



Australian Government



NEW COLOMBO PLAN

Connect to Australia's future - study in the region

New Colombo Plan Guidelines Scholarship Program

2018 Round

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1 Program Overview

1.1 Purpose of Guidelines

These guidelines outline the process for selecting Australian undergraduate students for the 2018 round of the New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program, and the conditions of the 2018 New Colombo Plan Scholarships. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Advice to Applicants available on the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website at www.dfat.gov.au/new-colombo-plan.

These guidelines commence on 3 January 2017.

1.2 About the New Colombo Plan

The New Colombo Plan is a signature initiative of the Australian Government which aims to lift knowledge of the Indo-Pacific in Australia by supporting young Australians to study and undertake Internships in the region.

The Australian Government made an initial commitment of \$100 million of funding for the New Colombo Plan over five years. Funding for the Program is now ongoing. It involves a prestigious Scholarship Program for study of up to one Academic Year, and Internships and/or Mentorships of up to six months; and a flexible Mobility Grant Program for both short and longer-term study, Internships, Mentorships, practicums and research.

The New Colombo Plan is intended to be transformational, deepening Australia's relationships in the region, both at the individual level and through expanding university, business and other stakeholder links.

1.2.1 Strategic Objectives

The New Colombo Plan aims to:

- lift knowledge of the Indo-Pacific in Australia by increasing the number of Australian undergraduate students undertaking study and Internships in the region
- deepen Australia's people-to-people and institutional relationships with the region, through the engagement of students, universities, businesses and other stakeholder networks in the Program
- establish study in the Indo-Pacific as a rite of passage for Australian undergraduate students, and as an endeavour that is highly valued by the Australian community, and
- increase the number of work-ready Australian graduates with regional experience.

The New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program objectives in 2018 are to:

- provide between 120 and 150 prestigious and highly-competitive Scholarships
- support more study experiences in a broad range of Indo-Pacific locations
- encourage New Colombo Plan students to undertake longer-term study, language study and an Internship and/or Mentorship
- engage New Colombo Plan students, universities and other stakeholders in public diplomacy and outreach, and
- continue to develop an active alumni community for participants to share their experiences, promote the New Colombo Plan and continue to develop knowledge of and professional links with the Indo-Pacific region.

1.2.2 New Colombo Plan Budget¹

Funding for the total New Colombo Plan budget from 2017-18 is outlined below.

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
\$50,933,000	\$50,933,000	\$50,933,000

1.3 Scholarship Conditions and Eligible Activities

The Program provides opportunities for Australian undergraduate students, between 18 and 28 years of age (inclusive), to undertake study, participate in Internship and/or Mentorship opportunities and receive language training in eligible Host Location(s) in the Indo-Pacific. The Program also encourages students to participate in community engagement and advocacy in relation to the New Colombo Plan.

At a minimum, a Scholarship Program must include a study component. The other possible elements can be undertaken concurrently or one after the other, in any order. A Scholarship Program must be between three and 19 months in duration, and commence between 1 January 2018 and 31 December 2018. Programs must be full-time throughout their entire duration. Full-time study is as-defined by the Home University; a full-time Internship is at least 22 hours per week; full-time language training is at least 15 contact hours per week. Where short gaps between Program components are unavoidable, a gap lasting no longer than four weeks may be approved on a case-by-case basis.

Applicants who have already commenced or will commence a study abroad or exchange program overseas prior to 1 January 2018 are not eligible to apply for a Scholarship to continue that study.

Study Component

- A study component is mandatory.
- The duration must be at least one Study Period as defined by the Host Institution (usually a semester or trimester) and up to one full Academic Year.
- Study must be undertaken face-to-face (not online).
- Applicants' home universities must agree to grant full-time academic credit towards a Bachelor or Honours Degree for the classes undertaken at the Host Institution.
- Applicants may propose overseas study that will provide whole or partial credit towards a Concurrent Diploma.
- Scholars studying a research-based honours program overseas must be supervised by an academic from their Host Institution and are required in their application to describe the benefits of undertaking their research program at their chosen Host Location.
- Favourable consideration during the selection process will be given to applicants seeking longer-term study.

Internship/Mentorship Component

¹ As outlined in the 2016-17 Portfolio Budget Statements. Covers all aspects of the New Colombo Plan administration, including Mobility Program funding. The budget does not include funding for capital expenses.

