

HMC PROJECTS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

SCHOLARSHIPS TO SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM - 2010-11

Information for Parents of Czech Applicants

Students are asked to translate this paper for their parents if necessary in order to ensure that it is fully understood.

The purpose of this paper is to describe the arrangements for the scholarships offered in the United Kingdom through HMC Projects in Central and Eastern Europe. You will find further details of the nature and work of HMC Projects at this web address -

<http://www.hmc.org.uk/projects>

HMC (Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference) is an association of the Headteachers of many of the leading independent schools in the United Kingdom. HMC Projects is incorporated as a company with limited liability and registered as a charity. Its specific purpose, since its inception in 1992, has been to enable young students from the countries of Central and Eastern Europe to study in the UK and to enable them to associate more easily with British young people. In consequence, **over 1,000 students** have received scholarships to spend a year in British schools. Quite apart from the benefit to the students, the British schools have also greatly enjoyed their presence and have gained much. The scholarship scheme is run by the Working Group of HMC Projects but students are placed not only in schools belonging to the HMC but also in some other independent schools.

The British schools are of various types. Some are schools mainly for boarding pupils (boys and girls who live at the school during the school terms). Other schools have both boarding pupils and day pupils. Scholarship students from Central and Eastern Europe are normally offered places as boarding pupils.

The schools are located throughout the UK, with four in Scotland, one in Wales and one on the Isle of Man. Many of the schools are coeducational but some take girls only and others take boys only. We try to match our scholars with schools best suited to their individual talents but I should emphasise that all the schools within the scheme have been selected because we see them as entirely suitable and because we know that they will offer a very valuable experience to the students who are their guests. Once the school has accepted the student proposed, it is not normally possible for a change to be made.

When the students arrive in Britain for the first time, they are normally met at the airport and are then taken to Cambridge for three days for a short Orientation Course. This is the one occasion in the year when all the students on the scheme gather in one place together with the members of the Working Group. Mr Robin Hildrew, our Student Counsellor, will explain his key role in helping students during their time in Britain. The Orientation Course is the opportunity for us to explain more fully the way in which the schools function. It is also the opportunity for students to ask questions.

Please Turn Over

At the end of the Orientation Course careful arrangements are made for each student to travel on to the school. Students will be fully informed as to how to make the journey and who will meet them on arrival.

Once the students have arrived at the school they are in the care of the school staff at all times when the school is in session. The school provides not only tuition but also accommodation and food together with everything the student may need including medical care if appropriate. Each student normally lives in a large house with perhaps thirty or forty other students who are supervised by the housemaster or housemistress.

The school year in Britain is usually divided into three terms, with holidays at Christmas, Easter and in the summer. In addition, most schools close for a half-term break in the middle of the term. The length of this break will vary from school to school – from a few days to a maximum of two weeks. At these times a member of the school staff (the Contact Person) will undertake the responsibility of making suitable arrangements for the student during the half-term break. This member of staff will contact parents to ensure that they agree with these half-term arrangements. **On the Parental Consent Form attached to this information, you will see that parents are asked to authorise the School's Contact Person to make half term arrangements on their behalf.**

At the end of the first term the school will ensure that the student knows the arrangements for travelling home and returning to Britain after the Christmas holiday. Students may not remain in Britain during this holiday unless the school agrees to this and the parents have also given permission and have made the necessary arrangements.

The scholarship has been arranged as a result of cooperation between three parties.

- **HMC Projects**

HMC Projects coordinates the general programme in the UK and liaises both with the national organisations listed above and with the schools. We ensure that students are met when they first arrive in the UK, we arrange the Orientation Course, we ensure the students' safe travel to their schools and we provide (through the school) a Bursary of £500 for each student. Once the student has arrived at the school, formal responsibility for each student transfers to the school. Even so, our **Student Counsellor**, Mr Robin Hildrew, plays a key role in monitoring the continuing welfare of students. Like all the Working Group of HMC Projects, he is willing at all times to give support and advice as needed. On the recommendation of the Student Counsellor, financial help may be given to students confronted with exceptional expenditure (for instance cultural expeditions, field trips, etc).

- **The Open Society Foundation**

The Open Society Foundation administers the programme in the Czech Republic and provides support and advice before departure.

