



PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE01429

Name of petitioner

Wajahat Nassar

Petition title

Making Scottish international education more accessible

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to change the eligibility criteria of the priority countries for Scotland's Saltire Scholarships programme to benefit students of all nationalities.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

I emailed the managing body of the Scholarships programme to which I was told that the scholarship is open to the countries mentioned in the eligibility criteria only.

I emailed the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, Michael Russell MSP to which I received a reply dated 03 April 2012 and I was told that the eligibility criterion was subsequently reviewed and the criteria for countries may be reviewed in future.

I emailed the Scottish Youth Parliament, to which I was told that the SYP does not have a mandate to deal with my request.

Petition background information

Scotland's Saltire Scholarships offers up to 200 awards, each worth £2000, towards the tuition fees of a one year Masters course at any of Scotland's higher education institutions.

The scholarships are designed to support the promotion of Scotland as a learning nation and a science nation and are therefore targeted at the priority sectors of creative industries, life sciences, technology, financial services and renewable and clean energy.

Since inception, Saltire Scholarships has been giving students the chance to study at internationally acclaimed post-graduate institutions in Scotland, a country that not only is a world leader in education but also rich in culture and history.

These are available to the following countries:

- Canada
- China
- India
- United States of America

I wish the Honourable Scottish Parliament to kindly consider the following questions:

1. Is the Scottish culture open to the countries currently in the eligibility criteria?
2. Is the Scottish education open to countries currently in the eligibility criteria?

I am quite sure that many and all of the Honourable Scottish Parliament would agree that the Scottish culture and education is available to one and all.

I do not support any one nation, nor am I putting forward this petition for my personal reasons. I just believe and consider that everyone has a right to education and there should be no impediment to the education. Education is not a luxury, it is a basic right and Scholarships are the right of every student in this world.

I believe that the talent and merit of the person should form the criteria, not his or her nationality. There are 200 scholarships available for the four nations that are currently eligible. Scottish education could be made available to 200 nations around the world if made open.

The website <http://www.scotlandscholarship.com/> states that "This is part of the Scottish Government's continuing support for the 'brightest and best' students to come and study in Scotland." I consider that nationality is no criteria for being a best and a bright student. All nations have had their heroes in all fields and to consider that only these nations can bring about talented students is a gross discrimination.

I am not sure how the management of the scholarship has decided these countries to be of priority and if there has been public consultation to evidence this. Scottish Development International programmes should be open for all, as it again says International and I could not find a document where the UK Government has considered only these countries as priority.

The Saltire Scholarship details say: "The scholarships are available to students as part of a wider strategy to promote Scotland as a study destination and showcase Scotland's higher education offering in international markets."

I wish to bring the attention of the Honourable members to the words, promote, destination, showcase and international. All these words qualify for Scottish education open for all nations.

Although there are many other scholarships present for the students, but lets consider this as one less opportunity for a talented student and lets consider this as a window for those who can apply for both this and the other scholarships.

I humbly request the Honourable Scottish Parliament to open the scholarship for students all over the world or initiate another similar scholarship for students across the world other than these countries. 200 scholarships distributed to only these countries is unfair to other students who are equally talented and deserve international education.

Unique web address

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/GettingInvolved/Petitions/PE01429>

Related information for petition

Do you wish your petition to be hosted on the Parliament's website to collect signatures online?

NO

How many signatures have you collected so far?

1

Closing date for collecting signatures online

N/A

Comments to stimulate online discussion