- An Internship is a professional work experience in which a student has learning goals relevant to their academic qualification and professional development. Internships can include clinical placements or practicums.
- A Mentorship is a developmental relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person helps to guide a less experienced or less knowledgeable person, relevant to work, career, or professional development.
- Internships do not need to be confirmed at the time of application.
- Scholars can undertake more than one Internship/Mentorship during their Scholarship Program.
- Scholars will be able to access the New Colombo Plan Internship and Mentorship Network to identify Internship and Mentorship opportunities made available by registered organisations, though Internships and Mentorships do not have to be arranged through the Network.
- Internships may be undertaken on a full-time basis (between 22 and 38 hours per week, for a maximum of six months) prior or subsequent to study at a Host Institution, and/or on a part-time basis concurrent with study at a Host Institution.
- If a full-time Internship is not undertaken concurrently with study, the stipend (see Section 2) will be paid for the duration.
- Scholars are encouraged to seek academic credit for their Internship, but this is not mandatory.
- An Internship alone cannot constitute a Scholarship Program.
- Mentorships may only be undertaken concurrent with full-time study or a full-time Internship.
- Internships can be undertaken in a location other than the primary Host Location for the study component.

In keeping with the objectives of the New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program, Internships and Mentorships are strongly encouraged where Host Location visa requirements permit this.

Language Training

- The Scholarship Program includes support for in-country training in a language that is an official language of the Host Location, or is widely spoken. The training must be undertaken in the same Host Location as the Study Program or Internship.
- When the language training is full-time (minimum 15 contact hours per week), is being delivered formally by a designated language training provider, and is being undertaken separately to other Scholarship components, a maximum of one month of stipend will be provided.

Where relevant, Scholars are encouraged to undertake language training as part of their Scholarship Program.

Community Engagement and Advocacy

The Australian Government, including through its network of missions and offices overseas, may invite Scholars to participate in a range of events during their Scholarship Program.

Scholars are encouraged to share the experiences of their Scholarship Program with the NCP Secretariat, other students and their community, including through engaging with the New Colombo Plan alumni community. They are encouraged to participate in activities that

will encourage others to participate in the New Colombo Plan and to advocate for the New Colombo Plan, as well as for the benefits of studying and undertaking work placements in the Indo-Pacific region.

2 Scholarship Benefits

Before applying for a New Colombo Plan Scholarship, students should consider their personal financial circumstances and ensure that undertaking a Scholarship Program will not overextend them financially. Exchange rates can fluctuate. The Scholarship should be used as intended.

The New Colombo Plan Scholarship includes:

- tuition fees to cover the cost of study for up to one Academic Year (including student service and amenities fees), where Scholars are studying as fee-paying international students, up to a maximum of \$20,000 (\$10,000 per semester or \$6,666 per trimester). These fees are payable directly to the Host Institution. The Scholarship will only provide for international tuition fees if no current exchange agreement place is available between the Home University and the Host Institution.
- language training tuition fees, where incurred, of up to \$1,500. These fees are only for in-country language training and are payable directly to the language training provider.
- a travel allowance of \$2,500 to contribute to costs associated with the Scholar's travel to and from the Host Location.
- an establishment allowance of \$2,500 to contribute to the costs associated with the Scholar settling into their Host Location.
- a monthly stipend of \$2,500 to contribute to the Scholar's basic living costs in their Host Location.
- health and travel insurance for the duration of their overseas Scholarship Program.
- a dedicated Case Manager for the duration of their Scholarship Program who provides services including pre-departure briefings, advice on health and travel insurance, advice and assistance relating to accommodation, and payment of allowances.
- New Colombo Plan Fellows (the top-ranked Scholar in each location and top ranked Indigenous Scholar) will receive an additional benefit of \$1,000 to purchase study materials for use during their Scholarship Program.
- Scholarships may be sponsored by Private Sector Organisations for the duration of the Scholar's Scholarship Program. This may include in-kind benefits provided direct to the Scholars, such as training opportunities.

3 Eligibility

3.1 Applicants

To be eligible, applicants for a New Colombo Plan Scholarship must:

- be nominated by their Home University.
- be an Australian citizen. Applicants cannot undertake their Scholarship in a Host Location in which they hold dual citizenship or permanent residency; or in which they have previously been a citizen or permanent resident.

- be enrolled in units at an on-shore campus of an Australian University during the application process.
- be between 18 and 28 years of age (inclusive) on 1 January 2018.
- be undertaking a Bachelor Degree or Bachelor Honours Degree when the Scholarship Program commences.
- have achieved a minimum 70 per cent graded average or equivalent for their undergraduate course at the time of application, as determined by the nominating Home University.
- not be a previous recipient of a New Colombo Plan Scholarship.

Successful applicants are not allowed to commence another Australian Government funded off-shore Scholarship Program or mobility grant (including a New Colombo Plan Mobility Program grant) while undertaking their New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program.