- **The School:**

Your son or daughter will become a full member of the school chosen by HMC Projects and you will be asked to sign the home-school agreement signed by all other parents. The School provides the scholarship for tuition, food and accommodation and accepts responsibility for the students at all times when the school is in session. The School will appoint a **Contact Person** (see above) to make arrangements for the students at times when the school is not in session. The School will ask the parent to provide information relating to any previous or current medical problem from which the student suffers. Schools will hope to be able to welcome students with any controllable condition but must be informed beforehand and they do have the right not to accept students into a residential community if the medical condition could cause extreme difficulties and had not been declared in advance. Parents should not worry about this but schools may wish to seek further information in some cases so that they can be sure that they can give the necessary medical support to students.

We must emphasise that the cost of living in Britain is very much higher than at home. Despite their Bursary from HMC Projects, and despite the financial help which we may provide towards the costs of half-term accommodation, school trips and travel, your son or daughter will almost certainly need to turn to you, from time to time, for additional spending money. Moreover, parents should expect to receive a termly bill from the School for 'Extras' (for uniform, books, trips, clubs etc).

Scholars are normally expected to return home during the Christmas and Easter holidays. The cost of these journeys must be met by parents but they can choose the method of travel. Parents are responsible for the arrangements for these holidays and have full responsibility for their sons or daughters during these times. The Working Group may be able to assist students to find less expensive methods of travel but cannot make arrangements for the holidays. If students wish to remain in the UK for the Easter holidays, parents must assume sole responsibility for their children at this time and it is essential that they should inform the school clearly of their intentions in advance.

Students need to be ready to adapt to the boarding way of life and to desire positively to support the school's philosophy and rules. Inevitably our scholars do find that some features of British schools are very different from their schools at home - viz

Please Turn Over

1. Students live in boarding houses. Normally about thirty to forty students live in one house, supervised by two members of staff. The houses are of course either for boys only or else for girls only. For young people who have always lived at home it takes some time to become accustomed to this situation. Many students do miss their homes at first but quite quickly they make friends and enjoy having the company of other young people for much of the time.
2. Most students will share a room with another student and usually this will be the place where they not only sleep but do their work and keep their personal belongings, clothes, books and other items. Most schools will expect their boarders to take their share in certain communal responsibilities.
3. In order to make reasonable arrangements which are convenient for all the students there need to be some basic rules both in the boarding house and in the school. For example one such rule in many schools might be that students will be expected to be in their own rooms by 10.30 p.m. and will be required to be quiet after that time so that others may sleep. Another rule will be that students are not allowed to smoke. Schools do not, of course, allow the use of drugs. Students on boarding schools are not normally permitted to seek or obtain paid employment outside school. At home rules of this sort are probably unnecessary. Our experience is that these rules do not usually create difficulties for students, but we must emphasise that students need to be willing to accept them. If your son or daughter does not think that (s)he could accept such rules, then (s)he should decline the scholarship.
4. In most schools students wear a uniform during teaching hours and for special occasions. Schools will send full information about this to those who are selected for scholarships and there is no need for parents to spend much money on these items before the students leave for the UK.
5. An important difference is that in British schools students usually take only four or perhaps five main subjects. In most schools they also take a subsidiary subject or a general studies course. For example, a student might take Mathematics, Physics, Biology and Chemistry as the main subjects with German as a subsidiary subject. Another combination might be German, History, French and Economics as the main subjects with Information Technology as a subsidiary subject. Students are normally able to choose their subjects from a range of fifteen to twenty different possibilities. The consequence of this arrangement is that students in Britain generally study a smaller number of subjects in greater depth than students in most other countries. In some ways this is a narrower approach but it does give opportunity for students to think more deeply about the subject rather than just to absorb some information. Of course students are speaking, listening, reading and writing in English all the time so that they will certainly be learning more English than anything else. There will be no need to worry about the arrangements for the academic programme. Schools will provide all the necessary information in due course.

6. Another important difference is that, whereas many European schools aim to provide only teaching in the academic subjects, British boarding schools offer also a wide range of other activities which give opportunity for students to develop talents or sports. For example, many schools offer excellent opportunities for Music with orchestras and choirs. All schools offer drama and the facilities for sport are normally excellent. Scholars can be assured that they will be able to enjoy themselves besides working hard. It is indeed important that they do make time for these other activities since these contribute to the lasting friendships which are for many the most important feature of the year in Britain.
7. **The HMC Projects Scholarship is for one year only and students can have no expectation that they will be able to stay for a second year. The scholarship does not carry with it the opportunity to study at a British university.**

It is important, therefore, that students should consider carefully whether or not they would wish to accept a scholarship from HMC Projects to study in the UK for one year. They should find out from local universities and from their own schools and universities if certain studies or examinations will be necessary if they are to resume studies at home without disadvantage when they return. In general this has not been a problem for students in the past and certainly the benefits of the year in the UK have far outweighed any disadvantages, although a few students have needed an extra year on their return to their own schools.

