digital and technology sectors	HOST, MediaCity	Panel and Q&A	HOST Leadership (TBC) Creative Technology Entrepreneurs
16:15–17:30	Blue Tower Reception Networking reception with Greater Manchester's creative, digital and innovation sectors.	Blue Tower, MediaCity (TBC)	Networking	Mediacity, HOST And Regional Innovation Partners
19:00	Delegate Dinner	Blue Tower (TBC)	Networking	Delegates

Example Birmingham Day

Time	Session	Venue	Format	Speakers / Contributors
08:30	Transfer from The Grand Hotel Birmingham		Transfer	
09:00–09:30	Birmingham's Transformation and the Future Leadership Challenge	The Forward Institute	Keynote	Academic and Social Innovation Leader
09:30–10:30	Leading Inclusive Cities: Trust, Belonging and Shared Prosperity	The Forward Institute	Keynote	Senior Civic Leader
10:30–11:15	Building Communities for the Future: Collaboration, Opportunity and Inclusion	The Forward Institute	Keynote	Community And Social Impact Leader
11:15–12:00	Leadership, Trust and the Future City	The Forward Institute	Panel and Q&A	Academia, Civic Leadership and Community Innovators
12:00–13:30	Lunch and visit	The IKON Gallery/Medicine Bakery	Networking	Delegates
14:00–14:30	The Future of Finance, Trust and Digital Innovation	Tour of the Commonwealth Mint	Guided Tour	Founder and Innovation Leader
14:30–15:00	Innovation, Manufacturing and International Partnerships	Commonwealth Mint	Keynote	Senior Financial Services Director
15:00–15:30	Design, Identity and Trust in a Digital World	Commonwealth Mint	Keynote	Creative and Design Leader



15:30– 16:15	Trust, Innovation and the Systems of Tomorrow	Commonwealth Mint	Panel and Q&A	Entrepreneurial, Operational and Creative Leaders
19:00	Delegate Dinner	24 Stories	Networking	Delegates

Example London Day

Time	Session	Venue	Format	Speakers / Contributors
08:45	Welcome & Introduction	The Great Room, RSA	Opening Remarks	
09:00	How Do We Maintain Agency in a Digital World?	The Great Room, RSA	Keynote	A member of the UK's House of Lords and a global authority on digital regulation.
09:25	How Do We Ensure the Digital Future Works for Everyone?	The Great Room, RSA	Keynote	A leading voice of British business involved in philanthropy and public servant.
09:50	AI, Innovation and Europe's Digital Future	The Great Room, RSA	Keynote	C-Suite Leader of a global tech company. EMEA
10:15	Human Identity, Consent and the Future of AI	The Great Room, RSA	Keynote	Global film & theatre actor
10:40	Protecting Cities in an AI-Driven World	The Great Room, RSA	Keynote	Technology Entrepreneur & Cyber Security Leader
11:05	The Future of Human-Centred Technology: Trust, Inclusion and Digital Leadership	The Great Room, RSA	Panel Discussion	Global leaders in technology, creativity, business transformation and responsible innovation
11:45	Audience Questions & Discussion	The Great Room, RSA	Interactive Discussion	Panel
12:00	Lunch to Go	RSA	Bento Boxes	
13:00	Depart for Heathrow		Transfer	
14:00– 17:00	Future Mobility and Connected Infrastructure	Heathrow Airport	Study Visit & Keynote	Senior Aviation Leader



1700-1800 Depart for London

Transfer

1900 Dinner

London Restaurant

Networking Delegates