3.2 Host Locations

Scholarship Programs can be conducted in the following 40 Indo-Pacific Host Locations: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Hong Kong SAR, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kiribati, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, New Caledonia, Niue, Pakistan, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Vietnam.

Scholars may apply to undertake their study and/or Internship component in more than one eligible Host Location and/or Host Institution/Organisation, where it adds meaningful value to the core Scholarship Program.

Where the Scholarship Program is undertaken in more than one location, the Scholar must nominate a primary location on their application form. A primary location is where the Scholar undertakes the most substantial study component of their Scholarship Program. Study and/or Internships at other locations must not exceed the time spent at the primary location.

No additional funding (to that outlined in Section 2) will be provided for a Scholarship Program undertaken in more than one eligible Host Location (i.e. each Scholar can only receive one travel allowance and one establishment allowance). Travel to secondary locations for the purposes of the scholarship is subject to relevant visa conditions.

Scholars must not travel to a Host Location or region within a Host Location for which the Australian Government's Smartraveller travel advice recommends 'Do not travel' (see www.smartraveller.gov.au). Host Locations for which the Smartraveller travel advice recommends 'Reconsider your need to travel' are eligible, but applicants should inform themselves carefully of the risks and think seriously about the need to travel to that country or region before applying. Applicants must acknowledge in their Scholarship agreement (see Section 6) that they have considered the risks carefully and investigated safety precautions before deciding to travel.

Study should preferably be undertaken at a local Host Institution. Host Institutions should not be offshore campuses of a third country, unless from a New Colombo Plan Host Location. Applications to study at offshore campuses of Australian Universities will be considered on a

case-by-case basis, if the Home University provides confirmation that the following conditions are met:

- there are no local Host Institutions in the proposed location that offer relevant courses that would receive credit from the Home University.
- the offshore campus offers a genuine local experience, where Australian students are the minority of the student body and students are taught predominantly by local and international academics.
- the Home University is continuing to explore and expand exchange or other partnerships with local Host Institutions in that location.

4 Selection Criteria

4.1 Selection Criteria

Applicants will be assessed on the following selection criteria, in their written applications and their performance at interview:

1. Academic excellence at the tertiary level (40 per cent weighting)

Assessment of this criterion will relate to a) the applicant's graded average achieved in tertiary studies, and b) to ungraded academic achievements, such as academic awards and commendations, publications, or other examples of academic excellence at the tertiary level. The applicant's communication skills, higher-order cognitive and critical thinking skills, and engagement in learning will also be assessed. High School academic achievements will not be considered.

2. Leadership in the community (30 per cent weighting)

Assessment of this criterion will relate to the applicant's demonstrated leadership in the community, including volunteer and not-for-profit roles and/or activities they have undertaken in their local community, nationally, overseas and/or in their university.

3. Adaptability and Resilience (15 per cent weighting)

Assessment of this criterion will relate to the applicant's potential to adapt to change, thrive in a different environment, and demonstrate resilience in the face of challenges.

4. Ability to contribute to New Colombo Plan goals (15 per cent weighting)

Assessment of this criterion will relate to the applicant's understanding of New Colombo Plan objectives, and how the applicant and their proposed Scholarship Program would contribute to New Colombo Plan goals.

4.2 Selection of New Colombo Plan Fellows

The top-ranked candidate for each location will be acknowledged as a New Colombo Plan Fellow. Subject to their agreement, the top-ranked Indigenous candidate will be acknowledged as the New Colombo Plan Indigenous Fellow. Fellows are encouraged to play a strong role in promoting the New Colombo Plan while on their Scholarship Program, and as part of the alumni network on their return.

4.3 Other Considerations

Where applicants have similarly meritorious claims in relation to the selection criteria, preference may be given to:

- applicants proposing longer periods of study, an Internship/Mentorship and/or language training;
- diversity across Host Locations;
- representation from diverse student groups including: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from a Low Socio-economic Status background, students from Regional/Remote areas/universities, students across the Genders, female students in non-traditional fields, or students with Disability;
- diversity across fields of study and Home Universities.

5 Selection Process

The table below summarises key dates and steps in the selection process:

Timeline	Activity
3 January 2017	Program guidelines published.
1 July – 31 July 2017	Australian Universities nominate applicants. Nominations close 11.59pm Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST) on 31 July 2017. Nominations must be made via the New Colombo Plan Online website.
1 August – 31 August 2017	Nominated students receive application guidance and an invitation to complete an online application form. Applicants complete their application and gather supporting documentation.
31 August 2017	Applications close at 11.59pm AEST.
September 2017	Applications are shortlisted and shortlisted applicants are notified.
September – October 2017	Shortlisted applicants are interviewed.
November 2017	Selections are finalised and the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Education and Training are notified of selection outcomes. All successful and unsuccessful applicants are notified of the outcome of their application.
December 2017	Scholars are announced and their details are published on the New Colombo Plan website.
1 January – 31 December 2018	Scholars commence their Scholarship Programs.