Eligibility

To be eligible for the HMC Project scholarship, a student should be 16 years old on 1st September 2010 and not older than 17.6.

In order to meet the Charity Commission's guidelines to charities in respect of Public Benefit, the parents of applicants must sign a declaration that their combined gross annual income during 2009 will not have exceeded the equivalent of £20,000.

A student may not accept an HMC Projects if he or she is holding a place at another British Independent school. If, between application for the HMC scholarship and the decisions concerning their award, parents receive the offer of a place at another British Independent school, they should consult me as to whether they should withdraw the application for the HMC scholarship or inform the School that their acceptance of a place at that school must be subject to the outcome of the HMC Projects scholarship process. If difficulties like this arise, parents should feel welcome to consult me.

Please Turn Over

HMC Projects Reduced Fee Scholarship scheme

Since 2006 HMC Projects, as a means of expanding the number of opportunities open to students in Central and Eastern Europe, has run a Reduced Fee scheme for students who, although they did not win a full scholarship, showed in their applications and at interview that they would have been worthy of such a scholarship. Each year, a significant number of the schools offering full HMC Projects scholarships state that, in addition, they will offer reduced-fee scholarships to students who come close to the award of a full scholarship and who, on that account, are nominated by HMC Projects as worthy of consideration for Reduced-Fee Scholarships.

Roughly 25 Reduced Fee places become available in this fashion, with fee reductions ranging from 25% to 75% of fees.

Students whose parental income would debar them from consideration for full fee scholarships are encouraged to enter the competition for HMC Projects scholarships, as the means to consideration for Reduced Fee scholarships.

What happens next?

Most successful candidates will be informed that they will be offered scholarships within a week or two of the interview. **At this point parents will be asked to return the attached form, indicating that they have understood the arrangements and that they agree to their son or daughter taking up the scholarship in the school which will be arranged for them.** They will not, however, be told at that stage which school they will be attending.

It is unlikely that the name of the school will be known until early in May since there is much work to be done in the UK to find and arrange the best schools for all the students. In May I shall write with the details of the school and with further information about the arrangements. The Head of the school will also write at this time and will normally send a prospectus of the school together with any formal documents for signature. The local Foundation office will coordinate travel arrangements to the UK and students are usually required to arrive either at the very end of August or during the first few days of September. Meanwhile, I will be available to respond to any particular enquiries that students or their parents may have.

We charge an **administrative fee**, payable to HMC Projects by parents of students who win full HMC Projects scholarships. This is a necessary contribution to the funding of such expenses as interviews, orientation course, student bursaries and half term provision for students. The fee for Czech students in 2010-11 will be £2,000. (In exceptional circumstances this amount may be reduced.) The latest date for payment is **30th June 2010**. **Thereafter, this fee is not refundable.**

Patrick Tobin, Administrator HMC Projects,
September 2009

Summary of Responsibilities

- **The Open Society Foundation**

Administers the scheme in the Czech Republic.
Provides support and advice before departure.
Liaises with parents concerning financial arrangements.

- **The School**

Provides a full scholarship for tuition, food and accommodation.
Accepts responsibility for the student when the school is in session.
Has full authority in regard to the student when the school is in session and keeps in contact with the student's parents.

- **The Working Group of HMC Projects**

Coordinates the programme in the UK.
Liaises with the national organisation listed above.
Arranges for the students to be met on arrival in the UK.
Arranges an Orientation Course during the first few days.
Arranges the transport of students from the Orientation course to their schools.
Provides a Bursary of £500 for each student.
Provides help in making half-term arrangements, including supervised stays in youth hostels.
Provides financial assistance, when necessary, for attendance of field trips, cultural visits, etc.

- **Parents**

Sign an agreement with the School accepting the normal conditions of the School.
Declare that their combined gross annual income during 2009 will not exceed **£20,000**.
Sign a Consent Form authorising the Contact Person appointed by the School to make arrangements for mid-term breaks and any other times when the School is not in session.
Parents are responsible for their sons/daughters during the school holidays at Christmas and Easter and will, unless otherwise agreed with HMC Projects, meet travel costs for return journeys at these and other times.
Parents will pay the termly 'Extras' bill charged by the School and meet such personal costs of their son/daughter as are not funded by HMC Projects.
Parents pay a fee (as advised by the national organiser) to HMC Projects.