5.1 Nominations

Students must be nominated by their Home University in order to apply. Students interested in applying for a New Colombo Plan scholarship may wish to advise their university's international office of their interest.

Each Australian University is asked to conduct an internal process to nominate up to 10 unranked students. Australian Universities should make nominations accessible to all eligible students enrolled at that university.

Australian Universities should consider the eligibility and selection criteria when conducting their nomination process.

Nominations must be submitted through the New Colombo Plan Online website (<https://ncponline.education.gov.au/>). The Department of Education and Training will provide New Colombo Plan Liaison Officers for Scholarships with instructions on how to submit nominations.

The following details about applicants will be requested in the online nomination form:

- name
- gender
- date of birth
- email address
- mobile phone
- degree in which the nominee is enrolled
- Academic Transcript (official)
- intended primary Host Location (where known).

5.2 Written Applications

The Department of Education and Training will contact nominees by email and provide instructions on how to submit the application. Applications must be submitted through the New Colombo Plan Online website.

The application requires applicants to provide details of their proposed Scholarship Program, including the mandatory study component, any proposed Internships, Mentorships or language training, and the Host Location(s) in which they intend to complete their Scholarship Program. The primary Host Location must be decided at the time of application.

In applying, each student must submit a single Program proposal. Multiple proposals will not be considered. An applicant cannot change their primary Host Location once their application has been submitted, except in exceptional circumstances.

The main component of the written application involves answering questions related to the four selection criteria (see Section 4.1).

Applications may be disregarded, offers revoked or a Scholarship Program terminated if it is the belief of the Department of Education and Training, in consultation with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, that false or misleading information has formed a component of an application.

Referee Reports

Applicants must supply two referee reports when submitting their application. A referee must be able to comment substantively on the applicant's abilities and experience with respect to the selection criteria, and must hold a position that gives their comments credibility (e.g. a position in the applicant's university, workplace or community). At least one report must be prepared by an academic referee.

Applicants should consider carefully their referees, as their reports may add considerable value to an application through the assessment process.

Supporting Documents

Applicants must submit the following documentation in addition to a completed application form:

- evidence of Australian citizenship (copy of birth certificate, current passport or citizenship certificate)
- a letter of current enrolment from their Home University, including expected completion date for the course the overseas study program will be credited towards
- a current, complete-to-date official Academic Transcript from their Home University
- evidence of affiliation with their Host Institution, which should demonstrate the applicant has begun the application process with their proposed Host Institution, for example:
 - a copy of a partnership agreement between the applicant's Home University and the Host Institution
 - a letter from the applicant's Home University outlining partnership arrangements to allow for Commencement between 1 January 2018 and 31 December 2018
 - an email or letter from the applicant or the applicant's Home University to the proposed Host Institution indicating the student is in the process of applying for a New Colombo Plan Scholarship and, if successful, they would be seeking to undertake a study program at that proposed Host Institution.

Applicants should liaise with their Home University's New Colombo Plan Liaison Officer for Scholarships or international office to obtain this evidence.

5.3 Selection Process

Scholars are selected through a competitive, merit-based selection process against selection criteria and other considerations set out at Sections 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3. Scholarships are awarded to eligible applicants to support Scholarship Programs that best represent value with public money in line with the New Colombo Plan strategic objectives.

All applications submitted by the closing date will be subject to eligibility checks.

Eligible applications will then be shortlisted by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of Education and Training against the selection criteria. All officers and individuals involved in selection processes have commensurate skills and experience to assess applications and are required to complete a Conflict of Interest declaration.

Shortlisted applicants will be advised in September 2017 and an interview will be scheduled during September and October 2017. Interview panels may comprise senior government officials, members of the business community, academics, or other appropriate individuals.

The Program Delegates will approve final Scholarship outcomes based on the advice of the interview panels.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Education and Training will be advised of outcomes prior to the notification of successful and unsuccessful applicants.

5.4 Acceptance Process

All successful and unsuccessful applicants will be advised of the outcome of their application by the end of November 2017.

Offer of Scholarships

Applicants who are offered a Scholarship must accept and sign a Scholarship agreement, and be able to satisfy the visa requirements of their Host Location.

Police Checks

All successful applicants will be required to undergo a police check. It is an important consideration of the Australian Government that a Scholar will enhance the reputation of Australia and the New Colombo Plan overseas. A criminal record will not automatically disqualify an applicant from receiving a Scholarship. However, if a successful applicant is found to have a criminal record or conviction then the Department of Education and Training, in consultation with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, may revoke or refuse to grant a Scholarship.

Support Services Organisation

Successful applicants will be allocated a Case Manager from a contracted Support Services Organisation to assist with Scholarship logistics such as health and travel insurance, accommodation, and payment of allowances.

6 Scholarship Agreement

The Support Service Organisation will enter into a Scholarship agreement with the Scholar on behalf of, and as agent for the Australian Government. A Scholarship agreement between the Scholar and the Australian Government must be executed before any Scholarship funds can be paid to the Scholar. If the Scholar commences the Scholarship Program before the Scholarship agreement is executed, the Australian Government will not be liable for any expenditure incurred before the date of execution.

The Scholarship agreement will detail the successful applicant's responsibilities in relation to the Scholarship Program and outcomes that must be achieved. It will also set out the arrangements for the provision of funding for the Scholarship Program as well as arrangements relating to (but not limited to):

- payment of entitlements
- leave of absence entitlements
- pre-departure advice and assistance
- assistance regarding return arrangements to Australia
- travel and health insurance
- confirmation of Internships/Mentorships
- minimum monthly contact.

Pre-departure requirements outlined in the Scholarship agreement should be completed before successful applicants receive Scholarship benefits.

6.1 Variations to Scholarship Programs

New Colombo Plan Scholars may apply to vary their Scholarship Program for a number of reasons, including to incorporate a new Internship/Mentorship opportunity, to increase the length of study, or in exceptional circumstances to change the Host Institution.

Any request for a variation must be made in writing to the student's Case Manager well in advance of the proposed variation commencing.

The decision to vary a Scholarship Program will be made on a case-by-case basis by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Department of Education and Training, with agreement contingent on the merits of the request and funding being available if required. Scholars will be liable for any financial commitments made in relation to their proposed extended study where those commitments were made prior to receipt of formal advice granting the Program extension.

6.2 Taxation

Scholarship funds provided to Scholars are to be treated as exempt from income tax as per Section 51.10, 2.1A of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997* (Cth).

7 Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 Australian Government

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of Education and Training administer the New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program together.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is responsible for strategic leadership and setting the policy direction for the New Colombo Plan. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade manages the New Colombo Plan budget and matters related to business liaison, Internships, Mentorships, public diplomacy and alumni.

The Department of Education and Training coordinates application processes and the administration of online systems, and is the first point of contact for students and Australian Universities on administrative matters, including eligibility for the Program, nominations, applications and attendance at interview.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of Education and Training jointly manage Program guidelines and selection processes, and review direction and implementation of the Program. Departmental officers involved in selection processes have commensurate skills and experience to assess applications and are required to complete a declaration to cover issues associated with Conflicts of Interest.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of Education and Training are not responsible for arranging work placements, study programs, or logistics in Host Locations, including accommodation, nor will they direct Host Institutions, Host Organisations, or Scholars about the manner in which work placements and study programs are carried out. These matters are for Home Universities, Host Institutions, Host Organisations and Scholars to determine.

Section 12 provides contact details for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of Education and Training.

7.2 Australian Universities

Each Australian University is responsible for identifying and nominating up to 10 Scholarship applicants for the 2018 round. It is the responsibility of Australian Universities to obtain consent from students for their details to be provided to the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in the nomination process. It is also the responsibility of Australian Universities to ensure that the email addresses provided for the nominees are up-to-date and accurate.

Following the nomination process Australian Universities are responsible for confirming with each of their nominated applicants their receipt of Australian Government guidance on the application process and that the nominee's proposed study program is credit-bearing. Australian Universities are requested to assist with obtaining the required evidence of acceptance with Host Institutions and encouraged to provide support to the applicant as needed in arranging any Internship/Mentorship.

Australian Universities are requested to nominate a New Colombo Plan Liaison Officer for Scholarships (and an alternative contact, where possible) who can submit nominations on behalf of their university and receive updates throughout the selection process. The New Colombo Plan Liaison Officer for Scholarships must provide consent for their name and contact details to be published on the New Colombo Plan website and to being contacted by the Australian Government in regards to the New Colombo Plan.

Australian Universities making nominations must disclose any Conflict of Interest in relation to a nomination in writing to ncp.scholarships@education.gov.au at the time of submitting the nomination form or when the Conflict of Interest arises or is likely to arise. Australian Universities must take reasonable steps as required by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Department of Education and Training to resolve or otherwise deal with that Conflict of Interest.

7.3 Applicants

Applicants must be nominated by the Home University and meet all eligibility criteria set out in these guidelines. Eligible undergraduates who are interested in applying for a New Colombo Plan Scholarship and feel they have strong claims against the selection criteria (see Section 4.1) should contact the New Colombo Plan Liaison Officer for Scholarships or the international office of their Home University. A list of New Colombo Plan Liaison Officers for Scholarships is available at www.dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/new-colombo-plan/Scholarship-program/Pages/Scholarship-program.aspx. It is the applicant's responsibility to arrange any Internships or Mentorships.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that their complete application, including supporting documentation and referee reports, is submitted by the closing date. Applications not submitted by the closing date will not be considered; although an extension may be granted in exceptional circumstances for the submission of additional supporting documents. Applicants must meet any costs associated with preparing and lodging their application.

Applicants must obtain the required evidence of affiliation with their Host Institution and, if successful, the required evidence of acceptance with their Host Institution.

Applicants are responsible for obtaining the correct visa(s) for the duration of their Scholarship Program.

The decision to accept a New Colombo Plan Scholarship and travel overseas is the responsibility of the Scholar. The Australian Government will not be liable for any loss, damage, injury or harm that might be suffered during, or in connection with, the Scholarship Program.

Applicants should make their own independent inquiries about the risks involved in overseas travel, including travel to the Host Location(s), and be fully informed about the risks at all times. Scholars are required to read carefully the travel advice for their Host Location(s) and other relevant travel information pages on the Smartraveller website (such as 'Studying overseas') for information about risks overseas and how they can prepare for overseas travel. Scholars must subscribe to the relevant travel advisories and register their contact details on Smartraveller prior to Commencement of their Scholarship.

Applicants are required to exhibit professional behaviour throughout the selection process and, if successful, applicants are expected to act as ambassadors for Australia and the New Colombo Plan during their Scholarship Program. Evidence of unprofessional behaviour, including but not limited to, misrepresentation of the truth in applications or at interview, or inappropriate social media posts or public commentary referencing the New Colombo Plan can be grounds for not awarding or for cancelling an awarded Scholarship.

Applicants must disclose any Conflict of Interest in relation to an application in writing to ncp.scholarships@education.gov.au at the time of submitting the application or when the Conflict of Interest arises or is likely to arise. Applicants must take steps as the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Department of Education and Training reasonably require to resolve or otherwise deal with that Conflict of Interest. Obligations for the management of Conflicts of Interest by Scholars are set out in the Declaration of Acceptance.

7.4 Support Services Organisation

The Support Services Organisation is responsible for allocating a Case Manager and providing high quality assistance and program management for each Scholar. These services include, but are not limited to, pre-departure support; providing a briefing pack of important information; paying allowances; providing advice and guidance during the overseas Program; assisting Scholars with Program variation requests; and assisting with a Scholar's return to Australia on completion.

8 Complaints and Feedback

There may be a number of reasons why an application does not progress through the process. Please see the Program website www.dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/new-colombo-plan/Scholarship-program/Pages/Scholarship-program.aspx at the conclusion of the round for the most common reasons why applicants were not successful.

Feedback, inquiries and complaints in relation to the processing and selection of applications should be sent to ncp.scholarships@education.gov.au.

Appeals against decisions on the selection of Scholars will not be considered.

If an applicant, or any other person, is dissatisfied with the administration of the New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program they can raise their concerns with the Commonwealth

Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will generally prefer that the Department be given an opportunity to deal with the complaint in the first instance.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman may be contacted by telephone on 1300 362 072 (International +61 2 6276 0111), email at ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au, or by post at:

The Commonwealth Ombudsman
GPO Box 442
CANBERRA ACT 2601

The Australian Government is not responsible for any misunderstanding arising from the failure by an applicant to comply with these guidelines, or arising from any ambiguity, discrepancy or error contained in an application.

9 Legislative Authority

The Arrangement under which public money is, or may become payable by the Australian Government for the Program can be found in the *Financial Framework (Supplementary Powers) Regulations 1997* (Cth) (Schedule 1AB).

10 Disclosure of Information

The use and disclosure of information provided to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Department of Education and Training by applicants and Scholars for the Program is regulated by legislation including the *Public Service Act 1999* (Cth), the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth), the *Crimes Act 1914* (Cth), the *Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth) and the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Cth), as well as the common law.

10.1 Information to be Announced

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of Education and Training may make public details of individual Scholarships, including, but not limited to:

- the names of successful applicants, their Home University, Host Location(s), Host Institution and Host Organisation
- a brief description of study areas and Internships/Mentorships being supported (and their timing)
- the amount of funding awarded
- photographs of successful applicants taken at the award ceremony.

10.2 Privacy

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of Education and Training and their contractors are bound by the provisions of the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) (Privacy Act). Schedule 1 of the Privacy Act contains the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs), which prescribe the rules for handling Personal Information.

Without collecting Personal Information the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of Education and Training will not be able to process an application. Personal Information collected by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of Education and Training in relation to applications under the New Colombo Plan will be used for the following purposes ('the purposes'):

- assessing applications
- administering and performance monitoring the New Colombo Plan
- promoting the New Colombo Plan, including to past Scholarship recipients and to media representatives and in promotional material, information and publications in hardcopy and/or on the internet
- congratulating and/or inviting successful recipients to functions and events held in Australia and overseas, before during or after the term of the recipient's Scholarship.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of Education and Training may disclose Personal Information in relation to applications under the New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program for the same purposes listed above to the following recipients:

- other Australian Government Departments and agencies, including Austrade, the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, the Australian Federal Police and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
- State and Territory Governments
- Australian Parliamentarians and Parliamentary committees
- contractors and agents of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of Education and Training
- Australian Universities, including the New Colombo Plan Liaison Officer for Scholarships
- potential Internship hosts, including but not limited to companies, Host Location governments/authorities or non-government organisations. These may be foreign organisations (noting that representatives of foreign companies, governments/authorities or non-government organisations are not bound by Australian privacy legislation)
- Scholarship sponsors, including but not limited to companies or professional bodies
- representatives of Host Location(s) governments/authorities (noting that representatives of foreign governments/authorities are not bound by Australian privacy legislation)
- media representatives, including foreign media representatives
- in publicly available promotional material, information and publications in hardcopy and/or on the internet.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of Education and Training will not otherwise use or disclose the Personal Information for a purpose other than that identified in these Guidelines, except as allowed under Australian law.

For more information on privacy, including handling of Personal Information, how someone can access or correct Personal Information, or how to make a complaint, go to:

- Department of Education and Training - www.education.gov.au/privacy or contact privacy@education.gov.au
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade – www.dfat.gov.au/privacy.html or contact privacy@dfat.gov.au.

10.3 Confidentiality

Identification of Confidential Information

Information which satisfies the four criteria listed below will be treated by the Australian Government as Confidential Information:

- the information to be protected has been clearly identified by the applicant

- the information is commercially sensitive
- the disclosure of the information would cause unreasonable detriment to the applicant or another party
- the information was provided by the applicant under an understanding that it would remain confidential.

Confidential Information also includes information designated by the Australian Government as confidential or that either party knows or ought to know is confidential. This does not include information that is otherwise in the public domain.

Applicants must ensure that they clearly mark information in their application that is confidential and explain why it should be treated as Confidential Information.

Use of Confidential Information

Even if information belonging to the applicant is marked confidential, it may be used by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Department of Education and Training and other parts of the Australian Government.

The Confidential Information will be disclosed to Australian Government employees and contractors and agents for the purposes of determining the suitability of applicants to enhance the reputation of Australia.

In addition to the above, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Department of Education and Training may disclose the Confidential Information to:

- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner.
- the responsible Minister(s).
- a House or a Committee of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia.
- a third party contractor engaged by the Australian Government for audit-related purposes.
- other Australian Government agencies for law enforcement purposes, where the disclosure will serve the Australian Government's legitimate interests and, if necessary, to substantiate an applicant's claims.
- a technical, financial, economic and/or industry expert (including auditors) from whom the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Department of Education and Training wishes to seek advice.

Confidential Information may also be disclosed if the Australian Government is otherwise required or permitted by law to do so (for example in accordance with the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Cth)*) (FOI Act), where the consent of the applicant and/or Scholar to the release of information is obtained prior to its disclosure, or where the information enters the public domain due to the actions of someone other than the Australian Government.

10.4 Freedom of Information

The FOI Act provides a legally enforceable right to seek access to government documents, including documents with regard to the New Colombo Plan.

Decisions regarding requests for access under the FOI Act are made by authorised FOI decision-makers in accordance with the requirements of the FOI Act.

The right of access to documents is subject to exemptions, including in relation to personal and business information. In certain circumstances where documents within the scope of an FOI request contain Personal Information or information which relates to the business, commercial or financial affairs of third parties, the FOI Act requires the decision-maker to consult with the individuals and business affected if release of the material is being considered.

All FOI requests must be referred, immediately via email at foi@dfat.gov.au, to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. As required, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will consult the Department of Education and Training on FOI requests.

11 Program Evaluation

Program reporting and evaluation are ongoing activities within the Government. As such, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Department of Education and Training, and the Support Services Organisation can use any information collected for performance monitoring and management of the New Colombo Plan.

The New Colombo Plan Online website will be used by the Support Services Organisation, the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for performance monitoring and management. New Colombo Plan Online is used to collect information about applicants, Program outcomes and performance (including reports).

Program stakeholders, including university representatives, interview panel members, nominees and Scholars may be asked to participate in evaluating the Program.

12 Further Information

For further information on Program administrative matters, including eligibility for the Program, applications and funding arrangements please contact the Department of Education and Training at ncp.scholarships@education.gov.au. For other matters, including business liaison, Internships, Mentorships, public diplomacy and alumni, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade can be contacted through ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au.

13 Definitions of Key Terms

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander means a person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which he or she lives, or formerly lived.

Academic Transcript means an official document issued by the Home University as a record of all completed units and results throughout the student's enrolment.

Academic Year means the annual period of study sessions of a Home University and/or Host Institution.

Australian University means a registered higher education provider for the purposes of the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011*, that is registered in a provider category that permits the use of the word "university".

Bachelor Degree means undergraduate studies at a Bachelor Level 7 as defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Bachelor Honours Degree means undergraduate studies at a Bachelor Honours Level 8 as defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Case Manager means a staff member of the Support Services Organisation that is assigned to a particular Scholar and who is responsible for providing the Scholar with information and support services to undertake their overseas program.

Commencement means the date the Scholarship holder commences their Scholarship Program as confirmed by their Host Institution, Host Organisation or language training provider for payments that are reliant on the Commencement of the Term of the Scholarship.

Concurrent Diploma means undergraduate studies at a diploma level as defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework, undertaken concurrently with a Bachelor or Bachelor Honours Degree.

Confidential Information is information which satisfies the four criteria listed at Section 10.3 of these guidelines or is designated by the Australian Government as confidential or that either party knows or ought to know is confidential. This does not include information that is otherwise in the public domain.

Conflict of Interest refers to real, apparent, or potential private or personal associations or interests (financial or non-financial) which improperly influence, or may improperly influence, a person's performance of their role and responsibilities in relation to the New Colombo Plan.

Disability refers to any limitation, restriction or impairment which restricts everyday activities or assistance is required and has lasted or is likely to last for at least six months.

Gender means part of a person's social and personal identity, and may not necessarily be the same as the person's sex. When applying, individuals are given the option to select M (male), F (female) or X (Indeterminate/Intersex/Unspecified).

Home University means the Australian University in which the student is enrolled at the time they applied for a Scholarship, that nominated the student to apply, and will confer the student's degree upon completion.

Host Location means the eligible geographic location in the Indo-Pacific region (see Section 3.2) to which the Scholar will travel to undertake their Scholarship Program.

Host Institution means a university or other education provider in which the Scholar undertakes their study component in the Host Location.

Host Organisation means the organisation in which the Scholar undertakes their Internship/Mentorship in the Host Location.

Internship means professional work experience in which a student has intentional learning goals relevant to their academic qualification and professional development. Internships can include clinical placements or practicums.

Low Socio-economic Status means students who are from a low socioeconomic background, as measured by the lowest quartile of the ABS Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) Index of Education and Occupation (IEO) measured at Statistical Area 1 (SA1) level.

Mentorship means a developmental relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person helps to guide a less experienced or less knowledgeable person, relevant to work, career, or professional development.

New Colombo Plan Liaison Officer for Scholarships means the person designated by each Australian University to submit student nominations and receive Program updates.

Personal Information has the same meaning as in the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*.

Private Sector Organisation includes Australian, global and local commercial enterprises (businesses) and non-profit organisations, ranging from those in the informal sector to large multinational organisations, which are not owned by or under the direct control of a government. This does not include Host Institutions.

Program means the New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program.

Program Delegates means a Deputy Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and a Deputy Secretary of the Department of Education and Training.

Regional/Remote means a region designated as Regional or Remote by the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011 Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS).

Scholar means a successful applicant who receives a New Colombo Plan Scholarship.

Scholarship means Scholarship funding and other benefits provided to successful applicants under the Program.

Scholarship Program means the study, Internship/Mentorship activities and language training applicants propose in their Scholarship application.

Sponsored Scholarship a Scholarship that is sponsored by a Private Sector Organisation for the duration of the Scholarship Program and which may include in-kind benefits provided direct to the Scholars, such as training opportunities.

Support Services Organisation means a third party provider contracted by the Department of Education and Training to manage support services for Scholars.